FETAUSIA'I – A SERVANT LEADERSHIP PARADIGM FOR THE MISSION OF THE METHODIST CHURCH IN SAMOA

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by

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ABSTRACT

Christian churches in Samoa today face public criticism regarding the autocratic style of leadership they have embraced and encouraged, which goes hand in hand with their lack of attention for people below the poverty line. This research addresses the problem entrenched in the theology and ecclesiology of the Methodist Church in Samoa (MCS) today, which is captured in the Samoan expression *E lē fa'a'ele'elea se faife'au* – literally translated, "pastors are not supposed to do dirty work." The focus of the research is an analysis of the problem imbedded in this belief, particularly its failure to embody the Christ-like qualities of shepherding, stewardship, serving and caring. From a sociological point of view, the cultural values of *tautua* (service) and *fa'aaloalo* (respect) have been applied to the clergy through this expression in an exclusive and elitist way that promotes the status and wealth of church leaders or ministers, at the expense of the quality of life of their followers. The MCS' style of leadership is hierarchical, and is manifested in the cultural system of *va-fealoa'i* or respect for those in authority, a system that privileges seniority and depends on the flow of material wealth from church members to clergy. This leadership model is viewed as absolute by many MCS ministers, but it also contributes to the contemporary economic and mission crises the Church now faces. It negates mutual service and embraces a notion of leadership centred in 'being served.' The Christological view of Jesus in the Gospels and the Pauline theology of servant leadership offers a different perspective, grounded in Jesus as 'Servant-Lord.' A new model of church leadership is proposed for the MCS, based on this Christocentric vision of servant leadership and the relational, inclusive and reciprocal understanding of service rooted in the Samoan cultural practice of *fetausia'i* (reciprocal caring).

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my dearest parents, Kioa Faimanifo Latu Tusa and Sesa Lemana-Kioa; and my late father-in-law, To'oala Vaisauali'i Keresoma. You have always been my inspirational servant leaders, who taught me to be a servant of all.

And to

My wife and children:

Lynette Ruta, Blessing, Honour, Glory and Mathew.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

"For from Him [God] and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen!"

"Auā ua fua mai ia te Ia [Atua], ma ua faia e Ia, e i'u atu fo'i ia te Ia mea uma; ia iā te Ia le vi'iga e fa'avavau lava. Amene!"

(Romans 11:36/*Roma 11:36*)

"I am small and despised, yet I do not forget your precepts."

"E fa'atauva'a lava a'u ma 'inosia; 'ae lē galo iā te a'u Au fe'au."

(Psalms 119:141/*Salamo 119:141*)

GLOSSARY

'āiga	-	family
'āiga potopoto	-	extended family
a'oa'o	-	theological student; teachers
'au'auna	-	paid-servant
ali'i	-	male; high chief (tamāli'i)
alofa	-	love
Ekalesia/lotu	-	church
ōīa	-	ruined
osi-taulaga	-	priests
usita'i	-	obedient
fa'aaloalo	-	respect; honour; courtesy
fa'a'ele'elea	-	to be dirty
fa'afailele	-	process of nurturing
fa'alogo	-	listen
fa'amatai	-	chiefly system
fa'a-Samoa	-	Samoan way of life
faife'au	-	pastor; church minister; servant of God
Faigā-Mē	-	Annual May offering
failāuga	-	lay preachers
faletua	-	wife of a high chief
feagaiga	-	(n) sister - the brother's covenant
fefa'aaloaloa'i	-	mutual respect
fefa'asoaa'i	-	collaboration
fetausia'i	-	reciprocal caring
fono	-	meeting
fono a matai	-	village council of chiefs
īfoga	-	cultural way of apology
leoleo	-	watchmen; guardians
Lotu Toga	-	Tongan religion
malae	-	meeting field
māliliega	-	agreement; consensus

mamalu	-	dignity; honour
mana	-	power
Matāgaluega	-	parish
matai	-	chief
meaalofa	-	gifts; thing of love
nu'u	-	village
pule	-	authority
sa/tapu	-	sacred
soālaupule	-	communal discussion
soli-va	-	literally means 'trampling on' or 'stepping on someone or something;' figuratively understood as 'rude' or 'reckless.'
ta'ita'i	-	class leaders
tama'ita'i	-	ladies
taulele'a/'aumaga	-	untitled men
tausi	-	to care, look after; wife of an orator
tausi fa'atinā	-	mother's special care
tautua	-	service rendered by the untitled men and their spouses in a Samoan family; service rendered by heirs of the family to the family
tautua lotu	-	serving the church
tagata	-	human beings
tinifu	-	children
tu'ua	-	chief orator
tulāfale	-	orator/talking chief
va	-	a relational 'space' in between

ABBREVIATIONS

AWC	-	Australasian Wesleyan Conference
CCCS	-	Congregational Christian Church of Samoa
CEO	-	Chief Executive Officer
EFKS	-	Ekalesia Fa'apotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa
LMS	-	London Missionary Society
MCS	-	Methodist Church of Samoa
NRSV	-	New Revised Standard Version
PTC	-	Piula Theological College
RCC	-	Roman Catholic Church
WMMS	-	Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society

INTRODUCTION

FETAUSIA'I[1] – A SERVANT LEADERSHIP PARADIGM FOR THE MISSION OF THE METHODIST CHURCH IN SAMOA

1. BACKGROUND

Christian Churches in Samoa today face public criticism regarding the autocratic style of leadership they have embraced and encouraged, which goes hand in hand with their lack of attention to people below the poverty line.[2] This same criticism is found in my own church – the Methodist Church of Samoa (MCS) – and it is this problem of leadership which this thesis addresses. The MCS's style of leadership is hierarchical, as manifested in the cultural system of *va-fealoa'i* or respect for those in authority. This system is based on seniority and is foundational to the ministerial system embedded in the MCS. This leadership model is viewed as absolute and is respected by many MCS ministers; however, it also contributes to the current economic and mission crises the Church now faces.[3]

In the run-up to the MCS's annual conference in July 2015, a financial report was circulated stating that the church had unsettled debts of over five million *tala* (ST$).[4] This was a reality that translated into a demand for more financial donations from church members. In addition to these debts, a multimillion *tālā* youth project had been approved and was expected to be funded by the *Faigā-Mē* or annual offering.[5] Besides the annual offering, there is not a single Sunday without some monetary contribution being requested for the Church's affairs.[6] This raises the issue of the affordability of financial contributions to the Church expected from its church members, which are an added burden on top of their family and village daily expenditure commitments.

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[1] *Fetausia'i* means "reciprocal caring and sharing."
[2] "Church Accused of Blackmail," Letter to the Editor, *Samoa Observer,* July 18, 2010. Rev. Fepa'i Kolia writes, *"Often, the established churches are challenged by members of the community who claim that financial and other material demands of the church are contributing to poverty in Samoa."* Fepa'i Fiu Kolia, "The Church and Development," in *Samoa National Human Development Report 2006: Sustainable Livelihoods in a Changing Samoa* (Apia: National University of Samoa, 2006), 137.
[3] Ekalesia Metotisi i Samoa, "Minute 2014/5," in *Minute 2014* (Faleula, Samoa: Koneferenisi, 2014).
[4] Ekalesia Metotisi i Samoa, "Minute Komiti Tumau," in *Minute 2015* (Faleula, Samoa: Koneferenisi, 2015).
[5] Ekalesia Metotisi i Samoa, '"Minute Komiti Tumau," in *Minute 2014* (Faleula, Samoa: Koneferenisi, 2014), 145.
[6] 'Church affairs' in this context includes monetary offerings for church development, *atina'e*, *peleti* or fortnightly/monthly allowances for the parish minister, and *taulaga o le Me* or Annual Offering, also called the May Offering, etc.

What is observed in the life of the Church today is that it places more emphasis on raising money than on helping people to worship God and share in other aspects of its mission.[7] It can be seen that there is less time given to church members to enhance their spiritual life. As a result, the spiritual life of many church members is in disarray, while material demands are increasing.[8] Having such financial burdens imposed on church members affects the wellbeing of the whole household of God.

In light of these observations, it is important to address the issue of leadership in the MCS, as it is an issue that has both positive and negative impacts on the spiritual growth of people in the Church.[9] The autocratic system or style of leadership has undeniably become institutionalised. This research therefore seeks to examine the causes and effects of the type of leadership that typifies the MCS today, in an attempt to resolve this growing problem. In brief, the research aims to engage the Methodist Church in Samoa's hierarchical system of leadership so as to create a new theological paradigm for leadership set by Christ as both Lord and Servant.

2. RESEARCH PROBLEM

This research will address the problem entrenched in the theology and ecclesiology of the MCS today based on the Samoan perception that *E lē fa'a'ele'elea se faife'au* – literally translated, "pastors are not supposed to do dirty work."[10] The focus of the research will be an analysis of the problem imbedded in this belief or cultural-philosophical expression, particularly its failure to embody the Christ-like qualities of shepherding, stewardship, serving and caring. From a sociological point of view, the cultural values of *tautua*[11] and *fa'aaloalo*[12] appear to have been applied to the clergy in this expression in an exclusive and elitist way that promotes the status and wealth of church leaders, at the cost of the quality

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[7] Alec Thornton, Maria T. Kerslake, and Tony Binns, "Alienation and Obligation: Religion and Social Change in Samoa," *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 51, no.1 (April 2011), 9.

[8] Ekalesia Metotisi i Samoa, *Minute 2014* (Faleula, Samoa: Koneferenisi, 2014), 19.

[9] O le Ekalesia Metotisi i Samoa, *O le Faavae ma le Tulafono* (Apia: Methodist Church in Samoa, 2012), 43-44.

[10] This also translates "pastors/ministers are not allowed to perform duties of those of the lower ranks."

[11] Originally, *tautua* referred to the kind of service rendered by the untitled men and their spouses in a Samoan family, literally serving 'from the house at the back' (i.e., kitchen) for the chief in the front *fale* or house. The word *tau* means 'to execute' or 'to serve,' and *tua* means 'back or behind.' In this sense, *tautua* directly points out the place where service is rendered: *from* the back and *to* the front. In other words, service is rendered from a position of lowliness. In the church, church members' *tautua* is made manifest today in the form of monetary donations and food offered to the *faife'au* (minister) and the church, through one's parish, synod and mother church (in this case, the MCS).

[12] *Fa'aaloalo* - translates to mean 'mutual respect'.

of life of their followers. Accepting this ideology is like placing a '*caveat*'[13] on the 'serving' mission of the Church. This ideology can be applied to the situation of Samoan ministers, where their service for the Church and its members has limitations and restrictions.

The analysis of this problem will entail a careful investigation of the reliability of the church leadership ethos that is derived from the generally held assumption that the action of the paramount chief Malietoa Vainu'upō, who renounced his political kingship status and conferred all his *mamalu* (honours and prestige) upon the *faife'au*[14] (clergy) upon his conversion to Christainity, was instituting an immutable authority that must be enshrined in the clergy for all time. A critical historical analysis is used to inform the argument made in this study that this assumption is incorrect.

In the system of *va-fealoa'i*, restrictions are imposed on younger ministers to remain silent until their authorised time comes for them to voice their concerns and thoughts. In other words, they should serve and keep on serving until they are deemed qualified to sit with the older decision-makers. This same protocol filters down to the congregational level and encourages church members to serve the parish minister as if the minister is in the place of God. Normally, no one is allowed to disregard the minister's will, even though what he says may be not in agreement with the opinion of the majority.

In view of the legacy of this inherited system, leadership can be viewed as in a state of crisis within the MCS. This study not only looks at the problems in the Church, however, but also at how cultural concepts like *tautua* and *fa'aaloalo*, which can provide a contextual framework for a Samoan ethics, can be reframed theologically and biblically to create a model that coheres with Jesus' example of servant leadership.

Tautua and *fa'aaloalo* are the two main pillars of the Samoan cultural concept of *fetausia'i. Fetausia'i* is simply about reciprocity in relationships, illuminated through acts of caring and sharing. It is a relational and inclusive concept and will be employed in this thesis as an alternative leadership model that is culturally rooted in the *fa'a-samoa* (Samoan way of life), at the heart of which is the *fa'amatai* or chiefly system. Since *fetausia'i* is a

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[13] The legal definition of 'caveat' "is a statutory notice that is registered against the Certificate of Title for land. It serves as a notice that the person lodging the caveat ('the caveator') has an interest in the land. One purpose of lodging a caveat is to prevent the land from being transferred or otherwise dealt by the owner of the land without the knowledge or consent of the caveator." (http://www.duhaime.org/LegalDictionary/C/ Caveat. aspx) Two important aspects of this process are considered relevant in this discussion: (a) there is an unnoticed influence of the third party ('caveator') on someone else's property; and (b) the owner's ('Title for land') rights or liberty to do anything on the land are denied.

[14] *Faife'au* is the Samoan word for a church minister or pastor.

model of reciprocity, it encapsulates mutuality in relationships that promotes community cohesion. It is meant to reflect equal treatment of everyone, regardless of social standing in the community.

3. METHODOLOGY

This thesis draws on a wide array of sources of information obtained from secondary literature (published and unpublished works), in the form of books, theses, reports, seminar presentations, church sources, newspapers and articles. These available sources are arranged under two categories: first, a socio-political analysis of leadership (in particular, servant leadership) in the church, in pedagogy, and in the Samoan cultural context; and second, a biblical and theological understanding of Jesus Christ as both Lord and Servant. I will interact with these materials from both affirmative and negative perspectives. After critically examining these materials, conclusions will be drawn to raise awareness or concerns, especially in relation to the economic and spiritual burdens demanded from the members of the MCS by leaders who are not practicing servant leadership.

In order to develop an alternative model of leadership for the MCS, this thesis draws on a methodology associated with the Translation and Anthropological models in Stephen B. Bevans' *Models of Contextual Theology*.[15] These two of Bevans' six models of contextual theology are considered to be particularly relevant for this research.[16]

Firstly, Bevans uses three images to encapsulate the Translation model: (a) the 'gospel kernel,' (b) the 'contextual husk,' and (c) the 'new ground' or 'soil' where the gospel seed is to be planted. Although the translation of the gospel message into a distinct cultural context is fundamental in this model, Bevans maintains that the context should never misconstrue or alter the substance of the gospel message. The original message of the gospel must be kept intact, and the *un*-wrapping of the contextual husk in order to find the gospel kernel is the key to this process. This process must be observed carefully, with a clear and impartial intention. And when the gospel kernel is found, there is a need to look for a "receptor situation," such as the appropriate terms, actions or stories needed to *re*-wrap the message so that it resonates with those who hear it.[17]

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[15] Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, rev. and expanded ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 54-69.
[16] Ibid., 37-53, 54-69.
[17] Ibid., 40-1.

Secondly, the Anthropological model highlights "cultural identity and continuity" and the ways in which cultural values or concepts can manifest the divine revelation of God. This model takes seriously the patterns of human relationships in the diversity of cultures as a lens through which to comprehend the reality of the relational God. Bevans finds M. A. C. Warren's stirring plea insightful, where Warren argues that "…God has not left Himself without a witness in any nation at any time… Approaching another people, another culture, another religion, is to take off our shoes, for the place we are approaching is holy." This affirmation leads Bevans to conclude,

> I know that the central and guiding insight of the anthropological model: human nature, and therefore the human context, is good, holy, and valuable. The anthropological model would emphasize that it is within human culture that we find God's revelation – not as a separate supracultural message, but in the very complexity of culture itself, in the warp and woof of human relationships, which are constitutive of cultural existence… The practitioner of the anthropological model looks for God's revelation and self-manifestation as it is hidden within the values, relational patterns, and concerns of a context.[18]

Bevans clearly supports the claim that God can be revealed through human cultural values, relational patterns and local contexts. Bevans concurs with Justin Martyr's assertion that "the seed of the Word" can be observed in human cultures.[19] Simply put, relationships in human cultures can portray God's ethics and sacrificial love. On the other hand, immorality and selfishness are also present in human cultures, which is why they need divine revelation. This model is also known as 'Inculturation' or 'Indigenization.' It has affinities with Walter Bruggemann's description of God as a "relational" and "dialogical" God, which is certainly a theology that takes anthropology seriously.[20]

For the purposes of this research, I will draw particularly on Bevans' Translation model, in this way: (a) The 'gospel kernel' which I want to contextualise is *Jesus, the servant leader*, expressed in John 13, Luke 9, Matthew 27 and Mark 15. (b) The 'contextual husk' I will be employing to re-wrap the gospel kernel is that of *fetausia'i* – reciprocal caring in terms of relational practices between cultural leaders and others – i.e., *matai* (chiefs) and their family members and village. (c) The 'new ground or soil' where I wish to plant the gospel kernel of servant leadership is the 'Samoan context.' In this process,

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[18] Ibid., 56.
[19] Ibid., 54.
[20] Walter Bruggemann, *An Unsettling God: The Heart of the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009).

fetausia'i emerges as an appropriate Samoan concept which captures the crux of servant leadership modelled by Jesus.

4. MOTIVATION FOR ADDRESSING THIS TOPIC

What triggered my interest in researching the issue of leadership in the MCS was hearing a former leader of the MCS state, "*E lē mana'omia se Ekalesia e to'atele-vale, ae pala'ai i mea-fai,*" which translates, "The church does not need too many people [who are] cowards or petrified of the church's demands."[21] This statement referred dismissively to church members who had left the MCS because they did not want the concept of *tautua lotu* or 'service to the church' to be rendered solely in terms of making burdensome material offerings. On the one hand, this public statement could be taken as a positive challenge to church members to increase their giving to the Church as a moral obligation. On the other hand, the statement can be seen as mirroring the current position of the MCS leadership, where the Church's physical needs are conveyed as the foundation upon which spirituality is based.

Since church ministers in Samoa acquire so much dignity, prestige and power in the church and other social contexts, it is tempting for them to preserve the status quo and neglect their call to serve God by serving others. The culture of Samoans is to elevate the clergy to the highest positions and have them remain there as both divine and political leaders. This problematic attitude results in making church members suffer financially, to the point of experiencing great stress, and for the church to become overly focused on materialism and money.[22] This reality has motivated me to explore in this research the effects of the leadership styles and practices of the MCS, and how they affect the wellbeing of its members.

As a predominantly Christian society, over 65% of the total population of Samoa in 2012 are active members of the three mainline Christian Churches: the Congregational Church (CCCS, or EFKS in the Samoan translation) is 32% (51,131); the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) is 19% (31,221); and the Methodist Church (MCS) is 14% (22,079).[23] According to the most updated research, the overall official MCS membership (including churches in American Samoa, USA, New Zealand and Australia) was 35,757 adherents in

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[21] MCS President, keynote address at the official opening ceremony of the 50th anniversary of the independence of the Methodist Church of Samoa, Faleula, Samoa, 2014. Author's translation.
[22] Manfred Ernst, "Samoa," in *Globalization and the Re-Shaping of Christianity in the Pacific Islands*, ed. Manfred Ernst (Suva, Fiji: Pacific Theological College, 2006), 553.
[23] Samoa Bureau of Statistics, *Samoa Socio-Economic Atlas 2011* (Apia: Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2015).

2014, and 35,593 in 2015.[24] What becomes a concern is the fact that over 100,000 Samoan Christians are under the same leadership arrangement and are thus facing similar problems to those outlined above. Hence, although this research is focused primarily on the MCS, the situation in the other two major denominations is comparable.

5. DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

The topic of church leadership has been discussed and written about widely in many forums, and has been analysed and reflected upon in numerous scholarly works.[25] Although it is impossible to cover all of the literature available on this topic, the most pertinent sources are covered in this thesis. It is helpful to begin by providing working definitions of key terms employed in this research, in order to indicate how these core concepts will be used as a guide and framework for this study.

5.1 Defining Leadership

Leadership in this study is addressed both in terms of its principles and styles. At the most foundational level, this thesis accepts Helen Doohan's definition of leadership as "…the behaviour pattern that a person exhibits when attempting to influence the activities of others."[26] Efrain Agosto magnifies this definition by asserting that any bona fide leader creates opportunities for his or her followers to become leaders themselves.[27]

The question of how a leader creates opportunities for others to lead is explored by Stephen R. Covey in his explication of what he calls the 'four roles of leadership.' His first and fourth roles are particularly useful for our interests. He asserts that the first role is "to be an example, or modeling," and the fourth role is "to empower" (the other two roles are *pathfinding* and *alignment*).[28] Although Covey argues that a leader who chooses to lead by personal example is credible, truthful, diligent, humble, and has the spirit of servant leadership, very few human beings are able to exhibit all of these attributes (an argument covered in Chapter 2), except for Jesus Christ himself – the Servant-Lord. However, this

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[24] Ekalesia Metotisi i Samoa, *Minute 2015* (Matafele, Samoa: Ekalesia Metotisi i Samoa Printing Press, 2015), 19.

[25] In the Samoan context, see, for example, Upolu L. Vaai, "From Divine Master to Trinity: Re-Conceiving the Theology of God in the Methodist Church of Samoa" (MTh Thesis, Brisbane College of Divinity, 2003). and Tuivanu Tuivanu, "Taufaleali'i: Reorienting Theology of Leadership Towards Mission in the Methodict Church in Samoa" (MTheol thesis, Pacific Theological College, Suva, 2013). Tautiaga Senara, "Samoan Religious Leadership: Tradition and Change" (MA thesis, University of Otago, 1987).

[26] Helen Doohan, *Leadership in Paul* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1984), 17-18.

[27] Efrain Agosto, *Servant Leadership: Jesus & Paul* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2005), 6.

[28] Stephen E. Covey, "Servant-Leadership and Community Leadership in the Twenty-First Century," in *Focus on Leadership Servant-Leadership for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Larry C. Spears and Michele Lawrence, 28-33 (New York: J. Wiley & Sons, 2002).

does not diminish the fact that some leaders can and do exemplify some or many of these traits. Modeling, or leading by example, is the basis of Covey's definition of 'true leadership,' which he explains in this way:

> Nothing is as powerful as example… This modelling is the foundation of true leadership. People who genuinely care and who have this personal integrity merit the confidence of others…[they] help people get involved in the process of deciding the destination, the *pathfinding* role. You are modeling tremendous respect for others when you are willing to *align* structures and systems that affect you as well as everyone else, and you make yourself accountable. You have essentially modelled integrity. The greatest gift you can give to other people is themselves. You do this when you affirm in people their basic gifts and talents and capacities, their ability to become … change catalysts. When you do that, you show tremendous reverence for people, you show humility, you show respect, you show caring – that's modeling."[29]

Any caring leader serves others. Leaders who are anchored in the principle of respect for all willingly sacrifice their own personal needs and wants in order to serve others.[30] It is this understanding that leads Robert K. Greenleaf to define leadership as "service" and "stewardship."[31]

Defining leadership in terms of "empowerment," Sen Sendjaya suggests that serving leaders are able to "make conscience decisions" that will, firstly, empower individual followers; secondly, facilitate the growth of an organisation; and, finally, stimulate the leader's own growth.[32] What is key to an empowerment approach to leadership is that leaders observe, listen to and serve the needs of others.[33] In Greenleaf's judgment, the visible functioning of any organisation or church can be used to test the capabilities and competencies of its leaders. If such leaders have empowered others, the church or organisation will be seen to be functioning in an optimal way.

In a similar vein, Larry Spears argues that if the followers cannot grow as persons, if they are unhealthy, unwise, bound, dependent, and do not want to serve others, then leadership has to be blamed.[34] Sendjaya, Greenleaf and Spears all agree that visible signs

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[29] Ibid., 28, 30-31.
[30] Ibid., 29. See also Sen Sendjaya, *Personal and Organizational Excellence through Servant Leadership: Learning to Serve, Serving to Lead, Leading to Transform* (New York: Springer, 2015), 3.
[31] Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*, ed. Larry C. Spears, 25th anniversary ed. (New York: Paulist Press, 2002), 3.
[32] Sendjaya, *Personal and Organizational Excellence through Servant Leadership*, 1.
[33] Larry C. Spears and Michele Lawrence, eds., *Focus on Leadership: Servant-Leadership for the Twenty-First Century* (New York: J. Wiley & Sons, 2002), 31.
[34] Ibid., 4.

of growth and health in a church can be employed as a measure of their leaders' effectiveness as empowering agents.

Leadership in this thesis is not understood as autonomous authority; rather, it exists within the mutual relationships found in the community of faith. It is manifested by way of modeling or being an example, one that empowers people. Prior to our exploration of leadership in the MCS, it will be helpful to define the Samoan hierarchical system of leadership, from a sociological point of view, for this has a direct bearing on the leadership system of the MCS.

5.2 *Fa'amatai*:[35] A Communal Samoan Political System

Before the arrival in Samoa of the two colonial political powers (Germany and New Zealand) in the early twentieth century,[36] power and authority in Samoan society was centered in the *fa'amatai*, literally the 'way of the chiefs,' who exercised authority in the village setting (an authority that continues today). The foreign administrations' attempts to persuade Samoans to choose a Western-style king and to form a centralised government failed, as they observed that the Samoans were very firm in upholding their *fa'amatai* system.

One fascinating aspect of the *fa'amatai* system is that no one can alter what has already been pre-fixed. As the Samoan saying goes, *O Samoa o le i'a e iviivia, e leai se poto po'o vave na te auauina*, meaning "The complexity of Samoa is like the bony fish, neither [the] brainy nor quick-witted can clarify [it]." Other traditional proverbial sayings include: (a) *O Samoa ua uma ona tofi*, meaning, "Samoan statuses or positions have already been appointed;" and (b) *E tala tau Toga ae tala tofi Samoa*, which translates as "Tongans talk about wars but Samoans talk about heritage or solidarity."

These Samoan sayings articulate important insights about the political system of *fa'amatai*. *Fa'amatai* is not solely about the chiefs exercising power and authority. It is a concept in which a network of social groups in Samoan villages, such as *tama'ita'i* (chiefs' sisters and female cousins), *taulele'a* (untitled men), *faletua ma tausi* (wives of chiefs), and *tinifu* (children) function together as one collective, interwoven unit in society. The

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[35] *Fa'amatai* is the term used to describe Samoa's chiefly system. This system is based on mutual respect among the *matai* of every village, who gather to exercise political authority in affairs of the village iin the village council or *fono*.
[36] Namely, the Germany colonial administration headed by Governor Solf (1900-1903) and the New Zealand Military Administration (1914-1921).

system of *fa'amatai* is, in this sense, inclusive, although the *matai* have the final say in the deliberations of the village council or *fono*.[37]

Chiefs in Samoa are divided into two categories, the *ali'i* and the *tulāfale*. However, this does not mean that one is higher than the other. The distinction between the *ali'i* and *tulāfale* is not grounded on any merit relating to power or the authority to rule, but is based on the different roles they play as representatives of their family, village or district.[38] The system of *fa'amatai* is far from being a "closed class" system, as in the caste system of India, in which status is ascribed or determined by birth.[39] It can instead be described as an "open class system," [40] where one's status is determined by family or village *māliliega* (agreement or consensus).

In other words, an *ali'i* (high chief) or *tulāfale* (talking chief) is a title that is bestowed and thus owned by the group, the *'āiga* (extended family) or *nu'u* (village) to which that person belongs. It is with the utmost discretion, vested in the legitimate family members of the village, that they alone confer a *matai* title upon the family heir, usually by merit of *tautua* (service) rendered to the family. Further, if the *matai* title holder does not adhere to the standards, values and expectations of the family and village, they will face removal and loss of the *matai* title.[41]

5.3 Defining Leadership in the MCS

In the Constitution of the MCS, the aim and objectives of the Church's mission are articulated as follows:

> O le manulauti po o le sini autu o le galuega a le Ekalesia, o le tala'iina lea o le Talalelei o le Fa'aolataga a Iesu Keriso, ina ia fa'aolaina le tagata mo le mālō o le Atua; e mulimulita'i i fetalaiga a lo tatou Ali'i Faaola, '…Ia outou o atu e fai nu'u uma lava ma so'o, ma papatiso atu ia te i latou i le suafa o le Tama, le Alo ma le Agaga Paia' (Mataio 28:19); 'Ia e fafaga i a'u mamoe, ia e leoleo i a'u mamoe' (Ioane 21:15-17). [42]
>
> *The main aim or the goal of the Church's mission is to proclaim the Good News of Salvation through Jesus Christ, to save the person into the kingdom of God; and to follow*

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[37] Betty Kathleen Duncan, "A Hierarchy of Symbols: Samoan Religious Symbolism in New Zealand" (PhD thesis, University of Otago, 1994), 106.

[38] Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa*, ed. Malama Meleisea and Penelope Schoeffel Meleisea (Suva, Fiji: University of the South Pacific, 1987), 27.

[39] Ian Robertson, *Sociology*, 3rd ed. (New York: Worth Publishers, 1987), 254.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Telea Kamu Tapuai Potogi, "O Tiafau O Le Malae O Le Faautugatagi a Samoa: A Study of the Impact of Lands and Titles Court Decision on Customary Land and Family Titles" (MA thesis, University of the South Pacific, 2014), 5.

[42] Methodist Church of Samoa, *O Le Faavae Ma Le Tulafono* (Matafele, Samoa: Methodist Printing Press, 2012), 8.

the utterances of our Lord and Saviour, '…Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit' (Matthew 28:19); 'You feed my sheep, you tend my sheep' (John 21:15-17).[43]

This affirmation sets the platform for the various roles and responsibilities of the MCS's mission, instructing its leaders not only to make Jesus known to the people, but to nurture and care for them physically, mentally and spiritually. There are clear directives and instructions for the Church to 'preach' the Good News about the salvific acts of Jesus Christ, and to prohibit its gospel messengers from teaching theologies inconsistent with what is prescribed in the Bible. As is vividly expressed in this declaration, the wellbeing of the Church is in the hands of those playing leadership roles in the Church. However, Church leaders in Samoa are challenged by the fact that the prestige and authority associated with leadership roles, as modeled by the *fa'amatai* system, as well as the system of authoritarian leadership in the church, are rooted in the Samoan culture of *fa'aaloalo* and *va-fealoa'i,* and the acquisition of respect mentioned earlier.

These positions are revered, with distinct forms of respectful language of address that identify the leadership group to which a person belongs. This traditional view highlights a static cultural norm which ensures that whenever or wherever a status or position is assigned, it remains fixed. In this respect, if a church leader wished to serve his parishioners in the way Jesus served his disciples (exemplified, for example, in the lowly act of footwashing), or by serving church members in other acts of humble service (such as preparing or serving food), this would be perceived as disrespectful to the *faife'au* (minister) and disgraceful in the eyes of the community whom the *faife'au* serves. As Charles Forman, the Pacific church historian, writes,

> There is probably no part of the world, however, where the pastor has had greater prestige in recent times than the Pacific Islands. The pastor's position there can only be compared to that of the ministers of colonial New England or of the higher clergy of the medieval court… He was the best educated man, representing a kind of aristocracy, and he was the link to the white missionary. He … made up a large part of the new professional and official elite.[44]

This observation by Forman is echoed by Malama Meleisea, a well-known Samoan and Pacific historian in the contemporary era, who notes that, historically, "In the *nu'u* [village], the pastor occupied the place of highest honour, but his political power was

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[43] Author's translation.
[44] Charles Forman, "The South Pacific Style in the Christian Ministry," *Missiology* 2, no. 4 (1974): 424.

normally very circumscribed."[45] I would submit that Meleisea's claim is only partly correct. I challenge the notion that the pastor's political power is confined within the parameters of the Church, for two reasons.

First, the evidence available from other historical literature offers a different view to that of Meleisea. For instance, Forman observes that the position of highest honour and the aristocratic status of the *faife'au* came to monopolise the socio-political system in Samoa, in the *'āiga* (family), *nu'u* (village) and *lotu* (church).[46] Felix Keesing emphasizes that the "church" in the Samoan context not only defines religious activities, but also encompasses social and recreational activities. Additionally, the church forms the basis of the intellectual life of its members.[47] What Keesing is suggesting is that if the church controls the thinking of its members, through its pastors' control over teachings, rituals and traditions, the church controls these members in a holistic way.

Secondly, there is evidence to suggest that pastors have indeed come to replace the sacredness of the authority formerly vested in the *fa'amatai* system, which is the very core of Samoan communal life. John Garrett notes that "the pastors took the place of the priests and prophets of ancient Samoan religion as mediators…They renounced *matai* status, but exercised special power of their own because of their spiritual authority and social position."[48] Garrett's assessment undermines the oral tradition still embraced by many Samoans today, namely that the paramount chief Malietoa Vainu'upō[49] renounced his own status as the king of Samoa in acknowledgement of the new God or *Ieova*[50] of the pioneering white missionaries. This argument coincides with Meleisea's judgment that the early English missionaries felt that English ways were superior to those of the Samoans and sought to undermine the authority of the Samoan chiefs.[51]

The available historical evidence leads to a reasonable conclusion that (a) the early missionaries to Samoa attempted to transfer the sacred status of the Samoan *matai*, who

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[45] Malama Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa: Traditional Authority and Colonial Administration in the History of Western Samoa* (Suva, Fiji: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1987), 19.
[46] This issue will be discussed further in Chapter 2.
[47] Felix Maxwell Keesing, *Modern Samoa: Its Government and Changing Life* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1934), 396.
[48] John Garrett, *To Live Among the Stars: Christian Origins in Oceania* (Geneva and Suva: World Council of Churches and Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1982).
[49] Malietoa Vainu'upo was the Samoan chief who accepted John Williams, the first London Missionary Society (LMS) missionary to Samoa.
[50] The Samoan term is the transliteration of the Hebrew YHWH (God) in the Old Testament.
[51] Meleisea, *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa*, 67-69.

controlled the *fa'amatai* system, to the clergy; and (b) there is no evidence to prove that Malietoa Vainu'upō actually renounced his kingly titles and bestowed them upon God's messengers (missionaries or local pastors). The closest evidence that Meleisea offers pursuant to Vainu'upō's reasons for his *mavaega* (dying testament) is that "he (Malietoa Vainu'upō) would be the last overall ruler of Samoa because of the coming of the Gospel and Nafanua's prophecy."[52]

It is very likely the case that the gospel was the only reason that Malietoa wanted to renounce his kingship status, as he acknowledged the kingship of God as the one and only true king of Samoa upon his conversion to Christianity. This ideal is reflected in the Samoan national motto since independence in 1962, which states *E fa'avae i le Atua Samoa*, or "God is the foundation of Samoa."[53] This means that all the *mamalu* (highest honour and dignity), *fa'aaloalo* (prestige and respect), and *pule* or *mana* (authority) vested in Malietoa was conferred to God, not to the messengers of God (the clergy). At any rate, Vainu'upō's *mavaega* is honoured and manifested wherever a conferral ceremony of a *matai* title occurs, when a pastor is always called upon to offer a blessing before the traditional protocols are carried out. Theoretically, working for God is a privilege that should remain within the parameters of being a servant of God, but not standing in the place of God.

5.4 Conscience Leadership

Sen Sendjaya accentuates the importance of conscience leadership.[54] 'Conscience' here becomes an essential quality of leadership. This is seen, as Stephen Covey puts it, when a leader's "inward moral sense" enables him or her to clearly delineate "right from wrong;" this conscience is the "innate sense of fairness and justice, of what is kind and what is not; of what contributes and what detracts; of what beautifies and what destroys; and of what is true and what is false."[55]

Covey elaborates that conscience leadership is "principle centered." Moreover, conscience leadership produces conscience followers. This can only be ascertained when both the leader and follower follow a "common value system."[56] Losing this quality of leadership is considered by Greenleaf as an "ethical failure," which he explains in this

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[52] Ibid., 74.
[53] Ibid., 70.
[54] See Sendjaya, *Personal and Organizational Excellence through Servant Leadership.*
[55] Covey, *"Servant-Leadership and Community Leadership,"* 4.
[56] Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 5.

way: "…Once leaders lose this … [leading by conscience], and events start to force their hand, they are leaders in name only."[57]

An example of conscience leadership in the Samoan context is described by Keesing in his account of a church leadership decision in 1901, when the church headquarters in both American Samoa and (Western) Samoa "required communities wishing to construct new churches to submit plans and show [that] the finances are available, thus countering the 'excessive church building' which was resulting in debts that 'virtually enslave the present generations and subsequent ones.'"[58]

Keesing's record suggests that this kind of moral decision-making and visionary leadership seen in the early twentieth century is needed for the church in the twenty-first century. Generally speaking, Samoa's mainline churches (Congregational [EFKS],[59] Roman Catholic Church and MCS) are currently facing a real dilemma regarding leadership. Once leaders do not lead from a foundation of conscience, this can result in placing pressure on church members to do what the leaders demand.

In the course of this thesis, I will suggest a more compelling method, which creates a common ground for both church leaders and members to share not only agreed ideas and plans, but also the pains and burdens carried by those at the periphery. Such leadership must not only make decisions using the brain, but the heart as well. This goal leads us to the model known as 'servant leadership,' a paradigm in which leaders willingly lower themselves to the level of the people and fully embrace everyone in the community.

5.5   Servant Leadership

The literature on servant leadership theory, both in the community of faith and in academia, is vast. My choice for a theoretical point of departure focuses on the theories of Robert K. Greenleaf[60] and Avery Dulles.[61] On the critical matter of translation (between English and Samoan), I am drawing on the work of Mosese Ma'ilo.[62] I chose Greenleaf because of his personal experience and research related to three key institutions, one of which is *the church*, the particular context I am writing about.[63] Greenleaf's contribution

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[57] Ibid., 39-40.
[58] Keesing, *Modern Samoa: Its Government and Changing Life*, 403.
[59] *Ekalesia Fa'apotopotoga Kerisiano a Samoa*, or the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa, formerly known as the London Missionary Society (LMS).
[60] Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*.
[61] Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 2nd ed. (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1988).
[62] Mosese Ma'ilo, *Bible-Ing My Samoan* (Apia, Samoa: Piula Publications, 2016).
[63] The other two are the universities and businesses. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 62.

to the theory of servant leadership in the arena of business and other organisations is enormous, leading to his being recognised widely as the 'father of servant leadership'. Some of his most effective methods of developing servant leaders include: reciprocal activities, a fundamental principle of servant leadership; encouraging people in their own service impulses; doing one's best to live one's own life as a servant leader; accepting people for who they are; and learning from personal examples of servant leadership.

The American Catholic practical theologian Cardinal Avery Dulles has identified, evaluated and critically assessed several 'models' of the church, most notably in his acclaimed book, *Models of the Church*.[64] The two of his models which I address are '*The Church as Institution*' and '*The Church as Servant*.' Dulles insists that the institutional view of the church is valid, within limits. Institution is one of the necessary elements of a balanced ecclesiology.[65] But within his institutional view of the church, he highlights the Servant model, which he describes as the leader's 'conscience,' which is an essential quality of leadership. A strength of this model is its high priority on ministry and service to others, especially those in society who are oppressed. Its weakness is the risk it runs of being articulated in secular rather than Christ-like terms, which could lead to adopting secular values and goals.

Following Mosese Ma'ilo's latest publication, *Bible-Ing My Samoan*, the current principal of the MCS's Piula Theological College has been described as "one of Pasifika's [most] open-minded, creative, critical and generous biblical scholars."[66] He is someone who is gaining respect in the field of biblical hermeneutics in the Pacific. Ma'ilo challenges the control over interpretations of the Samoan Bible based on the interests of European peoples, cultures and languages. Ma'ilo argues that the power vested in the 'politics of translation' has had a significant bearing on the way Samoan people understand the Bible. He argues that the language we use can make people belong or not belong, connect or discriminate. In relation to the interests of this thesis, for example, the word '*au'auna* frequently used in the Samoan Bible to translate 'servant' connotes meanings that are inconsistent with the traditions and culture of Samoans. The word '*au'auna*

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[64] The five models of the church in Dulles' first edition of *Models of the Church* (1974) were: institution, mystical communion, sacrament, herald, and servant.
[65] Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 10.
[66] Jione Havea, "Foreword," in Ma'ilo, *Bible-Ing My Samoan*, x.

suggests the Western idea of the lord/master-servant relationship, which in fact is not a Samoan concept.

Servant leadership describes leaders who lead by serving those whom they lead. This simple definition affirms William Pollard's comment in Robert Greenleaf's work, *Servant Leadership*, that "…no leader is greater than the people he or she leads, and even the humblest of tasks, as Jesus taught His disciples over two thousand years ago, is worthy for a leader to do."[67] Pollard not only points to a mutual interconnectedness and relational pattern between leaders and followers, but also highlights the theology of servant leadership. From the many examples set by Jesus in the Gospels, three narratives will be the focus of our discussion in Chapter 3, where Jesus is seen serving as a: (i) servant-slave in the narrative of footwashing (John 13); (ii) carer by providing food to feed his disciples (John 21) and the five thousand (Luke 9); and (iii) 'sacrificial lamb,' which is the pinnacle of his service through the cross (Matthew 27, Mark 15).[68]

All of these biblical narratives offer practical insights into how servant leadership is relational and morality-driven. Robert Greenleaf defines servant leadership as 'reciprocal,' where the choices made between leaders and those they lead reflect a shared moral authority. What this means is that when both the leader and the follower share the same values, the moral authority that flows from their shared truth will infuse the decisions that are made. As Greenleaf asserts,

> Moral authority is another way to define servant leadership because it represents a reciprocal choice between leader and follower. If the leader is principle centered, he or she will develop moral authority. If the follower is principle centered, he or she will follow the leader. In this sense, both leaders and followers are followers. Why? They follow truth. They follow natural law. They follow principles. They follow a common, agreed-upon vision. They share values. They grow to trust one another. Moral authority is mutually developed and shared.[69]

Greenleaf argues that what is distinctive in the servant leadership approach is the fact that not only do followers respect their leaders, but leaders also put their followers first. What this means is that relationality is a core principle. It values the dignity of each individual regardless of their social status or whatever other context they inhabit. This is

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[67] William Pollard, cited in Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*. No specific page number given; however, it is written in the third unnumbered page in the Front Matter of the book, under the heading, *What Others Say About – Servant Leadership*.
[68] These passages will be discussed in Chapter 3.
[69] Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 5-6.

essential for the church as the Body of Christ, and ought to be mirrored in its leadership style and mission. This leads to our consideration of a relevant Samoan concept that depicts the relational God as identified in the biblical narratives mentioned above.

As a response to the problem of the hold of the 'status quo' over the church today, Craig C. Hill, in his recent book, *Servant of All*, acknowledges that the application of Scripture to problems such as 'status' and 'status quo' is not an easy task for the contemporary church, given that what is written in the Bible was meant for its "original audience."[70] Hill sees the problem of status in the church as a ubiquitous problem in human relationships and organisations throughout history.[71] Related to the issue of status in the church is 'ambition,' which perpetuates hierarchy, as those with the greatest ambition rise to the top. However, those church leaders who practice self-promotion are ultimately resented by many church member for being overly ambitious.[72] Hill's contribution to servant leadership is centred in the concept of *kenosis,* which is the self-emptying of Jesus as this 'model of love,' epitomised in the story of Jesus washing his disciples' feet (John 13).

5.6 A Cultural Model: *Fetausia'i*

The contextual model that emerges in this thesis is grounded in the concept of *servant leadership* and its related concepts outlined above. Servant leadership, as a contextual model, must be culturally embodied. Hence, servant leadership as discussed in this research is observed in the cultural value of *fetausia'i,* as demonstrated by Jesus Christ as 'servant leader.' The *fetausia'i* concept is rooted in the word *tausi. Tausi* is a compound word meaning 'to make smooth and beautiful' or 'to harmonise different components.' Ali'ilelei Lefua, an MCS minister, writes in his BD thesis that "*tausi* functions in the Samoan structure with reference to the act of cultural care giving."[73] Lefua's cultural meaning of *tausi* reflects Milner's definition of the term: (i) "take care of, maintain, keep in order, look after"; (ii) "wife (of an orator)".[74]

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[70] Craig C. Hill, *Servant of All: Status, Ambition, and the Way of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B, Errdmans, 2016), 153.
[71] Ibid., 4.
[72] Ibid., 6.
[73] Ali'ilelei Lefua, "The Concept of Tausi" (BD thesis, Piula Theological College, Samoa, 2007).
[74] G. B. Milner, *Samoan Dictionary: Samoan-English, English-Samoan* (Auckland: Pasifika Press, 2001), 256.

All of these meanings imply a deep level of service. *Fetausia'i* resonates with the image of God revealed in Jesus' servant-oriented ministry. It will serve to test the existing leadership system in the MCS. The application of the concept of *fetausia'i* to church leadership in Samoa must be rooted in Samoan cultural values, scripture, and the living traditions of the Christian faith.[75] These three pillars underpin the theology of God's relationality. The Christological focus on *fetausia'i* is centred in Jesus' approach to relationships.

Our use of *fetausia'i* as a model is in line with Anne Carr's understanding of 'conceptual models.'[76] Carr argues that any conceptual model should facilitate an awareness of God's involvement in human experience. Avery Dulles, a Catholic theologian, describes a conceptual model as a "…relatively simple, artificially constructed case which is found to be useful and illuminating for dealing with realities that are more complex and differentiated."[77]

The *fetausia'i* model of leadership is thus reshaped or infused with a Christological focus in this research, where Jesus is positioned as the lens through which church leaders and church members must be viewed. It is important that Samoan images such as *fetausia'i* be developed as an illustration of God's relational orientation, manifested in Jesus. This is particularly relevant in the Samoan context, where relationality is the central moral value that encompasses all cultural practices, most evident in the practice of *fetausia'i*.

Fetausia'i can also be viewed from a sociological perspective as a reciprocal "social interaction" that defines a society,[78] and which must be adhered to by all of its members. Francis E. Merrill, an American sociologist, describes social interaction as "…a reciprocal process, whereby each individual takes into account the behaviour and interactions of the other and is treated similarly in return."[79] The existence and sustaining of any society depends on healthy interactions among people.

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[75] Upolu Luma Vaai, "A Theology of *Talalasi*: Grounding a Relational Consciousness to Challenge the One Truth Ideology," paper presented, Commission for Mission and Theology for the Pacific Council of Churches, Nadi, Fiji, November 2015, 3.

[76] Anne Carr, "The God Who Is Involved," *Theology Today* 38, no. 3 (1981): 314.

[77] Avery Dulles, *Models of Revelation* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1983), 30.

[78] *Society* is defined as two or more persons interacting with each other socially. In other words, a society can never exist without a continuous social interaction between two or more persons. It is important that social interaction is seen as reciprocal, in that each member governs his behaviour in terms of the assumed expectations of others. See Francis E. Merrill, *Society and Culture: An Introduction to Sociology*, 4th ed. (Engelwood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1969), 7.

[79] Ibid., 19.

5.7 Contextual Theology

Stephen B. Bevans, a well-known contemporary Catholic missiologist and contextual theologian, is perhaps best known for his work *Models of Contextual Theology*, which offers a comprehensive account of his personal experiences and insights gleaned from his search for a relevant contextual way of "doing theology" that draws on two key experiential sources. First, there is the "experience of the past, recorded in Scripture and preserved … in Church tradition;" second, there is the "experience of the present or the particular context."[80] This second experience is explained further in the description of the four elements of contextual theology in Bevans' earlier writing, "(1) the spirit and message of the gospel; (2) the tradition of the Christian people; (3) the culture of the particular nation or region; and (4) social change in that culture…"[81] This thesis can be considered an exercise in contextual theology, as it seeks to relate foundational Christian theological principles to core values embedded in the Samoan context.

6. OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

This thesis is comprised of four chapters, this Introduction, and a Conclusion. Following the Introduction, the first chapter explicates the problem inherent in the current leadership model that is operative in the MCS, in terms of its negative impact on the Church's mission. This chapter also looks at the origins of the leadership structure in the MCS based on the the hierarchy of the Samoan 'priestly' or *osi-taulaga* system in antiquity and the 'chiefly' system or *fa'amatai*; and how it impacts the spiritual growth and welfare of its members.

In Chapter 2, I discuss Avery Dulles' 'Church as Servant' model, in contrast to his 'institutional' model of the church, which has been implemented by the MCS, arguing that the latter is ineffective and counter-productive for the Samoan context today.[82] The institutional model places emphasis on the powers and rights of those at the top. It is a model that has been adopted by the MCS since its independence and is now increasingly problematic. This autocratic approach ignores leader-member dialogue and is evident in the common appeal to *tautua lotu* (serving the church) and *fa'aaloalo* (respect) as a cultural

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[80] Carmen Lansdowne, "Review of Stephen B. Bevans and Katalina Tahaafe-Williams, eds., *Contextual Theology for the Twenty-First Century* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011)," *Ecumenical Review* 64 (2012): 223-24.

[81] Stephen Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology: Faith and Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997), 186.

[82] Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church: A Critical Assessment of the Church in all its Aspects* (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1989), 34-46.

and theological basis for demanding financial and material support in the name of church development.

In Chapter 3, the focus is on developing a Christological foundation (that is, a biblical and theological grounding) for the Samoan cultural value of *fetausia'i.* Informed by Jesus' own relational and reciprocal approach as a servant leader, this model is deemed to be the most appropriate for the MCS. It is an attempt to uncover the "contemporary experience" imbedded in the interpretation of the Bible.[83] This chapter discusses the biblical theology of servant leadership with reference to the presentation of Jesus Christ as not only 'Lord or Master' but as 'Servant.'

In this regard, I identify and analyse several incidents that occurred in Jesus' life prior to the crucifixion: first, when Jesus served as a slave in the narrative of footwashing (John 13); second, when Jesus invited, cooked for and served his own disciples (John 21), and relatedly, when Jesus told his disciples to go and look for food to feed the multitude (Luke 9). And, finally, there is Jesus' act of offering himself as a living sacrifice, which marks the highest point of his service as a true leader (Matthew 27, Mark 15). How these events became part central to the 'theology of the cross' is evaluated and underlined as a way of highlighting the importance of the servant leader paradigm. This chapter also includes an exegesis of the cultural context in which Jesus lived, focusing on the norms of social interaction in Judea in the first century CE.

It is reasonable to conclude that unless Christ literally 'washed,' 'served,' 'fed' and 'was crucified,' all other narratives about His servanthood are only fables. In looking beneath his literal acts of feet-washing, feeding people and crucifixion, one discovers new theological imperatives for the MCS regarding how to build a community of faith by loving, caring, and doing simple, humble and sacrificial service.[84] From a relational hermeneutic lens, Christ is God and Lord, but lowered Himself to become the commoners' servant.

In Chapter 4, I examine the cultural setting of the proposed model of *fetausia'i.* This cultural model is recommended as the best possible solution for the problem of the leadership crisis in the MCS, explored earlier in Chapters 1 and 2. This model highlights a mutually respectful, mutually serving relationality as a way to reduce the gap between the clergy and members of the MCS. I acknowledge the insights of Anne Carr as a background

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[83] Anne Carr, "The God Who Is Involved," *Theology Today* 38 (October 1981): 314.
[84] John Marsh, *Saint John* (London: Penguin Books, 1968), 481-91.

to the proposed model, as I search for a 'conceptual model' that vividly portrays the affirmation of God's involvement in human experience. I maintain that this is what the *fetausia'i* model can offer. Here, I bring into dialogue relevant interpretations of several theologians and historians in respect to the *fetausia'i* (relational/reciprocal) concept. The *fetausia'i* concept is presented as a cultural model that resonates with the image of God revealed in the example of Jesus as Servant.

CHAPTER ONE

A SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS ANALYSIS OF THE LEADERSHIP SYSTEM IN THE METHODIST CHURCH OF SAMOA

INTRODUCTION

The hierarchy of status in the Methodist Church of Samoa (MCS) has been described as being parallel to that of a Samoan village social structure.[85] The current hierarchical structure of the MCS is heteronomously autocratic. Helen Gardner has argued that the "village pastor was incorporated into the political forms and status of Samoan life,"[86] which suggests that the hierarchical system in the Church is in certain respects a mirror image of the cultural leadership system. The primary emphasis of this chapter is thus to discuss and analyse the existing leadership structure in the MCS in relation to the traditional Samoan leadership system, in antiquity and in the present day.

The social, political and religious systems prior to the arrival of foreign missionaries in 1830 included: the *osi-taulaga* or 'priestly' system revealed in the mythical narratives, which had some affinities with the *fono a matai* (village council of chiefs) in the contemporary period; the relationships between the *matai* (chief) and the *'āiga potopoto* (extended family); and the *fa'amatai* (chiefly system) involving the three social groups within the *nu'u* (village) – the 'council of chiefs,' the 'group of women,' and the 'group of young untitled men.'

To understand the impact of these traditional systems on the existing hierarchical structure of the MCS, I have drawn on Maria Cimperman's social analysis theory as a tool to explore and analyse these systems and social structures. The cultural significance of the relationships in these traditional structures (particularly in the extended family and village), based on the cultural concepts of *tautua* (service) and *fa'aaloalo* (respect), is also discussed. The theological implications of *tautua* and *fa'aaloalo* in relation to the type of leadership

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[85] See Mosese Ma'ilo, *Bible-Ing My Samoan* (Apia, Samoa: Piula Publications, 2016), 216. Tualagi Ah Yek, "The Metaphor of Shepherding in John 10:1-18 and 1 Peter 5:1-7 and its Significance for Samoan Ministry," (MTheol thesis, University of Otago, 2008), 25-26; Vaega Faimata., "The Conversion of a Member of a Methodist Church in Samoa to the Assemblies of God. Description and Analysis of Contributing Factors." (BD thesis, Pacific Theological College, Suva., 1999), 5; Tuivanu Tuivanu, "Taufaleali'i: Reorienting Theology of Leadership Towards Mission in the Methodict Church in Samoa" (MTheol thesis, Pacific Theological College, Suva, 2013), 10.
[86] Helen Bethea Gardner, *Gathering for God: George Brown in Oceania* (Dunedin: Otago University, 2006), 39.

witnessed in the MCS today are pivotal for the following discussion. This study also presumes that the existing domineering structure of the MCS is not only cultural but in certain respects foreign, as it became normative due to the influence of the earliest missionaries.

1. SOCIAL ANALYSIS

Joe Holland and Peter Henriot explain that *social analysis* is an "effort to obtain a more complete picture of a social situation by exploring its historical and structural relationships … [it is] a practical tool which enables researchers to analyse and understand social problems deriving from their economic, cultural, social and political context."[87] More recently, Maria Cimperman has developed Holland and Henriot's concept and process of social analysis, focusing on the three approaches of "seeing, judging and acting" in response to a social situation in a systematic manner.[88] According to Carlo Mesters, to hear the voice of God in the church's context today through appropriating the 'see-judge-act' method entails a new openness to revelation.[89] Social analysis is employed here as a tool which creates space for a dialogue between 'cultural values,' 'church historical development' and 'biblical theologies.'

Based on these three influential factors which are fundamental to the context of the MCS today, this research focuses in particular on the aspect of leadership in the Church. This thesis proposes that the existing hierarchical norm in church leadership in the MCS needs a review, because leadership as it is presently understood and practiced has both positive and negative impacts on the life of its members. The spiritual, social and economic demands of this kind of leadership, shaped by traditions and cultural frameworks that are not biblically grounded, is a serious concern which this thesis wishes to address.

There are two issues central to the following discussion. First is a concern regarding the huge gap created by the hierarchical structure of the Church between its leaders (clergy) and members (laity). If this gap is not examined judiciously, inequality may lead to injustice in the church. In this regard, the pioneering Latin American liberation theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez rightly argues that "without equality, there is no justice," suggesting that if justice

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[87] Joe Holland and Peter Henriot, *Social Analysis* (Washington DC: Center of Concern, 1988), 14.

[88] Maria Cimperman, *Social Analysis for the 21st Century: How Faith Becomes Action* – Social Analysis for the Twenty-First Century (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015), ix, x.

[89] Carlos Mesters, "A Brazilian Example: 'Listening to What the Spirit Is Saying to the Churches' – Popular Interpretation of the Bible in Brazil," in *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible from the Third World*, ed. R. S. Sugirtharajh (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006), 433-34.

is not enacted in the systems that guide the church, one may conclude that God is on the "side-line of the church."[90] The inequality of social status in the MCS leads to the second concern, which is the 'affordability to serve' the Church financially and materially. Social analysis becomes a methodological tool which allows the researcher to have a closer look at the roots and causes of these social realities that underlie the "economic, cultural, social and political systems" established in the Church.[91]

In order to understand the hierarchy of the MCS, it will be helpful to examine the origins of Samoan traditional authority and leadership, or the roots of Samoan political and religious structures. The following discussion highlights the origins of the Samoan hierarchical structure as a framework for understanding the MCS structure.

2.   A SAMOAN TRADITIONAL VIEW: THE POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS STRUCTURE

This section examines the structural order of traditional Samoan society based on the Samoan mythical worldview prior to the missionary era (1830). There are three traditional structures which this research highlights in an effort to understand the Samoan understanding of authority and leadership. The first is based on an ancient myth[92] in which the classification of Samoan chiefs originated from the god *Tagaloa* (meaning 'boundless freedom')[93] and his family gods (*Sā Tagaloā*).[94] Second is the relational structure within the *'āiga potopoto* (extended family) between the *matai* (chiefly title holder) and members of his/her family. Third is the *fa'amatai* (chiefly system), whose authority covers all members of the village, differentiated by three social groups: *fono a matai* (council of chiefs), *saofa'iga ā a tama'ita'i* (meeting of female heirs) and *fa'a-le-'aumaga* (group of untitled men).

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[90] Gustavo Gutierrez, "Where Will the Poor Sleep," in *On the Side of the Poor*, ed. Gustavo Gutierrez and Gerrard Ludwig Muller (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015), 48.

[91] Holland and Henriot, *Social Analysis*, 14.

[92] Myths or legends are a Samoan traditional way to preserve through recitation the ancient narratives about our origins (*solo o le va*). The employment of a myth or legend provides coherence by bringing together the bits and pieces of collective past experience. As the Samoan novelist Albert Wendt states, "Myth does not try to replace or explain experience, it gives it depth, vitality and value." Cited in Paul Sharrad, *Albert Wendt and Pacific Literature: Circling the Void* (Manchester, UK and New York: Manchester University Press, distributed exclusively in the USA by Palgrave, 2003), 193.

[93] Fanaafi Aiono-Le Tagaloa, "Tapuai: Samoan Worship" (BA thesis, University of Otago, 2001), 37.

[94] See Misilugi Tulifau Tofaeono Tu'u'u, *Rulers of Samoa Islands & Their Legends and Decrees: 2000 B.C.-1912 – Pule'aga Iloga O Le Atu Samoa & O Latou Tala Fa'asolopito Ma Mavaega* (Wellington: Tuga'ula Publications, 2001), 8-21; and Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa*, ed. Malama Meleisea and Penelope Schoeffel Meleisea (Suva, Fiji: University of the South Pacific, 1987), 2-10.

Fundamental to the discussion of these three structures are the values and virtues they embody by means of the concepts of *tautua* (service) and *fa'aaloalo* (respect), in relation to Samoan cultural leaders (*matai*) and later to Christian clergy (*faife'au*). This discussion will help to explain the underlying foundation of the Samoan proverb, *E le fa'a'ele'elea le 'Au'auna pa'ia a le Atua*, which translates "holy servants of God are not supposed to perform 'dirty' tasks of the lower ranks."

2.1   A Mythical Belief: The Priestly System

A *matai* (chiefly title holder) is accepted as being of paramount rank because it is commonly believed that the original holder of the *matai* title was a direct descendant of the god *Tagaloa*.[95] There are many traditional oral narratives about the origin of Samoa which are undisputed.[96] It is also commonly held that the genesis of the Samoans is parallel to the creation narrative of the Judeo-Christian biblical tradition, in that both traditions assume that, before the earth was created, a creator god existed (Yahweh or *Tagaloa*).[97]

According to the Samoan *Solo o le Va*,[98] in the beginning only the heavens and the waters covering the earth existed. The superior god *Tagaloa* looked down from where he was living in the top heaven called *Lagi-tua-iva* ('the ninth heaven') and considered making a place on the earth where he could stand.[99] Then *Tagaloa* was given the name *Fa'atupunu'u* (Creator), and his family, called *Sā-Tagaloālagi*, became gods or priests residing in the eight-fold heavens.[100] George Pratt writes that in the "genealogical-cosmological account" of this creation story,

> *Tagaloa* (the supreme god of Samoa) was married to *Papatele* (great rock) and the issue was *Papatū* (standing rock). *Papatū* married *Papa'ele* (earth rock) and the issue was *Ma'ata'anoa* (loose stones). *Ma'ata'anoa* married *Palapala* (mud) and the issue was *'O le Tagata* (the human being).[101]

In this creation story, heaven (represented by the god *Tagaloa*) and earth (represented by rocks, stones and mud) are the progenitors of humankind. Heaven is the father and earth is the mother, and in the cosmic relationship between the heaven, earth and humankind we

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[95] Lowell D. Holmes, *Samoan Village: Then and Now*, ed. Ellen Rhoads Holmes, 2nd ed. (Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1992), 29.

[96] Tu'u'u, *Rulers of Samoa Islands & Their Legends and Decrees*, 9.

[97] Augustin Krämer, *The Samoa Islands: An Outline of a Monograph with Particular Consideration of German Samoa* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1999), 24.

[98] A keeper of the Samoan traditiona l story of creation.

[99] Holmes, *Samoan Village: Then and Now*, 15.

[100] Krämer, *The Samoa Islands*, 24.

[101] George Pratt, "The Geneology of the Kings and Queens of Samoa," in *Report of the Second Meeting of the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science* (Melbourne: Australian Association, 1890), 657.

find the origins of 'reciprocal caring' or *fetausia'i*.[102] Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi maintains that this is why "Samoans live not as individuated beings but as beings integrally linked to the cosmos … land, seas and skies."[103] In this connection, the practice of *fetausia'i* is evident in *fa'aaloalo* and *tautua*, which are believed by many Samoans to be relational moral values that maintain the continuity of the "cosmic-community."[104] This traditional practice of *fetausia'i* or 'reciprocal caring' undermines Keesing's critical evaluation of the Samoans, in which he argued that "group mutual cooperation is impossible" in Samoa.[105]

According to the creation myth, *Tagaloa* the creator then created other gods:

> Tagaloa-fa'atupunu'u; then he created Tagaloa-le-fuli (stable Tagaloa), and Tagaloa-asiasi-nu'u (Tagaloa the visitor), and Tagaloa-tolo-nu'u (Tagaloa the village creeper), and Tagaloa-savali (Tagaloa the walker), and Tuli (a seabird), and Logonoa (deaf). … Then said Tagaloa, the creator, to Tagaloa-le-fuli, 'Come; be thou chief in the heavens.' Then Tagaloa 'the immoveable' was chief in the heavens.[106]

Tagaloa-le-fuli is thus considered to be the first *matai* (chief) ever created and appointed by the creator god. After his creation, *Tagaloa* sent his messenger *Tagaloa-savali* down to all the occupants of the eight-fold heavens, instructing them to gather together in the ninth heaven, where the 'chief' '*Tagaloa* the immoveable' resided, in order to form a 'council.'[107] This was the first council meeting held by the god *Tagaloa* and his family gods. One of the decrees of this meeting occurred when *Tagaloa* the creator said to Night and Day: "Let those two boys go down below to be chiefs over the offspring of *Fatu* and *'Ele-'ele*." But to the end of the names of the two boys was attached the name of *Tagaloa-le-fuli*, who was king (*tupu*) of the ninth heaven; hence the Samoan kings were named *Tui* of *Manu'a-tele ma Samoa atoa* (king of Manu'a and the whole of Samoa).[108]

From that time forward, *Tagaloa* the creator personally established a sacred ideal of rule for all humans, in order to show *fa'aaloalo* to his descendants. This is the origin of the

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[102] Upolu Luma Vaai, "Fa'aaloalo: A Theological Reinterpretation of the Doctrine of the Trinity from a Samoan Perspective" (PhD thesis, Griffith University, 2006), 163; Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi, "Samoan Jurisprudence and the Samoan Lands and Titles Court: The Perspective of a Litigant," public lecture, University of Hawaii at Manoa, October 29, 2007, 3. Western Samoa Administration, *Handbook of Western Samoa* (Wellington: W. A. G. Skinner, Government Printer, 1925), 53.
[103] Efi, "Samoan Jurisprudence and the Samoan Lands and Titles Court," 4.
[104] Vaai defines "cosmic-community" as including "the living, the dead and the whole creation." Vaai, "Fa'aaloalo: A Theological Reinterpretation of the Doctrine of the Trinity," 164.
[105] Felix Maxwell Keesing, *Modern Samoa: Its Government and Changing Life* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1934), 28.
[106] Meleisea, *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa*, 4.
[107] Ibid., 4-5.
[108] Ibid., 5.

prohibitions and extreme marks of *fa'aloalo* given to the high-ranking chiefs, called the *ali'i*, observed to this day throughout the Samoan archipelago.[109] Krämer states that, in Samoan tradition, such reverence shown to *Tagaloa's* descendants (*matai*) was boundless, because chiefs "were sacred (*pa'ia*) and therefore everything with which they came in contact was likewise sacred."[110] Samoan chiefs were indeed believed to be sacred, and therefore they must be respected by all people through offerings and material forms of tribute.

The growing population of *tagata* (human beings) was the reason for the gods' withdrawal to their heavens, allowing humans to organise, rule and conduct their own affairs. As Krämer writes,

> The supreme gods [*Sā-Tagaloā*] withdrew early into their heavens and left the rule over mankind [chiefs] to the demons, the lower gods, to whom the people prayed and whom they obeyed, hearkening to the voice of the priests, who naturally accepted willingly their food offerings and … tributes in the form of fine mats.[111]

In Krämer's account, chiefs were also known as priests, who likewise gave orders and directions. Keesing also claims that "the Samoans believed in various forms of 'gods,' of good and bad spirits … and [ritual acts were] performed directly or through the medium of priests." However, "Samoa had no great elaboration of religious institutions and of the powers of the priesthood…"[112] Keesing's comment suggests that the priestly role in antiquity was in fact never intended to hold any power to rule over or control people. Priests simply emanated from *Sā-Tagaloā* gods.[113]

Since antiquity, Samoans' practice of respect for authority has maintained the sacredness of the *matai* system, visibly manifested through the exchange of material gifts. This culture of bestowal of material wealth is an indication of caring (*tausi*) and love (*alofa*) between the high chiefs (*ali'i*) and orators (*tulāfale*), between the *matai* and his family, and also between the council of chiefs and the other two social groups in the village. This culture of reciprocity is normative within the unit of the *'āiga potopoto* (extended family),

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[109] Derek Freeman, *Margaret Mead and Samoa: The Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1983), 133.
[110] Duncan, "A Hierarchy of Symbols," 91.
[111] Krämer, *The Samoa Islands*, 25.
[112] Keesing, *Modern Samoa: Its Government and Changing Life*, 26.
[113] Tuʻuʻu, *Rulers of Samoa Islands & Their Legends and Decrees*, 13-14.

where the *matai* is undoubtedly viewed as someone who leads his family through a mutual kind of *tautua* or service, together with all members of the family.

2.2 *'Āiga Potopoto* or Extended Family

Traditionally, the *matai* is chosen on the basis of his or her service. In the social setting of the Samoan extended family, human relationships are pivotal. Whenever the *'āiga potopoto*, as heirs to a *matai* title, deliberates and decides who the title holder for the family will be, "each person present in the [family] discussion, man or woman, titled or untitled, has a right to put forward proposals and counter-proposals; to agree or disagree."[114] Kamu's description raises two important points: first, the relationship between the *matai* (title holder) and his *'āiga* is reciprocal; and second, the ownership of the *matai* title is the *'āiga*.

Therefore, the impression that once a person is bestowed with a *matai* title he or she becomes the lord and master, with power and authority over all members of the family, is inconsistent with the cultural understanding of *fa'aaloalo* and *tautua*. Keesing claims that the reason for this fabricated evaluation is that it was made according to the worldview of Western foreigners, which is very different from that of Samoa and therefore not necessarily accurate.[115]

The organisation of the Samoan family, according to Allan Tippett, "is under the leadership of the *matai*, a chief (*ali'i*) or an orator (*tulāfale*), [who] has the responsibility of caring for [*tausi*] and leading the group. In return for his effort he may expect cooperation and services [*tautua*]."[116] Tippett's explanation highlights the Samoan understanding of *fetausia'i* or 'reciprocal caring,' a reality wherein both the *matai* and his family perform *tautua* (service) and *tausi* (caring) for each other. In practical terms, according to the pioneering missionary George Turner, an eyewitness of this relationship, "the duties of cooking devolve on the men [untitled men]; and all, even chiefs of the highest rank, consider it no disgrace to assist in the cooking-house occasionally."[117] This suggests that the *matai* or the head of the family can also perform the duties of a servant (*tautua*).

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[114] Lalomilo Kamu, *The Samoan Culture and the Christian Gospel* (Apia: Marfleet Printing, 2003), 39-40.
[115] Keesing, *Modern Samoa: Its Government and Changing Life*, 27-28.
[116] See Allan Tippett, *People Movements in South Polynesia: Studies in the Dynamics of Church-Planting and Growth in Tahiti, New Zealand, Tonga, and Samoa* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971), 147; and Holmes, *Samoan Villag: Then and Now*, 28.
[117] Ma'ilo, *Bible-Ing My Samoan*, 216.

Turner's account of the *matai's* service for his *'āiga* establishes the reciprocal roles of the *matai* and his *'āiga*, where each one serves the other. His presence in the kitchen with the young men, cooking and serving food together for the family, does not affect his leadership position, as the *matai* models leadership by example. This is the true image of a traditional *matai*, sometimes referred to as the 'father' who serves his *'āiga*.[118] If the *matai* does not perform his leadership by serving his *'āiga* according to their expectations and standards, the *matai* title can be removed. Holmes confirms this by commenting, "While *matai* are theoretically selected to serve for life, there are expectations. Occasionally, an irresponsible, lazy, or cruel chief may have his title removed by his family through an action somewhat akin to impeachment."[119]

Based on this traditional understanding of the *matai*, he/she is a servant, as reflected in his/her internal title, *matai tausi 'āiga*, or the 'family chief custodian or caretaker.' In other words, the *matai* does not have *'au'auna*[120] (servants) in the sense of this term as used in the Samoan Bible translation (to identify a master-servant relationship). The most important point to note about this leadership role of the *matai* as *tautua* is the cultural understanding of a *matai* as a servant leader rather than a master or lord of the family. Thus a real *matai* in the Samoan cultural context is the one who serves. This means that the *matai* is not seen as superior and the family as inferior. In the same way, all *matai* in the village council of chiefs (*fono*) are treated with and expected to reciprocate respect (*fa'aaloalo*) equally, especially during deliberations where ideas are exchanged. This same respect is expressed through cultural presentations of material goods, regardless of one's title or rank in the village or place in the meeting house.

2.3   The *Fono a matai* or 'Council of Chiefs'

The word 'village' in English is translated in Samoan as *nu'u*, a term which embraces all members in a certain village. The *matai* of each family has a multitude of duties and responsibilities in the *nu'u*, which normally include supervising the collection of the family's contributions for redistribution, especially related to family obligations and village commitments; maintaining peace and order among family members; and representing the

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[118] Holmes, *Samoan Village: Then and Now*, 28.

[119] Ibid., 32.

[120] *'Au'auna* is a common term used to translate the word 'servant' as used in the Bible. Mosese Ma'ilo argues that the term is a foreign (Tahitian language) concept used by the early missionaries to translate the English Bible into Samoan, a term that reflects the idea of a 'paid servant' and the 'master-servant' ideology in the Western world. Ma'ilo, *Bible-Ing My Samoan*, 253-54.

family in the village council or *fono*.[121] Although the seating arrangements within the *fale fono o le nu'u* ('meeting house of the village') appear to be hierarchical, when the council discusses matters pertaining to the village all chiefs are at liberty to express their thoughts, through elegant speech and courtliness based on respect (*fa'aloalo*). Betty Duncan, an outsider researcher, verifies this by stating,

> In the *fa'a-Samoa* [Samoan culture and tradition], it is a great act of magnanimity. When a chief defers to the point of view of another, or the opinion of the village at a *fono* [meeting], he is usually said to have exercised his *fa'aloalo* (courtesy). This means he has shown the other person or persons his respect. This is a very honourable thing to do. The practise of *fa'aloalo* is a reciprocal one and it is also applied to the exchange of gifts…[122]

Duncan's account confirms the fact that all chiefs, despite their rank-related seating positions in the meeting house, can contribute in the deliberation process in trying to reach a reasonable conclusion to any matter of concern. For this reason, inferring that the *ali'i* is a "noble figurehead or lordship, honourable, highness" and that the *tu'ua's* (chief orator's) oratory task assumes that they are the sole decision makers of the *nu'u*, as the anthropologist Margaret Mead concluded, is a misconception.[123]

Although the distinctions of status and rank among chiefs are visible in the seating positions in the village meeting house, their status differences refer to distinctions in their roles, while rank distinctions refer to an ascending order of power, prestige, and so forth within any particular role.[124] The rights and privileges of the *matai* are usually referred to by the term *pule* (authority), but this does not always mean authority over others. *Pule* may refer simply to a *matai's* right to perform a public function or *tautua* (service) on behalf of others (i.e., members of his *'āiga* or *nu'u*). *Matai* are 'gods' of the *'āiga* and *nu'u* in the sense of being *mata-i-ai* (set apart or consecrated).[125] A wider view of the relational and communal status of the *matai* in the *fa'a-Samoa* is also seen in the relationships between the Samoan social organisations in the system known as *fa'amatai*.

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[121] Sharon W. Tiffany, "The Politics of Denominational Organization in Samoa," in *Mission, Church, and Sect in Oceania*, ed. James A. Boutilier, et al. (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, produced and distributed by University Microfilms International, 1978), 434-35.

[122] See Duncan, "A Hierarchy of Symbols."

[123] Freeman, *Margaret Mead and Samoa*, 131-32.

[124] Bradd Shore, *Sala'ilua, a Samoan Mystery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 79.

[125] Malama Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa: Traditional Authority and Colonial Administration in the History of Western Samoa* (Suva, Fiji: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1987), 7.

2.4 *Fa'amatai* or the 'Chiefly System'

By tradition, Samoan villages or *nu'u* were and remain conceptually divided into three spheres of activity or domains – (1) *O le saofa'iga a matai* or the 'village council meeting', comprising all the village high chiefs and orators, as mentioned above; (2) *O le saofa'iga a tama'ita'i* or 'council of village women,' including all sisters (*feagaiga*), female cousins and daughters of chiefs; and (3) *fa'a-le-'aumaga* or the 'group of untitled men,' which includes all sons, nephews and untitled men of the chiefs' families. Some writers assert that, since the council of chiefs is the highest executive and judicial authority in the village, all members of a village are obliged to honour and respect the decrees of the council of chiefs.[126] Unquestionably, there is a division of opinion with respect to the relationship between these social groups and the *fa'amatai*, and notions of the authority of the *fono* are at times contested in the contemporary context of rapid social change.[127]

In Aiono Fanaafi's view, *fa'amatai* or the 'chiefly system' is the holistic cultural structure of the Samoan society, which she calls the "socio-metric wheel in which the Samoan society turns."[128] Fanaafi defines the system of *fa'amatai* as customarily strong and legally binding on the three social organisations as rightful heirs of the *nu'u* through the *matai* titles of their respective families.

The relationship between these social cultural groups that comprise the *fa'amatai* system is viewed by foreign observers as tyrannical, where "the real work and responsibility for practical affairs is shouldered by the women (*saofa'iga a tama'ita'i*) and young people (*fa'a-le-'aumaga*)."[129] In contrast, there is the insider view that the *fa'amatai system* is a reflection of an egalitarian way of life that works within the framework of *tautua* and *fa'aaloalo* as relational values and virtues expected among these social groups. The first view of the *fa'amatai* system seems unreliable as it is outweighed by the contrary view.

Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi argues that Samoa's political, economic, social and religious domains of life in the pre-missionary era were not greatly compartmentalised, and

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[126] See Fineaso T. S. Fa'alafi, *Carrying the Faith: Samoan Methodism 1828-1928*, ed. Piula Theological College (Apia, Samoa: Piula Theological College, 2005), 23; Peteru Tone, "The Place of Women in the Church and Society in the Pacific," in *Towards a Relevant Pacific Theology: Theology Consultation* (Suva, Fiji: Lotu Pasefika Production, 1986), 59; and Keesing, *Modern Samoa: Its Government and Changing Life*.
[127] Selota Maliko, "Restorative Justice: A Pastoral Care Respose to the Issue of *Fa'ate'a Ma Le Nu'u* (Banishment) in Samoan Society," (PhD thesis, Univrsity of Otago, 2017), 145-55.
[128] Aiono Fanaafi, "Western Samoa: The Sacred Covenant," in *Land Rights of Pacific Women*, ed. Institute of Pacific Studies (Suva, Fiji: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1986), 103-04.
[129] Keesing, *Modern Samoa: Its Government and Changing Life*, 28-29.

that these domains developed within the framework of *fa'aloalo* for each other.[130] This *fa'aloalo* is viewed as a reciprocal lifestyle which is very common in the context of communities committed to enforcing communal living. Upolu Vaai writes that the presence of *fa'aloalo* in the *fa'a-Samoa* "diminishes any authoritative egoism and hierarchical structures; rather, it encourages them to live instead in mutual giving and receiving as well as interdependence, without separateness or subordination or division. It further promotes a relationship sealed by mutual understanding and love."[131]

From a political perspective, it was this system of strong social control that impeded the efforts of the colonial rulers during the colonial era (1860-1962), Germany and New Zealand, to turn Samoa's fairly egalitarian political system of *fa'amatai* into a Western-style concept of a 'king' and a centralised government.[132] Samoa as a community never believed in the idea of one-man power, where everyone serves the king and the king dictates. Samoa is a collective community, as evident in the practice of *fetausia'i*, where one considers the dignity of the other person at the same level. Religiously, the practice of *fa'amatai* in villages became the reason why mass conversion was never a successful experience, unlike the Wesleyan Church in Tonga,[133] despite many attempts by the early missionaries.[134]

The traditional understanding of *fa'aloalo* and *tautua* as the critical elements of *fetausia'i* are core values and virtues that should be seen in the conduct of the *matai* towards his/her family and village. In contrast, the Western values that accompanied the early missionaries, which were in part a product of industrialisation, separated people into classes: the elite, the middle class, and the commoners. This influence had an impact on the understanding of *fa'aloalo* and *tautua* in the *fa'a-Samoa* and, in turn, on the institutional model of the church that found its way into Samoa, which is defined in terms of its visible structure of hierarchies. This is especially the case with regard to the view that the rights

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[130] Tuiatua Tupua Tamasese Efi, "O Le Gagana Ma Le Lotu a Samoa Ae Le I Taunuu Mai Le Talalelei," unpublished paper presented, National University of Samoa, 1999, 1-8; Upolu L Vaai, "From Divine Master to Trinity: Re-Conceiving the Theology of God in the Methodist Church of Samoa" (MTh thesis, Brisbane College of Divinity, 2003), 14.

[131] Vaai, "From Divine Master to Trinity," 48.

[132] Leasiolagi Malama Meleisea, "Introduction," in *Samoa's Journey, 1962-2012: Aspects of History*, ed. Malama Meleisea, Penelope Schoeffel Meleisea, and Ellie Meleisea (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2012).

[133] Makisi Finau, *Island Churches: Challenge and Change*, ed. Teeruro Ieuti, Jione Langi, and Charles W. Forman (Suva, Fiji: Institute of Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific, 1992), 149.

[134] Tiffany, "The Politics of Denominational Organization in Samoa," 424, 33-35.

and powers of its officers are paramount, rather than those whom they are charged to serve.[135]

Before discussing the structure of the MCS, it will be helpful to establish the historical formation of the Methodist Church in Samoa (MCS), which was formerly known as the *Lotu Tonga* (Tongan Church), in association with the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (WMMS) in the early 1800s.

3. THE METHODIST CHURCH IN SAMOA: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

An ordinary Samoan by the name of Saiva'aia, who first introduced Christianity to Samoans in 1828, was an active voice in the time leading up to the arrival of the first foreign missionaries. Saiva'aia had been converted to Christianity during a family visit in Tonga not long after the Wesleyan Mission began there in 1822.[136] Upon Saiva'aia's return to his sub-village of Tafua in Salelologa[137] as a Wesleyan convert, he shared his new faith with his family, calling it *Lotu Tonga*.[138] The Tongan monarch and Tongan teachers then played a significant leadership role during the early stages of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (WMMS). They kept the flame alive in the first three decades (1828–1857), a period of uncertainty for the WMMS until the Australasian Wesleyan Conference (AWC) took over in 1857.[139] Martin Dyson, an English missionary, was appointed to work in Tonga in 1857, and in that same year he was reappointed to reinvigorate the Wesleyan mission in Samoa. Dyson's presence, together with the Tongans, initiated a "Wesleyan structure" in the WMMS for the first time.[140]

3.1 The Organisational System under the Influence of the Missionaries

The Wesleyan Methodist Mission in Samoa under the leadership of Dyson and the Tongans was organised into a structure of hierarchies. Raeburn Lange describes this

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[135] Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 2nd ed. (Dublin [Ireland]: Gill and Macmillan, 1988), 34.
[136] R. W. Allardice, *The Methodist Story in Samoa, 1828–1984* (Tala Faasolopito O Le Ekalesia Metotisi I Samoa, 1828–1984) (Malifa, Samoa: Methodist Conference of Samoa, 1984), 2-4; Sione 'Amanaki Havea, "The Tongan Response to the Gospel," paper presented, South Pacific Regional Conference of the World Methodist Historical Society, an affiliate of the World Methodist Council, Wesley College, Auckland, New Zealand, May 18-23, 1987), 1; Saunoa Sila, *La Laau O Le Sopoaga: A Plant for a Journey* (Matafele, Samoa: Methodist Printing Press, 2015), 20.
[137] *Salelologa* is known as one of the largest villages in the biggest island of Savaii in Samoa, and it is where both the town and wharf are situated.
[138] *Lotu* translates as a 'religion' or 'church,' and the term *Tonga* refers to the island nation of Tonga in the Pacific.
[139] Sila, *La Laau O Le Sopoaga: A Plant for a Journey*, 20, 44.
[140] Ibid., 44.

arrangement: "Catechists were put in charge of districts (15 in 1861), giving pastoral oversight and management under the general superintendency of the missionaries. Catechists were called *leoleo* in Samoan, meaning 'watchmen' or 'guards;' they supervised the *a'oa'o* (teachers), *failauga* (lay preachers) and *ta'ita'i* (class leaders) in the villages of their district."[141]

Lange's account confirms John Garrett's claim that the "origins" of the hierarchical structure in the WMMS and its "policies linked it with Tonga and the imperial policies of the first Tongan King, Taufa'ahau I; in Samoa it was called the *Lotu Tonga.*"[142] This coincides with Malama Meleisea's observation that "influential European settlers in the nineteenth century Polynesia, most notably missionaries, sought to foster the centralisation of power," [143] as evident in the systems of the churches in Samoa today. Garrett also explains that Samoa's socio-political system was not really hierarchical in the sense of a pyramid structure, although Tongan influence was strong. The Samoan system at the time, according to Nicholas Thomas, was a "…complex society, run with finesse, where office is determined by many considerations more subtle than descent and conquest. A single pyramid under an undisputed king is hard to build [in this context] and does not endure for long when built."[144]

The reason for such complexity in the socio-political sphere is that in Samoa, at this time, there were numerous "kings or queens" who were given *matai* titles in their respective extended families; no one family was above the other.[145] Thomas suggests that Samoa was, in that sense, an egalitarian society operating on the basis of a system of shared authority,

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[141] Raeburn Lange, *Island Ministers: Indigenous Leadership in Nineteenth Century Pacific Islands Christianity* (Christchurch and Canberra: Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies, University of Canterbury, and Pandanus Books, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University, 2006), 86.

[142] John Garrett, *Footsteps in the Sea: Christianity in Oceania to World War II* (Suva, Fiji and Geneva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, in association with World Council of Churches, 1992), 189.

[143] Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, 2. Historian and missiologist John H. Darch in his thesis claims that "Wesleyan Methodist Conference concerned to safeguard centralised control of the society and its constitution ensured that the WMMS and its missionary activity cam explicitly under the control of the Methodist Conference. This was a unique arrangement among the British missionary societies," including WMMS in Samoa. Clearly, the development of missionary activity actually revitalised the British Methodism. John H. Darch, *Missionary Imperialists? Missionaries, Government and the Growth of the British Empire in the Tropics1860-18* (Colorado Springs, CO: Paternoster Press, 2009), 11.

[144] John Garrett, *To Live among the Stars: Christian Origins in Oceania* (Geneva and Suva, Fiji: World Council of Churches and Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1982), 123.

[145] Nicholas Thomas, *Islanders: The Pacific in the Age of Empire* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 271.

operationalised through *soālaupule*[146] (communal discussion), a process of deliberation within the extended family (refer to 2.2) and the village council of chiefs (refer to 2.3).

Tiffany argues that the transition from being a mission enterprise to an established church in Samoa was heavily influenced by the organisational structure of the London Missionary Society (LMS),[147] the most prominent early mission society in Samoa, which intentionally aligned with local socio-political institutions.[148] In this view,

> Samoa became an arena in which political relations, consisting of labile alignments of chiefs, descent groups, villages, and districts, shaped the mission's administrative organization, procedures, affairs and autonomy. In short, the missionaries' concern with the flock's spiritual welfare inevitably meant intervention in internal political affairs, which in turn influenced the structure and organization of the mission enterprise.[149]

Clearly Tiffany is suggesting that the formation of the indigenous churches' structure was rooted in the political structure of the Samoans as well as that of the mission organisations. Samoa's situation was in some sense a success for the society's mission, which was "not to aim to establish a specific denomination of the church, but rather to establish churches that were evangelical and non-denominational, with administrative organization suited to the local situation."[150]

The Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (WMMS) became independent from the AWC on July 4, 1964, and subsequently became the Methodist Church of Samoa (MCS),

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[146] *Soālaupule* is comprised of three words: *soa* is 'to share with the other person,' *lau* is 'your' in the second person singular form, and *pule* is 'authority.' How matters are discussed, deliberated and decided within the family and village must be done in a shared manner or *soālaupule*.

[147] Anna Johnston, an analyst of missionary writings of the London Missionary Society in the Pacific, argues that "Christian missionary activity was central to the work of European colonialism, providing British missionaries and their supporters with a sense of justice and moral authority. […] Missionary activity was […] either covert or explicit cultural change. It sought to transform indigenous communities into imperial archetypes of civility and modernity by remodelling the individual, the community, and the state through western, Christian ideologies." In other words, Johnston suggests that missionaries occupied ambiguous positions in colonial cultures caught between imperial and religious interests. Anna Johnston, *Missionary Writing and Empire, 1800-1860* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 13. The LMS in Samoa in fact was led by the British. John Garrett has noted that the LMS was inclined to regard the LMS in Samoa as similar to European and British established state churches, on account of the prominence of village high chiefs and the alliance between the *faife'au* and the *matai*. There were instances of rivalries (politically motivated) between white missionaries of the LMS and the WMMS (Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society) in the early 1800's, which resulted in the withdrawal of the white WMMS missionaries from Samoa in 1839. Fineaso Faalafi explains that there were political motives working behind both missions (LMS and WMMS). Fa'alafi, *Carrying the Faith: Samoan Methodism 1828-1928*, 88-100. See also Garrett, *Footsteps in the Sea: Christianity in Oceania to World War II*, 189-208.

[148] Tiffany, "The Politics of Denominational Organization in Samoa," 425.

[149] Ibid., 424.

[150] Meleisea, *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa*, 55.

with its own governing body or Conference.[151] It could be argued that its organisational structure succeeded initially because of the Samoan culture of *fa'aaloalo* (respect), demonstrated in *tausi-va-fealoa'i* ('mutual caring in the relational space').[152] This culture of *fa'aaloalo* and *tausi-va-fealoa'i* was first introduced and modelled at the theological training institution of the MCS, Piula Theological College.

3.2   The Training Institute: Piula Theological College

No minister of the MCS is called an 'ordained minister' or *faife'au fa'amāoni* unless he has graduated from Piula Theological College (PTC), after the completion of four years of theological studies. In addition, graduates of Piula undertake another five years under probation as *faife'au fa'ata'ita'i* (probation ministers).[153] There is only one alternative prescribed in the MCS Constitution, whereby a lay preacher with more than five years of service is eligible to become a probation minister, subject to the discretion of the Ministerial Committee.[154]

In 1859, the village of Satupaitea on the big island of Savai'i became the original site for training church ministers for mission work, locally and abroad.[155] After almost a decade, it was relocated in 1868 to the oceanside in Lufilufi (the orators' village in the eastern part of Upolu island), and was named Piula Theological College (PTC).[156] *Piula* is a transliteration of the word 'Beulah' in the Hebrew Bible, which means 'married to the Lord.'

Part of PTC's Mission Statement states that "a successful collaboration of academic competence, Wesleyan traditions, spiritual eminence, and Samoan cultural values"[157] is elemental to the training of future ministers of the MCS. The training of the ministers at PTC, in other words, is based on the MCS's traditions, biblical and Wesleyan theology,

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[151] Methodist Church in Samoa, *O Le Faavae Ma Le Tulafono* (Apia, Samoa: Methodist Church of Samoa, 2012), 8-11.

[152] *Va* refers to the space between people. *Fealoa'i* consists of three linguistic components: *fe*, *alo*, and *a'i*. *Fealoa'i* derives from the root word *alo* (an act of facing towards or frontal); *fe* is a prefix denoting reciprocal action, attached to the verbs *alo* and *a'i* as a suffix. Having *fe* attached to *alo* suggests the interaction of facing towards each other (between two or more people). *Alo* literally means turning faces towards each other; it also suggests reception through respect, caring and acceptance. *Va-Fealoa'i* is about the space where respect, care and love interact.

[153] MCS, *O Le Fa'avae ma le Tulafono*, 16.

[154] The Ministerial Committee is chaired by the President and comprised of most senior ministers, including the General Secretary and all Superintendents of the MCS. The main function of this committee is to discuss and decide upon matters concerning the life, work and the discipline of all ministers. Ibid., 17.

[155] Gardner, *Gathering for God: George Brown in Oceania*, 41.

[156] Piula Theological College is the only Methodist theological school in Samoa accommodating theological training for those who want to become church ministers in the MCS.

[157] See Piula Theological College website, www.piula.edu.ws.

and Samoan cultural values. Further, the doctrinal basis of its "teaching and learning, worship and leadership training is based on the Apostles and Nicene Creeds, as well as the founding statements of faith prescribed by the Constitution of the Methodist Church in Samoa."[158]

Central to all 'Samoan cultural values' is *fa'aaloalo*, where *va-fealoa'i* (mutual respect) is the norm. *Va-fealoa'i* is understood as a holistic way of relating that is manifested in all facets of training at Piula (theological, mental and physical). The tradition of *fa'aaloalo* and *va-fealoa'i* in the context of PTC is demonstrated through the relationships that are honoured in the 'honorific salutation' or *fa'alupega*, which outlines the instituted order of authority and respect:

Susū lau susuga i le ali'i Pule[159], ma
Faia'oga[160]
Afio le Tama'ita'i,[161]
Le Tausaga Fa'alagilagi.[162]
Le vasega o ali'i leoleo,[163] ma le
Nofo-a-tausaga[164] i le igoa o Piula.

"In deference we greet your honourable Principal, and
Lecturers,
Greet your highness 'the Lady,'
The Final Year Students,
The group of watchmen, and
Distinct Classes in the name of Piula."

The structure of PTC was intended to identify the students' and faculty's roles and responsibilities. At the same time, these honorific or greeting statements underline different strata of *fa'alupega* associated with the honour, power and respect accorded to each individual or group. All new students are shaped to respect older students through *faalogo* (listening) and *usita'i* (obeying without delay).[165] In other words, *fa'aaloalo* here becomes

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[158] Methodist Church of Samoa, *Tulafono Ma Fa'avae* (Apia, Samoa: Methodist Printing Press, 2012), 15. See also Piula Theological College website, www.piula.edu.ws.
[159] *Pule* literally means 'authority' but here translates to mean the Principal of the College.
[160] *Faiā'oga* refers to all lecturers or teachers of the College.
[161] *Tama'ita'i* literally refers to the 'sacred covenant' or the *feagaiga* of the *matai* in a family, a status wherein most Samoans believe that the position of the *tama'ita'i* or *feagaiga* is higher than men or *matai*. This particular title is given to the top final year student.
[162] *Tausaga Fa'alagilagi* refers to the 'class of final year students.'
[163] *Leoleo* are prefects of the College who are the eyes and ears of the principal and lecturers.
[164] This refers to the respective classes (first, second and third years).
[165] Duncan, "A Hierarchy of Symbols," 54.

a value which necessitates humility through obedience to superiors. In other words, theologising *fa'aloalo* entails local twists in doctrine and practice.[166]

Customarily, *va-fealoa'i* and *fa'aloalo* in the *fa'a-Samoa* (Samoan customs and traditions) are cultural concepts that entail more than mere obedience; they are realities which express *fetausia'i* (reciprocal caring), *fealoa'i* (mutual love) and *soālaupule* (communal sharing), regardless of an individual's social status in the community. The Samoan value of *fetausia'i* based on *fa'aloalo* and *va-fealoa'i* (relational space of respect) is not a trivial culture where anyone is at liberty to modify one's behaviour to suit one's or any group's interests.

The way future ministers of the MCS are shaped through the tradition of *va-fealoa'i* at Piula seems to create a learning culture of unquestioning obedience and submission. There are some merits to this design. However, if the design means that the thoughts and dictates of those who are 'above' are always absolute and cannot be questioned, then it creates a culture of silence where the freedom of expression for the common good of the community is repressed. This culture of respect fostered at PTC seems to promote the unquestioned authority of the institutionalised church and its leaders, which is clearly laid out in Article V, Part 15 (i) of the MCS Constitution:

> *E usiusita'i ma faalogo le Faife'au Fa'amāoni i le Faife'au pule o le Matāgaluega, i le ma Faife'au Fa'amāoni na muamua ia te ia.*[167]

> All ministers must listen to and obey the authority of the Minister in charge of the Parish, and all senior ministers above them.

Since the Constitution of the MCS is the ultimate authority of the Conference of the MCS, this clause verifies a culture of seniority, as evident in the existing structure of the church.

3.3   The Conference

The MCS Conference is conducted in two separate sessions. The first is the 'Ministerial Session'[168] and the second is the 'Representatives' Session.'[169] The MCS Conference covers Samoa (7 synods), American Samoa (1 synod), Australia (3 synods), Hawaii (1 synod), New Zealand (4 synods), and the USA (1 synod). The synodical system,

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[166] Douglas L. Oliver, *The Pacific Islands*, ed. American Museum of Natural History, rev ed. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1961), 213.

[167] MCS, *O Le Faavae Ma Le Tulafono*, 17.

[168] The 'Ministerial Session' deals with matters pertaining the conduct and discipline of all ministers in full connexion, probationers, local preachers and theological students at Piula Theological College.

[169] MCS, *O Le Faavae Ma Le Tulafono*, 28.

established by missionaries in the early twentieth century, thus comprises seventeen (17) synods depending on the topographical location, each headed by a *Sea o le Sinoti* (Superintendent of a Synod). The Conference is the final authority in relation to decision-making on all issues pertaining to economic, physical, doctrinal, liturgical and missional developments in the MCS worldwide.[170]

All Conference proceedings and Committee meetings are presided over by the President.[171] The establishment of the MCS Annual Conference since its independence in 1964 was clearly intended to be an autonomous embodiment of the centralised structure.[172] The existing structure of the MCS is certainly hierarchical and somewhat foreign.[173] According to Tamaali'i, this European structure was simply transformed into a Samoan guise, claiming to be the image of the *fa'a-matai* system.

Figure 1: The MCS Ministerial Hierarchical Structure[174]
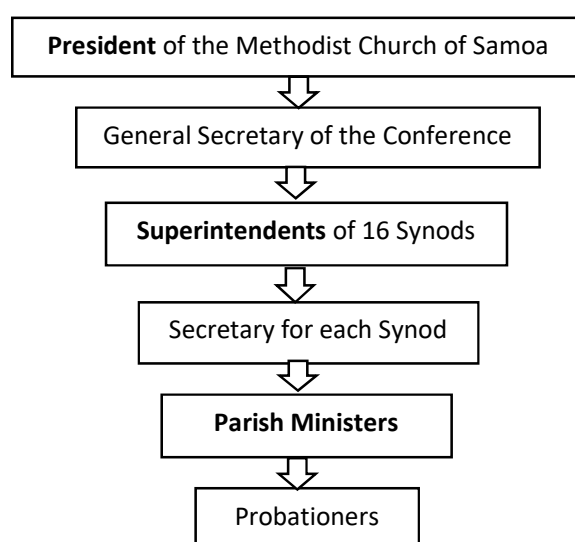
The election of the Conference's Executive (President, General Secretary and Treasurer) is carried out through a voting process during each annual Conference. The qualified criterion required to nominate a candidate for the positions of President, General

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[170] Ibid.

[171] Ibid., 31.

[172] Charles W. Forman, *The Island Churches of the South Pacific: Emergence in the Twentieth Century* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1982), 131.

[173] Sione Uesile Tamaali'i, "Church Administration and Finance in the Methodist Church in Samoa" (BD thesis, Pacific Theological College, 1975), 64.

[174] This structure is drawn according to the author's knowledge of the present situation of the MCS today, based on the 2012 edition of the Constitution, which verifies different positions based on the responsibilities ascribed to each one. MCS, *O Le Faavae Ma Le Tulafono*.

Secretary and Synod Superintendents is that the candidate must have not less than twenty years of service as an ordained minister.[175] Essentially, the hierarchical structure of the MCS is framed around a culture of seniority, a system which is very much valued and corresponds with the Samoan value that respects advanced age, encapsulated in the saying, *O le tele o tausaga o le tagata, o le tele foi lea o lona silafia* ("the more years one lives, the more knowledgeable one is").[176] It also entrenches a tradition of 'silence' that draws on the cultural values of *fa'aaloalo* and *va-fealoa'i.* This is much in evidence during Conference meetings. Sione Uesilē Tamaali'i, a former General Secretary of the Conference, describes this culture as follows:

> The senior ministers do dominate most of the discussions on matters concerning the ministry [during Conference]. It may be true to say that the President, who is also the Chairman, is the first among the equals. And this may be true as far as giving the opportunity to young ordained men to voice their opinion on matters discussed. But on the other hand, being a very senior man often reserves the final decision to coincide with the opinions of the senior ministers, regardless of their unpopularity and relevancy to the matter under discussion. … Silence is golden and outspoken men are cheeky men in the eyes of many senior ministers. The young men should be seen and not heard, and the rules of debate allow only ordained men to speak and vote in the ministerial meetings. Young pastors must be present to answer the questions and to listen to advice, so they are there to learn [rather] than contribute. This is very much the situation of the untitled young men in the village structure. So the Ministerial Session is very much like a village meeting of chiefs and young men, rather than ministers of the Church of Christ who should help and build each other up.[177]

Tamaali'i suggests that the rules governing debates and discussions in the Ministerial meetings of the MCS are parallel to that of the meeting of the village chiefs. Based on the MCS structure above, the following discussion examines only three leadership positions: (1) the President; (2) the Superintendent of the Synod; and (3) the parish minister. These three distinct positions are hierarchical; however, they are all treated as 'heads' of each distinct category (i.e. Conference, synod and parish) to which they are responsible.

3.4   The President

The President is called the 'father' of the Church and he is an authoritative leader whose word is the law and must be respected by all;[178] yet this is not the case according to

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[175] These positions include the President, General Secretary and Synod Superintendents, who must have no less than twenty years of service as ordained ministers; the position of Secretary for each Synod must have no less than fifteen years of service as ordained ministers. MCS, *O Le Faavae Ma Le Tulafono*, 27, 31-32.
[176] This phrase translates "knowledge or expertise comes with age one has served." In other words, little experience or knowledge is dangerous.
[177] Tamaali'i, "Church Administration and Finance in the Methodist Church in Samoa," 39.
[178] Ibid., 42.

the Constitution. The following are some of the President's responsibilities and duties sanctioned under the MCS Constitution:[179]

    (i)   To chair the proceedings of the Conference, and be the Chairman of all Conference Committees;

    (ii)   To decide on all matters concerning Church ministers and the Church until the next meeting of the Council of Ministerial Matters Committee or the 'Standing Committee;'[180]

    (iii)   To conduct the dedication of any new church building of the MCS worldwide, and lead the funeral service of any church minister or his wife;

    (iv)   To keep and counter-sign with the Treasurer of the Conference all the financial accounts of the Church, and to appoint an auditor to audit all accounts and finances of the Church;

    (v)   In the absence of the President due to illness or unavailability, he must appoint the General Secretary of the Conference or a Synod Superintendent to carry out his duties.

Based on the above-mentioned duties and responsibilities of the President, none would suggest that he is the spiritual leader of the Church, or someone who takes care of the Church's spiritual growth and wellbeing. His main responsibilities are to look after the bank accounts, which leads to absolute power and authority in that sphere. The President seems to be the chief director of all Church affairs. If the President disagrees entirely with the opinion of the Conference and Committee meetings, "he uses his 'veto' which is his authority as President to give the final decision. Such a decision may be quite contrary to what the session intended it to be, but nevertheless that will still go."[181] Yet, surprisingly, I was told by a former President in person that there is no such thing as a 'veto power' of the President, and that such a notion is unconstitutional.[182] For the President to override the

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[179] MCS, *O Le Faavae Ma Le Tulafono*, 31-32.

[180] The 'Standing Committee' is chaired by the President and comprised of the General Secretary and equal representatives of the senior ministers and laymen. This is the most powerful Committee which acts on behalf of the Conference and requires immediate attention. Sione Tamaali'i calls it "another small conference within the Conference," especially in terms of its handling of finances. This Committee seems to have fallen into the danger of becoming the master rather than the servant of the Conference. Tamaali'i, "Church Administration and Finance in the Methodist Church in Samoa," 52.

[181] Ibid., 39.

[182] When the PCC (Pacific Conference of Churches) meeting was held at Piula Theological College in 2015, I was invited by a former President of the MCS to share with him during lunch time. I then asked him about the President's veto, and his response is mentioned above.

will of any Committee or Conference means that either he is unlawfully ruling or perhaps not clear about the MCS Constitution.

There is one occasion worth noting in this regard, as mentioned in the *Minutes of the Conference 2014*, after a motion was passed for the Church to refrain from demanding further unnecessary contributions of its members (especially from Synods). The President then issued words of 'encouragement', which I translate as "be steadfast and strong-willed, because the more we give, the more we get."[183] Although theologically inspiring, the President was actually reversing the decision of the Conference in an indirect manner.

3.5 The Superintendent of a Synod

The Ministerial Session (ordained ministers only) of the Conference elects Superintendents responsible for each synod for one year only.[184] Some of his mandatory duties and responsibilities are as follows:[185]

(i)   To call and chair all meetings of the Synod;

(ii)   To oversee the progress of each parish and make sure that everyone is abiding by the rules and traditions of the Church;

(iii)   To present all Synod requests and entreaties to the Conference;

(iv)   To collect all monies belonging to the Church and make deposits to the bank;

(v)   To prepare and provide financial computations to the MCS Treasurer for audit;

(vi)   He must be notified of any new construction work (i.e., a church building or parish pastor's house) untaken by a parish.

(vii)   If he is unwell or dies between Conferences, the Secretary of the Synod can take over and perform all the prescribed duties set above.

It seems that many of the above-mentioned duties of the Superintendent are very much finance-related and secretarial rather than being a spiritual leader of the Synod. The term Superintendent is translated and used in Samoan as *Sea*, the transliteration of the word 'over-*seer*,' which suggests someone with the status of a chief, supervisor, manager,

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[183] In Samoan, "*Ua finagalo le Koneferenisi e talia le mau, fa'atasi ma le faamalosi'au a le afioga I le Peresetene o le Ekalesia, ina ia mau pea le to'ovae ma maua le lototele, aua e tupu pea mea avea.*" *Minute 2014,* 19.
[184] MCS, *O Le Faavae Ma Le Tulafono*, 27.
[185] Ibid.

administrator and boss.[186] Clause V, Part 15 (o) of the Constitution states that "*E fa'alogo ma usiusita'i Faife'au uma i Sea o Sinoti*," which translates "all ministers must listen to and obey the Superintendents of Synods."[187] The term *faife'au* in this clause refers to all 'parish ministers,' a category discussed below.

3.6   The Parish Minister

The 'parish minister' is translated in Samoan as *faife'au tausi matāgaluega*. This title is given to any minister called to serve in a parish church; it is ratified by the Constitution, which delineates the pastoral role or tasks of a minister. The cultural understanding of the title is significantly associated with the model of *fetausia'i.* Aliilelei Lefua defines the term *faifeau* to mean the "one who serves."[188] According to Milner, *faifeau* implies the servanthood role of a *taule'ale'a* (untitled young man), namely "to wait on."[189] Thus the verb *faife'au* becomes a noun referring to the person who serves (*tautua*) or waits on others. It is a 'doing' or 'action' word reflecting the traditional duty of a *taule'ale'a*, which is identical to the *aumaga* (untitled man) who serves the *matai* and his family as a servant.[190] One duty of an *aumaga* is to sit at the back of the house with a basin of water and a hand towel, patiently waiting for elders or *matai* while they are dining.

The word *tausi* is another action word which explains the intention behind the service rendered towards elders and *matai*. *Tausi* is an imperative concept that captures the intention of a servant (*taule'ale'a* or *aumaga*) to demonstrate love, care and respect for the family and village. Finally, the word *matāgaluega* refers to a parish of the MCS.

According to the MCS Constitution, the core of the role of a *faife'au tausi matāgaluega* is "to save souls."[191] Apart from this title, the Constitution does not propose or indicate any other titles suitable for the parish minister. However, several additional designations for a *faife'au* are frequently used in the contemporary period, all of which, in one way or another, prohibit the *faife'au* from acting like the *faife'au* in the sense of the

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[186] Philip Babcock Grove, ed., *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged* (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 1986), 1610.

[187] MCS, *O Le Fa'avae ma le Tulafono*, 17

[188] Ali'ilelei Lefua, "The Concept of Tausi" (BD thesis, Piula Theological College, 2007), 25.

[189] G. B. Milner, *Samoan Dictionary: Samoan-English, English-Samoan* (Auckland: Pasifika Press, 2001), 53.

[190] Tuivanu, "*Taufaleali'i*: Reorienting Theology of Leadership Towards Mission in the Methodct Church in Samoa," 111.

[191] MCS, *O Le Faavae Ma Le Tulafono*, 19.

servanthood role of an untitled man. Rather, ministers are treated as masters and lords. These designations are explored in the following section.

4.   THE MINISTER AS LORD AND MASTER

John Garrett captures the widely held understanding that Christianity and culture in Samoa "became closely knit together,"[192] and Samoan Christians gradually selected what they wanted from the mission era and adapted it to suit their own purposes. This adaptation process can be seen in the evolution of the role of the ordained minister. Based on the Samoan cultural value of *fa'aaloalo*, ministers have been given additional titles over time which have made them become masters and lords, who have the *mana* (power) to decide and do everything. In this case, misinterpretations of *fa'aaloalo* have led to a manipulation of the value of *fa'aaloalo* through the creation of new traditions which have undermined the core value of egalitarianism.

4.1   Historical Background

After the arrival of the first group of Wesleyan missionaries in Samoa in 1835, led by Peter Turner, "he and his fellow missionaries were treated in ways far beyond the normal treatment of chiefs in the *Fa'a-Samoa*… They [Samoans] paddled for him [Peter Turner] in the sea and hand-carried him to shore to keep him from getting wet. The most unusual treatment was the way he was carried when travelling on land."[193] This latter reference is to the way Samoans carried Turner on their shoulders. Turner himself describes this practice in a letter to the Mission Centre in England, on July 16, 1836. He writes,

> If you were to see the contrivance the natives have to carry me I am sure you would smile. Were we to exhibit it in the streets of London many would stop to laugh. [...] Each end of the pole rests on a person's shoulder, and they have to change every two minutes. So that to go around an island I have to have procured 20-30 natives… I do not pay them for this labour, but tell them they must do this from pure love.[194]

George Turner, as Mosese Ma'ilo points out, must have been "a bit confused … because a high chief paddled his own canoe if he went fishing."[195] Peter Turner's letter suggests that he knowingly accepted the way he was treated as a nobleman, even more so than how his countrymen treated their own lords. According to Ma'ilo, Turner's acceptance of *fa'aaloalo* from the natives in such a noble manner was a common experience of the

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192 Garrett, *To Live among the Stars: Christian Origins in Oceania*, 278.
193 Fa'alafi, *Carrying the Faith: Samoan Methodism 1828-1928*, 74.
194 Ibid.
195 Ma'ilo, *Bible-Ing My Samoan*, 216.

English missionaries, given their "Lords-servants relationship in the nineteenth century."[196] Ma'ilo adds, "It was that English image that elicited the setting up of servants (even women servants) for the missionaries, and who accompanied some missionaries in their canoes when they travelled from place to place."[197] What is quite noticeable in this situation is that neither the European practice of payment for the service provided nor the indigenous practice of appreciation for services rendered was considered.

Ma'ilo further states that LMS missionaries admitted that they were called "white chiefs," and were aware that they "found themselves elevated to chiefly status although none of them had occupied any high-ranking position in England."[198] What is clear here is that the reciprocal caring or *fetausia'i* that was at the heart of the Samoan worldview was far from the reality of the earliest missionaries' work. The elevation of these early missionaries is a practice which continues today in the treatment of clergy, and appears to be a basic premise of the theology of ministry of the Samoan churches.

Betty Duncan's case study of Samoan churches in New Zealand concludes that the Samoan community has placed the minister in the strongest possible economic and social position,[199] including the ministers of the MCS. Duncan refers to the historic unceasing rivalries among Samoan chiefs regarding who had legitimate power as a situation of "kings without kingdoms."[200] In this situation of rivalry, marked by numerous wars and conflicts, especially at the time of the arrival of the first missionaries, Samoans soon turned to the *faife'au* to solve these conflicts between chiefs. This led to Samoans treating ministers as lords and masters within their churches.[201] The lordship status of church ministers became stronger and irreversible over time, as evident in the following designations for ordained clergy.

4.2 *Fa'afeagaiga* or "the Covenantal Minister"

In the oral traditions of Samoan chiefs, the dignity, respect and honour seen in the *feagaiga* (sacred covenant between brother and sister) was conferred by the high chief Malietoa Vainu'upō[202] on the first LMS missionaries, as God's agents; subsequently they

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[196] Ibid.
[197] Ibid.
[198] Ibid., 215.
[199] Duncan, "A Hierarchy of Symbols," 106-07.
[200] Ibid., 108.
[201] Ibid., 107-08.
[202] Malietoa Vainu'upō was one the highest chiefs of Samoa, who first accepted the LMS missionaries in 1830 at Sapapāli'i village on the island of Savai'i. He later changed his untitled name *Vainu'upō* to *Tavita*

were called *fa'afeagaiga.* However, this claim does not correspond with the historical evidence and events that occurred at the time. According to Fanaafi Aiono-Le Tagaloa,

> … the teachers of the [Christian] faith [missionaries] were given a highly respected place within the social organisations of the Samoans. They were given a status similar to that of the *tama'ita'i* – the female heirs of the *matai*. They were placed in this group because it was observed that the Christian teachers carried out the responsibilities or *nafa* normally carried out by the *tama'ita'i* or the *feagaiga* – the covenant. The *tama'ita'i* was the peacemaker, she was the healer, the teacher, the keeper of the knowledge of the family, and she was also the priestess who presided over the private worship if the *matai* of the family was not present. The Christian teachers, missionaries, and later the pastors were given the title of *fa'afeagaiga*, one who is like a *feagaiga*.[203]

Instead of the title *feagaiga*, the term *fa'afegaiga* ('to be' or 'like' the *feagaiga*) was given to ministers. Although the title *fa'afeagaiga* is a foreign concept to the MCS, people generally use it to refer to MCS ministers as well. However, Le Tagaloa argues that ministers can never become a real *feagaiga* in its literal sense.[204] Le Tagaloa therefore defines *fa'afeagaiga* as "one who is like a *feagaiga.*"[205] It is rooted in the word *feagaiga* (the brother's covenant with the sister), and the prefix or the causative verb *fa'a* suggests that anyone can be a *feagaiga*. *Feagaiga* in Samoan antiquity were sisters of the *ali'i* (high chiefs), and in every *'āiga* (extended family) the sisters of the *matai* held influence in family matters.

In essence, *feagaiga* was traditionally a "covenant of respect between the brother and a sister which gave special honour to their respected female siblings."[206] The term *feagaiga* carries the same meaning as *tama'ita'i*[207] (lady), and Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop states that the *tama'ita'i* or *feagaiga* in Samoa "were the mostly valued and highest status group in the village."[208] Penelope Schoeffel agrees with Dunlop: "A sister was of higher rank (than

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(after King David in the Bible), as a sign of his conversion to Christianity; he died on May 11, 1841. Krämer, *The Samoa Islands*, 320.

[203] Aiono-Le Tagaloa, "Tapuai : Samoan Worship," 37.

[204] Ibid.

[205] Ibid.

[206] Latuivai Kioa Latu, "Women Lay Preachers: Inquiring on Grace and Equality," (BD thesis, Piula Theological College, 2015), 6.

[207] According to Ma'ilo Fuaiva'a, "In the protocols of the Samoan social system, every woman is entitled to be respectfully addressed as *tama'ita'i*. The Samoans even addressed the Missionaries' wives as *Misi Tama'ita'i* or Lady Missionary, although this was not according to their social status in English. But in contrast to the Samoan treatment of women, foreign (English) women … ill-treated the Samoan women just like the treatment of the biblical women." Mosese Ma'ilo Fuaiva'a, "The Politics of Bible Translation in Early 19th Century Polynesia: Re-Examining the Construction of the Samoan Bible Translation in the Light of Contemporary Post-Colonial Concerns" (PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 2008), 211-12.

[208] Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop, ed., *Tamaitai Samoa: Their Stories* (Suva and Carson City, CA: Institute of Pacific Studies and KIN Publications, 1996), 7.

the brother), she had separate and more comfortable sleeping quarters, and was given precedence in seating arrangements in the serving and eating of food."[209] The cultural obligation of the brother (even if a chief) to his *feagaiga* was seen, for example, in his *tautua* in serving his sister's food in the main residential *fale* where the parents were residing as well. Such *tautua* embodies the belief that the *feagaiga* is the *i'omata* or 'the very pupil of the brother's eye,' which means sisters are well protected and cared for by their brothers.[210]

The title *fa'afeagaiga* was transferred from this context of the covenant between brothers and sisters to the relationship between parishioners and ministers, with the ministers now in the position of being served (as the sister is served by the brother). This designation was given to the London Missionary Society (LMS) ministers, not the MCS or the Catholic clergy, although, as noted above, it came to be applied to the MCS clergy as well. The title *fa'afeagaiga* assumes that the service rendered to the *feagaiga* within the *nu'u* and *'āiga* is expected to be rendered to the minister by the parish and the village.

4.3 *Tamā o le Galuega* or "Father of the Ministry"

Ministers are called by all members of their parishes *tamā o le galuega* (*tamā* = father, *o* = of, *le* = the, *galuega* = work/gospel), and their wives are called "*tinā o le galuega*" (*tinā* = mother). Tualagi Ah Yek notes that, "regardless of age or ability, this title is given to every parish minister in every village."[211] Ah Yek comments that even when the minister and his wife are younger than some of the members of the congregation, they are still called parents of the parish or *mātua o le galuega* (*mātua* = parents). From a Samoan perspective, *tamā*, *tinā* and *mātua* are titles indicating the obligation of untitled men to offer *tautua* or service for their parents. Therefore, the *tautua* rendered to ministers as *tamā o le galuega* can never reflect the application of *fetausia'i*, for parents can never render any *tautua* to their children; it is impossible in the Samoan culture.

4.4 *Ao fa'alupega* or "Head of Honorifics"

The title *ao o fa'alupega* given to the *faife'au* is a clear indication of *fa'aaloalo*, where the minister becomes the "head of honorifics" in Samoa. The word *ao* is translated as "head," and *fa'alupega*, according to George Pratt, means "to compliment" or "the naming

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[209] Ibid.
[210] Latu, "Women Lay Preachers: Inquiring on Grace and Equality," 7.
[211] Yek, "The Metaphor of Shepherding in John 10:1-18 and 1 Peter 5:1-7," 37.

titles of a village."[212] G. B. Milner's definition of *fa'alupega* is "a ceremonial style and address of a person or a social group traditionally associated with certain areas. Such a style of addressing someone usually includes a specific reference to the most important titles or kin-groups in strict order of precedence."[213] In this sense, *ao o fa'alupega* underlines the translation of *ao* as 'head,' meaning that the minister is the 'head' of all honorifics, including all chiefs.[214] In this way, church ministers are given the greatest respect, over and above all the village chiefly titles, because of their title *ao o fa'alupega*. This implies that the village and church serve the *faife'au* as almost a god, and this prevents the *faife'au* from serving the people. The practice of *fetausia'i* cannot be revealed in the title *ao o fa'alupega*.

4.5   *'Au'auna Pa'ia a le Atua* or "Holy Servant of God"

The title *'au'auna pa'ia a le Atua* is one of the most respected titles in recognition of the highest status of the minister, similar to that of *fa'afegaiga, tamā o le galuega* and *ao o fa'alupega*. Mosese Ma'ilo's research reveals that since "there were no servants [*'au'auna*] in the Samoan cultural context … missionaries created the term *'au'auna* to depict the biblical notion of servant."[215] Ma'ilo states that the initial meaning of the word '*au'auna* in the Samoan Bible translation is "to send, or a messenger."[216] The title *'au'auna pa'ia a le Atua* translates the term *'au'auna* as "servant," and *pa'ia* as "holy/sacred."

However, this reference to ministers as *'au'auna pa'ia a le Atua* or 'sacred servant of God' is deemed by Tuivanu Tuivanu to be flawed.[217] Tuivanu contends that the word *pa'ia* (holy) is a language of stratification, which makes the minister the only sacred or holy person among all members of the village, to the extreme that he is "not touched by work."[218] This meaning implies that the service of God's servant or '*au'auna pa'ia a le Atua* "belongs only to God, not to the people."[219] In other words, the title separates the *faife'au* from the people, severs him from his servanthood role, and is accordingly exclusive. The title

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[212] George Pratt, *A Grammar and Dictionary of Samoan Language with English and Samoan Vocabulary*, 3rd and rev. ed. (Papakura, NZ: R. McMillan, 1984), 97.
[213] Milner, *Samoan Dictionary: Samoan-English, English-Samoan*, 116.
[214] Tuivanu, "Taufaleali'i: Reorienting Theology of Leadership Towards Mission in the Methodict Church in Samoa," 117.
[215] Ma'ilo, *Bible-Ing My Samoan*, 217.
[216] Ibid.
[217] Tuivanu, "Taufaleali'i: Reorienting Theology of Leadership Towards Mission in the Methodict Church in Samoa," 114-15.
[218] Ibid., 115.
[219] Ibid., 114.

'au'auna pa'ia a le Atua makes the village and church members servants of the minister but not vice-versa, and as such does not reflect the practice of *fetausia'i*.

4.6   *Sui Va'aia o le Atua* or "Representative of God"

Ministers are rarely called by their personal names in the parish or village; rather, they are called by their titles, whereby people show respect. One of those is the title *sui va'aia o le Atua*, translated as the "visible representative of God." To some degree, this is how people express their faith and trust in God – by serving the minister as if he were God. Because of this, even chiefs tend to lower themselves in service of the representative of God in the world – the minister. The belief is that the minister acts in the place of God, or rather Christ, the head of the church. This requires us to ask whether such titles mirror the call of a minister to serve. In my view, this designation is *anti*-Christ.

SUMMARY

From a sociological perspective, the organisational structure of the MCS as outlined in this chapter is unquestionably autonomous, which concurs with the functionalist view of the church.[220] Sociologists argue that any society operating by means of an autocratic system is elitist, concerned with promoting the status and wealth of those at the top and "it always provides a justification for existing inequalities and injustices".[221] This centralised system endorses the Marxist analysis that the established church not only "supports the social order,"[222] maintaining the "boundaries" by upholding the status quo,[223] but also undermines the "sighs of the oppressed creatures."[224]

In this regard, Mosese Ma'ilo, an MCS scholar and minister, pleads for a "decentralisation of power" in the MCS, which would delegate some roles of those in leadership to others. For example, the President could delegate the dedication of new church buildings to the synod Superintendent, the Superintendent could delegate financial roles to the secretary, treasurer and ministers of the synod; and the parish minister could

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[220] Ian Robertson, *Sociology*, 3rd ed. (New York: Worth Publishers, 1987), 401-02.
[221] Ibid., 403.
[222] Ibid., 261.
[223] Diana Kendall, "Class: Still Alive and Reproducing in the United States," in *Privilege*, ed. Michael S. Kimmel and Abby L. Ferber (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 97.
[224] Robertson, *Sociology*, 403.

allow lay preachers to help distribute the emblems of Jesus' body and blood during communion.[225]

The various traditional titles given to church ministers discussed above (3.2 - 3.6) distinguish the *faife'au* as one who is served, rather than one who serves. This is alarming for the Samoan churches and their ministers. This reality challenges the church to 'see, judge and act.' The church needs to take a firm stand against such *fa'aaloalo*, where Christ's position is supplanted by that of the ministers, who are forced to exercise and gain power, prestige and wealth. Ah Yek argues that "as the church of Christ we must not fear to re-examine, to challenge and to break the polite rules of the traditions we live under, in order to serve God and neighbour in more meaningful ways."[226] Similarly, Martin Luther (1483–1546) "rejected the authority of the Pope, and thought that people should go to the church and pray directly to God or Christ, and not to anyone who claimed special powers or holiness."[227]

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[225] Mosese Mailo, "O Pulega Lelei I Le Tamaoaiga, Upufai, Ma Aga-Feso'ota'i a Le Ekalesia Metotisi I Samoa," *Le Fa'asoa* II (2015): 67.
[226] Yek, "The Metaphor of Shepherding in John 10:1-18 and 1 Peter 5:1-7," 41.
[227] Harold J. Grimm, *The Reformation Era, 1500–1650* (New York: Macmillan, 1955).

CHAPTER TWO

SERVANT LEADERSHIP: A PARADIGM FOR THE METHODIST CHURCH OF SAMOA

INTRODUCTION

The thrust of this chapter is a discussion of the concept of 'Servant Leadership' as it is used to describe the leadership modelled by Jesus Christ. This offers a perspective for critiquing the cultural norms frequently placed on the leadership of the church through cultural ideologies in the Samoan Methodist context.[228] It is also important to note at the outset that Jesus Christ's leadership paradigm differs from other leadership paradigms, particularly in the area of learning and training in businesses and other secular organisations. The chapter concludes that adopting Jesus Christ's leadership model as one that can not only enable Samoan *faife'au* to live a Christ-like life, but also help answer many questions concerning the prestige, honour and power bestowed upon *faife'au*.

1. SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Despite an extensive search, I have not been able to locate any Samoan theological writers who have published material on the topic of servant leadership. The reason as to *why not* seems ambiguous, but may possibly be because of the cultural theory of 'service' or *tautua* and 'respect' or *fa'aaloalo* to be rendered by those at the bottom of the hierarchy towards those at the top, and not vice-versa. Normally, once *matai* (chiefs) or *faife'au* (ministers) or those at the top of the Samoan social-religious-political hierarchy are found serving their subordinates,[229] this would be viewed as unacceptable, inappropriate, disrespectful and disgraceful in relation to the norms and practices of the whole community. However, neither the Christological view of Christ as *Servant-Lord* discussed in Chapter 3, nor the view of the serving Samoan chief or *matai tautua*[230] in antiquity would accept or support such a common view.

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[228] This refers to the ideology of *E le fa'a'ele'elea se faife'au* or "Pastors are not supposed to do dirty work." The 'servant leadership' model counters this ideology and provides a rationale for why *faife'au* must "serve" or '*tautua'* bu not the in the meaning frequently used both in the Samoan Bible and ecclesiastical language: '*au'auna* (also meaning "to serve" but implying a master-slave relationship). See Mosese Ma'ilo, *Bible-Ing My Samoan* (Apia, Samoa: Piula Publications, 2016).

[229] This refers to members of the family and/or members of the congregation or community.

[230] This means that the chief is the servant of the family and village, even in the performance of lower tasks.

Prior to engaging in the scholarly discussion on what servant leadership is all about in relation to the Church, it will be helpful to begin by defining the two concepts ('servant' and 'leadership'), in order to have a general view of these concepts and establish a constructive argument for the purpose of clarity and precision.

1.1 Defining Leadership

Bernard Bass, who teaches leadership in business and organisational sectors, claims that the word 'leadership' only appeared in English-language publications in the first half of the 1800's, with reference to writings about political influence and control in the British Parliament.[231] However, the concept of course is ancient. Alan Cutler mentions the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu's writings on leadership in the 5th century BC, where Tzu states, "Good leadership consists of motivating people to their highest levels by offering them opportunities, not obligations."[232]

The concept of leadership continues to attract enormous attention, especially in the fields of business, politics and secular organisations.[233] Nevertheless, as Corné J. Bekker argues, the concept of 'religious leaders' has been somewhat overlooked.[234] Counteracting Bekker's view, I would maintain that studies on the concept of religious leadership are increasingly gaining prominence, particularly from a biblical perspective.[235]

In relation to religious leadership, Efrain Agosto states that the greatest leaders of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) were the prophets who were speaking on behalf of God's people, Israel, before God.[236] Agosto suggests that leadership must be discussed in relation to what the leader actually does, instead of in relation to theory or some sort of abstract

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[231] Bernard M. Bass, "Concepts of Leadership," in *Leadership: Understanding the Dynamics of Power and Influence in Organizations*, ed. Robert P. Vecchio (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 16.

[232] Cutler quoted this from Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching,* a book that was meant to be written for Chinese political leaders in the 5th century BC, which emphasises the importance of the leader-follower relationship. Alan Cutler, *Leadership Psychology: How the Best Leaders Inspire Their People* (London: Kogan Page, 2014), 1, 5.

[233] Bass, "Concepts of Leadership," 9. See also Kent M. Keith, "Foreword," in *Servant Leadership: Development in Theory and Research*, ed. Dirk van Dierendonck and Kathhlenn Patterson (New York: Palgrave Mcmillan, 2010), x-xi.

[234] Corné J. Bekker, "Towards a Theoretical Model of Christian Leadership," *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership* 2, no. 2 (2009): 142.

[235] Iddrissu Adam Shaibu, "John Wesley's Christian Leadership Paradigm: A Model for the Ghanaian Clergy," *International Journal of African and Asian Studies* 15 (2015): 94. See also Efrain Agosto, *Servant Leadership: Jesus & Paul* (St. Louis, MO; Chalice Press, 2005); and *Sen Sendjaya, Personal and Organizational Excellence through Servant Leadership : Learning to Serve, Serving to Lead, Leading to Transform* (London: Springer, 2015).

[236] Refer to Moses in the next section, *1.2*.

concepts only. As Agosto states, "the religious leader, according to much of the Bible, responds to a call to action. He or she does so in a particular, personal style or approach to that action; flexibility is the key. And the biblical leader undertakes his or her approach contextually, that is always with the specific needs of concrete faith communities in mind."[237] Such actions and styles of leaders are also prominent in Proverbs, the Servant-Songs in Deutero-Isaiah, and the debates over Israel having a king like other neighbouring nations.

In the perspective of this chapter, leadership is a 'style,' a special skill needed in all aspects of human life, particularly in the context of the church. For that reason, the issue of religious/Christian leadership is distinctive and demands our attention, since religious leadership permeates every aspect of the Samoan society. This chapter therefore seeks to argue that Jesus' leadership style is the ultimate paradigm, apposite for leadership in the context of the modern Churches in Samoa (MCS).

The word *leadership* as defined by Cutler is rooted in the word 'lead', a word derived "from the Anglo-Saxon for a journey, a road, [and] a way."[238] Thus the act of leading implies movement from one place or situation to another. It involves change and it is, indeed, in periods of great change that incomparable leaders emerge.[239] In general, the "act of leading people involves influencing them to undertake a course of action that contributes to an objective defined by the leader: his or her vision."[240]

Helen Doohan describes leadership 'style' as the "behaviour pattern that a person exhibits when attempting to influence the activities of others."[241] Both Cutler's and Doohan's definitions of leadership imply that there is a sense of influence by those in positions of authority over others.[242] However, sociologist Robert Bierstedt suggests that leadership can be distinguished from authority. As Bierstedt explains, "a leader can only request, an authority can require. … In the leadership relation, the person is basic; in an authority relation, the person is merely a symbol."[243] In relation to leadership in the church,

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[237] Agosto, *Servant Leadership: Jesus & Paul*, 7-9.
[238] Cutler, *Leadership Psychology: How the Best Leaders Inspire Their People*, 6.
[239] Ibid.
[240] Ibid.
[241] Helen Doohan, *Leadership in Paul* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2016), 19.
[242] Ian Robertson, *Sociology*, 3rd ed. (New York: Worth Publishers, 1987), 170. See also Agosto, *Servant Leadership: Jesus & Paul*, 6.
[243] Robert Bierstedt, *The Social Order*, 4th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974), 298.

Sendjaya believes that the focus of the leader-member dynamic should be on the best interests and benefit of the led, and not primarily the interests and benefit of the leader.[244]

Considering Bierstedt's distinction of leadership, Agosto adds that the primary task of leadership is to create "opportunities for others," [245] which aligns with Lao Tzu's view of leadership mentioned earlier. This is evident in Doohan's statement that, in the contemporary period, there is a shift from "power, position and authority to a relative situational quality and a participative involvement on the part of all.'[246] What Bierstedt, Sendjaya and Agosto suggest is that, despite the power and authority a leader in any given situation holds, there is also an opportunity for leaders to move from their positions of power and be able to perform the tasks of those whom they lead.

Peter Block offers a radically different perspective, arguing that the term 'leadership' must be "relinquished," because it speaks of hierarchy, a system where those at the top decide how those below them ought to do their work and not vice-versa. As an alternative, Block offers 'stewardship'[247] and 'service' as terms to replace leadership,[248] and Agosto comments that both terms have biblical roots.[249] However, Block's view of relinquishing the role leadership because of its hierarchical association is not in accord with this chapter's intent, given the example of Jesus.

I will discuss the second alternative – 'service' – in the next section, and affirm Block's summary of 'stewardship' as a term which "springs from a set of beliefs about reforming organizations [and] affirms our choice for service over the pursuit of self-interest."[250] This takes into account the importance of balancing the "power between ourselves and those around us… It comes from the choice to place control close to where the work is done and not hold it as the prerogative of the middle and upper classes."[251] These stewardship elements can reflect the duty of a Samoan *matai* as family chief, that is,

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[244] Sendjaya, *Personal and Organizational Excellence through Servant Leadership*, 2.
[245] Agosto, *Servant Leadership: Jesus & Paul*, 6.
[246] Doohan, *Leadership in Paul*, 20.
[247] Sen Sendjaya describes how the "word 'stewardship' is derived from the Greek word 'oikonomia'. The original meaning of the word is rooted in the idea of a house manager. The 'oikonomos,' which is translated steward, was entrusted with the responsibility of managing the business affairs of a household. The word often referred to a servant who was given responsibility over money, property, goods or others servants." Sendjaya, *Personal and Organizational Excellence through Servant Leadership*, 7.
[248] Peter Block, *Stewardship: Choosing Service over Self Interest*, 1ˢᵗ ed. (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1993), 5.
[249] Agosto, *Servant Leadership: Jesus & Paul*, 7.
[250] Block, *Stewardship: Choosing Service over Self Interest*, 6.
[251] Ibid., 8.

one who works for the best interests of his/her family. In this sense, the term 'leader' can be interpreted and translated as *matai*.

In addition, Sendjaya accentuates the importance of 'conscience' as an essential quality of leadership.[252] This is seen, as Stephen Covey puts it, when a leader's 'inward moral sense' enables him or her to clearly delineate 'right from wrong;' this conscience is the "innate sense of fairness and justice, of what is kind and what is not; of what contributes and what detracts; of what beautifies and what destroys; and of what is true and what is false."[253]

Covey elaborates that conscience leadership is 'principle centered.' Moreover, conscience leadership produces conscience followers. This can only be ascertained when both the leader and follower follow a "common value system." [254] Losing this quality of leadership is considered by Greenleaf as an "ethical failure," which he explains in this way: "Once leaders lose this … [leading by conscience], and events start to force their hand, they are leaders in name only."[255]

An example of conscience leadership in the Samoan context is described by Keesing in his account of an American Samoa and (Western) Samoa church leadership decision in 1901. The church headquarters of both countries "required communities [parishes] wishing to construct new churches to submit plans and show [that] the finances are available, thus countering the 'excessive church building' which was resulting in debts that 'virtually enslave the present generations and subsequent ones.'" [256] Indeed, this was a wise action taken by leadership of the church, where all members of the church were benefitted from at the time.

Keesing's record also suggests that this kind of moral decision-making and visionary leadership seen in the early twentieth century is needed for the church in the twenty-first century. Generally speaking, Samoa's mainline churches (Congregational [EFKS],[257]

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[252] Sendjaya, *Personal and Organizational Excellence through Servant Leadership*.
[253] Stephen E. Covey, *Servant-Leadership and Community Leadership in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Larry C. Spears and Michele Lawrence (New York: J. Wiley & Sons, 2002), 4.
[254] Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*, ed. Larry C. Spears, 25th anniversary ed. (New York: Paulist Press, 2002), 5.
[255] Ibid., 39-40.
[256] Felix Maxwell Keesing, *Modern Samoa: Its Government and Changing Life* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1934), 403.
[257] Ekalesia Fa'apotopotoga Kerisiano a Samoa, or the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa, formerly known as the London Missionary Society (LMS).

Roman Catholic Church and MCS) are at present facing a real dilemma regarding leadership in relation to finances. Once leaders do not lead from a foundation of conscience, this can result in placing pressure on church members to do what the leaders demand.

In view of Jesus's model, he did not need to surrender his *matai* or leadership role as his disciples' Master/Lord/Teacher in order to become a servant (John 13: 13-14a).[258] Jesus acknowledged that he was in fact the leader or *matai* of his disciples, but that did not stop him from performing the tasks of a servant towards them. Surely, this is a new journey, a new road and a new way to identify a leader who leads by example (i.e., making personal sacrifices) in spite of cultural pressures and norms.

1.2 Defining Servant

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word *ebed* is commonly translated as worker, but it is also the commonly used Hebrew term for servant, or slave.[259] The word is also used to mean worshippers. The worshippers of [G]gods, whether YHWH or pagan, were called servants.[260] This denotes that the term is not confined to biblical use alone but was also common in pagan religions in the Ancient Near East. In distinguishing between the two, J. Y. Campbell suggests that the "use of the singular form of the phrase 'the servant of the Lord' is a title of distinction and honour, given to individuals who have shown special devotion or render distinguished service to Jehovah…"[261]

A further consequence of this honourable title 'servant of the Lord' is the authority to speak on behalf of God (YHWH). Indeed, Moses was authorised to go and tell the people of Israel what their God had said (Exodus 3:15). Thus Moses was a messenger and, in this way, a 'servant of the Lord' who was a messenger or God's orator (one who speaks on behalf of God). His mission is participation and involvement and this is indicated by his role as a servant of God.[262] Tavita P. I'amanu believes that the servant in this sense (as God's messenger) is an honourable role which God initiated for His own purpose and as a

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[258] John 13:13-14a: "You called me Lord and Teacher – and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I your Lord and teacher have washed your feet, [...]" NRSV.

[259] Murray J. Harris, *Slave of Christ: A New Testament Metaphor for Total Devotion to Christ*, ed. D. A. Carson (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 28-30.

[260] J. W. Campbell, "Servant," in T*he Theological Work Book of the Bible*, ed. A. Richardson (New York: Macmillan Company, 1962), 223.

[261] Ibid., 224.

[262] Tavita Poutoa I'amanu, "The Servant Image and the Servant Church: An Attempt to Re-Formulate the Christological Image with the Special Reference to the Methodist Church in Samoa" (BD thesis, Pacific Theological College, 1985), 39-40.

specific type of calling.[263] Although I'amanu's view is right to a degree, we cannot equate the servant role of Jesus Christ in the New Testament with that of Moses in the Old Testament. This transition is perfectly laid out in the introduction of the letter to the Hebrews (Hebrews 1:1-4):

> Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

Raeburn Lange reminds us that the term 'service' clearly describes Jesus' ministry. What is unusual in the construction of this earliest Christian paradigm is the notion that "leaders were seen as servants," a dual role model reflected in Jesus as the Servant-Lord. However, the title 'servant' gradually diminished in the history of the church, as it adopted more secular models of leadership from the surrounding social environment associated with power, authority and prestige. This is reflected in the way "new titles"[264] were introduced and bestowed over time upon MCS ministers in Samoa. Yet, according to Lange,

> Service (*diakonia*) was seen as a defining characteristic of the place of Christians in the world, and not least of those who served by leading in the Christian movement. The concept was handed down into English as 'ministry', from the Latin word for 'service', which came to be applied particularly to the work of local and other church leaders. It was not always easy to reconcile the call to servanthood (a theological imperative) with the need for leadership (a sociological matter as well), but the idea was never entirely lost.[265]

Lange's evocative vision of servant leadership in the Christian Church establishes a characteristic of a Christian leader as the one who 'serves.' Although the question as to the extent to which Jesus exercised authoritative rule over his followers is arguable,[266] the only clear evidence, according to Lange, is the fact that neither Jesus nor the apostles established a socially stratified system, except that a leader is the one who serves and is not to be served.[267]

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[263] Ibid., 40.
[264] This refers to new titles discussed in Chapter 1, 3.2 - 3.6.
[265] Raeburn Lange, *Island Ministers: Indigenous Leadership in Nineteenth Century Pacific Islands Christianity* (Christchurch and Canberra: Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies, University of Canterbury and Pandanus Books, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University, 2006), 30.
[266] Craig C. Hill, *Servant of All: Status, Ambition, and the Way of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B Errdmans, 2016), 163.
[267] Lange, *Island Ministers*, 29-30.

On the other hand, Lange states that the "Jewish religious culture" and the "caste of priest" later influenced the new leadership structure of the church, and this model has continued to exist, even in the contemporary era.[268] This assertion is sustained by James Burtchaell's examination of the social hierarchy in the synagogue in the first and second centuries in his book, *From Synagogue to Church*.[269] Burtchaell's revisionist historical account of Christian origins in this book creatively challenges the established positions on church order. He discovers that there were only three levels of offices in the synagogues in the time of Jesus – the president, elders and assistants – and he suggests that these were the most likely predecessors of the Christian offices which became clearly defined in the second century.[270]

For Burtchaell, the synagogue offices were present from the moment the early Christians began to form their own congregations. The Christian experience gave the basic structure of the church its own course of development, at the same time that the synagogue tradition was being reshaped within Judaism. Burtchaell argues that while the three offices of ministry existed from the beginning of the Christian Church, their incumbents during the first century were not the leaders, but were men who truly "servants of all their fellow servants."[271]

This background may help us to interpret why Jesus never thought to relinquish his leadership role in order to become a servant-slave (refer to Peter Block's view of leadership), or the other way around. Jesus showed his followers how to survive in a pluralistic world where statuses were the main causes of social hierarchy, which created stark social 'gaps' between people. In this way, Jesus creates and exhibits a flexible appropriation of leadership.

In the Samoan context, the word 'servant' is translated as '*au'auna* in the Samoan Bible, which was the choice of the missionaries who first translated the Samoan Bible. It reflects the biblical understanding of the master-servant or master-slave relationship in the Ancient Near East cultures of the Bible, rather than the term *tautua*, a more relevant term in the Samoan context of service.[272] According to Ma'ilo, the term *tautua* is used to describe

[268] Ibid., 30.
[269] James Tunstead Burtchaell, *From Synagogue to Church: Public Services and Offices in the Earliest Christian Communities* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
[270] Ibid., 237-49.
[271] Ibid., 249.
[272] Ma'ilo, *Bible-Ing My Samoan*, 217. See also Charles Uesile Tupu Folasa II, "O Le Ala I Le Pule O Le Tautua: Mataio 25:14-30 Mata'upu Silisili Fa'asi'omaga (Contextual Theology)," *Le Fa'asoa* II (2015): 42.

the untitled men's service in the "Samoan culture [where these young men] will one day become a chief as a reward for [their] service, … because the *tautua* is always the 'heir' to the title."[273] This corresponds with the Samoan saying: *O le ala i le pule o le tautua* which translates as 'the way to authority is through service.' The word *pule,* authority or power, in the context of the family, always refers to the intent to hold a *matai* title, although the word *pule* can be misleading to some extent.

Telea Kamu Tapua'ī Potogi explains in his MA thesis that the word *tautua* also refers to the caring duty of the *matai* (chief) in his/her *'āiga* (extended family). Despite being the *matai* of the family, if one does not perform the 'service' (*tautua*) that is expected, the *matai* title may be removed legally if the heirs (extended family) to the title are dissatisfied with one's *tautua*. Potogi confirms that about 10 percent of all cases brought before the Land and Titles Court are successful in removing the *matai sa'o*[274] or titular bestowal.[275] Other *matai* are available to be called upon, as Potogi points out:

> Even though the *matai sa'o* in the *fa'a-Samoa* may be at the apex of the family structure and the *matai* hierarchy, there are other *matai* and chiefly titles of lesser ranking that form the family organization. These *matai* are referred to as a *matai tautua* or serving titles of the *matai sa'o*, because they are expected to assist the *matai sa'o* in handling the affairs of the family.[276]

Potogi verifies the point made earlier, that the usage of the term *pule* or authority by a *matai* to claim superiority in the family is actually misleading. In the Samoan cultural context, where service is rendered by various parties, *taule'ale'a* or *matai*, the word always used is *tautua*. This is problematic with reference to the Samoan Bible translation, where the word *tautua* is rarely used to translate the word servant.

Further to what Ma'ilo pointed out above, the word '*au'auna* is also used to translate the word 'slave' or in Greek '*δοῦλος*' or '*doulos*,' where Paul referred to himself and

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[273] Ma'ilo, *Bible-Ing My Samoan*, 217.

[274] The word *matai sa'o* is the highest ranking, the most senior title or principal chief of the family. This person is usually the longest serving *matai* but may not necessarily be the oldest. According to Potogi, the *matai sa'o* is "expected to look after the family's interests and affairs and is accountable to the family. It is expected that the *matai sa'o* exercises his/her discretion to make a decision that is in the best interests of the family." Telea Kamu Tapuai Potogi, "*O Tiafau O Le Malae O Le Faautugatagi a Samoa*: A Study of the Impact of Lands and Titles Court Decision on Customary Land and Family Titles" (MA thesis, University of the South Pacific, 2014), 6-7. The *matai sa'o* is also viewed as *tausi-'āiga* ('family-carer'), which does not necessarily equate to having absolute power over a family's properties, lands and titles. Ruiping Ye, "Torrens and Customary Land Tenure: A Case Study of the Land Titles Registration Act 2008 of Samoa," *Victoria University of Wellington Law Review* 40, no. 4 (May 2009): 827-61.

[275] Potogi, "*O Tiafau O Le Malae O Le Faautugatagi a Samoa*: A Study of the Impact of Lands and Titles Court Decision on Customary Land and Family Titles," 5.

[276] Ibid., 10.

Timothy as "slaves [*douloi*] of Christ" (Phil 1:1).[277] The correct translation of the word 'slave' or *doulos* into the Samoan language is *pologa*, according to the definition rendered by G. B. Milner.[278] However, the word 'slave' in the original Greek, *douloi*, is sometimes translated in the Samoan Bible as 'servant' which is *'au'auna*, or 'minister,' which is *diakonos* (Greek), and this may cause confusion because of the mistranslation. For instance, Phil 1:1 (NRSV) uses the Greek word *douloi* or 'slave' but it is translated in English as 'servant' meaning *diakonos*, which also means 'deacon' or 'minister' but is translated into Samoan as *'au'auna* instead of *pologa*. In the case of John 13:16 and Phil 1:1, the Samoan Bible translation follows the English translation of the word 'servant.'

The word *doulos* (Greek),[279] 'slave' (English) or *'pologa'* (Samoan) in the context of the first century is referred to by Harris as being a 'human thing' or a 'property' which was owned by another person known as master/lord or slave-owner. What is fundamental about slaves is that their rights as human beings are denied. Slaves are those who are positioned at the very lowest rung of the social order; servants are ranked above slaves.

However, this thesis argues that neither the denial of rights and low-rank status associated with the Greek terms *douloi* (*pologa* or 'slaves') or the mistranslation of *diakonos* as *'au'auna* ('servant' as in a master-servant relationship) have ever existed as a cultural practice or status in the pre-contact Samoan context. The only possible word which Samoan people would understand according to their own customary practice is *tautua*. In my view, it seems fitting and appropriate to translate both Greek words, *douloi* and *diakonos*, as *tautua*. As Ma'ilo points out, the significance of the term *tautua* can be used as a strategy not only to redeem the oppressive status of a servant in the biblical text, but also to empower those political images of a servant to the image of a 'relative' or *'āiga* (the extended family).[280]

Based on the above discussion, the amalgamation of the terms 'servant leadership' necessitates a new perspective regarding the social hierarchy, where status is primarily

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[277] Hill, *Servant of All: Status, Ambition, and the Way of Jesus*, 169.
[278] G. B. Milner, *Samoan Dictionary: Samoan-English, English-Samoan* (Auckland: Pasifika Press, 2001), 187.
[279] Harris defines a slave as someone whose person and service belong wholly to another. In this view, slavery involves (a) absolute ownership and control on the part of the master and the total subjection of the slave; and (b) the absence of the slave's freedom to choose his action or movement. Although the slave was usually the property of the master for life, the master could choose to set the slave free. Harris, *Slave of Christ: A New Testament Metaphor for Total Devotion to Christ*, 25-26.
[280] Ma'ilo, *Bible-Ing My Samoan*, 254.

understood as something communally achieved, where the needs of others are the highest priority.[281] Cutler's view suggests that the authority associated with leadership must be applied in a way that ensures that all people have equal access to the resources necessary to achieve personal and organisational objectives. In other words, servant leadership is all about serving the interests of the majority (church members) over the interests of the minority (leaders).

This view has been defended by a recent decision of the Samoan Court of Appeal, delivered on March 31, 2017, in a court case involving the church hierarchy and a church member, between Rev. Elder Kerita Reupena and Rev. Elder Tautiaga Senara and Others (on behalf of the EFKS Elders Committee and General Assembly). In this particular case, the court ruled against the power and authority of the Church hierarchy, in favour of the appellant, the minister of the church. What is fascinating about this case is the way the court defined the relationship between a *faife'au* (as God's servant or the executive of the church) and members of the church:

> […] the Servant of God 'receives his authority from the Lord' but that his authority 'shall be dependent upon the views of those under his care.' The integrity of the Servant of God must be 'clearly evident to the people.' That authority will be lost if the congregation loses confidence and trust in the Minister.[282]

Clearly, the court's view challenges the implied authority of Samoan churches' leadership today, based on the governance system they inherited and embraced, which is authoritarian, domineering and dictatorial.[283] Like the EFKS in the court case, the MCS' governance is reflected in its autocratic system that values uniformity and control over all. Peter Block describes this as the "means of dominance by which colonialism and sovereignty are enacted."[284] Block borrows language from commerce to describe a kind of leadership where "bosses are no longer customer ['being served' as lords, but] they are suppliers [*tautua*]."[285]

Real servant leaders are people who are not only driven by their feelings, based on what they see and judge; their feelings and passions must be transformed into real actions or practice. In other words, church leadership must be engaged in social actions in order

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[281] Cutler, *Leadership Psychology: How the Best Leaders Inspire their People*, 241.
[282] Ilia L. Likou, "Court of Appeal Rules against Church," *Samoa Observer Online*, April 5, 2017.
[283] Refer to Chapter 1.
[284] Block, *Stewardship: Choosing Service over Self Interest*, 7.
[285] Ibid., 66.

for God's love, respect, care and justice are seen to be done here on earth. On that note, servant leadership is a reality in which, as John Gooch concludes, "we need a warmed heart and dirty hands."[286] Gooch's insight is that relationships and mutual responsibility are more important than prescribed roles and expectations. This mutuality in terms of shared responsibilities is able to transcend the "older models of patriarchy and hierarchy, where the leader at the top decides and implements, while the rest of us either comply or 'get out of the way.'"[287]

Servant leadership is an old practice but still a relevant paradigm for today's context, as it was in much earlier times. As Kent Keith observes,

> [m]any people have a deep yearning for a better world. […] Servant leadership is a key to that better world. Servant leadership has ancient roots and modern applications. It is grounded in universal values and is adaptable to different cultures. It is good for the leader as well as the led, because it is an ethical, practical, and meaningful way to live and lead.[288]

In view of Keith's observation, the following discussion will highlight the trend in which servant leadership is observed and practiced in the viewpoint of secular scholarship in the last and twenty-first centuries.

1.3   Servant Leadership in the Twenty-first Century

For Greenleaf, servant leadership as an approach embodies 'reciprocity' between leader and the followers, where not only do followers respect their leaders, but leaders also put their followers first.[289] This means that reciprocity is a fundamental principle of servant leadership. This principle of reciprocity values the dignity of each individual, irrespective of their social status or whatever other context they inhabit. It also relates to the Samoan concept of *fetausia'i* (explored in Chapter 4), which depicts the relational God as identified in the biblical narratives (Chapter 3). In other words, this chapter serves to connect the Christological view of Jesus Christ as the Servant-Lord and the cultural view of *fetausia'i* in the context of servanthood or *tautua*, with the aid of insights from recent broader scholarship on servant leadership.

Dirk van Dierendonck and Kathleen Patterson, in their essay "Servant Leadership: An Introduction" in *Servant Leadership: Development in Theory and Research*, profess

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[286] John O. Gooch, *John Wesley for the Twenty-First Century: Set Apart for Social Witness* (Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 2006), 43.
[287] Agosto, *Servant Leadership: Jesus & Paul*, 7.
[288] Keith, "Foreword," x.
[289] Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 5.

admiration for three prominent people whom they label as "historic examples of servant leadership."[290] They are: Jean Monnet (a pioneer of the European Union),[291] George Washington (the first President of the United States of America, 1789–1997),[292] and William Wilberforce (the youngest member of England's Parliament).[293]

In addition, all contributors of the fifteen essays in the above-mentioned book have a grounding in Robert K Greenleaf's Servant Leadership model. The modern academics of the servant leadership model, launched about five decades ago, have accepted that the concept of servant leadership was first 'coined' by Greenleaf in his seminal work *The Servant as Leader*, first published in 1970.[294]

What is fascinating about Greenleaf's theory is that he was inspired by a character named Leo, a servant leader whom he encountered when reading Hermann Hesse's short novel, *Journey to the East* – an account of a mythical journey by a group of people on a spiritual quest.[295] The central figure in this journey is Leo, the party's servant, who takes care of the daily chores, plays music, and looks after the wellbeing of the group. At some point Leo disappears, and the group falls into disarray. Years later, the group learns that Leo was, and is, the titular head of their Order, its spiritual guide and leader.

It was from this story that Greenleaf realised that it is possible to combine the roles of servant and leader in one person; that, indeed, this very aspect may be characteristic of

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[290] Dirk van Dierendonck and Kathhleen Patterson, "Servant Leadership: An Introduction," in *Servant Leadership: Development in Theory and Research*, ed. Dirk van Dierendonck: An Introduction," and Kathhleen Patterson (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 5-6.

[291] Jean Monnet (1888-1979) was a French politician, military veteran and businessman and educator. Despite his success in the business field and influence across Europe, he opted to place himself in service of the dream of a United Europe, and in this effort he earned the respect and trust of many political officials in Europe and the United States. Most significantly, in terms of the history of Europe, especially during World War I and World War II, was his stance as an instigator of the effort to unify Europe, as reflected in the establishment of the European Union. Ibid., 5. See also Juan Carols Ocaña, "Jean Mannot 1888–1979," in *The History of the European Union: The European Citizenship*, 2003, http://www.historiasiglo20.org/europe/monnet.htm.

[292] George Washington (1732–1799) was known as a planter, backwoodsman, and Revolutionary War veteran, and is called the 'Father of the United States of America.' His pivotal role in the history of the United States was that "he demonstrated how one can have a real position of power, use it for the good of the society in which one lives, and combine it with the ability to let go of the power after the task is accomplished." Dierendonck and Patterson, "Servant Leadership: An Introduction," 6.

[293] William Wilberforce (1757-1833): was an English politician who left parliament to serve God. He was an eloquent speaker and very witty. More importantly, he "devoted his life to the abolition of the slave trade in the English empire […] and devoted himself in selfless service for the good of others, even when it was an incredibly unpopular stance to take." Ibid. See also "William Wilberforce (1759-1833): The Politician," in *The Abolition Project*, 2009, http://www.e2bn.org/.

[294] Dierendonck and Patterson, "Servant Leadership: An Introduction," 3. and Larry C. Spear, "Servant Leadership and Robert K. Greenleaf's Legacy," in *Servant Leadership: Developments in Theory and Research*, ed. Derk van Dierendonck and Kathhleen Patterson (New York: Palgrave Mcmillan, 2010), 12. See also Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*.

[295] Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*, 21.

a real leader.[296] Typically, servant leadership is understood by those who admired Robert Greenleaf's work as, at its core, a long-term process, a transformational approach to life and work – in essence, a way of being – that has the potential for creating positive change throughout society.

Although Dierendonck and Patterson expressed the hope that this influential book which they edited would offer a 'perspective on service that is solid, global and inspiring,' I must disagree to some extent, based on the fact that they limited their views only to the work or example of political public figures. Greenleaf's and Hesse's emulation of the servant leader Leo is indeed inspiring and worth emulating, but those who are seeking a Christocentric understanding of servant leadership must look further.

Iddrissu Adam Shaibu, a minister and theologian of the Methodist Church of Ghana, addresses this need in his seminal work, *John Wesley's Christian Leadership Paradigm: A Model for the Ghanaian Clergy*.[297] Shaibu explores John Wesley's (the founder of the Wesleyan/Methodist movement) leadership paradigm as a model for Ghanaian clergy. He highlights Wesley's assertion that any Christian leader who takes for himself or herself anything more than the plain necessities of life lives in a habitual denial of Jesus Christ.[298] Shaibu affirms that all church leaders, like John Wesley, must have a deep personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

> A leader who has a personal relationship with Jesus Christ will definitely live a Christ-like life. […] A leader with a Christ-like character is able to command trust among people. This is exemplified in the life of Wesley. […] He was one person who practiced what he preached. To demonstrate this, he gave most of his money to the poor and needy. This made him to always wear inexpensive clothes and eat only simple food.[299]

Shaibu notes that, although Wesley had leadership gifts that Ghanaian pastors can rightly emulate with regard to his character and personality, at the same time Wesley always acknowledged his need for Jesus Christ.[300] On that note, and with due respect to those lives are worth mentioning as paradigms, this thesis argues that none of them can compare to Jesus Christ, the perfect exemplar and pioneer of servant leadership of all times. In fact,

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[296] Dierendonck and Patterson, "Servant Leadership: An Introduction," 4.
[297] Shaibu, "John Wesley's Christian Leadership Paradigm: A Model for the Ghanaian Clergy."
[298] Ibid., 95.
[299] Ibid.
[300] Ibid.

Sendjaya summarises that servant leadership "undertakes a commitment to make personal sacrifices," which is the common element observed in those lives discussed above.[301]

2. JESUS CHRIST: THE PIONEER AND PERFECT MODEL OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Efrain Agosto states that the biblical narratives do not suggest that the Bible is "a book about leadership. In it we find the struggles of various faith communities to establish themselves, strengthen their relationships with God, and, indeed, find good leaders to help them do this. By studying the stories of these struggles that we find in the Bible, we come closer to some models of good (and bad) leadership."[302]

Agosto's inference serves as a basis for my intent to employ Jesus' examples (mainly footwashing) as the perfect model of good leadership for MCS leaders. In Jesus' examples explored in Chapter 3 – *washing his disciples' feet* (John 13:14-16), and the call to be a *servant* of one another (Mark 10:42-45) – I will reiterate this point. In addition to what will be discussed in the following chapter, Jesus used the term 'servant' as a synonym for greatness. In other words, Jesus taught his disciples in those particular events that a leader's greatness is measured by a radical commitment to serve his or her fellow human beings. Jesus set an example for them to follow, including calling his followers to do the humblest tasks that no one wants to do. Even if such tasks literally require dirty hands and body, or perhaps demarcate the lowest status, we must embrace them with love and compassion. If Jesus confronted the social hierarchy of his day in order to help those in need – the social outcasts and the poor – so too is this the call for the church today. Jesus even reached out his hand to touch the leper, the most unclean pariah of his day.[303]

2.1 Servant Leadership: A Model for the Contemporary Church

Before attempting to discuss servant leadership as a model for the church, I wish to develop a fundamental view of the church in its institutional element. The purpose for discussing the institutional manifestation of the church is to better understand what it means to be a servant. In the history of the Christian Church subsequent to the time of Jesus and

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[301] Sendjaya, *Personal and Organizational Excellence through Servant Leadership*, 2.
[302] Agosto, *Servant Leadership: Jesus & Paul*, 1.
[303] "When Jesus had come down from the mountain, great crowds followed him; and there was a leper who came to him and knelt before him, saying, 'Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean.' He stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, 'I do choose. Be made clean! Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. Then Jesus said to him, 'See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." Matthew 8:1-4 (NRSV).

the apostles, the 'Catholic'[304] Church was described as a 'perfect society' since its earliest formation, and it was seen as 'subordinate to no other.'

Raeburn Lange states that, "Although no structures of the church organisation and leadership were defined by Jesus or even by the apostles, the early Christians were not without models for the local religious specialists they soon found necessary.[305] Yet it is noted that this organisational structure of the Church later become a threat for the community's stability, as Burtchaell writes:

> As initiative and power rose, by a sort of capillary action, from the leaders to the notables, it is not easy to believe that the latter would have left in existence an office which had the prerogative of convening the council of elders, with its ancient and traditional dignity, an office which would always stand as a threat to the solidarity of the community.[306]

According to Dulles, the Christian Church gradually devised its own organised visible structure that, to a degree, adopted the structures of the political government, where 'rights and powers' are bestowed at the discretion of its officers.[307] The church then became a socially stratified society where those in leadership positions (with power and authority) were the 'active subjects' in terms of decision-making, while the church members were the 'objects.' This historical observation leads Dulles to clarify the distinction between the church as Institution and the state in which the church moves into institutionalism. The following discussion will highlight and suggest reasons why the Church as an institution needs to be accepted, but not the values and structures that lead to institutionalism.

2.2   The Church as Institution[308]

Avery Dulles' models of the church known as 'Church as Servant'[309] and 'Church as Institution'[310] are the two distinct models employed here to ascertain and establish the concept of Servant Leadership.[311] Dulles argues that the mission of the church as an institution depends upon "[…] some stable organisational [structural] features. It could not unite men of many nations into a well-knit community of conviction, commitment, and

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[304] It was called the 'Universal' church before the Roman Empire made Christianity the state religion in the 4th century, after which it came to be called the 'Roman Catholic Church.'
[305] Lange, *Island Ministers*, 29.
[306] Burtchaell, *From Synagogue to Church*, 239.
[307] Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 2nd ed., 34.
[308] Ibid., 34-46.
[309] Ibid., 89-102.
[310] Ibid., 34-46.
[311] The other models of the Church, according to Dulles, are: (i) The Church as Mystical Communion, (ii) The Church as Sacrament, (iii) The Church as Herald, (iv) The Church and Eschatology, (v) The True Church (vi) The Church and the Churches, (vii) Ecclesiology and Ministry, and (viii) The Church and Revelation.

hope, and could not minister effectively to the needs of mankind, unless it had responsible officers and properly approved procedures."[312]

Dulles argues for the importance of two clear features which identify the church as an institution. First, it must have 'responsible officers,' meaning a group of exceptional leaders who are able to demonstrate a caring and relational approach to leadership. Responsible leaders are leaders who feel that they have a shared responsibility to look after and care for the common good of all members, without controlling or dictating to them.

Secondly, the church as institution must have 'approved procedures' ratified collectively through proper and communal considerations. In other words, any approved procedure or course of action should never be imposed by a 'single pastor-leader' as seen in the CEO or monocratic models (mentioned below), but should be an outcome of a mutual agreement.[313] These procedures, including "recognised ministers, accepted confessional formulas, and prescribed forms of worship," are features that characterise a well-established church.[314] The church depends on structures and procedures for its survival and growth. Dulles further makes the distinction that, while these procedures are "[…] fitting and proper… [they do] not necessarily imply institutionalism, any more than papacy implies papalism, or law implies legalism, or dogma implies dogmatism."[315]

Basil Butler's view of the historical church, cited by Dulles, is a society containing "… a constitution, a set of rules, a governing body, and … members who accept this constitution and these rules as binding on them."[316] Regarding Butler's viewpoint, Dulles argues that once these defined features are manipulated as primary,[317] church members will be viewed and used as a secondary entity; they will become objectified, such that they are likely to be treated as 'slaves' (*pologa*[318] or '*au'auna*) to achieve the wishes and the aims of those who wield authority in the church.

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[312] Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 34-35.
[313] Joseph H. Hellerman, *Embracing Shared Ministry: Power and Status in the Early Church and Why It Matters Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Ministry, 2013), 235.
[314] Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 35.
[315] Ibid.
[316] Ibid., 34.
[317] Ibid., 34-35.
[318] The term *pologa* used to translate the English words 'slaves' or 'slavery' is used in the same meaning as in the Book of Deuteronomy 6:12, "Take care that you do not forget the Lord, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of *slavery*."

The words *pologa* and *'au'auna* are borrowed concepts in the Samoan language, and the Samoan churches' inculcation of these terms has lessened the cultural value, meaning and usage of the Samoan word *tautua*.[319] Mosese Ma'ilo argues that

> The use of *'au'auna* […] is a deliberate re-signification of a subservient status in the Bible that allows unequal relationship of people. The present understanding of *'au'auna* is dominantly in the sense of 'to serve, or slave' accompanied by the biblical teachings of submission and radical obedience. *'Au'auna* or *'au'aunaga* belong particularly to the Christian Church, to explain the service given to the Church in the name of God. It is seldom used outside of the Church because the term *tautua* or the service rendered by the heirs to the 'title' is still used in the Samoan cultural context, and it is still captures the communalistic aspect of the Samoan way of life.[320]

Au'auna, 'au'aunaga and *tautua* are all different words to translate 'service' rendered to the church by its members, without reciprocity. This thesis argues that both *'au'auna* and *'au'aunaga* were intentionally translated and imposed to serve the interests of the imperial systems, where the term *'au'auna* became an imposed term in the Samoan vernacular. The right term to use is 'services rendered,' which is *tautua* (as depicted in the services provided by the extended family to the *matai* and, in return, by the *matai* to his/her family).

According to Bevans, the institutional model of the church is seen as the active subject, and the world as the object that the church acts upon or influences.[321] In general, the institutional model comes with 'privilege' which amounts to people becoming authoritative, being treated with great respect, and expecting material gifts as a reward for whatever they do.[322] The institutional model of the church understands members of the church as the world or environment for the church to use as resources to meet its needs. This leads us to consider the other side of the institutional model of the church – 'institutionalism' – which is believed to be substantially driving the current leadership of the MCS.

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[319] The word *tautua* is defined by Mosese Ma'ilo as "a service given by 'heirs' to the title." Since the 'title holder' or the *matai* is also an 'heir of the title,' he/she is also expected to render the same service to his/her family, who are owners of the 'title' bestowed upon him/her. Ma'ilo, *Bible-Ing My Samoan*, 221. *Tautua* is a freer, more liberal term in which the person who performs the service should never act under any form of oppression, rather rendering the *tautua* in fulfilment of a duty that is readily accepted.
[320] Ibid., 217.
[321] Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 89. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 89.
[322] Lange, *Island Ministers*, 78.

2.3 Institutionalism and the Church

Institutionalism can best be described as the state in which the church considers its institutional element as 'primary,' especially when this system treats its officers as chiefs.[323] Once the church creates a culture of privilege, where church officials are teachers, sanctifiers and rulers claiming the authority of Christ, that is institutionalism.[324]

Additionally, the institutional model of the church came to claim over time that the church's theology and teachings must be accepted without question as truth, that the church is perfect and good and the world is sinful and bad, and that therefore the church should rule over the world. Indeed, this was the normative view from the patristic era until it was challenged in the scholastic era, particularly in the thirteenth century.[325]

Institutionalism is described by Sally Morgenthaler, in relation to the Evangelical Church of America, as the 'CEO model', a derivative of a business model which well defines the leadership style she experiences in her own local church. Morgenthaler unveils the failure of this model and why it is unworkable for the contemporary church, especially when the model favours "one leader's vision; one take on what God is up to in the community, the nation, and the world; one single, often blurry, and out-of-context frame in this speeding movie we call life."[326] Morgenthaler argues that the CEO model is a prime illustration of institutionalism, and that it has a huge impact in the mission of the church when the pastor treats his/her calling to ministry as that of CEO or boss.

Pastors operating under the CEO model increase the possibility for their positions to become domineering and authoritarian, as expressed in the 'it's my way or the highway' approach, which is an autocratic and top-down form of leadership.[327] This CEO image is reflected in the MCS's golden rule that all ministers 'must listen and obey' to the senior ministers, and all ministers to the Superintendents (Leaders) of Synods.[328] In this sense, Boff was right when he said 'institutions mean power' or, in other words, "power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely."[329] Therefore, the Church as institution

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[323] Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 35.
[324] Ibid., 89.
[325] Ibid., 34-36.
[326] Sally Morgenthaler, "Leadership in a Flattened World: Grassroots Culture and the Demise of the CEO Model," in *An Emergent Manifesto of Hope*, ed. Doug Paggit and Tony Jones (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 182.
[327] Ibid., 181.
[328] MCS, *O Le Faavae Ma Le Tulafono*, 17.
[329] Leonardo Boff, *Church, Charism and Power: Liberation Theology and the Institutional Church* (London: SCM Press, 1985), 48.

model is not "the community of believers who give witness in the world to the presence of the risen Christ" but, rather, "the organization of this community with its hierarchy, sacred powers, dogmas, rites, canons, and traditions."[330]

Institutionalism is described by Byungohk Lee as 'monological' in approach, with reference to the mission of the church. Lee argues that the monological approach not only ignores the "dialogical way of mission" but also turns a deaf ear to the voices from the margins.[331] Lee admires Bevans' and Schroeder's call for the mission of the church to have a "prophetic dialogue" not only "with other faiths" but around "justice for the poor/oppressed."[332]

Ignorance of those at the periphery, or at the bottom of the pyramid of the church hierarchy, leads to many problems. To put this in the Samoan context, an anonymous author of a *Letter to the Editor* published in the Samoan daily newspaper, the *Samoa Observer*, writes, with reference to monies giving to the EFKS Church,

> The bulk [of the money] is spent on the church's institutional aims while the poor are getting poorer, the needy are getting desperate, and people are getting lost right under the church's noses as people struggle with the daily pulls and pushes of an increasingly materialistic world. […] The poor with little or nothing to give end up with guilty complexes and no understanding of God's immense grace.[333]

Another open complaint in the *Samoa Observer* is against the Roman Catholic Church:

> We have always contributed generously to the Church and to the priests, especially in the building of the new cathedral. Now I see the Church greedily lusting for yet more, more, more. Although we have been parishioners at *Mulivai* [name of the parish] for three generations, we are now being forced to register as *Mulivai* parishioners and pay a $200 registration fee. Forced? […] Religion has become big business now in our country. The theological colleges are full of students hoping to make it big time by becoming preachers. Great non-taxable compensation packages, abundant benefits, high social status, no manual labour, cars, and all the food they can eat.[334]

Speaking of the current situation in the MCS, Tuivanu Tuivanu, an ordained minister and scholar of the MCS, states:

> Buildings and infrastructures are built not only to cater for administrative purposes, but also to make a strong impression of what the church can do. They are also a symbol of

[330] Ibid., 50.
[331] Byungohk Lee, "A Missional Hermeneutic of the Other: A Dialogue between Levinas and Confucianism," *Missiology* 41, no. 4 (2013): 416.
[332] Ibid., 417.
[333] I. N. L, "Letter to the Editor: Church and Money," *Samoa Observer*, March 25, 2016.
[334] B. P. Pani, "Letter to the Editor: Greedy, More Greedy and Most Greedy, "*Samoa Observer,* June 9, 2017.

church authority and power. Institutionalism fosters an understanding that the church is a hierarchical institution that judiciously rules the church members.[335]

In light of the above, the values of institutionalism easily become a real threat to the church as an institution. Both the *Letters to the Editor* and Tuivanu's views suggest that the churches are building the status of church leaders at the expense of the disadvantaged, who are the church members. In this sense, as Dulles argues, "institutionalism is a deformation of the true nature of the Church – a deformation that has unfortunately affected the Church at certain periods of its history, and one that remains in every age a real danger to the institutional church."[336]

This is a timely call for the church to abandon "its search for glory in order to better serve the community and the Lord present within it."[337] Even in the hierarchical structure of the MCS, the servant leader model set by Jesus Christ as the Lord who serves can still be better reflected in its existing structure.[338]

One of the two models of the 'Church as Servant' is significant here, where it not only articulates the image of 'Servant-Lord' (in Chapter 3), but also connects to the cultural practice of *fetausia'i* ('reciprocal caring') in Chapter 4. Since *fetausia'i* implicates *fa'aaloalo*[339] ('respect') and *tautua*[340] ('service'), servant leadership can also be regarded and described through these cultural lens.[341] In other words, the cultural concept of *fetausia'i* ('relationality/reciprocity') should be mirrored in the church's institutional model and mission, particularly the leader-member relationship in the 'Church as the Body of

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[335] Tuivanu Tuivanu, "Taufaleali'i: Reorienting Theology of Leadership Towards Mission in the Methodict Church in Samoa" (MTh thesis, Pacific Theological College, 2013), 11.
[336] Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 35.
[337] Boff, *Church, Charism and Power*, 48.
[338] Jesus said to his disciples: "It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of man came not to be served but serve, and give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:26-28).
[339] *Fa'aaloalo* involves manners in which *tautua* (the service performed by family heirs, not a paid servant) serves the *matai* (chief).
[340] The term refers to those of the lower rank, i.e. *taule'ale'a* or the untitled man (man without a chiefly title). Sometimes the status of *taulele'a* (plural form of *taule'ale'a*) seems inferior as it always associated with their service rendered to their superiors (*matai,* parents and sisters), such as cooking and serving food.
[341] Feleterika Nokise magnificently displays and amalgamates the two cultural concepts of *fa'aaloalo* and *tautua* when he highlights "…the display of respect warranted by the status of those for whom the food has been prepared for. In other words, one must be respectful during the whole operation. You [*tautua*] show respect [*fa'aaloalo*] in the way you prepare the food as well as in the manner in which it is presented. In this way, one learns a number of relational realities that have been woven together to reveal not only the meaning and understanding of what respect is, but also its value as a cultural reference point that defines and determines both structure and process." Feleterika Nokise, "Keynote Address: Weavers of Meanings and Patterns," in *Relational Hermeneutics Conference Report* (Suva, Fiji: Pacific Theological College, 2016), 7.

Christ.'[342] Hill notes the focus on the church as community in the early church: "Understandably, the New Testament authors were more concerned about matters within the church than without. Insofar as they dealt with issues of structure, their concern was usually the good order (and therefore the good functioning) of Christian communities."[343] Greenleaf adds that since people are the programmers and authors of systems and structures, "ultimately, … we must work with people to give them a new concept of their stewardship and to redefine leadership as service and stewardship."[344]

3. CHURCH AS SERVANT

In the institutional models, the official church teaches, sanctifies and rules with the authority of Christ. Unlike the 'Servant' model, all other models, including the institutional model, give a primary or privileged position to the institutional church. The church is also seen in all these models as the active subject, and the world as the object that the church acts upon or influences.[345]

The model of the Church as Servant, according to Dulles, is framed around the pastoral letter of the Catholic Church, "The Servant Church," issued by Richard Cardinal Cushing in Boston, Massachusetts in 1966. The letter outlines the image of 'Christ the Servant':

> Jesus came not only to proclaim the coming of the Kingdom, he came also to give himself for its realization. He came to observe, to heal, to reconcile, to bind up wounds. Jesus, we may say, is in an exceptional way the Good Samaritan. He is the one who comes alongside of us in our need and in our sorrow, he extends himself for our sake. He truly dies that we might live and ministers to us that we might be healed.[346]

Later in the same letter is the claim that the church, being the Body of Christ, is thus called to be a 'suffering servant' and a 'servant church':

> So it is that the Church announces the coming of the Kingdom not only in word, through preaching and proclamation, but more importantly in work, in her ministry of reconciliation, of binding up wounds, of suffering service, of healing. […] And the Lord was the 'man for others,' so must the Church be the 'community for others.'[347]

The Pastoral Letter not only identifies what the historical Jesus came to earth to do, but also targets the church as the representative of the Servant Jesus. The authenticity of

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[342] The concept 'church' is defined by Lange as 'Body of Christ' or 'comprising all baptised people.' Lange, *Island Ministers*, 29.
[343] Hill, *Servant of All: Status, Ambition, and the Way of Jesus*, 159.
[344] Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 3.
[345] Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 89.
[346] Ibid., 92. According to Dulles, this is also found in the above-mentioned pastoral letter, on page 6.
[347] Ibid. Also found in the Pastoral Letter issued by Richard Cardinal Cushing, cited in Ibid., 6-7.

Jesus' words and deeds are demonstrated in the four Gospels, Mathew, Mark, Luke and John. For Agosto, the gospels are consistent in presenting the audience on which Jesus focused his attention as "the poor and the outcast, those suffering the most, those to whom nobody, not even the established political and religious leaders who could help, pays attention. Jesus identified with those who suffer, and, therefore, according to the gospels, became a great leader."[348]

Dulles summarises Christ as the servant image of Jesus based on Dietrich Bonhoeffer's view of Jesus as "the man without selfishness and without defences, the man for others."[349] Thus, in order for the church to become the witness of Christ, it must therefore adopt Jesus' style of leadership.

Undoubtedly, among those in need in Jesus' time were the peasant population who carried the 'greatest tax burdens' (economic burdens) of his day.[350] Those people were part of the target audience in Jesus' Great Sermon in Matthew 11:28-29: "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (NRSV)

In contrast to the call to the church to be a servant to its members, this thesis argues that this call has been reversed in the contemporary church, at least in Samoa, where church members expected to serve the church obediently and wholeheartedly. Without a doubt, it is the duty of Samoan church members to give financially and materially to meet the needs of the church; however, this should not become a heavy burden because of the increase in demands that are beyond the means of the members.

3.1   Serving the Church through 'Gifts' or 'Things of Love' in the *Fa'a-Samoa*

Before the arrival of Christianity in Samoa, the common practice used to demonstrate caring and support among Samoans was the reciprocating of material belongings as 'gifts' or *mea-alofa*. Saunoa Sila argues that this reciprocal giving still seen among Samoans today is a cultural practice established long before the arrival of the missionaries.[351] Yet this

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[348] Agosto, *Servant Leadership: Jesus & Paul*, 53.
[349] Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 95.
[350] Agosto, *Servant Leadership: Jesus & Paul*, 57.
[351] Saunoa Sila, *La Laau O Le Sopoaga: A Plant for a Journey* (Matafele, Samoa: Methodist Printing Press, 2015), 46.

exchanging of material gifts as part of *fa'aaloalo* and *tautua*, in the view of the early missionaries, was a covetous practice.[352]

In any cultural formality or etiquette, such as funerals and weddings, gifts are exchanged between the two main parties and other parties involved. The act of gift exchange is called *fa'aaloaloga* or ceremonial gifts. This exchange of gifts in the context of the *fa'a-Samoa* is generated out of "freewill … where the Samoans generously offer gifts so as to give social and economic support for the Samoan cultural celebrations and for family obligations, given as an expression of love, support and care."[353] For instance, in a funeral ceremony, the visiting families prepare a *si'i-alofa* or "gifts presented out of love" in the form of fine mats, food and money, as a family contribution to the deceased's family.[354] In return, the deceased's family presents a *sua-fa'atamāli'i* (the highest form of cultural presentations of ceremonial gifts) to the visiting families involving fine mats, food and money.

Byron M. S. Seiuli explains that "the process of giving and receiving *mea-alofa* signifies connectedness."[355] Therefore, the public presentation of *fa'aaloalo* strengthens the *va-fealoa'i* and affirms the intention and meaning of *mea-alofa* or "a thing of love" or gifting in the context of *fa'a-Samoa*. Fineaso Faalafi defines *fa'aaloaloga* as the "material and behavioural expression of hospitality between hosting and visiting parties."[356] *Fa'aaloaloga* signifies close spiritual, emotional, genealogical and friendship bonds, or the acknowledgement of the *'va'* (sacred relational space) between individuals, families and villages. Without a doubt, this system of gift exchange is an act and expression of *fetausia'i* or caring for one another.

However, things have changed somewhat since the arrival of Christianity. The same system of gift-giving was adapted by the missionaries to achieve the goals of their mission. They required such material giving in order to develop the infrastructure and sustain the

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[352] Fineaso T. S. Fa'alafi, *Carrying the Faith: Samoan Methodism 1828–1928* (Apia, Samoa: Piula Theological College, 2005), 73.

[353] Lotofaga Lima, "Towards a Christian Ethics of Economic Wealth in the Context of the Methodist Church in Samoa" (BD thesis, Pacific Theological College, 1992).

[354] The word *si'i* means an act of embracing by hugging, holding or carrying someone with both hands, a drama showing love in the process of nurturing and caring, and *alofa* is 'love'. The significance of *si'i alofa* implies the essence of caring, love and respect. See Mercy Ah Siu-Maliko, "Public Theology: Core Values and Domestic Violence in Samoan Society" (PhD thesis, University of Otago, 2015), 90.

[355] Byron Malaela Sotiata Seiuli, "The Meaalofa Therapeutic Approach in Counselling with Pacific Clients," in *Pacific Identities and Well-Being: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, ed. Margaret Nelson Agee, et al. (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2013), 121.

[356] Fa'alafi, *Carrying the Faith: Samoan Methodism 1828–1928*, 115.

mission of the respective churches. Malama Meleisea explains the modification of the Samoan cultural *mea-alofa* into the newly introduced economic system called 'church offering' or *taulaga*.[357] Meleisea states that the

> … accumulation of goods for tithes and church building was required, and the missions traded in various commodities on the international market, but the Samoans organised accumulation of goods for the church as they did for other traditional purposes such as chiefly installations, funerals and weddings, within the framework of the 'āiga and nu'u under the direction of the fono and later of church councils.[358]

3.2   The Offering System in the Church as *Tautua*

The practice of exchanging gifts in the Samoan way was never a burden in the pre-missionary era. *Fa'aaloalo* is the very nerve which determines the survival of the *fa'a-Samoa* (Samoan way of life). However, after the arrival of Christianity, it became "a complex system of annual monetary collections (*taulaga/me*), weekly donations, tithes and offerings, as a means of financing pastors' residences (rural and urban), new church buildings and expansion."[359] This has become problematic for many families attending Samoan churches, both locally and abroad.[360]

In the historical account of the MCS, while the early missionary Dyson advanced the new organisational model for the Methodist mission the same year he arrived (1857), the culture of *fa'aaloalo* was without a doubt the major contributing factor in the successful execution of the offering model, until today. Seeing *fa'aaloalo* as an advantage for the institutional church agenda that was being instituted locally, Dyson misapprehended the value behind the generous support of Samoan people in the form of *tautua* (service). In *tautua*, one person, family or group serves the other person, family or group, but in a respectful way for the benefit of families (*'āiga*) and villages (*nu'u*), through the giving of *fa'aaloaloga* (ceremonial gifts).[361] Today *fa'aaloalo* has been perversely twisted to become a commodity for the material survival of the church. Consequently, it has become an

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[357] The word *taulaga* explicates the acts of sacrifice made by people through various means to the church.
[358] Malama Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa: Traditional Authority and Colonial Administration in the History of Western Samoa* (Suva, Fiji: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1987), 20.
[359] Alec Thornton, Maria T. Kerslake and Tony Binns, "Alienation and Obligation: Religion and Social Change in Samoa," *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 51, no.1 (April 2010): 6.
[360] Mosese Ma'ilo, "Tautua Lotu: Contextual Theology's Contribution to the Economic Development Practices, Ideologies, Networks and Imaginations in Samoa," in *Woven Together? Christianity and Development between New Zealand and the Pacific* (Wellington: Victoria University of Wellington, 2016), 5.
[361] *Fa'aaloaloga* is the Samoan way of showing respect, appreciation and honour to the other party.

increasing burden for most church members in Samoa today. Samoan researchers are calling for all church leaders to "remember that the church must remain an organization for the physical and, most importantly, the spiritual wellbeing of its members."[362]

3.3   *Tautua-lotu:*[363] **A Union of Culture (*Tautua*) and Church (*Lotu*) Offerings**

The theological meaning of *tautua-lotu* or "service to the church" highlights the importance of sacrificial giving (theological) as a pragmatic (cultural) way of serving God. *Tautua-lotu* is an ideology that serves to pacify the demand for more offerings and material gifts to the church in the name of development. *Tautua-lotu* summarises the effective union of the cultural (*fa'a-Samoa*) and religious values (*lotu*) in a praxis theology that is manifested through social, spiritual or economic development. According to Mosese Ma'ilo, "*Tautua lotu* controls and drives one's service to unrestrained horizons. It puts an end to any form of dialogue or argument with any opposition, which are mostly the young or the 'budget generation'. […] *Tautua lotu* indicates the inseparable union of culture and Christianity."[364]

Unquestionably, the practice of giving and receiving of material goods in the *fa'a-Samoa* was traditionally a cultural practice deeply rooted in *tautua* and *fa'aaloalo* for the family, village and guests. Exchanging of *mea-alofa* or "things of love" (material gifts) is not about gaining material wealth; rather, it is about showing respect, honour and appreciation for the other party (family or guests). Meleisea submits that "the Samoan system made economic individualism impossible."[365]

However, demanding more and more monetary gifts to support the mission of the church unfairly attempts to amalgamate the Samoan culture of *tautua* and *fa'aaloalo* or hospitality into the development of the church.[366] Jeffrey F. Keuss submits that placing

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[362] Unasa F. Va'a Asofou So'o, and Telesia Lafotanoa, "Executive Summary," in *The Samoa National Human Development Report 2006: Sustainable Livelihoods in a Changing Samoa*, ed. Unasa F. Va'a, Asofou So'o, and Telesia Lafotanoa (Apia: National University of Samoa, 2006), 38.

[363] According to Mosese Ma'ilo, *tautua-lotu* is an "action word with emphasis on its expression not in words, but in deeds." The word *tautua* is one of the pillars of the *matai* system, deeply rooted in the *fa'a-Samoa.* The word *lotu* is "adopted from the Tongan dialect for religion/Christianity/Church. It indicates faith, worship, and things pertaining to God/Supernatural." Ma'ilo, "Tautua Lotu," 3.

[364] Ibid.

[365] Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, 18.

[366] Ibid.

emphasis on such material demands as a priority of the church definitely becomes the church's greatest weakness.[367] Keuss' argument is absolutely valid.

3.4 MCS Ministers: The Call to Serve

Whether a trainee (students at the Methodist Theological College) for the ministry, probationer, ordained minister, or a member of the Executive, ministers were, are and will always be trained to become faithful servants of the MCS. Thus, the following discussion clarifies the servant calling of the church and its leaders as a central factor to be considered in envisioning the MCS' future. This calling implies that the MCS is summoned to serve and to model service, whereby members are empowered to become servants of others, both within and outside the perimeters of the church.

The utmost expectations of all ministers of the MCS are to serve in a parish by becoming a *faife'au tausinu'u* ('parish minister'). Executing or administering the call for MCS ministers is guided by its rules and regulations. At the Synod's Meeting for the New Zealand South Synod, held in June 2016, we (all ministers present) were asked by the Superintendent to pronounce the 'Twelve Rules for Ministers in Samoan' inscribed in the Constitution of the MCS.[368] Some of these rules, such as *Rule 8* and *Rule 11*, are directly related to service in the ministry, as prescribed below:

> Rule #8: "*Aua le fia ali'i, o le aufaigaluega, o auauna i tagata uma*" or "Do nothing as a gentleman/lord, ministers are servants of all people."
>
> Rule #11: "*E tasi lava lau fe'au. O le fa'aola o agaga ina ia maua tagata o Iesu. Ia tausia lava i lenei galuega. Ia asiasi i tagata uma o e ua latou fia maua oe, atoa ma e ua latou le fia maua oe*" or "You only have one responsibility: to save souls and find people for Jesus. Do this work carefully. Visit all people, those who need you, even those who don't."[369]

Imbedded in the two cited rules are two important aspects: (a) to remain humble in our service for God; and (b) the service is soul-oriented and not material-oriented. Winning souls for God is defined by Gustavo Gutiérrez as proclaiming "salvation in Christ through words and deeds."[370] Gutiérrez is saying that the attitude of a servant of God must be

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[367] Jeffrey F. Keuss, *Freedom of the Self : Kenosis, Cultural Identity, and Mission at the Crossroads* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2010), 8.
[368] "O Tulafono e Sefulu ma le Lua Mo Faifeau sa Tusia e Sione Uesile," MCS Synod Ministerial Meeting, Invercargill, June 3, 2016. Adopted from the MCS Constitution, MCS, *O Le Faavae Ma Le Tulafono*, 22-24.
[369] Translation mine.
[370] Gustavo Gutierrez, "Where Will the Poor Sleep," in *On the Side of the Poor*, ed. Gustavo Gutierrez and Cardinal Gerrard Ludwig Muller (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015), 86.

coherent both in what we preach and in our actions.[371] The serving role of a minister must be reflected in the minister's service as a steward or shepherd of a flock in the parish.

The twelve rules designed for MCS ministers are derived from John Wesley's 'Twelve Rules for 'Preachers' and/or 'Anglican Priests.'[372] However, there have been some variations of these rules during the course of Methodism's development.[373] According to Barrie Tabraham, the 'original rules' were initially designed by John Wesley and recorded in the *Minutes of First Annual Conference, Friday, 29 June 1744*.[374] He contends that the main purpose of these rules was "to maintain a balance and avoid the danger of preachers becoming either 'gentlemen' above their station in life or undisciplined fanatics."[375] The idea of being a 'gentleman' in 18th century England is about have a position and status in society. Methodists were usually working-class people and they may have been tempted to become ministers in order to move up in society.

There is a major difference between the MCS's twelve rules at present and John Wesley's original rules, which is an issue worth mentioning. In the original twelve rules of John Wesley, rule 9 states: "Take no money of any one. If they give you food when you are hungry or clothes when you need them, it is good. But not silver or gold. Let there be no pretence to say we grow rich by the gospel."[376] This raises a question as to why 'rule 9' in Wesley's original document is not found in the MCS's twelve rules. At any rate, the evidence is clear that the initial twelve rules for Methodist ministers, which are clearly biblically based, forbids them from accumulating personal wealth from those they are called to serve (parishioners).

What was, is and will always be crucial in the mission and call of the MCS *faife'au* is the mandate to serve people, and not to be served. Unlike the many other prestigious titles[377] bestowed upon Samoan ministers, regardless of which denomination they serve, the title *faife'au* is legitimately embedded in the Constitution of the MCS. This title is reflected in the titles: *Faife'au Tausinu'u* or *Faife'au Tausi Matāgaluega* (village or parish

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[371] Ibid., 87.
[372] According to Barrie Tabraham, "the term 'preachers' or 'helpers' was referring to 'either laymen or Anglican priests'…The senior ordained 'helpers' came to be called 'Assistants to Mr Wesley', and these were the forerunners of the present day Superintendents." Barrie W. Tabraham, *The Making of Methodism* (London: Epworth Press, 1995), 43.
[373] MCS, *O Le Faavae Ma Le Tulafono*, 22-24.
[374] Tabraham, *The Making of Methodism*, 43.
[375] Ibid.
[376] Ibid.
[377] Refer to Chapter 3.

ministers or carers); *Faife'au Fa'amāoni* (ordained ministers); *Faife'au Mālolo Manumalō* (pensioners, or ministers who have reached their retirement age (not over 70) and are still serving); *Faife'au Mālolo Gasegase* (ministers not able to serve due to extended illness, but not entitled to benefits or to be called pensioners); and *Faife'au Fa'ata'ita'i* (probationer ministers).

3.5   *Faife'au* Reflects Servanthood

The term *faife'au* derives from two Samoan words, *fai* ('to serve, do or carry out') and *fe'au* ('a message, assignment or task'). From these definitions, the term *faife'au* is a product of the verb 'serve' and the noun 'message', thus indicating a servant, doer and carrier of the message, assignment or task. The term *faife'au* has traditionally denoted the service or *tautua* rendered by young or untitled men or *taulele'a* to their families and village. Hence, the word never suggests someone being in a position of power, authority, prestige or wealth, but merely the one who serves.

As we have seen, the title *faife'au* is the most common term for ministers in Samoa, including those in the MCS, and the closest English translation of the word is 'servant.' The wife of the *faife'au* is given the polite title *faletua* (formed by two words – *fale* = house and *tua* = back). The title *faletua* signifies the relationship between the back house (referring to the hut/kitchen) and the front house (where parents and sisters are), wherein the back house serves or *tautua* the front house with food, drinks and any other chores assigned by the front fale.

3.6   *Faife'au Tausinu'u* or *Tausi Matāgaluega*: The Village Servant Leader

The true meaning of the term *faife'au* is mirrored in the title given to a minister serving in a parish – *Faife'au Tausinu'u (faife'au* = servant, *tausi* = to care for, and *nu'u* = village), or *Faife'au Tausi-Matāgaluega (Matāgaluega* = parish*)*. Their primary roles are to serve by sharing God's message of salvation in the village or parish, and by meeting people's spiritual needs (praying for their salvation, preaching the Word); psychological needs (offering counselling, words of encouragements and comfort); and physical needs (praying for healing and feeding the needy).

SUMMARY

To attribute the notion of servant leadership entirely to Greenleaf would constitute a lack of careful attention, given the other perspectives discussed in this chapter. Even though the concept of servant leadership is ascribed to Greenleaf as the one who first introduced and

disseminated it to the educational and business domains, the principle of servant leadership has been taught and embodied by Jesus Christ and his disciples almost two millennia ago, much earlier than the works of Greenleaf.

The idea of leaders serving their people is deeply embedded in numerous passages in both the Old and New Testaments, although the precise designation 'servant leadership' is non-existent in the Bible. This thesis surveys and discusses two particular instances in the Bible where Jesus Christ taught and demonstrated servant leadership, as recorded in the Gospels of John 13 and Mark 10 respectively.

In the course of this chapter, I have argued that 'servant leadership' is the most biblically and theologically compelling model of church leaders, which creates a common ground for both church leaders and members to share not only ideas and plans, but how to work together as the Body of Christ to achieve these common plans (the church's mission), in line with the way of Christ. Such leadership not only makes decisions using the brain and the heart, but more importantly, by living out the call to service in practice. As described in numerous instances in the chapter, servant leadership is potentially the best paradigm for leadership in the MCS, as servant leaders are willing to lower themselves to the level of the people and fully embrace everyone in the community, as seen in the ministry of Jesus himself.

As we are living in today's challenging world, people are not only looking for a deeper purpose and meaning to equip them to meet the many challenges they are facing, but also searching for guiding principles that actually work and are relevant in solving the problems in their own contexts.[378] In this milieu, servant leadership offers an antidote to the weaknesses of the institutional model, or the institutionalism that has pervaded the MCS. The servant leadership model establishes what God has instituted in Jesus Christ as God's Servant to the world, or what Hill calls the 'Servant for All.'[379]

The servant leadership model can reverse the view of the *faife'au* as the antithesis of true *tautua* and create a new faith community in which the *faife'au* serves in the ways of Christ. The serving attitude of the *faife'au* (representing the church) towards church members must be the reflection of the caring duty of the church (based on *fa'aaloalo* and *tautua*) rather than emphasising the *faife'au's* obligation to lead. The two terms, *fa'aaloalo*

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[378] Spears and Lawrence, eds., *Focus on Leadership Servant-Leadership for the Twenty-First Century*, xi.
[379] Hill, *Servant of All: Status, Ambition, and the Way of Jesus*.

and *tautua*, are constantly used indigenously to underscore the significance of our human relationships. In the Samoan worldview, it is through *fa'aaloalo* and *tautua* that harmony is created and sustained.

The servant leadership model also leads us to underscore the fact that those selected for pastoral work must be judged to have the vocation and the aptitude to represent Christ and to act by his authority, not their own. In other words, if Christ served the people he encountered in his community, especially the 'lost and the least', the downtrodden and the broken-hearted, so too should this be the model for the service expected of all *faife'au* as representatives of the visible Body of Christ.

In summary, the mission of the church is the ongoing ministry of Christ today, and it must be focused on *service* to human needs in the social, economic and political orders, as well as the preaching of the Word and the celebration of the sacraments. As Cimperman puts it, "[a]nd they were sent. So are we. […] Now together, we go forth to love and serve."[380]

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[380] Maria Cimperman, *Social Analysis for the 21st Century : How Faith Becomes Action*, Social Analysis for the Twenty-First Century (Orbis Books, 2015), 226.

CHAPTER THREE

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY: A CHRISTOLOGICAL VIEW OF JESUS CHRIST AS THE SERVANT-LORD

INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 1, I discussed the influences of white missionaries' theologies, imperial and centralised control of the indigenous Samoan culture and their amalgamation of Western stratified social systems in the early establishment of Methodism (and the London Missionary Society) in Samoa. The present hierarchical structure of the MCS is a direct reflection of the British Empire's ideologies of gender, race and class accomplished via missionary work. As a result, the dogmatic ideology of *E lē fa'a'ele'elea se faife'au*[381] undeniably imposes limitations and restrictions on the 'serving' role of the Church and its ministers.

Clifford Geertz argues that the threat of any ideology is when it becomes "doctrinaire" and/or "totalistic."[382] It is doctrinaire when it claims a "complete and exclusive possession of political truth and abhors compromise;" and it is totalistic in the sense that "it aims to order the social and cultural life in the image of its ideas, futuristic in that it works towards a utopian culmination of history in which such an ordering will be realised."[383]

Following Geertz, this chapter focuses on a theological view grounded in an anthropological starting point, in which, as Howard Stone and James Duke suggest, "theologians are to look first at Christian faith in the context of human living [as referred to in previous chapters] and then seek to ascertain the meaning of God's message to the world … as revealed in Scripture."[384]

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[381] This is translated to mean that "pastors [including white missionaries] are not supposed to perform tasks of the lower ranks." It seems that no one has seriously attempted to contest this ideology, in the past or the present day, regarding its truthfulness. This expression is a clear image of the way Samoans treated the missionaries in the past (like Peter Turner, 1835–1839) and the *faife'au* in the present, claiming this to be part of the Samoan culture of *fa'aaloalo* and *tautua*. See also footnotes 118 and 119, pp. 28-29, Chapter 1.

[382] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 197.

[383] Ibid.

[384] Howard W. Stone and James O. Duke, *How to Think Theologically* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1996), 56.

The biblical and Christological view of Jesus as the 'Servant-Lord' will be discussed contextually below, as the *matai tautua*.[385] What will be established in this chapter offers a different perspective, and anticipates a removal of this caveat ("the ideology") which is placed on the leadership of the church. Based on a frequent Samoan cultural practice and the theology of biblical contextualisation,[386] this thesis constructs a more relational, reciprocal, inclusive and practical model rooted in the practise of *fetausia'i* (reciprocal caring).

The first part of this chapter will establish the 'lordship' status of Christ revealed in Scriptures. In the second part, I will discuss the theology behind Jesus' teaching 'to serve others but not to be served by others.' The servant status of Jesus which he applied in his ministry will help us to better understand the context from which the biblical narratives referring to his leadership emerges. This chapter thus aims to establish a more biblical foundation on which to build a concrete application set by Jesus for the MCS in the contemporary setting. In fact, the Christological view of Christ as both Lord and Servant is foundational to this chapter, focusing on Christ's mission as set forth in the Gospel accounts and the apostle Paul's view in the epistles.

The following is an exploration of Matthew 20:20-28, John 13:1-17 and Philippians 2:6-11, which will be discussed in light of two theological themes: (a) the 'lordship' title/status of Jesus; and (b) *kenosis*[387] – the 'lord is becoming the servant-slave' – with reference to the one who suffers on the cross.[388] Unsurprisingly, both themes point to Jesus

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[385] *Matai tautua* is literally translated 'serving-chiefs' or the one (chief or minister) who serves all members of his/her family, village and community in all aspects of life. See also Chapter 4, pages 127-29, Sections 4.1-4.3.

[386] "In the 1960's, theories of indigenisation were being influenced by issues raised by the translation of the Bible into local languages and by terminology being developed in linguistic generally. Critical approaches to bible translation came to prefer the idea of dynamic equivalence to an earlier focus on literal translation … By the 1970s it was more widely accepted that concern for indigenisation also required fresh thinking about how faith was expressed in local contexts, even if some of the old fears remained. A solution was found in the language of contextualisation, which was borrowed from its usage in linguistics and in 1972 was deliberately applied to funding projects supported by the World Council of Churches (WCC) through its Theological Education Fund. … Contextualisation offered the possibility of being able both to pick up concern for indigenisation and to avoid the connotation of syncretism, which was regarded a serious risk by Western church leaders." John Roxborogh, "Protestant Theological Education, Indigenisation and Contextualisation in Singapore and Malaysia, 1948-1979," *New Zealand Journal of Asias Studies* 18, no. 2 (December 2016): 72-73. In his article, Roxborogh put the term contextualisation in its simplest imagery by "using the image of being rooted in the local soil – Christianity should not be a pot-plant carried from place to place unattached to its contexts." (72)

[387] 'Kenosis' means the 'self-emptying' of God as revealed in Christ's cross narrative and his physical suffering. It is a process of humiliation before exaltation.

[388] The place where both God's honour and glory is revealed. This is the climax of his service revealed in his death on the cross, before returning to his majestic splendour, where he is sitting at the right hand of God.

as the One who is descended from his heavenly throne as 'God-Son' and who takes the human form of a 'servant' and/or 'slave' to show God's care for the world through his earthly ministry; this is also known as the 'two natures' of Christ, which will be discussed at the outset of this chapter.

1. JESUS CHRIST *is Both Lord and Servant/Slave*

In the theology of the Triune God, God is understood in the "divine relations of the *Father*, *Son* and *Holy Spirit*."[389] However, given the limitations of this research, I will focus on establishing the relationship between God-the-'Father' and God-the-'Son' (Jesus Christ). Andrew Lincoln suggests that the Gospel of John shows significant evidence of Jesus' relationship to both God (divinity) and man (humanity).[390]

Although the gospel of John distinguishes Jesus from God (Father), this does not deny the fact that Jesus is God as in the Logos ["Word"] is God (John 1:2). In the same manner, Bauckham argues that "Jesus Christ is intrinsic to the unique and eternal identity of God."[391] This view of God through Jesus suggests a God who relates, connects and shares His life with people. The relationship between God the Father and His Son Jesus is well established, as they are described as being 'One' (John 10:30).

While these 'two natures' known as the 'divinity and humanity of Christ' are debated in the biblical and theological scholarship,[392] Moltmann's distinction between these two natures of Christ offers a persuasive logic. Moltmann writes,

> The intellectual bar to this came from the philosophical concept of God, according to which God's being is incorruptible, unchangeable, indivisible, incapable of suffering and immortal; human nature, on the other hand, is transitory, changeable, divisible, capable of suffering and mortal. The doctrine of the two natures in Christ began from this fundamental distinction, in order to be able to conceive of the personal union of the two natures in Christ in the light of this difference.[393]

In view of the above, the union of the two natures and the suffering of Christ suffice to serve as a framework for Christological terminologies distinctly referring to Christ's

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[389] Upolu L. Vaai, "Motu Ma Le Taula: Towards an Island 'Let Be' Hermeneutics," *Pacific Journal of Theology* II, no. 53 (2015): 34.

[390] Andrew T. Lincoln, *The Gospel According to Saint John* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005), 59-70.

[391] Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2008), x.

[392] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*, 1st ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 227-28.

[393] Ibid.

divinity as 'Lord' (in Greek κύριος or *kyrios* and διάκονος or *diákonos*) and 'Servant' in human form.[394] Yet the presentation of Jesus in his human form is more than a mere servant (*diákonos*); rather, Jesus served God (Phil 1:1) and humans (John 13:5) the way 'slaves' (δοῦλοι or *douloi*) do.[395] Jesus' 'Servant' title derives from this understanding of 'Servant-Slave.' But how can this 'Servant-Lord' Christology integrate theologically into our socio-historical context and help us reflect on and evaluate our own existing systems of hierarchy in the church (MCS)? This question will be discussed below.

2. DISCOVERING INCARNATION CHRISTOLOGY: *What does it mean for church leadership today?*

Our approach to the biblical texts under consideration fully acknowledges "… the vast political and cultural differences that separate our [twenty-first century] world from that of the first century wherein slavery was commonplace, social mobility was comparatively rare, gender roles were rigid, and popular political reform was almost non-existent."[396] It will thus not be easy to interpret Jesus' title 'Servant-Lord' through a contextual lens that enables us to relate the biblical context of the first Christians to the contemporary leadership in the MCS. On the other hand, the contemporary church is pressed continually to draw critical conclusions as to how Scripture ought to inform its frequent practices.[397]

Had we lived in the mid-nineteenth century when some of our Samoan forefathers were excommunicated for resisting German colonial rule,[398] surely the New Testament toleration of slavery and command for slaves to be obedient to their masters (Eph 6:5)

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[394] The English word 'servant' in the ecclesial sense refers to "a particular helping role in the early church" or to an 'assistant.' Lange, *Island Ministers*, 30.

[395] The Greek word for 'slave' is δοῦλος or *doulos*, as in Paul's letter to the Philippians, where he referred to himself and Timothy as "slaves [*douloi*] of Christ" (Phil 1:1). See also Craig C. Hill, *Servant of All: Status, Ambition, and the Way of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B Errdmans, 2016), 169. The correct translation of the word 'slave' or *doulos* in the Samoan language is *pologa*, according to the definition rendered by G. B. Milner, *Samoan Dictionary*, 187. 'Slave' in the original Greek is *douloi*, sometimes translated as 'servant', 'minister' or *diakonos* (Greek) in the English Bible, and this may cause confusion because of the mistranslation. For instance, Phil 1:1 (NRSV) uses the Greek word *douloi* or 'slave' but it is translated in English as 'servant' meaning *diakonos*, which also means 'deacon' or 'minister' or '*au'auna* in Samoan. The Samoan Bible translation follows the English translation of the word 'servant' in John 13:16 and Phil 1:1. Chapter 2 argued that both *douloi*, translated as *pologa* or 'slave,' and *diakonos*, translated as '*au'auna* or 'servant,' have never existed as a cultural status in the Samoan context.

[396] Ibid., 153.

[397] Ibid., 154.

[398] One of the orator *matai* from the island of Savai'i by the name of Lauaki Namulau'ulu and eight other Samoan chiefs were deported to Saipan in the Mariana Islands due to their resistance to German rule with reference to Solf's (German Consular to Samoa) economic policies established in 1904. John Garrett, *Footsteps in the Sea: Christianity in Oceania to World War II* (Suva, Fiji and Geneva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, in association with World Council of Churches, 1992), 198-99, 402.

would not have been easily understood or accepted in abstract terms.[399] The resistance of the indigenous leaders was indeed against the institution of a 'master-servant' system attempted by the German colonial rulers and the European monarchical system fostered by 'missionaries and settlers' with an effort to abolish the Samoan chiefly egalitarian system.[400]

2.1 Jesus as Servant-Lord

Against this backdrop, our discussion of the 'Servant-Lord' title of Christ offers an alternative practice in relation to the negative worldview of 'master-servant.' On that note, it is helpful to recall Moltmann's version of Athanasius' view which states that, "God became man that we men might participate in God."[401] The assertion suggests two points: firstly, that the divine nature of God ("the Father") is transforming into human form ("servant/slave") through the incarnate Son, Jesus; and second, that the purpose for such transformation is for the salvation of humanity, as evident in the Christ event on the cross. Moltmann argues that without Jesus' 'humiliation on the cross,' his incarnation would have never be completed; and for that reason the "death of Jesus on the cross is the centre of all Christian theology."[402]

Bart Ehrman calls this juxtaposition (when the Lord/Jesus became a slave) an "incarnation Christology."[403] Ehrman states that John's Gospel presents Jesus as a 'divine being who became human' for the salvation of humankind: "Christ was a pre-existent divine being who became human before returning to God in heaven. Here, Jesus is not understood to be a human who is elevated to a divine status; instead, he is a heavenly being who condescends to become temporarily human. "[404]

In the same manner, Moltmann establishes that Jesus is the eternal presence of God among humans, and the world is saved only through Jesus.[405] Thus the divine-human form

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[399] Hill, *Servant of All: Status, Ambition, and the Way of Jesus*, 154.
[400] The German economic system definitely favoured the German copra company as 'chiefs' or 'masters;' Samoan copra farmers 'worked' for them as paid-servants (peasants) or *'au'auna totogi*. The British monarchical system would introduce a European system of 'lord-servant.' The political intentions of these foreign systems deliberately suppressed the traditional privileges of the orator chiefs in determining the shape of the Samoan indigenous government, the *Malo*. Malama Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa: Traditional Authority and Colonial Administration in the History of Western Samoa* (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1987), 2.
[401] Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 228.
[402] Ibid., 204.
[403] Bart D. Ehrman, *How Jesus Became God: The Exaltation of a Jewish Preacher from Galilee*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2014), 249.
[404] Ibid.
[405] Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 88.

of Jesus means that Jesus never detached from his divinity while living in human form. Paul argues that Jesus' high-class (divine/lordship) status was never misrepresented while taking the form of a slave on the "cross"[406] or when washing his disciples' feet. Paul explains to the Philippians (Phil. 2:6) that when Jesus took the form of a slave, this did not mean that his "form of God … equality with God" is "something to be exploited." In saying that Jesus took the 'form of a slave' (Phil. 2:7*b*), Paul meant that Jesus took the 'cross.' In the footwashing narrative, the same idea is portrayed in vv. 4-5, when Jesus "got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he [Jesus] poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him" (John 13: 4-5) (NRSV).

Although Jesus performed this menial task (and acted the same way that slaves do when washing guests' feet), yet his lordship status was never deprived. In fact, Jesus agreed with his disciples' acknowledgement of his Lordship by saying, "You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for that is what I am" (John 13:13). In Jesus' own words, he neither rejects the fact that he is the Lord, nor denies his degrading to the status of a slave when he washed his disciples' feet.

Richard Weymouth understands Jesus' humiliation (his death on the cross and being a foot washer) as "an expression of his divine identity and nature as is his exaltation."[407] This expression proposes a view that God is in heaven and at the same time present among humans. In other words, the incarnation of God through Jesus can be illuminated in the concept, 'God is relational.' This characteristic of God was manifested in the earthly ministry of Jesus as Servant-Lord, and in his crucifixion, interment and resurrection. In view of the above discussion, the correlativity of Jesus' two identities also suggests the relational nature of God.

2.2   The Relational God: Openness to Vulnerability and Risk

The God-being of Jesus is void unless he has an intimate relationship with both God and humans. This supposition is reflected in Vaai's claim that "to be God is to be

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[406] Jesus being the One who voluntarily offered himself to take the place of a slave in the story of footwashing implies his crucifixion, which Paul also explains in Phil. 2: 8; this image also coincides with the explanation of the 'Suffering Servant' in Isaiah 53:12*c*: "he poured out himself to death."
[407] Richard John Weymouth, "The Christ-Story of Philippians 2:6-11: Narrative Shape and Paraenetic Purpose in Paul's Letter to Philippi" (PhD thesis, University of Otago, 2016), 313. See also Joseph H. Hellerman, *Reconstructing Honor in Roman Philippi: Carmen Christi as Cursus Pudorum* (Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 403.

relational."[408] The significance of Vaai's view is substantiated in Jesus' own claim that "the Father and I are One" (John 10:30); and that "the Father is in me and I am in the Father" (John 10:38*d*, 14:10*a*), indicating that God the Father, and God the Son are not only One but relational. The effect of the relationship between Father and Son renews life through Jesus' service or *tautua* by dying on the cross in place of the transgressor, by giving back life and preserving life (John 1:4)[409] as God in the beginning breathed life into humanity (Gen. 2:7). Thus the event of the cross is the revelation of God's characteristic of 'caring' or *tausi* and 'sharing' or *fa'asoa*.

In addition, Ormond Rush argues that the relationality of God the *Father* and *Son* in the above-mentioned scriptures points toward a "reception of one another."[410] To be receptive is to have a mutual openness where one allows the other to be part of one's life, even to the point of "being opened to vulnerability and risk."[411] Rush suggests that genuine reception is manifested in treating the other as 'guest.' Practically speaking, treating others as guests entails hospitality or *tali-mālō lelei*[412] and generosity or *agalelei*,[413] which are fundamental bearers of *alofa* or "love" and *fa'aaloalo* or "love" in the Samoan context. This is premised in the way Jesus acted as slaves do in the story of footwashing.

Maria Cimperman submits that to concur with the risk associated with love, one has to expect 'suffering' as a price.[414] This perspective may sound intimidating to some. Karl Barth's view is more encouraging, as summarised by Avery Dulles: "The biblical message of the cross and resurrection of Jesus comes to the reader or hearer as a summons to radical obedience, detachment, freedom, openness, and trust. It rids us of fear and anxiety in the face of suffering and death."[415] In a similar vein, Moltmann claims that "The one who is capable of love is also capable of suffering, for he [Jesus] also opens himself to the suffering

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[408] John 1:4: "In Him was life, and the life was the light of all people." (NRSV) Upolu Luma Vaai, "Relational Hermeneutics and the Reshaping of the Pacific from the Ground-Up," paper presented, Relational Hermeneutics Conference, Pacific Theological College, Suva, Fiji, 2016, 3.

[409] Ibid., 2.

[410] Ormund Rush, *The Eyes of Faith: The Sense of the Faithful and the Church's Reception of Revelation* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 2009), 8.

[411] Ibid.

[412] *Tali* = 'to receive' or the state of being 'receptive' and/or 'acceptance'; *Mālō* = 'guests or visitors'; *lelei* = 'in an honourable manner.'

[413] *Agalelei* is translated by Pratt as the generous act of 'kindness.' George Pratt, *A Grammar and Dictionary of Samoan Language with English and Samoan Vocabulary*, 3rd ed. rev. (Papakura, NZ: R. McMillan, 1984), 68.

[414] Maria Cimperman, *Social Analysis for the 21st Century: How Faith Becomes Action*, Social Analysis for the Twenty-First Century (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015), 42.

[415] Avery Dulles, *The Craft of Theology: From Symbol to System* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 76.

which is involved in love."[416] Or, as Barron puts it, "real power comes not from the protection of the ego from danger but rather from willingness to expose the ego to danger for the sake of love" for others.[417] Despite the risks and vulnerability associated with our response to God's relationality, Walter Bruggemann reminds us that the biblical story of the People of Israel (as God's agents) reveals a "God in relationship."[418]

The reigning Bishop of Rome, Pope Francis, contributes to our understanding of the love of God in his comments on the Catholic Church's 'Year of Mercy.' The true identity of God, he writes, is found in the concept of *misericordis*,[419] meaning "opening one's heart to wretchedness … a divine attitude which embraces; it is God's giving Himself to us, accepting us, and bowing to forgive" us through Jesus.[420] The pontiff's plea urges the Christian Church worldwide to emulate God's unconditional love and care to a humanity that is wounded. The duty of the Church which is not to "wait for the wounded to knock on her doors, [but] she looks for them on the streets, she gathers them in, she embraces them, she takes care of them, she makes them feel loved. […] I am ever more convinced of it, this is a *kairós* [time]*,* our era is a *kairós* of mercy, an opportune time."[421] Pope Francis' definition of love as God's 'merciful acts' is viewed through Jesus' *kenosis or* self-emptiness and humiliation, reiterating Harris' correlational view of Jesus' identity as being the Lord who chose to become the world's servant in order for the world to be saved.

3. EXPLORING KENOTIC CHRISTOLOGY: A REFLECTION OF *ALOFA* (LOVE) AND *FA'ALOALO* (RESPECT)

The Christological understanding of *kenosis* will be interpreted integrally here with reference to the cultural understanding of the Samoan concepts of *alofa* (love) and *fa'aaloalo* (respect). Hans Urs von Balthasar writes, "It is precisely in the kenosis of Christ (and nowhere else) that the inner majesty of God's love appears, of God as 'love' (1 Jn 4:8) and 'trinity.'"[422] In the same manner, Lucien Richard describes the self-emptying of Jesus' death on the cross as "a revelation that to be God is to be unselfishness itself."[423] According

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[416] Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 230.
[417] Robert Barron, *The Priority of Christ: Toward a Postliberal Catholicism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2007), 92.
[418] Walter Brueggemann, *An Unsettling God: The Heart of the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), xii-xiii.
[419] Latin word for 'mercy' or an 'act of being merciful.'
[420] Pope Francis, *The Name of God Is Mercy*, ed. Andrea Tornielli and Oonagh Stransky, 1st ed. (New York: Random House, 2016), 8-9.
[421] Ibid., 6.
[422] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Love Alone* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), 15.
[423] Lucien Richard, *Christ: The Self-Emptying of God* (New York: Paulist Press, 1997), 22.

to Craig Hill, *kenosis* as the self-emptying of Jesus is the "model of love."[424] Hill defines kenosis as 'self-emptiness' grounded in an ongoing discipline of pragmatic actions rather than a 'religious' orientation:

> […] we think that self-emptying for the sake of others is attainable only by the most saintly or only under the most extreme circumstances. Instead, it is a discipline to be practiced daily, habitually, even or especially in small matters, which are the training ground of character (Luke 16:10).[425]

This understanding is a reflection of 1 John 3:16-17: "We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?"

Vaai's contextual view of *kenosis* is understood as 'self-giving' or 'self-dedication' which requires making room and emptying oneself for the sake of the other.[426] This is quite obvious in the mutual respect or *fa'aaloalo* between God the Father and his Son Jesus. Jesus's relation to his Father is seen in his dedication to the Father through self-denial (Phil 2:7-8) evident on the cross, and the Father's relation to his Son is seen in his exaltation (2:9-11) by giving him the name above all names. This reciprocal process of *fa'aaloalo* or 'respect' is called *fefa'aaloaloa'i*, which Vaai describes as "the reciprocal self-giving of life and love for the other."[427] In this contextual interpretation, *fa'aaloalo* appears to be the ultimate criterion for understanding self-giving.

3.1   Footwashing: The Meaning of Jesus' Kenosis

Jesus used footwashing as an example to demonstrate and to teach his disciples the real meaning of his 'new commandment': "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34-35 (NRSV).

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[424] Hill, *Servant of All: Status, Ambition, and the Way of Jesus*, 32.
[425] Ibid.
[426] Upolu Luma Vaai, "Fa'aaloalo: A Theological Reinterpretation of the Doctrine of the Trinity from a Samoan Perspective" (PhD thesis, Griffith University, 2006), 192.
[427] Ibid., 191.

The concepts of *alofa* (love) and *fa'aaloalo* (respect) are derived from the word *alo*[428] – which means 'facing' and implies the literal act of facing one another. These cultural realities (*alofa* and *fa'aaloalo*) in the Samoan context mean that one has to vacate one's original position or self-interest in order to serve the interest of the other. In whatever action needs to be carried out, love and respect for the other are to be the prime motive. Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi designates *alofa* as the reality that is most vital in the *fa'a-Samoa*, and without one or the other, neither would exist.[429] This means that *alofa* is not only a way of life, but also a way of being. Fa'afetai Aiava describes *alofa* as something which "not connotes a multidimensional exchange between people, but it also portrays an interconnected web that interlaces the individual self with the cosmos, the environment and all of humanity."[430]

Apart from the events of the cross and footwashing, Jesus was tempted in the wilderness and then again in the Garden of Gethsemane to find an easier way. Jesus' responses illustrates what *alofa* and *fa'aaloalo* really mean in relation to his Father: "One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matt 4:4b); "Do not put the Lord your God to the test" (4:7b); "Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him" (4:10c); and Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want" (26:39). Jesus could have taken the privilege and honour offered to him in his three encounters in the wilderness, and he was at liberty to do his own will considering the pain of the cross ahead of him. Yet he showed his *fa'aaloalo* and *alofa* for God by prioritising God's interest before his own.

Footwashing as an act of love or 'love in action' can be understood through two vantage points: first, from the lens of the culture in which Jesus lived – the Graeco-Roman world; and second, in a symbolic framework. The cultural aspect of footwashing signifies a humble service pertaining to slaves only, whose rights were completely denied. The act of footwashing viewed as a 'symbol' presents a humbled Lord who was soon to be revealed through dying like a slave on the cross.

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[428] The word *alo* in the Samoan translation has multiple meanings – a face, child, belly, womb, or when used as a verb it means 'to row' or 'be engaged in.' In the word *fa'aaloalo*, two or more faces are engaged or facing one another. Milner, *Samoan Dictionary: Samoan-English, English-Samoan*, 15.

[429] Tuiatua Tuiatua Tupua Tamasese Efi, *Suʾesuʾe Manogi – In Search of Fragrance: Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Taʾisi and the Samoan Indigenous Reference*, ed. Tamasailau Suaʾaliʾi-Sauni (Apia: Centre for Samoan Studies, National University of Samoa, 2008), 60.

[430] Fa'afetai Aiava, "From 'In-Between' to 'In-Both': Dehyphenating Diasporic Theology from a Relational Perspective," paper presented, Relational Hermeneutics conference, Pacific Theological College, Suva, Fiji, 2016, 10-11.

First, in the ancient Jewish and Graeco-Roman cultures, footwashing was a common practise 'of welcoming guests.'[431] Normally, the ritual of footwashing was performed by a slave for guests upon their arrival in a home. Some commentaries refer to footwashing's function as a sign of welcome[432] and hospitality[433] which preceded a meal or banquet.[434]

Second, Gerard Sloyan argues that John is creating a "symbol out of hospitality's task of washing dusty feet."[435] This was made clear in Jesus' response to Peter – that "later you will understand" (referring to the washing of their feet). In this sense, footwashing is employed by Jesus a symbol pointing to a future event (his suffering and death on the cross). This suffering was foreshadowed in the vision in Deutero-Isaiah, where suffering is defined in relation to the 'Servant of the Lord-God' who suffered by way of humiliation and death, and yet was exalted. Bruggemann invites us to understand this, from a faith perspective, as a lens through which to connect the Old Testament narratives and the New Testament contexts in order to see the relevance of Jesus in the gospel stories for contemporary social contexts.[436]

Francis Moloney describes footwashing as 'love in action,' whereby Jesus makes God's 'unconditional love' visible by washing his disciples' feet – including Judah the betrayer, and Peter the denier.[437] Moloney interprets this love as inclusive, seen in the Gospel of John as embracing the love shared between Jesus, God and one another. Jesus' act of footwashing offers a new meaning of loving God and neighbour, an illustration of self-sacrifice encompassing otherness. In other words, footwashing demonstrates what Jesus meant when he said to his disciples in v. 13:1*c* that "he loved them to the end" – no matter what the circumstances. Jesus refers to 'them' in 13:1*c* as the 'community of believers' which, in later contexts, meant the church.

Frederick Bruner includes both interpretations in his conclusion that "the simplest explanation of the footwashing, then, remains that Jesus performed this servile task to

[431] Arland J Hultgren, "The Johannine Footwashing (13:1-11) as Symbol of Eschatological Hospitality," *New Testament Studies* 28, no. 04 (1982): 541, http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0028688500010419.

[432] John Christopher Thomas, "Footwashing in John 13 and the Johannine Community," *Journal for The Study of the New Testament Supplement Series* 61 (1991): 46.

[433] John C. Thomas, *The Spirit of the New Testament* (Leiden: Deo Publishing, 2005), 198.

[434] Thomas, "Footwashing in John 13 and the Johannine Community," 47.

[435] Gerard S. Sloyan, *John* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1988), 169.

[436] Brueggemann, *An Unsettling God: The Heart of the Hebrew Bible*, xiii.

[437] Francis J. Moloney, *Love in the Gospel of John: An Exegetical, Theological, and Literary Study* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 104-05.

prophesy symbolically that he was about to be humiliated in death."[438] Bruner gives two reasons why Jesus actually performed footwashing: it was clearly (a) a 'task' or service accorded to servant-slaves, and (b) it was a 'symbol' of his crucifixion (John 19).

3.2 A 'Dirty Job' Model of Ministry for the Church

The gospel of John has been called a "spiritual gospel," implying that "John is less interested in historical matters than the Synoptics;" in contrast, Andreas Köstenberger reminds us that "Clement sought to draw attention to the profound theological reflection present in John's gospel without intending to disparage the historical nature of his account."[439]

Horsley and Thatcher highlight the historical nature of Jesus' stories in the Gospel of John, seen as part of the 'plot of a story.'[440] Here the footwashing narrative is placed at the outset of the 'climactic events' commencing in Chapter 13. Our interpretation concurs with the view that the theology of footwashing arises out of an event that historically occurred.[441] In this context, the title 'Servant-Lord' is seen as a model or pattern of humility that was overtly enacted by Jesus. We accept Murray Harris' view that the "two titles/statuses 'Lord' (*kyrios*) and 'slave' (*doulos*) are correlatives."[442] The following discussion explores Jesus' footwashing as a model for self-emptying ministry and its implications for the church today. It is a model of ministry that links to the everyday life of the church.

This unique story of footwashing, which is only found in the Gospel of John, it demonstrates how God became a servant in a 'form of a *slave*.' For this reason, each element or movement[443] in the footwashing narrative was modelled by Jesus who was Master and Lord but yet served the way a slave serves (washing feet). Hill defines anyone who performs this 'menial and dirty job' as the "lowest-ranking person in the house."[444] In

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[438] Frederick Dale Bruner, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2012), 767.

[439] Andreas J. Köstenberger, *A Theology of John's Gospel and Letters* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 38.

[440] "A plot (often interwoven subplots) develops in a sequence of interrelated events that have consequences that lead to subsequent events, and eventually to climatic events (usually at the end)." Richard A. Horsley, *John, Jesus, and the Renewal of Israel*, ed. Tom Thatcher (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2013), 102-03.

[441] Ibid., 104.

[442] Harris, *Slave of Christ: A New Testament Metaphor for Total Devotion to Christ*, 90.

[443] Jesus "got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him." John 13: 4-5 (NRSV)

[444] Hill, *Servant of All: Status, Ambition, and the Way of Jesus*, 28.

other words, footwashing was one of the defining marks that reinforced social class in Jesus' day.

From a Samoan perspective, once a person of higher rank (i.e., a *matai* or *faife'au*) is found performing a task reserved for those of a lower rank (e.g., a *taule'ale'a* or untitled man), such as feeding pigs, cooking and serving food, the word used to describe such an unusual act is *fa'a'ele'elea* ("being dirty"). This situation is similar to the reason Peter rejected Jesus by saying, "You will never wash my feet" (Jn 13:8a). Considering the master-servant relationship Jesus mentioned in 13:16, in reference to the Greco-Roman social hierarchy, Peter's rejection was quite correct, because Jesus was his Lord/Master. This verbal exchange between Jesus and Peter resulted in Jesus taking on the task washing feet, an act showing Jesus' "reversal of status within God's reign."[445]

In the above distinction, the secular view of the title 'lord' was the reason why Peter objected to having Jesus wash his feet. Hernando claims that "Peter's objection seems based on the incongruity of Jesus' dignified status as Messiah in contrast to the menial service of a slave." [446] In other words, according to the customs and traditions of the Graeco-Roman world, Jesus being the master and teacher of the disciples made it culturally inappropriate for him to perform the task of washing guests' feet (in this case his own disciples), a task reserved only for servant-slaves.

But how should we appropriate footwashing in the church today? On the one hand, we may view footwashing as a 'ritual,' since it had that connotation in Graeco-Roman life in Jesus' day, "implying a connection between footwashing and sanctification" – in other words, a purification ritual.[447] Footwashing was also an act preceding entrance into a 'holy place,' and we know that "certain Roman priests participated in ritual footwashing."[448]

In the contemporary church, leaders of the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) such as the Pope and other high officials of the Church have continued this ritual by performing

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[445] Ibid., 159.

[446] James D. Hernando, "Episodes of Personal Encounter: Inquiry into John's Christology," in *But These Are Written...: Essays on Johannine Literature in Honor of Professor Benny C.* Aker, ed. Craig S. Keener, Jeremy S. Crenshaw, and Jordan Daniel May (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014), 87.

[447] Frank D. Macchia, "Is Footwashing the Neglected Sacrament? A Theological Response to John Christopher Thomas," *Pneuma* 19, no. 1 (1997): 245. In the Graeco-Roman tradition, footwashing (along with washing hands) had to be carried out when a person killed another person. This practice was ritualised as a symbol of 'purification of a killer,' which Thomas calls a 'religious/cultic cleansing.' Thomas, "Footwashing in John 13 and the Johannine Community," 198.

[448] Thomas, "Footwashing in John 13 and the Johannine Community," 198.

the act of footwashing on the Holy Maundy Thursday, the Thursday before Easter.[449] Leroy Huizenga writes that footwashing in the RCC is "not only meant to be an example of humble service, but primarily a record of the institution of the Christian priesthood and thus the Scriptural root of the sacrament of holy orders."[450] Footwashing in the Catholic Church "… is called the Holy Thursday Mandatum, and the rite takes place after the homily. Members of the congregation are chosen to sit and have their feet washed by the priest, who plays the role of Christ. One by one, the priest will wash the participant's feet with a basin and a towel."[451]

Thomas argues that the fact that the 'actual practice of footwashing' in some churches today is treated as a 'religious rite' is, to some extent, rooted in a 'surface reading' of John 13:14-17.[452] This suggests that footwashing is more than just a religious ritual. It has deep theological significance, as it illustrates the enactment of humble service offered for others, on a daily basis, for the common good of the whole community, as suggested earlier by Pope Francis.

But this model of ministry requires that Christians become, in a sense, counter-cultural, that they live counter to dominant narratives that denigrate servant leadership. Philippians 2:6-11 is a good example of what is required. Living as Christians in a context where the culture of 'status and power' was prevalent and customary, Paul encourages the Philippians to have the 'same mind' (2:5) of servitude which Jesus had, and to implement this in their own church community in Philippi. This passage serves as a social shaping model for Christians in Philippi, one that urges them to "determine their existence and inter-communal behaviour"[453] instead of following the status and power pattern of the empire, where hierarchical structures are preserved. The 'reversal pattern' of humiliation-exaltation or descent-ascent in the Christ-story is illuminating.

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[449] Frank Macchia states that "footwashing has been restricted to a rare occurrence on Maundy Thursday or to a regular rite practiced by a relatively few number of free-church traditions, such as certain Pentecostal groups, the Church of the Brethren, and some Baptist groups." Macchia, "Is Footwashing the Neglected Sacrament? A Theological Response to John Christopher Thomas," 239.
[450] Leroy Huizenga, "Holy Thursday, Footwashing, and the Institution of the Priesthood," *Catholic World Reports: An Online Magazine*, ed. Carl E. Olson (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2014), 1, http://www.catho licworldreport.com/Item/3074/holy_thursday_footwashing_and_the_institution_of_the_priesthood.aspx.
[451] Marshall Connolly, "Holy Thursday: What is the Foot Washing Ceremony and Why Does it Matter?," *Catholic Online*, USA California Network, 2016.
[452] Thomas, *The Spirit of the New Testament*, 197.
[453] Weymouth, "The Christ-Story of Philippians 2:6-11" 404.

What are the implications of this counter-cultural role reversal for leadership in the church today? Hill contends that how Jesus organised his disciples is debatable. This is one of the reasons why he believes that church leadership is 'inherently paradoxical.' It has become a growing problem in the contemporary church, in which leadership has been organised in terms of a 'professionalized ministry.'[454] In this arrangement, as Hill explains,

> It [the professional ministry] may encourage pastors to assume too much responsibility and everyone too little. Both sides benefit perversely from this arrangement: pastors are all the more essential and parishioners all the less encumbered. No church of the first or twenty-first century fulfils its promise under this arrangement. Indeed, one of the surest signs of a vital church is the participation of the laity in ministry.[455]

The danger to any church in the above arrangement is its association with the language of "distinction." In contrast, the church in Jerusalem (known as the Early Church) was characterised as a "community of goods," as described in Acts 4:32: "Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common." (NRSV) This church is presented by the author of Acts as a fellowship of believers in which there was no explicit distinction in reference to the status of Jews and Gentiles. This suggests that the early church was strikingly egalitarian, and certainly much less hierarchical than the surrounding culture. It reflected a radical equality among members of the community of faith.

4.   THE SERVANT LEADER PARADIGM: A Parallel Image of Jesus as *Matai Tautua*

In the gospel of John, the "two themes of lordship and servanthood" are fused together in the "whole passion narrative."[456] In particular, the 'footwashing' narrative (John 13:1-17) is treated here as the principal text, where Jesus' action portrays a servant leader paradigm regarding how his disciples should care for one another.

In the Greek literature, with reference to footwashing, Thomas notes that it was "extremely rare for a non-slave to wash someone else's feet."[457] Although footwashing was widely practiced in the Graeco-Roman context, we have already seen that it was a domain belonging to slaves. This infers that footwashing and degradation are closely associated.

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[454] Hill, *Servant of All: Status, Ambition, and the Way of Jesus*, 162-63.
[455] Ibid., 162.
[456] Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 50.
[457] Thomas, "Footwashing in John 13 and the Johannine Community," 54.

We have also seen how here Jesus was the "Lord who serves, who enacts the meaning of his death when he washes the disciples' feet, the menial task exclusive to slaves."[458]

Craig Hill notes that the fact that "Jesus's act occurred during supper, another breach of protocol, meant that it was a deliberate sign, a prophetic enactment, meant to make a point."[459] Jesus's enactment of this menial task of slaves sets an example of being a servant of all, where his lordship status was opened to vulnerability and risk. This was a practical model of servanthood ministry for his disciples to emulate. Jesus knew that such service was rendered by slaves, including the 'sinful woman' in Luke 7:36-50. Yet his alignment with such humble service set the standard for how ministry was to be performed by the leadership of the church after his death.

All of the Synoptic Gospels give ample evidence that the disciples were continually vying for better positions as leaders (Mtt. 18:1-5, Mk. 9:33-34; Mk 10:35-37; Lk. 9:46-48).[460] This problem of competing for power and status, so common among Jesus' disciples, suggests that they were the kind of leaders who had the expectation of being served rather than serving themselves. This is the same attitude that Simon the Pharisee had when Jesus entered his house but he (Simon) failed to offer Jesus water to wash his feet (Lk. 9:44).

Jesus knew that he would soon be leaving his disciples and returning to his Father (13:3). It is in this context of his impending crucifixion that the footwashing narrative becomes so important, as in this act Jesus was showing his disciples the only way for them to 'remain in him' (as the head of the church) – by serving each other just as slaves do. What Jesus modelled in this narrative was an example that he commanded his disciples to follow: "So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. […] If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them" (John 13: 14-15, 17) (NRSV).

Jesus openly claims in v.15 that what he had done (Lord becoming a slave) was 'an example' he himself set for his disciples to follow. This was a command to his disciples (representatives of the Early Church Leaders or apostles)[461] to minister as servants, no

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[458] Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 50.
[459] Hill, *Servant of All: Status, Ambition, and the Way of Jesus*, 29.
[460] Ibid.
[461] Macchia, "Is Footwashing the Neglected Sacrament?," 240-41. Horsley and Thatcher also assert that "the main characters [disciples] in John's story, more than in other ancient stories, including the Synoptic Gospels, are types, or stereotypes… These characters in the story, moreover, usually do not act and speak individually

matter what title or status they might hold in the community. The word "ought" in v.14 connotes that serving others is a work that "must be" done. Jesus' command offers no room for a follower to choose whether to serve in this way or not; it is definitely a 'must do' situation and applies to those who may be lords and masters. This 'servant leader' paradigm is parallel to the view of a Samoan *matai* (chiefly title holder) who serves or *tautua* his/her family by cooking, fishing and/or planting crops.[462]

Warren Carter finds the biblical theology of servant leadership in the Christological significance of the Matthean 'Jesus.' The presentation of the 'Christ-story'[463] in Phil 2:6-11 by Weymouth has both 'soteriological' and 'ethical' interpretations. The ethical demand was to critique the status and power pattern of the Roman imperial system, where hierarchical structures were preserved.[464] How to live as Christians within a context where 'status and power' were the norm meant that Paul had to remind the Philippians to have the 'same mind' (2:5) of servitude that Jesus had.[465]

4.1 A Call to Render *Tautua* (To Serve and not to be Served)

Jesus' response to his ten indignant disciples (Matthew 20:24-28), instigated by Zebedee's wife asking Jesus, on behalf of her two sons (James and John) to let them ascend with him to heaven and sit on his right and left-hand sides (20-23), is telling. In fact, Jesus had made a clear distinction in the previous chapter (Matthew 19:28) between the heavenly kingdom, where he would soon be seated on a throne along with his faithful followers, and the worldly empire (20:25), to which the unnamed wife thought Jesus was referring. On this note, Warren Carter's interpretation of verses 25-28 offers an interesting insight:

> She knows that Jesus will be victorious, will establish God's empire, and that disciples will share in that reign (19:28). But they want their thrones now! She and her sons failed to understand the nature of God's empire and their role in it. They are to be with the marginal and humiliated (18:1-14). They are children (19:13-15). Their 'rule' (19:28) does not consist of domination, prestige, and importance for themselves (left and right are proximity

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but collectively or representatively." Horsley, *John, Jesus, and the Renewal of Israel*, 105. Speaking of the church as a founding group of believers was only formulated in the post-resurrection period. "Jesus is the great individual revealer but not the leader of a movement. The latter, which became the church, was founded only after his [Jesus'] resurrection by His disciples." Ibid., 138.
[462] See Chapter 1, 28-29.
[463] The 'Christ-story' means the story about Jesus Christ. Weymouth, "The Christ-Story of Philippians 2:6-11," 137.
[464] Ibid., 313.
[465] Paul started by pointing to Jesus as someone who "enjoyed equal status with God" which is "the top of the peak" and "descended the social hierarchy – and willingly so – until he finally allowed himself to be publicly humiliated like a crucified slave." Hellerman, *Embracing Shared Ministry*, 140.

of honour). It does not imitate imperial structures and hierarchical societal patterns (anticipating 20:25). Rather it is a different way, that of humiliation and service.[466]

Matthew's narrative is significant for the purpose of this chapter in that it "contests [the] patriarchal and hierarchical structures"[467] in the "Greco-Roman world which sought to maintain social stratification, with more wealthy dominating and depriving the majority poor."[468] In addition, Carter identifies the purpose of Matthew, in chapters 19 and 20 in particular, as being to "subvert this hierarchical and patriarchal structure by instructing disciples in a more egalitarian pattern (cf. 20:12). […] following Jesus, not procuring wealth and status, defines discipleship (19:16-30); all disciples are slaves like Jesus (link to conclusion), there are no masters (20:17-28)."[469]

> In countering societal norms, this [serving Lord] embodies the way to the cross [in which] resist the hierarchical and patriarchal patterns and embody God's empire in more egalitarian structures. Other attempts to minimize or eradicate fundamental gender distinctions brought sharp resistance from elite, who considered such actions to be socially and politically subversive. In their dangerous and subversive existence, disciples are bound to meet with resistance.[470]

Carter's contention is supported by the reason Jesus turned and responded to all his twelve disciples instead of directing his remarks to the unnamed wife (of Zebedee) who made the request in the first place. Jesus needed to say clearly to his disciples,

> […] you know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. [26] It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, [27] and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; [28] just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many. (Matthew 20:25-28) (NRSV).

Jesus' words made a clear distinction between the way hierarchical structures are managed by worldly authorities who embrace self-interests and benefits, and the Kingdom of God, where the master of the house has to serve his/her household/community. Jesus urges his disciples not to be afraid to take the status of a servant or slave for the benefit of the whole community. This is Jesus' clear response against the wishes of those who desired positions of power through which to exercise their own personal interest and gain. The verbs 'lord it

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[466] Warren Carter, *Matthew and the Margins: A Socio-Political and Religious Reading* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 402.
[467] Ibid., 239.
[468] Ibid., 159-60.
[469] Ibid., 160.
[470] Ibid., 377.

over' and 'are tyrants over' are clear indicators as to why Jesus condemns such rule, which embodies a hierarchical system where the powerful exploit the majority who are poor.[471]

Jeffrey Gibbs' interpretation of the phrase 'it will not be so among you' is that this is Jesus' way of condemning and uprooting the "self-serving and domineering exercise of power" which was characteristic of the Gentile rulers, but which "simply will not be the way among disciples, as they live in community."[472] This is the right and acceptable way of life Jesus is teaching his disciples to practice. Indeed, Jesus' alternative Kingdom shapes a community of *fetausia'i* ("reciprocal caring") and *tautua* ("service").

4.2 Jesus as the *Matai-Ali'i*: 'Jesus is Lord'

It is undisputed that the identity of Jesus is God.[473] Bart Ehrman reaffirms this by pointing out that the Gospel of John presents Jesus' pre-existence as "a divine being who is equal to God."[474] The name 'Lord' is synonymous with *'adon*, which "refers to God in the Bible; it is printed 'Lord' in translation […] *'adonay*, literally 'my lords,' but usually translated '(the) Lord.'"[475] The title *'Adonay* was used as a title in the Old Testament in Jewish displays of reverence, spoken in place of 'God' (YHWH): *Lord-God*[476] is the same term as 'Lord' (in Greek κύριος - *kyrios*), which "means 'sir', 'owner', 'master' and 'lord', and is used of a man in his role as a … master of slaves, or a person worthy of respect (John 4:11). It is applied to… Jesus, both during his ministry and after his resurrection, and to God."[477] Harris claims that the lordship of Jesus is a title which he deserves to receive as a consequence of his ministerial service here on earth.

The resurrection of Jesus proves that the title 'Lord' was legitimately afforded to him. In the context of the Graeco-Roman empire in Jesus' day, the same title ('lord-*kyrios*') was

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[471] Carter, *Matthew and the Margins: A Socio-Political and Religious Reading*, 402-03.

[472] Jeffrey A. Gibbs, *Matthew 11:2-20:34* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2010), 1000.

[473] Jürgen Moltmann reiterates part of the Nicene Creed: "He [Jesus] is of one substance with God, begotten, not created, God of God, light of light, etc.," to answer the general question of God to the mystery of Jesus: "Was the eternal, unchangeable God revealed in Jesus?" Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 88.

[474] Ehrman, *How Jesus Became God*, 248.

[475] Dana M. Pike, "The Name and Titles of God in the Old Testament," *Religious Educator: Perspectives on the Restored Gospel* 11, no. 1 (2010): 11.

[476] Isaiah 6:1, for example, reads "I saw also the Lord [*'adonay*] sitting upon a throne." Israelite personal names composed with this title include *adoniyah*/Adonijah, "my lord is YHWH." As Moses emphasized to the Israelites, "The Lord [*yhwh*] your God [*eloheykem*] is God of gods [*elohey ha'elohim*], and Lord of lords [*'adoney ha'adonim*], a great God [*ha'el haggadol*]" (Deuteronomy 10:17). He was, and still is, the Lord or ruler of his people, who covenant to be loyal to and obey him." Ibid.

[477] Harris, *Slave of Christ*, 88. See also Ehrman, *How Jesus Became God*, 227-28. Occasionally the term *'adon* refers to deity and to human rulers, and is rendered 'lord.' See also Pike, "The Name and Titles of God in the Old Testament," 11.

given to Emperor Augustus (Luke 2:1) or *kyrios* Augustus.[478] However, the Lordship of Jesus was never in association with the prestigious 'powers' of the world, but referred to his messianic powers.[479] The Samoan translation of the English word 'lord' is *ali'i*; for example, in Romans 10:9, "Jesus is Lord" translates "*o Iesu le Ali'i.*" The term *ali'i* defines 'maleness' (gender) and 'high chief' (*matai-ali'i* or *tamāali'i*), a title distinguished from that of an orator or *tulāfale*.

The translation of the word 'lord' referring to Jesus infers that in the Samoan social-political structure, Jesus is seen as the high chief or *matai ali'i* – the highest rank of *matai* or chiefs, which is associated with prestige and authority.[480] This is manifested in the 'village meeting house' or *fale fono o le nu'u*, where special seats are reserved for the high chiefs of the village, always "located at the ends ['*tala*'] of the elliptical floor plan."[481]

James Hernando notes that the title 'Lord' or κύριος is used in the Gospel of John about forty-five times, all referring to Jesus, and that this title "is overwhelmingly christological, not secular, meaning something akin to 'sir'."[482] In the apostle Paul's letter to the Romans, he informs his addressees that if they confess publicly that "Jesus is Lord" and believe that God raised him from the dead, they will be saved (Romans 10:9). Certainly, there is power and authority in the name 'κύριος-Jesus.'[483] Unlike the κύριος Augustus, the title 'Christ is Lord' became the 'confession of faith' for the faithful in the post-resurrection period.[484] Barron points out how Jesus' lordship challenged the authority of empire:

> What the first Christians endeavoured to tell the world was that Jesus of Nazareth, crucified and risen from the dead, is the true *Kyrios*. This was, as we have seen, a clear challenge to all the earthly potentates, including and especially the Roman emperor, who claimed

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[478] Barron, *The Priority of Christ*, 91.
[479] Barron states that "quite naturally, we associate power with luxury and possession of fine things, but in light of this unsettling narrative, we realise that such an association would be mistaken. The power that animates the cosmos has much more to do with the emptying of self than with the pampering of self. Augustus's home, in the heart of the capital city of a world-spinning empire, would be the safest and most comfortable place imaginable, while a stable or a cave outside Bethlehem would be just about the most vulnerable, least protected space that we could imagine." Ibid., 92.
[480] Lowell D. Holmes, *Samoan Village: Then and Now*, ed. Ellen Rhoads Holmes, 2nd ed. (Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, 1992), 34.
[481] Ibid., 35.
[482] Hernando, "Episodes of Personal Encounter: Inquiry into John's Christology," 96.
[483] The term 'Lord' was an 'adjective,' with the sense of 'having power.' Harris, *Slave of Christ*, 88.
[484] Ibid., 88-89. This is evident in Peter's confession to his audience on the very day of Pentecost according to Luke in Acts 2:32 "This Jesus God raised up" and "God has made him [Jesus] both Lord and Messiah/Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified" (v. 36).

lordship, and it was a proclamation that was thoroughly conditioned by a biblical imagination.[485]

The understanding of what the title Lord meant in relation to Jesus has implications for the use of the Samoan term *'ali'i'* (high chief) for Jesus in the Samoan Bible translation. If the 'risen' Jesus was actually the true *Kyrios*, I would point out that, even in the post-resurrection setting, Jesus as Lord cooked, invited and served his disciples with breakfast, before finally ascending into heaven.

According to the Gospel of John chapter 21, Jesus commanded Peter to feed and tend his lambs for the final time at his post-resurrection appearance to his seven disciples on the shores of the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1-14). After Jesus has prepared a breakfast of fish and bread (v.9), he invited his disciples, "Come and have breakfast" (v.12); then Jesus took the bread and fish and served them (v.13).[486] Immdiately after Jesus cooked and served this meal for his disciiples, he then commissioned Peter with the task of feeding his sheep and tending his lambs (John 21:15-17). Alhough scholarly interpretations disagree about what Jesus meant by 'feeding' and 'tending' (perhaps it refers to the spiritual nourishments of the Word of God,[487] or to the eucharist[488]), I argue that we should not overlook the very context in which Jesus commanded Peter to feed and tend his sheep and lambs. It was right after Jesus physically prepared (cooked), invited and served (shared) a meal with his disciples that he appeared to have been preparing initially for himself. This is another reminder of Jesus' kenotic act on the cross.

In fact, this was the last event in the last chapter of the Gospel of John, and it was a revelation of Jesus' highest priority. Before he ascended into heaven, his final act was to charge his disciples (later church leaders) to look after those who will come to faith in his name. Peter himself reiterated these commands of Jesus to his fellow elders (1 Peter 5:2-3): "[T]o tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it – not for sordid gain but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock." (NRSV) Frederich Bruner rightly seeks to protect the shepherding responsibility from overinterpretation: "The overseeing and watching is not the main point and authoritarian reigning and ruling is

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[485] Barron, *The Priority of Christ*, 116.

[486] V. 13: "Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish." (NRSV) These words were almost the same words Jesus is reported to have said when feeding the five thousand in John 6:11.

[487] Bruner, *The Gospel of John*, 1210.

[488] Ibid., 1211.

forbidden the congregation's pastor… Peter is to protect and lead caringly the sheep which belong to Christ, in order to keep them in the pasture of life."[489]

The question that may arise out of the above discussion is whether Jesus is commanding his disciples to actually feed those who will follow them (as Jesus did to his seven disciples). The story of feeding the five thousand people through a miracle Jesus made out of five loaves and two fish in Luke 9:10-17 helps to clarify this question.[490] Chronologically, this story takes place just after Jesus commissioned his disciples (1-6) to "[t]ake nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money – not even an extra tunic."[491] Clearly Jesus and his disciples were not rich people, but this passage suggests that a life based on sharing what is available is more than enough.

Despite the focus on the miraculous aspects of the loaves and fishes story in most interpretations, the chronological interlacing of this story from Luke's account is taken here as a common sense object lesson. It was reasonable for the twelve disciples to request Jesus to send the crowd away, for not only was it late, with night approaching, but they did not have enough food or money to buy food to feed the crowd. However, Jesus refused their request and asked that they act (v.13): "You [disciples] give them something to eat."[492] According to Michael Wolter, Jesus' counter-suggestion is beyond the spectrum of possible reactions that could be expected on the basis of the request of the twelve.[493] However, Wolter points out that "The *twelve* should adopt the role of the host vis-à-vis the crowd, for the people whom Jesus welcomed and whom he told about the reign of God (v. 11) should become satiated (v.17) where *they* are – and not elsewhere."[494]

The theme of this chapter is none other than the 'Mission of the Twelve.' Therefore, in this story, "Jesus's answer takes a stance in favour of a relaxed attitude toward intra-

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[489] Ibid., 1235.
[490] The similar story of feeding crowds of several thousands is also found in the Gospels of Matthew 14:13-21, Mark 6:30-44 and John 6:1-14.
[491] Luke 9:3-4. (NRSV)
[492] Jesus' response to the twelve is similar in Mark's account (Mark 6:37), except for some additions in Matthew's narrative (v.16): "Jesus said to them, 'They need not to go away; you give them something to eat.' (NRSV) The narrative in John's Gospel is quite different from the synoptic gospels, as the author has put the same question in a different form: "Jesus said to Philip, 'Where are we to buy the bread for these people to eat?'" (John 6:5b). Unlike the other accounts, Jesus was the initiator of the situation instead of the twelve disciples or Philip. This suggests that Jesus was definitely proposing to his disciples that feeding the crowd was part of their responsibility.
[493] Michael Wolter, *The Gospel According to Luke, Volume I, Luke 1-9:50*, ed. Muse Project (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016), 379.
[494] Ibid.

Christian pluralism."[495] Luke not only sets Jesus over against the circle of disciples, but the concern goes beyond the circle of the disciples.[496] In Michael Wolter's view, Jesus is teaching his disciples here how to care, love and feel responsible for those whom they are called to serve (the image of the crowd being a symbol of the church), by providing for their basic needs. This is a continual interdependent process, not a one-way activity, as both the leaders of the church and its members are to reciprocate love, caring and sharing. This has profound implications for the churches and their leaders in Samoa.

4.3 Jesus as Servant-*Tautua* and the Cross

Murray Harris points out that the title 'slave' is significant in the original Greek language, which offers a deeper understanding of the kind of service Jesus undertook in his human form. Harris argues that the correlativity of lordship and slavery in the New Testament (Matthew 10:24-25, 25:21, 23; John 13:16, 15:15; 2 Corinthians 4:5) is more than their oppositionality.[497] In other words, referring to 'Jesus as Servant' only is ambiguous unless Jesus is seen as both 'Lord' and 'slave'; indeed, both identities made Jesus' incarnation possible.

When Jesus is called the Servant-Lord, this means that he is the Lord who became a Servant. The English translation of the Greek word δοῦλος or 'slave' in John 13:16 raises an issue here, as obviously the word δοῦλος or 'slave' is masked by the word 'servant'.[498] Harris offers an explanation as to why the English translation employs the term 'servant' in place of 'slave', claiming that "the language of slavery is offensive, the offence would have been considerably greater for those who lived in societies where slavery was intrinsic than for us for whom slavery is simply an unpleasant and embarrassing memory."[499] Cilliers Breytenbach agrees with Harris and suggests a corresponding example in 1 Corinthians 1:23,[500] where "the Jews found Paul's message of Christ crucified offensive."[501]

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495 Ibid., 407.
496 Ibid., 406-07.
497 Harris, *Slave of Christ*, 90-91.
498 *The Interlinear Hebrew-Greek-English Bible*, ed. Jay P. Green, 2nd ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005), 294, 300.
499 Harris, *Slave of Christ*, 45.
500 "But we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews…"
501 Cilliers Breytenbach, *Grace, Reconciliation, Concord: The Death of Christ in Graeco-Roman Metaphors* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), 2.

Given that the white missionaries of the LMS[502] were the first translators of the English Bible into the Samoan vernacular,[503] it is clear that their translation of the Samoan Bible reflected their "own interpretations, bias, worldviews, cultural values, and philosophical presuppositions."[504] The severity of this bias is evident in the translation of the words 'servant' and 'slave' in the current translation of the Samoan Bible. The translation of these two words was clearly based on "colonial fixed perceptions, cultural hegemonic attitudes and oppressive symbols, even if it meant usurping the authority of the original Bible languages and cultures."[505]

For the reasons aforementioned and for the purpose of this research, the word 'servant' (in English translation) in John 13:16 must be re-substituted by the word 'slave' in order to better comprehend the real meaning behind the story of footwashing in the Johannine narrative. The same exercise is also required and applied to the problem of the translation of the words 'servant' and 'slave' in the Samoan language, not from an offensive perspective, but from a political demarcation of the Samoan language due to what Ma'ilo calls "the politics of language and cultural difference."[506]

Indeed, the concept 'slave' is significant for this study, where emphasis is placed on a slave's social status. Researches have shown that the word 'slave' is also associated with the 'cross,' an instrument reserved mostly for slaves as a method of execution – a form of "capital punishment."[507] This form of punishment was part of the Deuteronomistic practice in the patriarchal era, where the crucifixion of convicts was understood to be a proper means of execution.[508] In reference to the "hanging on the tree" (Deuteronomy 21:22), Sloyan refers to the 'cross' as a 'tree of shame,' and in this context the earliest Christians would have believed that Jesus' hanging on the cross (tree) "made a special point of his [Jesus'] shameful ending."[509]

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[502] Refers to the London Missionary Society, currently called the CCCS (Congregational Christian Church of Samoa) or EFKS (Ekalesia Fa'apotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa).
[503] Ma'ilo, *Bible-Ing My Samoan*, 16-28.
[504] Ibid., 241.
[505] Ibid.
[506] Ibid., 237.
[507] Gerard S. Sloyan, *The Crucifixion of Jesus: History, Myth, Faith* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995), 12.
[508] Deuteronomy 21:22-23: "When someone is convicted of a crime punishable by death and is executed, and you hang him on a tree … for anyone hung on a tree is under God's curse…" (NRSV)
[509] Sloyan, *The Crucifixion of Jesus*, 13.

I wish to engage in the recurrent hermeneutical debates which offer a more theological meaning of the crucified Christ for the contemporary period. In this view, the crucified Christ is not only about the fulfilment of God's redemptive act for humanity, it is the revelation of the magnitude of God's glory and honour in Jesus Christ. It is at the cross that the act of the merciful God is exposed. As Emil Bruner states, "the love of God has been revealed in the cross of Jesus Christ, and nowhere else."[510] Consequently, the cross is no longer regarded as a curse,[511] as portrayed in the Old Testament; rather, it is a great privilege to know and yield to the power and wisdom of God concealed in the cross.[512] Certainly, the cross is the climax of Jesus' calling, where he would be "giving himself away rather than drawing fame, protection, honour, and sustenance to himself. When he is pierced on the cross, blood and water flow from his side, signalling that, to the very end, life goes out from him for the good of the church."[513]

Given the social, political and cultural contexts of Matthew 20:20-28, John 13:1-17 and Philippians 2:6-11 discussed above, the non-Samoan term '*au'auna* (which translates as 'paid-servant') in the Samoan Bible should be replaced by the indigenous word *tautua,* and *tautua-toto* should be used to translate the word 'slave' instead of *pologa* (which reflects a master-slave relationship).

SUMMARY

The footwashing narrative is a faith-provoking story whereby the Gospel of John can lead the reader to faith, just as Jesus' signs and discourses led people to faith.[514] By any estimation, John 13:1-17 is a pivotal text on how to care for one another by acting in love, as a paradigm for ministry in the church today.

The act of footwashing re-enacted by Jesus is one example of many menial tasks which could be viewed as 'dirty jobs'. This implies that the vulnerability of being *fa'a'ele'elea*, which Jesus showed to his disciples, must be rendered to all, regardless of social status. This story encompasses a wealth of instructions on Christian living. This unique narrative outlines the command to love and the call to serve, heedless of the social cost often mentioned in the New Testament as evidence of the church's faithfulness and

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[510] Emil Brunner, *The Word and the World*, 2nd ed. (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1932), 123.
[511] Deut. 21:23*c*: "for anyone hung on a tree is under God's curse." (NRSV)
[512] 1 Cor. 1:23:24: "But we proclaim Christ crucified … Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." (NRSV)
[513] Barron, *The Priority of Christ*, 93.
[514] Hill, *Servant of All: Status, Ambition, and the Way of Jesus*, 29.

the condition of its fruitfulness. Undoubtedly, 'love in action' is utterly significant for the intended audience of the Gospel of John, as it relates God's love for humanity and our love for one another. While John was writing for the early Christian community, his message is directly applicable to the context of the churches in Samoa today, specifically the MCS.

Jesus' title 'Lord' is not exclusive or elitist but honourably associated with those at the periphery, as in Philippians 2:7*bcd* where he is described as "…taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form." The deeper theological meaning of Jesus being a slave in this 'Christ-story' is reflected in his new title, 'Servant-Lord,' which resonates with the image of a master who serves all, including servants. Indeed, Jesus' human form, in the Pauline view, is that of a servant-slave.

God through Jesus completely reversed the shameful image of the cross associated with the slave-servant, transforming it into an image of honour and glory. This identity as 'servant-slave' should also be reflected in the image of the *faife'au* ("the one who serves" or *tautua*); this is not shameful or degrading for it provides life and care for others. Even before the event of the cross, Jesus literally took the form of a slave and demonstrated its real meaning by washing his disciples' feet. This duty of a servant-slave is parallel to the service rendered by the untitled men as *tautua* to their families and villages. The story of Jesus' footwashing and the story of the cross are interconnected, and it is this image of selfless service that should be the hallmark of the Samoan *faifeau*. The Samoan church needs to embrace "footwashing as having great significance for evangelists – it is the token of love, 'lasting and conclusive proof of Christ's love,' 'an anticipation of the cross,' and 'it expresses the meaning of the cross graphically as a deed of Jesus."[515]

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[515] J. E. Morgan-Wynne, *The Cross in the Johannine Writings* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011), 25.

CHAPTER FOUR

FETAUSIA'I: A SAMOAN CONTEXTUAL THEOLOGICAL MODEL OF RECIPROCAL CARING

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 revealed the lack of reciprocal caring among the privileged ministers (those in leadership) as a result of the fixed structural hierarchy embraced by the Methodist Church of Samoa (MCS). The leaders of the MCS (from the early missionaries to the indigenous clergy today) seem to have taken for granted their position of power and misused the core Samoan value of *fa'aloalo* or respect. The leadership problem is entrenched in the exploitation of the Samoan cultural concept of *fa'aloalo* (culture of respect) through a misconception of the culture of *va-fealoa'i.* This in turn leads to demands of *tautua*[516] or service from those at the periphery (i.e., members of the church), but this *tautua* is not reciprocal. Observably, the performance of these core Samoan values reveals a vertical (bottom-up) relationship where those at the bottom of the Samoan church hierarchy must enact *fa'aloalo* (respect) and *tautua* (service) for those at the top of the hierarchy. This creates an unbalanced and oppressive relationship.

Against this backdrop, the emphasis of this chapter is a reappropriation of the Samoan concept of *fetausia'i* or 'reciprocal caring' which appears to be lacking in the mission of the Church today. This chapter argues that the concept of *fetausia'i* indicates that *fa'aloalo* and *tautua* must be reciprocated between the respective groups in the Church (i.e., between the MCS Executive and members of the MCS, and between parish ministers and parishioners), as modelled in Jesus' own teachings and practical examples, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.

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[516] The concept *tautua* is a typical Samoan way of service (i.e., cooking, fishing, planting crops) rendered by the untitled men (*taulele'a*) for their *'āiga* (family), including parents and sisters; and for the *fono a matai o le nu'u* (village council of chiefs). Such service or *tautua* is always performed from the house at the back or kitchen *(tūnoa)* towards the front *fale* or house, where the parents and sisters reside and chiefs meet. The word *tautua* is formed by two words: *tau* means 'to execute,' 'to serve,' 'to fight' or 'to struggle'; and *tua* means 'back or behind.' In this sense, *tau-tua* or service directly points to service which is usually rendered from the back *fale* or house (denoting 'below') to the front *fale* (denoting 'top'). *Tautua* implies that the *matai* (chief), parents (*mātua*) and sisters (*tuateine*) are served by the *taulele'a*. In this sense, *taulele'a* are labelled as the *'au tautua* (the serving group). See also Mercy Ah Siu-Maliko, "Public Theology: Core Values and Domestic Violence in Samoan Society " (PhD thesis, University of Otago, Dunedin, 2015), 110.

The practice of *fetausia'i* is conveyed in this research as a relational practice that reflects the essence of *fa'a-Samoa* (Samoan way of life) in terms of its values and responsibilities. This is evident in the roles played by the *tausi feagaiga* (guardian of the covenant, a role performed by the sister's brother); the *tausi* or wife of the *tulāfale* (orator chief); the *tausi-ali'i* (wife of an *ali'i* or high chief); the *tausi-maliu* (carer of the bodies of the dead person, performed by women of the village); and the *matai tausi-'āiga* (chief as the family carer).

Given the limitations and scope of this research, I will only employ two of Stephen Bevans' models of contextual Theology – the "Translation" and "Anthropological" models – as a contextual guide for this conceptual model of *fetausia'i*.

1. THE NEED FOR A CONTEXTUAL THEOLOGICAL MODEL

According to Upolu Vaai, contextual and indigenous theologies were introduced into the Pacific around the 1960s.[517] Daniel Migliore has asserted that indigenising the Christian faith is a positive development in Christian history, one which requires "… openness to the new experience and understandings of Christ arising out of the particular contexts of suffering and hope […] a sign of a deeply felt need to identify and affirm what binds all Christians together and to express this faith in a full and coherent manner."[518]

John Allan adds an important point, namely that "Christians must understand the world they are living in, or all their obedience will be involved in confusion and error."[519] Allan contends that there is a great need to construct theological frameworks that have meaning in the context in which they arise. The recent interest in contextual theologies is one that Stephen Bevans recognises as a shift of theological method from the "traditional *loci* of scripture and tradition" to a way of doing theology that includes "present human experience," which integrates "'culture and history" into contemporary contexts.[520]

According to Bevans, it is the way that scripture and tradition are perceived in the contemporary setting that makes theology contextual. The shift from what were previously

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[517] Upolu L. Vaai, "Motu Ma Le Taula: Towards an Island 'Let Be' Hermeneutics," *Pacific Journal of Theology*, no. 53 (2015): 27.
[518] Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1991), 5.
[519] A. J. Allan, "Is There a Crisis? Christ and Tomorrow," in *Presbyterian Review – The Outlook* (Christchurch: Presbyterian Review, 1936), 5.
[520] Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, rev. and expanded ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 3-15.

held to be universally received understandings of scripture and tradition to interpretations that take specific contexts into account allows the gospel message to become relevant and articulate in native cultural forms.[521] Thus, "human experience and Christian tradition are to be read together dialectically."[522] In other words, contextual theology is a reading of human experience in the light of Christian tradition. Bevans' 'Translation' and 'Anthropological' models of contextual theology both allow for a framing and assimilating of the relational-cultural concept of *fetausia'i*.

1.1   Translation Model

The fundamental proposition of the Translation model of contextual theology is that one must preserve the 'gospel core' (which is the incarnate God revealed through Jesus Christ)[523] after the translation of one cultural or social context to another, using a 'kernel and husk' method. Here the 'kernel' is the 'gospel core' and the 'husk' is the 'context' in which the gospel is rooted. [524] Bevans suggests that a good translation is achieved when the 'spirit of the text' or the biblical message is captured after the process of translation.[525]

The purpose of this translation method is not only to "provide information which people can understand, but [one] must present the message in such a way that people can feel its relevance (the expressive element in communication) and can then respond to it in action (imperative function)."[526] This means that for the Bible to become meaningful and practical for local contexts and situations, it must be translated into native languages (i.e., concepts) and cultures (i.e., practices).

Upolu Vaai concurs with Bevans' idea of translating the gospel message into the vernacular form of a local language, in order for the reader to understand it fully within the framework of his or her own context. Vaai writes that "For the islander, understanding occurs within a larger historical context. Part of that historical context is 'language'."[527] With reference to the Pacific Islands churches, Sione 'Amanaki Havea of the Free

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[521] Ibid., 16-17.
[522] Ibid., 16.
[523] As Bevans comments, "Krikor Haleblian notes that some theologians … speak simply of the gospel core as 'Christ incarnate.' Donald McGavran, however, would hold that the essence of the gospel would have a bit more content. For him, the gospel is reducible to the 'belief and allegiance to (a) the Triune God, (b) the Bible, and (c) the ordinances and doctrines set in the Bible." Ibid., 40.
[524] Ibid., 37-53.
[525] Ibid., 38.
[526] Eugene A. Nida, *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, ed. Charles R. Taber (Leiden: Published for the United Bible Societies by E. J. Brill, 1969), 24.
[527] Vaai, "Motu Ma Le Taula: Towards an Island 'Let Be' Hermeneutics," 36.

Wesleyan Methodist Church in Tonga, speaking at the Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1983, explained: "Before, the gospel was foreign and Western. Now it is relevant and meaningful. Before, our Christ had blue eyes and spoke English or French. Now we see him brown-eyed; he speaks our language and is one of us inclusively."[528]

On the one hand, it is true that the indigenous people of the Pacific have been aided and nurtured in their Christian faith by foreigners (in the form of Western missionaries). At the same time, Pacific Island churches also struggled with a foreign religion whose style of doing theology has been described as classical, traditional or orthodox.[529] However, Bevans, Vaai and Havea all agree that the process of contextualisation can be achieved through a process of translation from this imported (Western) theological framework to one that is more authentic in the contexts of the Pacific Islands.

The first task in this translation process is to strip a particular Christian doctrine or practice "of its wrappings – the contextual husk – in order to find the gospel kernel."[530] Subsequent to the discovery of the gospel message through this initial unwrapping process, the next step is to look for the "appropriate terms or action or story" with which to rewrap the gospel message or kernel in a new "contextual husk."[531] This process of the translation model is described through the analogy of bringing the gospel 'seed' from its original soil and planting it in new soil.[532]

The gospel kernel that I want to translate or contextualise is the incarnate God in the form of Jesus Christ as the 'Servant-Lord' in the Gospels (i.e., John 13:1-17; refer to Chapter 3). The new soil is the Samoan context. The 'contextual husk' with which the gospel core or message can be rewrapped is the concept or practise of *fetausia'i* or 'reciprocal caring.' This Samoan concept embodies reciprocity, mutuality and a communal way of serving, sharing and caring. It is important to note that Bevans suggests that the whole translation process cannot be successful without the "help of not only theology and anthropology but real religious and cultural sympathy."[533] I will address the contribution

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[528] WCC Assembly, "Highlights the Life of Pacific Island Churches," *PCC News: Quarterly Journal of the Pacific Conference of Churches* 2 (September 1982): 2.
[529] Eteuati S. L. Tuioti, "When Gospel and Culture Intersect: Conversion in Samoa" (PhD dissertation, Drew University, 2011), 5. Vaai, "Motu Ma Le Taula: Towards an Island 'Let Be' Hermeneutics," 26.
[530] Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 40.
[531] Ibid.
[532] Ibid., 44.
[533] Ibid., 40.

of the anthropological model next, before discussing the cultural understanding of the concept of *fetausia'i*, which resonates with Jesus' deeds and examples as discussed in Chapter 2.

1.2   Anthropological model

For Bevans, what is pivotal in the translation model is that the 'Christian identity' must be preserved without misrepresentation, despite the importance of socio-cultural and historical realities.[534] That said, a prime focus of the anthropological model is to preserve the 'cultural identity' of the 'human person' and her or his own religious and cultural beliefs.[535] Justin Martyr's claim that the 'seeds of the word'[536] (of the gospel) can be found in other religions and cultures is further elaborated by Bevans, in two senses:

> In the first place, this model centers on the value and goodness of Anthropos, the human person. Human experience, as it is limited and yet realized in culture, social change, and geographical and historical circumstances, is considered the basic criterion of judgment as to whether a particular contextual expression is genuine or not. It is within every person, and every society and social location and every culture […]. God's hidden presence can be manifested in the ordinary structures of the situation […] and relationship become the standards by which genuine religious expression is judged to be sound…"

> Second, this model is anthropological in the sense that it makes use of the insights of the social science of anthropology to understand more clearly the web of human relationships and meanings that make up human culture and in which God is present, offering life, healing and wholeness."[537]

Anne Carr submits that any conceptual model of theology used must facilitate the 'transcendence of God' and demonstrate God's involvement in the cosmic 'human experience.'[538] Once people find in their own cultures the "concepts with which to construct an adequate articulation" of their faith, it is then assumed that God is involved and present.[539]

In the case of Samoan culture, Lalomilo Kamu asserts that the "divine origin of culture has established a theological basis" upon which to assert that God's participation in human culture makes human participation significant.[540] Unquestionably, culture is indicative of the God who interacts with people. However, although Kamu agrees that the

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[534] Ibid., 37.
[535] Ibid., 54.
[536] Ibid.
[537] Ibid., 55.
[538] Anne Carr, "The God Who Is Involved," *Theology Today* 38, no. 3 (1981): 314.
[539] Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 55.
[540] Lalomilo Kamu, *The Samoan Culture and the Christian Gospel* (Apia: Donna Lou Kamu, 1996), 36-37.

origin of the Samoan culture is divine, he submits a cautionary counter view, namely that cultural inferences can become either a benefit or a barrier to an authentic Christian faith. Kamu asserts that,

> … though culture is basically good, evidence has shown that certain cultural traditions proved to be both negative and detrimental to peace in society. Human failure and selfishness seem to dominate, producing injustices and suffering. Thus, it is apparent that the negative elements of culture are cruel and inhuman due to faulty interpretations and erroneous perceptions of what should be done for the good of society and what patterns of behaviour, mores or traditions should be upheld to enable solidarity, peace and order in that society.[541]

Kamu's assertion, together with those of Carr and Bevans, provides a background within which we can assert that Samoan images like *fetausia'i* are needed to illustrate God's activity as displayed in Jesus' narratives (i.e., footwashing, kenosis), as argued in the preceding chapter. Undoubtedly, *fetausia'i* is a Samoan practice which models the divine existence of God and the affirmation of God's involvement in human experience. *Fetausia'i* is a culture in its own right, and it is an important reason why Samoans initially accepted Christianity wholeheartedly, because it has so many aspects that find parallels with Samoa's own beliefs and practices.[542] This is the premise upon which a highly respected position was given to the early white missionaries within the social organisation Samoan society.[543]

2. DEFINING *FETAUSIA'I*

Before Samoa experienced European contact in the early 1800s,[544] the culture of *fetausia'i* was very much lived out and treasured among the Samoans.[545] *Fetausia'i* is a Samoan way of life which exhibits reciprocity through the sharing of services (*tautua*) and material goods or gifts (*meaalofa*), as a sign of *fa'aaloalo* (respect) between individuals, families and villages (and even extended to strangers).[546]

In terms of the conception of *fetausia'i* as *tausi* (caring) as occurring in a reciprocal manner, Vaovasamania Meripa Toso explains the rationale for this broader view by saying that "the values of *fefa'asoaa'i* (collaboration), *fetausia'i* (reciprocity), love, *tapuia/va-fealoa'i* (respect) and *tautua* (service) … enable young children to develop a sense of

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[541] Ibid., 37.

[542] Lange, *Island Ministers: Indigenous Leadership in Nineteenth Century Pacific Islands Christianity*, 79.

[543] Fanaafi Aiono-Le Tagaloa, "Tapuai: Samoan Worship" (BA thesis, University of Otago, 2001), 58.

[544] Meleisea and Schoeffel, eds., *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa*, 41-49.

[545] Roger Neich, *Material Culture of Western Samoa: Persistence and Change* (Wellington: National Museum of New Zealand, 1985), 7.

[546] Ali'ilelei Lefua, "The Concept of Tausi" (BD thesis, Piula Theological College, 2007), 5-16.

identity from birth."[547] This developmental process of constructing a Samoan identity from early childhood is grounded in *fetausia'i* (reciprocity) – a process which starts from within the family setting as the first classroom for all Samoans.

Unquestionably, *fetausia'i* is foundational to the rearing of any Samoan child. According to Va'ai, adhering to *va-fealoa'i* through the practice of *fetausia'i* starts within the embracing womb of the mother (birth) and continues until the enveloping womb of the earth (death).[548] In between these two extremes of life, there lies the womb of the *'āiga* – the extended family and the *nu'u* (village), where life is nurtured and lived.

Fetausia'i is composed of three linguistic forms: *fe*, *tausi* and *a'i*. According to George Pratt's *Dictionary*, *fe* is "a prefix to verbs, with *i*, *a'i*, *ta'i* or *ani* &c., suffixed."[549] *Fe*, according to G. B. Milner, is a "prefix to word-bases" and can be used alone or in combination with a suffix.[550] When this happens, *fe* denotes "a reciprocal process"[551] and is "an action or process carried out here and there, up and down, hither and thither, all around…"[552] *Fe* denotes the reciprocal action and plural forms. Ulrike Mosel describes *fe* as a "plurality of events, coherent sequence of events or events in turn."[553] This means that *fe* points us to a diversity and plurality of giving and receiving. In relation to any verb, *fe* always suggests the interaction between two or more people or groups of people. Hence, *fe* as a prefix implies that an action executed must be treated equally in a shared or reciprocal manner.

The term *tausi* is a compound word or verb which literally means 'the act of care-giving.' The term *tausi* can also become a noun or the person who performs the act of care-giving. *Tausi* is usually recognised in the parental care given to a child from birth until death. This insinuates that *tausi* is a full-time task and an ongoing process. No matter how old the child is, parental guidance and care can never be detached from him or her at any moment of life.

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[547] Vaovasamanaia Meripa Toso, "Reconceptualising Spirituality as a Philosophy of Practice for Pasifika Early Childhood Education in New Zealand: A Samoan Perspective," *The Journal of the Pacific Circle Consortium for Education* 23, no. 2 (2011): 130.
[548] Vaai, "Fa'aaloalo: A Theological Reinterpretation of the Doctrine of the Trinity," 227.
[549] Pratt, *A Grammar and Dictionary of the Samoan Language*, 152.
[550] Milner, *Samoan Dictionary: Samoan-English, English-Samoan*, 61.
[551] Ibid., xxxiv, 61.
[552] Ibid., 61-62.
[553] Ulrike Mosel, *Samoan Reference Grammar*, ed. Even Hovdhaugen (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1992), 180.

In sum, when *fe* as a prefix is added to *tausi,* it highlights the fact that *tausi* (caring, sharing or serving) is not supposed to be singular or to enforce a hierarchy of power. It is supposed to strengthen the distribution of power and the delegation of roles and responsibilities. Here caring and nurturing are viewed as "an ongoing horizontal dynamic of relationship."[554] In other words, *fetausia'i* enhances a reciprocal type of leadership and service.

2.1 *Fetausia'i* Acknowledges the *Va-fealoa'i* (Relational Space)

According to Tui Atua, there are four types of *va-fealoa'i* (relational scared space): "(a) between humanity and the cosmos, (b) between humanity and the environment; (c) between fellow humans, and (d) between human and self."[555] These relational spaces encapsulate the essence of the relatedness and connectedness of the Samoan people and the cosmos. Samoans believe that *e leai se tagata e tu fa'a-mauga*, or 'no-man is an island.' Again, Tui Atua captures this perception by stating:

> 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 my *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 belonging.[556]

Tui Atua's reflection portrays the fact that Samoa is a shared community. Samoa as a communal society exists through maintaining the *va*, which is a 'living space' that also serves as a lifeblood vein coursing through the community. In order for Samoan people to survive as a community, everyone must attend to *tausi le va*. Maintaining *va-fealoa'i* entails valuing the *tuā'oi-tagata* or 'neighbourly boundaries.' *Fa'aaloalo* (respect) and *tautua* (service) are cultural attributes required to safeguard these imperative parameters. Hence, *va-fealoa'i* connects and safeguards the space that ensures the 'social relatedness' between people.[557]

The theology of *va-fealoa'i* plays an important part in the life of the MCS's mission and the wellbeing of her members in general (see Chapter 1). Although the first part of *va-fealoa'i*, *va*, connotes an empty space, void, or gap in between, referring to *va* with regard

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[554] Mercy Ah Siu-Maliko, "Featausia'i (Reciprocal Caring) as a Relational Hermeneutical Approach for Gender Equality in Pacific Churches," paper presented, Relational Hermeneutics Conference, Pacific Theological College, Suva, Fiji, June 2016, 8.
[555] Efi, *Suʾesuʾe Manogi: In Search of Fragrance*, 80.
[556] Ibid.
[557] Lupematasila Misatauveve Melani Anae, "Teu Le Va: A Samoan Relational Hermeneutical Key," paper presented, Relational Hermeneutics Conference, Pacific Theological College, Suva, Fiji, June 2016, 5.

to relationships is not an unoccupied space. According to Feleterika Nokise, the word *va*, in terms of "… 'space,' is not a vacuum, rather it is a living entity made possible by the ongoing interaction of emotions, values, attitudes and behaviour within it. The expression of respect makes the space between people come alive. Its sacredness derives from the spiritual benefits of what is being exchanged."[558] Albert Wendt also explains *va* as

> … the space between, the betweenness, not empty space, not space that separates but space that relates, that hold separate entities and things together in the Unity-that-is-All, the space that is context, giving meaning to things. […] This is crucial in communal cultures that value group, unity, more than individualism: who perceive the individual person/creature/thing in terms of group, in terms of *va*, relationships.[559]

Paul Sharrad's observation is that *va*, in relation to Wendt's explanation, "functions as a holder" that holds individuals and groups together as a community.[560] Nokise's and Wendt's insights suggest that *va* requires everyone to care for, nurture, nurse and cherish relational space, as captured in the Samoan expression *Ia teu le va* ('to care for the relational space'). The word *teu* means 'to put things in proper order or rightful place,' which also implies *tausi* or caring.

The second part of the word *va-fealoa'i* is *fealoa'i*, which means 'face to face' or 'facing,' as in *fa'aaloalo*. In between the two or more faces is the *va* or the relational space. In the Samoan mindset, taking good care of this 'relational space' means valuing the worth and dignity of the other person. This is why the *va* as a relational space is also regarded as sacred (*tapu* or *sa*) space, in which everyone is expected to care for others and be cared for by others.

Nokise, Wendt and Tui Atua all understand *va-fetausia'i* as a living relational space in which this non-void space becomes sacred (*tapu*). It is a requirement of the *fa'a-Samoa* to "care for this sacred relational space" (*tausi va-tapuia*).[561] The sacredness (*tapuia*) of the *va* implies one's acknowledgement of the dignity of the other person and the cosmos as God's magnanimous creation, in a way that sustains the community's harmony and freedom. Whenever *va-tapuia* is ignored and overlooked, this results in *soli-va* (*soli* is figuratively understood as 'rude' or 'reckless,' and literally means 'stepping on' or

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[558] Feleterika Nokise, "Keynote Address: Weavers of Meanings and Patterns," *Relational Hermeneutics Conference Report* (Suva, Fiji: Pacific Theological College, 2016), 14-15.
[559] Albert Wendt, "Tatauing the Post-Colonial Body," *Span* 42-43 (April-October 1996): 15-29.
[560] Paul Sharrad, *Albert Wendt and Pacific Literature: Circling the Void* (Manchester, UK and New York: Manchester University Press, distributed exclusively in the USA by Palgrave, 2003).
[561] *Tausi va-tapuia*: *tausi* means 'to take good care of' or 'to look after.' *Va* is 'space' and *tapuia* has its roots in the word *tapu* or taboo, which means forbidden or sacred.

'trampling' on someone or something). This is an insult to the family and the whole community. When this happens, the sacred space is *ōīa* or 'ruined.'

Consequently, everyone who tramples on the sacred relational space must go through a remedial process of *teu le va*, the healing process of restoring wounded or broken relationships in order to reconcile individuals or communities. This process is enacted vividly in the traditional *ifoga* ('cultural way of apology') ritual. I am reminded of an act of *ifoga* performed by my village on Upolu Island for one of our neighbouring villages, in the late 1970s. A man from the other village had been slaughtered by someone from our village. This meant that the *va-fealoa'i* between the two villages was greatly disturbed.

Customarily, the *ali'i* (highest chief) of my village must present himself publicly in such a situation at the *malae* (meeting field) of the village of the deceased person, performing an *ifoga* or 'an act of bowing' and covering himself with the *ietoga* or 'fine mat,' a sign of beseeching forgiveness. As the *ali'i* he must offer himself in a sacrificial manner, standing in for the murderer on behalf of the family and the whole village (similar in a way to Christ sacrificing himself in atonement for our sins). This is the highest cultural act of reconciliation or *teu le va*. In this instance, in place of the high chief, our village church minister, Rev. Lima Ofo'ia,[562] sacrificially offered himself to perform this cultural act on behalf of the offender, his family, and our whole village, regardless of what may ensue.

This cultural performance reveals a deeper level of *fetausia'i* between the village *faife'au* (church minister) and the village. In this intentional act of care for the *va-tapuia* or sacredness of the *va-fealoa'i*, *fa'aaloalo* is also being conveyed. Maintaining and sustaining this *va-fealoa'i* or relational sacred space only becomes a reality when the practice of *fetausia'i* is genuinely expressed and enacted.

2.2 *Fetausia'i* is *Fa'aaloalo*, a Reality of *fa'a-Samoa*

Fa'aaloalo represents the very essence of *fa'a-Samoa* (Samoan way of life or Samoan culture and traditions), and indeed the Pacific way of life. Leslie Boseto, the well-known ecumenist and church leader from the Solomon Islands, states that the reality of the "Pacific community is people based … a real grassroots-community with a deep level of belonging

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[562] Rev. Lima Ofo'ia was the Superintendent of the Apia–Upolu Synod at the time of the incident, and the parish minister of my village MCS church.

and feeling … a community of sharing and caring."[563] Boseto's claim reflects the reality of *fetausia'i* or caring for one another. Va'ai defines *fa'aaloalo* as a "living reality rather than just an abstract idea," and in fact it is the very essence of Samoan and Pacific people.[564] The Samoan historian, scholar and minister of the MCS, Fineaso Fa'alafi, defines *fa'aaloalo* within the context of the *fa'a-Samoa*. He writes:

> *Fa'aaloalo*, which literally means 'face-to-face.' The word *alo* connotes 'face' or 'facing.' *Fa'a* is a causative verb that implies one facing the other with love, for the root of *alofa* (love) is *alo*. Thus, the word has the rich meaning of facing one another with mutual love. When Jesus invited his disciples to love one another, the Samoan word used is *fa'aaloalo*. Its meaning includes respect, honour, service, trust and justice, and implies mutual bonds of relationship, even covenant, which expressed in ethical, social, cultural and religious commitments.[565]

According to Fa'alafi, showing *fa'aaloalo* is all about *fetausia'i.* This practice of Samoan *fa'aaloalo* is part of the *fa'a-Samoa* that is exemplified in the context of the village meeting of chiefs.[566] Regarding this village council meeting of chiefs, Lloyd Osbourne comments that "Samoans have a strong sense of justice; they like, too, if they have a grievance, an enormous time in which to discuss it."[567] The length of time set aside to deliberate is not an issue. Osbourne suggests that all *matai* are respected for their opinions in these village council meetings, rather than just a few.

Fa'aaloalo is also evident in the way Samoan people use *gagana fa'aaloalo* (*gagana* = language) or the 'language of respect.' Mercy Maliko defines *gagana fa'aaloalo* as the "bedrock of identity and relationality."[568] Maliko agrees with Aiono Fanaafi Le Tagaloa's assertion that, without this distinct Samoan language, Samoan culture could not exist. Hence, *fetausia'i* is the Samoan concept which brings about a culture of reciprocal caring by sharing and serving.

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[563] Leslie Boseto, "Towards a Pacific Theology of Reality," *Pacific Journal of Theology* II, no. 12 (1994): 57-58.

[564] Vaai, "Fa'aaloalo: A Theological Reinterpretation of the Dictrine of the Trinity from a Samoan Perspective," 203.

[565] Fa'alafi, *Carrying the Faith*, 28.

[566] See Footnote 38, Chapter 1, Duncan, "A Hierarchy of Symbols," 106.

[567] Newton Allan Rowe, *Samoa Under the Sailing Gods* (London and New York: Putnam, 1930), xii.

[568] Ah Siu-Maliko, "Public Theology: Core Values and Domestic Violence in Samoan Society," 92, 94. *Gagana fa'aaloalo* is different from the language of everyday conversations or the 'ordinary.' Everything must be said with careful attention to formal protocols. For example, when referring to the other person or speaking in the second person, he/she must be addressed formally with respect. A speaker would never apply this respectful/polite language when referring to him/herself. This is shameful and disrespectful, or *lē-māfaufau* (meaning no brain or manners). As another example, the polite term for the Samoan word 'to eat' is *tausami*, whereas it is *'ai* in everyday language.

2.3 *Fetausia'i* is the Culture of Exchange

Fetausia'i is also a process of giving and receiving of goods and services commonly practiced in most Pacific nations, a practice that secures connectedness.[569] *Fetausia'i* is a cultural basis for exchanging material goods as seen in the traditional barter system (*taro* for fish or *tapa* for mats) between Samoan individuals, families and villages since antiquity. The exchange of material goods in the *fa'a-Samoa* is called 'material culture' by Roger Neich,[570] a process which reflects balance in terms of equal sharing of resources and traditional wealth between all members and groups within a community.

Byron Malaela Sotiata Seiuli sees *fetausia'i* as a way of 'gifting' or *meaalofa*[571] that expresses respect and love, where "these attributes and values are inherently visible and evidently at work in and through the lives of Samoan and Pacific communities everywhere."[572] The effect of the exchange of the 'things of love' encompasses a deep understanding of *fa'aaloalo* (mutual respect) between self and others, and between families and villages. The culture of *fetausia'i* is about the exchange of goods and services for the common good of the self, family and wider community. *Fetausia'i* is antithetical to the culture of individualism, embracing communal living rather than the personal desire of individuals. It is also an act of giving and receiving between two or more individuals or groups of people regardless of their hierarchical status in society. This act of exchange is a responsibility involving all members of the family and village.

Central to the culture of *fetausia'i* is the demonstration of *alofa* (love) and *fa'aaloalo* (respect) towards one another out of a sincere free will and not through demands of any authority.[573] In other words, reciprocal caring reflects an egalitarian way of life and it works within the framework of *fefa'aaloaloa'i* (mutual respect) with honour. Upolu Vaai cites Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi's claim that Samoa's political, economic, social and religious domains of life in the pre-missionary era were "not compartmentalized,"[574] for

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[569] Byron Malaela Sotiata Seiuli, "The Meaalofa Therapeutic Approach in Counselling with Pacific Clients," in *Pacific Identities and Well-Being: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, ed. Margaret Nelson Agee, et al. (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2013), 121.

[570] Neich, *Material Culture of Western Samoa: Persistence and Change*, 7.

[571] Seiuli defines *meaalofa* as a "gift or the values emphasized in the processes of gifting. *Meaalofa* is comprised of two Samoan words, *mea* ['thing' such as an object] and *alofa* […] [which] refers to love, charity, compassion or affection." Seiuli, "The Meaalofa Therapeutic Approach in Counselling with Pacific Clients," 119-20.

[572] Ibid., 120.

[573] Latuivai Kioa Latu, "Women Lay Preachers: Inquiring on Grace and Equality" (BD thesis, Piula Theological College, Samoa, 2015), 8.

[574] Upolu L. Vaai, "From Divine Master to Trinity: Re-Conceiving the Theology of God in the Methodist Church of Samoa" (MTh Thesis, Brisbane College of Divinity, 2003), 14.

these domains developed within the framework of *fa'aaloalo* for each other. In this sense, reciprocity is a lifestyle which is very common in contexts which enforce a communal way of life, like Samoa. Va'ai argues that *fetausia'i*, in the context of *fa'aaloalo*, "diminishes any authoritative egoism and hierarchical structures; rather, it encourages them to live instead in mutual giving and receiving as well as interdependence, without separateness or subordination or division. It further promotes a relationship sealed by mutual understanding and love."[575]

In the same vein, Meleisea comments that reciprocal caring eliminates any chance of poverty or self-accumulation, and any ethic of subordination or authoritarianism.[576] *Tausi* as the root word of *fetausia'i* is an ideal concept related to the feminine role of caring or looking after something of great value, such as '*ietoga* (fine mats). The importance of the '*ietoga* in the Samoan culture of exchange illustrates reciprocity within the framework of a culture of rank and hierarchy, in which fine mats of equal value are expected to be reciprocated in any exchange.

The exchange of fine mats in the past influenced the rise or fall of a descent group and thus had a political dimension.[577] Melanie Anae observes that "the *fa'a-Samoa* is not centred around accumulating goods and money as a means of security and expression of success, but rather it stems from a fishing and agrarian society where happiness and security are derived from the cohesiveness and strength of the family."[578] Anae gets to the heart of the social ethic that triggers the obligation of exchanging or sharing of material goods in the *fa'a-Samoa*. In this worldview, *fetausia'i* as a means of redistributing resources is also viewed as a way to maintain balance within a hierarchical setting.

It is evident that, in the present era, the culture of *fetausia'i* manifested through the redistribution of wealth out of free will seems to be replaced by a "new religious economic doctrine, namely church offering."[579] Fa'alafi is adamant that this approach to giving came about through the initiative of the missionaries, where the 'trading' of local commodities[580]

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[575] Ibid., 48.
[576] Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, 20.
[577] Adrienne L. Kaeppler, "Samoan Material Culture in the 1980s," *Pacific Arts*, no. 3 (1991): 18.
[578] Melanie Anae, "Towards a NZ-Born Samoan Identity: Some Reflections on Labels4(2)," *Pacific Health Dialog*, no. 4(2) (1997): 137.
[579] Fa'alafi, *Carrying the Faith: Samoan Methodism 1828-1928*, 115.
[580] These include Samoan oil, sennit, floor mats, fine mats, and arrowroot starch. In the case of the LMS, Meleisea asserts that "When a village decided to become Christian they built a church and a house for a teacher or pastor, and began to contribute to the church by supporting the pastor with food and services, and by contributing coconut oil to the senior representative of the mission in each district. The oil was collected

was emphasised in the name of church development.[581] This new approach was no doubt puzzling to Samoans, and it has become, over time, a growing problem which is viewed as a 'burden'[582] for Samoan church members.

The reason this system of giving became problematic was that missionaries like "Dyson did not present a true demonstration of the giving life as an example for the people to follow. Through his writings he demanded money for the 'May Offering' from all members, but he himself never contributed a penny to these offerings. It was more like saying, 'Do what I say, but not what I do.'"[583] Fa'alafi's comment suggests Jesus' words to his disciples, namely, "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach."[584]

This attitude of the missionaries caused confusion which threatened to undermine the culture of *fetausia'i* in the church, and "introduced an expectation that formed a totally different culture into the *fa'a Samoa*."[585] In contrast, genuine *fetausia'i* reflects the value of relationality and reciprocal sharing. In this worldview, positions and statuses in Samoa are meant to be reflected in the roles and responsibilities associated with *tausi*, or caring for one another, in terms of *tautua* (service).[586]

2.4 *Fetausia'i* is *Tautua* (Service Rendered by Heirs of the Family)[587]

The culture of *fetausia'i* is an expression of good relationships between individuals and social groups within the context of *fa'a-Samoa*. The *'āiga* (family) and *nu'u* (village)

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in large barrels by the missionaries and shipped to England for sale, to earn money for the mission. In the early days of the mission, *masoā* (arrowroot starch) was also given as a church contribution, and this too was exported for sale in England. This practice introduced the custom of making public the donations of money to the church; before people had money to give, the family heads would call out the amount of oil their family had made for the church. Families, villages, and districts competed for the honour of giving the most to the church." Meleisea, *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa*, 54-55.

[581] Fa'alafi, *Carrying the Faith: Samoan Methodism 1828-1928*, 116.

[582] Duncan explains this concept of 'burden' as 'suffering' and 'slavery': "The people [congregation] are suffering […] The people are slaves to the church and are buying their salvation." Duncan, "A Hierarchy of Symbols," 28.

[583] Fa'alafi, *Carrying the Faith: Samoan Methodism 1828-1928*, 117.

[584] Matthew 23:2-3, *Holy Bible,* NIV.

[585] Fa'alafi, *Carrying the Faith : Samoan Methodism 1828-1928*, 117.

[586] Kiwi Tamasese, *The New Morning: A Qualitative Investigation into Samoan Perspectives on Mental Health and Culturally Appropriate Services: A Research Project Carried out by the Family Centre = Ole [I.E. O Le] Taeao Afua*, ed. Carmel Peteru, Charles Waldegrave, and Taeao Afua (Lower Hutt, NZ: The Family Centre, 1997), 29.

[587] "The term '*tautua*' or the service rendered by the heirs to the 'title' is still used in the Samoan cultural context, and it still captures the communalistic aspect of the Samoan way of life." Ma'ilo, *Bible-Ing My Samoan*, 216, 17.

collectively serve (*tautua*) the *matai* (chief). In return, the *matai* also serves (*tautua*) his or her '*āiga*, and in this regard, the *matai* is the guardian, custodian, trustee and provider for the extended family and village.[588]

The word *tautua* can be either a verb or a noun. *Tautua* as a verb connotes the responsibility of an individual or group of people to serve parents, family, village, nation and church. *Tautua* as a noun, according to Vaitusi Nofoaiga's definition, is the person who "is able to listen to, see, and feel the needs of his or her family and village, and act to fulfil them despite challenges he or she will encounter in doing so."[589] Nofoaiga understands *tautua* as someone who takes the initiative to become accountable and responsible, and who actively provides quality service and support for the family and village.

In this context of the '*āiga* and *nu'u*, Mosese Ma'ilo suggests that the indigenous term *tautua* should be the appropriate concept to replace the foreign concept commonly used in the Samoan Bible translation for the word 'servant,' translated by the missionaries as '*au'auna*,[590] a concept reflecting the "master-servant/slave relationship."[591] The term '*au'auna* could be seen as one of the ways to sustain the missionaries' "paternalistic authoritarian attitudes" in the church.[592] On the same note, Wesley Taotua has commented on the paternalistic attitude of missionaries toward the Samoan people, in that their treatment of the locals was conveyed through instruction:

> This authority displayed means that the ministry of the church is very paternalistic. Such paternalism can be attributed back to the early missionaries, who treated the indigenous people like children. This does not mean that the missionaries disrespected the natives, but rather, they were teaching a new way of living that could only be transmitted through instruction. To the people of Samoa such instruction was similar to that of a father and child.[593]

Taotua is referencing the missionaries' understanding of '*au'auna* as a 'paid servant,' which is somewhat akin to the service given by the *taule'ale'a* (untitled man). It could be

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[588] Sometimes, a Samoan *matai* leads the fishing expedition, and occasionally he goes out fishing by himself. Ibid., 216.

[589] Vaitusi Nofoaiga, "Towards a Samoan Postcolonial Reading of Discipleship in the Matthean Gospel" (PhD thesis, University of Auckland, 2014), 38.

[590] Or 'paid servant.'

[591] Ma'ilo, *Bible-Ing My Samoan*, 254.

[592] Siatua Leuluaialii, *The Samoan Reponse to the Gospel: Edited Transcript of an Address Delivered to the South Pacific Regional Conference of the World Methodist Historical Society, Paerata, Auckland, New Zealand, May 1987*, ed. World Methodist Historical Society, South Pacific Region (Papatoetoe, NZ: Wesley Historical Society [New Zealand], 1987), 4.

[593] Wesley Taotua, "Samoa Methodist Church: Critical Analysis of the Intimacy in an Environment of Pluralism and Development" (BD thesis, Piula Theological College, 2003), 7.

seen as a way of maintaining and preserving hierarchical values and societal structures.[594] In contrast, the term *tautua,* according to Ma'ilo, is intended ideally "to empower those political images of a 'servant' [interpreted as *'au'auna*] to the image of a 'relative,' or *'āiga* (the extended family)."[595]

Although one's roles and responsibilities are determined by one's social status in the community (as *matai, tama'ita'i* (ladies) or *taulele'a*), once these obligations are carried out effectively, this is called *tautua lelei* or 'good service.' Thus*, fetausia'i* as *tautua* is met when everyone performs his or her roles or responsibilities within the family and village in a reciprocal manner.

3. *FETAUSIA'I* MEANS T*AUSI*

In the Samoan syntax, *tausi* can be both a noun and a verb, a base-word meaning a person who "takes care of or looks after,"[596] or a verb meaning 'to nurture'[597] someone or something. The concept *tausi* is usually attributed to the way parents nurture and raise their child from birth. It obliges commitment to care for and attend to the child at all times, by way of offering all the necessary basic needs to which every human being is entitled. The 'mother's special care' or *tausi fa'atinā* for the newborn is called *fa'afailele* ('process of nurturing').[598]

Fa'afailele can also be defined as *matua moe-pō*, which is equivalent in meaning to 'the parent who sacrifices rest and sleep at night for her young.'[599] *Tausi* from the parents' perspective is an unavoidable obligation which their children and all children of the extended family are expected to receive from them. In this sense, the act of *tausi* in the family circle is a "basic right of a child."[600] According to Filifilia Tamasese, "I interpret the rights of children as meaning the responsibility of mother, father, family, village and nation to do what ought to be done to promote and protect the interest of children. Lapse/s in performance of this responsibility breaches custom and/or village/government policy and/or law."[601]

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[594] Lefua, "The Concept of Tausi," 7.
[595] Ma'ilo, *Bible-Ing My Samoan*, 254.
[596] Mosel, *Samoan Reference Grammar*, 183.
[597] Ah Siu-Maliko, "Public Theology: Core Values and Domestic Violence in Samoan Society," 104.
[598] Filifilia Tamasese, "Samoan Custom and the Rights of Children," paper presented, PIC NZ/Samoan National Women's Synod, Waitakere, Auckland, 2006, 1.
[599] Ibid., 1.
[600] Lefua, "The Concept of Tausi," 5.
[601] Tamasese, "Samoan Custom and the Rights of Children," 1.

Tamasese's definition of the child's rights highlights two important points: first, *tausi* is the responsibility of the whole community; and second, when *tausi* has not been carried out properly, it infringes upon the customary laws of Samoa. Since Samoan society values communal living guided by domestic norms and attitudes intended to direct and enrich this cooperative control, *tausi* plays a pivotal role in this communal existence. In return, when parents reach old age, they will be looked after or *tausi* by their children.

Since *tausi* clearly refers to a person performing a caring role for someone or something, the following sections outline the roles associated with the performance of *tausi* or the act of caring. Their expressions of service depict interdependence, which forms a platform for the *fa'a-Samoa*.[602] These are roles that reflect the caring responsibilities of the Samoan people within the context of the family, village and church.

3.1 *Tausi Feagaiga* (Sisters' Guardians)

Women were highly respected in Samoa in antiquity, and were not subordinate to men as seen in some European societies of the past.[603] They were given many honorary titles which reflected the different roles they played within their own descent family or village. A Methodist Church of Samoa historian, Fualaga Taupi, acknowledges these multiple roles and honorary titles bestowed upon Samoan women, commenting,

> The roles of the Samoan women in their families are authoritative and powerful. Women are called *feagaiga* - 'sacred covenant' of their brothers, *tama sā* – 'sacred heir'; *'augafa'apae* – the centre of the village maidens; *tausala* – the 'transgress bearer'; *matai o 'āiga* – 'chiefs of families'; *o i'oimata* – literally means, 'the very pupil of the eye' which means they are well protected by their brothers.[604]

The status of women in the ancient Samoan context is reflected in the images of the *feagaiga*, or the *i'oimata* of the brother. In other words, the sisters of the brothers are labelled as the pupil (*i'o*) in (*i*) the brother's eye (*mata*).[605] This is used metaphorically to emphasise the fact that this part of the eye demands careful protection from being injured. Ali'ilelei Lefua states that, just as the "pupil or iris kindles light to the human eye, the sister arouses the pride in her brother's heart."[606] Therefore, the brother must *tausi* (care for) his *feagaiga* (sister) by showing her "respect, protection, comfort, and even her meals are provided by her brother. She is served [with] the same quality as that of the *matai*

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[602] Lefua, "The Concept of Tausi," 7.
[603] Latu, "Women Lay Preachers: Inquiring on Grace and Equality," 6.
[604] Fualaga Taupi, *Tala Faasolopito O Le Au-Uso Fealofani* (Apia: Methodist Printing Press, 2003), 17.
[605] Aiono Fanaafi Le Tagaloa, *O La Ta Gagana* (Alafua, Samoa: Le Lamepa Press, 1996), 27.
[606] Lefua, "The Concept of Tausi," 10.

(chief)."[607] In return for the brother's protection of his sister, the sister always respects her brother by looking after or caring for all her brother's children.

3.2 *Tausi* **as the Wife of the Orator**

Tausi is the title or status conferred upon the wife of a Samoan *tulāfale*, the *matai* who holds the status of orator in the family and the village. The status of the orator's wife (*tausi*) is defined by the customary duties and traditional service she offers her husband.[608] This *tausi* status of the orator's wife allows her to act as an advice-giver or mentor (*fautua*) to her husband, and as the steward (*tausi-mea*) of her husband's cultural goods.[609] These are all roles that are rooted in the concept of *tausi*. If the orator is not performing his oratory duties well in the family and village, his *tausi* (wife) will typically get the blame. Thus, the success of the orator in the performance of his public speaking and decision-making actually reflects the type and quality of the advice given by his *tausi*. Since the orator's wife is a *feagaiga* in her own family, she is also expected to perform some of her *feagaiga* duties within the family and village of her husband, such as the *pae ma le 'āūli* (a reconciler of any conflict, a peacekeeper and saviour). Yet another important role of the *tausi* is to produce the treasured wealth (*measina*) of the family, such as weaving different kinds of mats (*fala*), fine mats ('*ie toga*), and making Samoan oils (*fagu u'u*). In the pre-missionary era, the wealth of the family was produced by the *tausi*, with the help of her husband and children.

3.3 *Tausi-ali'i* **(or** *faletua***), Wife of the High Chief**

The polite term given to the wife of a high chief (*ali'i*) is *faletua*. Just as the title *tausi* is given to the wife of an orator, the title *faletua* signifies the role of a carer (*tausi*) for the *ali'i*. The caring role of the *faletua* traditionally gave her the status *tausi-ali'i*, or 'carer of the high chief.' In the rituals surrounding death, the term *tausi-ali'i* is always associated with the 'family of the high chief's wife' or the *āiga o le tausi-ali'i*. *Tausi* in this sense is similar to that of the *tausi* of an orator, as advisor, steward, protector and producer.

3.4 *Tausi-maliu***, Dead Body Carer**

Ritually, the body of the dead (*maliu*) must be cared for (*tausi*) by a woman who is designated *faifa'aali'i*, together with the company of a group of women in the village called

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[607] Ibid.

[608] Ah Siu-Maliko, "Public Theology: Core Values and Domestic Violence in Samoan Society," 104.

[609] These include *moegālafo* or storage of orator's fine mats; *to'oto'o* or staff; *fue* the fly whisk; '*ulafala* or traditional necklace; and *la'ei siapo* or traditional wear/bark cloth.

'*auosilagi*, as part of the death ritual obligation. The word *faifa'aali'i* is made up of three words: *fai*, meaning 'to do, serve or treat;' *fa'a*, a causative verb or prefix meaning 'to make;' and *ali'i*, implying 'noble manner' or 'respect/honour.' Collectively this means serving or treating the body of the dead as a sign of respect and honour. The term '*auosilagi* is formed from three words: '*au* ('a group'), *osi* ('to serve or care'), and *lagi*, referring to the heaven of the spirits.

To summarise, the concept of *tausi* in the *fa'a-Samoa* is an inclusive and holistic role which starts from within the womb of the mother (before birth), is nurtured within the family and village, and continues even to the womb of the earth (death).

4. CULTURAL LEADERSHIP: *TAUSI-'ĀIGA* (FAMILY CARER) AND *TAUSINU'U* (VILLAGE CARER)

Fundamentally, *fetausia'i* is a communal expression of interdependence. *Fetausia'i* is viewed by Lalomilo Kamu as 'reciprocity,' whereby the mutual relationship between the '*āiga* and the *matai* is pivotal in building unity, solidarity and harmony within the family. Kamu further argues that, "In achieving reciprocity the family provides a platform whereby human relationships are important; the respect of each other, especially the elderly, is upheld; and love, sharing and caring are practiced."[610]

The concept *matai* is defined as the titled head or leader of the family and/or village. Serge Tcherkezoff suggests that the word *matai* may have been derived from the combination of the Samoan words '*mata*' (eye) and '*i ai*' (look up to, or looking towards).[611] In this interpretation, Tcherkezoff argues that in the Samoan traditional connotation, the *matai* is the specialist in the art of looking after the family.[612]

The *matai* (chiefs) are traditionally not of equal status. The two main categories are *tamāali'i* (high chiefs) and *tulāfale* (orators). The *matai* are responsible to take care of their family and village as social units. From a sociological point of view, the act of *tausi* or *fetausia'i* within these social units is a social interaction which is "reciprocal, and each member governs his behaviour in terms of the assumed expectations of others."[613]

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[610] Kamu, *The Samoan Culture and the Christian Gospel*, 44.
[611] Serge Tcherkezoff, "The Samoan Category 'Matai' ('Chief'): A Singularity in Polynesia? Historical and Etymological Comparative Queries," *The Journal of the Polynesian Society* 109, no. 2 (2000): 180.
[612] Ibid.
[613] G. E. Swanson, "On Explanations of Social Interaction," *Sociometry* 28 (1965): 101.

The *matai* is also the *tausi-mea* (custodian) of the family estate and history. Meleisea writes that, traditionally, "the *matai* was the custodian of the ʻāiga estate and allocated rights to use sections of land for individual cultivation among members of the ʻāiga, but a great deal of work was organised communally."[614] Meleisea's point is clarified by Mercy Ah Siu-Maliko, who writes that the "*matai* serves as the guardian of assets, while the family retains the right to remove the title if so required.''[615] Both observations suggest that the *matai* is not the proprietor of family properties (lands and titles); rather, his/her many serving roles are driven by his/her *tautua* and *faʻaaloalo* for the family and village. Thus, leadership (vested in the *matai*) in Samoa is "anointed to those who have served the ʻāiga and scaffolds the traditional beliefs of the collective."[616]

4.1 *Matai Tausi ʻĀiga* (Chiefs are Family Carers)

In the pre-missionary era, the status of *tamāaliʻi* (or *aliʻi*) within the domain of the ʻāiga was also known as *saʻo* (head), and in this inclusive role, he/she performed the duty of caring as *tausi-vaʻatele*, meaning 'caring for all.' The *matai tausi-ʻāiga* is famously accredited only when his/her leadership leads the family in consolidation. As he/she is cared for by the ʻāiga, in return, he/she must provide for them. One of his many roles is to provide for the family during times of scarcity. Meleisea writes that

> … the title [*matai*] system had a vital economic basis.[…] One of the major economic powers of a high ranking *aliʻi* was that he could reserve crops by placing them under an interdict (or *sa*). A high chief could place a *sa* on any land or crop within the territory in which his authority was recognised… This power enabled the chiefs to conserve the food supplies in times of scarcity, or to reserve it for feasts.[617]

According to Meleisea, the power vested in the *matai* is about performing the responsibility and role of protecting and providing for the family, but not the power to demand from the family.

4.2 *Tuʻua* (Chief Orator) as *Tausinuʻu* (Village Priest)

One of the *matai*'s roles in the *nuʻu* was traditionally a priestly role, and they were revered because they had a fervent relationship with the gods.[618] The status *tuʻua* was reserved for the most significant chief (or the top rank of *tulāfale* in the village), who led

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[614] Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, 7. See also Kamu, *The Samoan Culture and the Christian Gospel*, 42.

[615] Ah Siu-Maliko, "Public Theology: Core Values and Domestic Violence in Samoan Society," 101.

[616] Toso, "Reconceptualising Spirituality as a Philosophy of Practice for Pasifika Early Childhood Education in New Zealand: A Samoan Perspective," 132.

[617] Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, 9.

[618] Aiono-Le Tagaloa, "Tapuai: Samoan Worship," 46.

all the religious rituals and ceremonies within the village context. This is seen in the traditional welcoming ceremony, where the *tu'ua* plays the priestly role on behalf of the entire community.[619] Fineaso Fa'alafi's view is quite correct when he dismisses some early historians and missionaries who referred to the *tulāfale* as *taulā-aitu* (evil/demonic spirits) or a spirit medium.[620] The priestly role is still observed today in the oratory of the *tu'ua* as *failauga* or *tulāfale* as *ositaulaga* (priest), where one speaker from each side (the host and the visitor) speaks in the traditional manner on behalf of the entire group.

The priestly role of the *matai* also presents offerings on behalf of the family, and in the past he "led the family in prayers before evening meals or in time for fishing and in time for expeditions in the bush. It is true to say that a *matai* performed such roles as a father, priest, politician… In return for his service he is to receive support and cooperation from the family."[621] In this reciprocity, the *matai* "is not [only] to receive but also to give" to his *'āiga* and *nu'u*, both spiritually and physically.[622] This is a clear indication that a Samoan *matai* is one who always feels responsible to *tausi* (cared for) the family and village.

4.3 *Fetausia'i* Conserves Social Order between the *Ali'i* (High Chief) and *Tulāfale* (Orator Chief)

From a hierarchical point of view, the *tulāfale*'s (talking chief/orator, who speaks on the *alii's* behalf) *fa'autaga* or expertise and wisdom in oratory presentations serves as a *tausi tamāli'i* (caring for the high chief), where the nobility and reputation of his high chief is well protected. Although the *tulāfale* always speaks and negotiates on behalf of his *tamāli'i* during customary gatherings, the *tamāli'i* always receives the *fa'aaloaloga* (highest honour by way of traditional gift presentations) from the other party (family or village), in terms of monetary gifts, fine mats and many other material goods.

However, upon returning home, the high chief would call his orator into his *maota* (house) and salute him with words of thanks for his duties well performed, which reflects his care (*tausi*) for the *va-fealoa'i*; this also occurs in public cultural ceremonies. In appreciation for the orator's work, portions of the material gifts the *tamāli'i* receives are given to his orator as a token of appreciation for his service (*tautua*) or care (*tausi*). The

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[619] Fa'alafi, *Carrying the Faith: Samoan Methodism 1828-1928*, 24.
[620] John Williams, *The Samoan Journals of John Williams 1830 and 1832.*, ed. Richard M. Moyle (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1984), 264-66.
[621] Kamu, *The Samoan Culture and the Christian Gospel*, 42.
[622] Ibid., 43.

ali'i habitually reserves the rest of the *fa'aaloaloga* he receives to donate and help with his family's next *fa'alavelave* (elaborate cultural occurrences).

At times the high chief may invite the orator to come back if he (the orator) needs anything for his own family. This transaction in the *fa'a-Samoa* is expressed in the cultural expression *E pala mea a tamali'i i tulafale* (literally, 'the high chiefs' material things are perished to their orators'). This means that whatever material possessions the *tamāli'i* has in his house, they are to be reserved and can be given away for the benefit of his orator's family. In that case, what the *tamāli'i* is doing or offering is called *tausi tulāfale* (caring for the *tulāfale*), as a token of gratitude for the *tulafale*'s oratory duty; this is also called *tausi 'āiga lelei* (good caring of the family). This exchange is also called *fetausia'i*.

In these actions, both the high chief and the talking chief have reciprocally shared and considered each other in their own respective ways of *tausi* – caring for one another, or *fetausia'i*. If both the high and talking chiefs perform *fetausia'i*, one would say, '*Ua lelei faatino a la nafa tausi,*' meaning 'their duties and responsibilities are rightly performed.' In this way, the act of *fetausia'i* between the *tamāli'i* and the *tulāfale* is a sign of preserving hierarchical values in a good and positive manner. Thus, *fetausia'i* depicts a cooperative effort of giving and receiving, and it reflects the value of communal living in the *fa'a-Samoa*.

SUMMARY

Fetausia'i is a reciprocal service or *tautua* entrenched in the *fa'a-Samoa*. The uniqueness of the concept *tausi* as both a role and status is quite obvious from the above explanations, in which *tausi* can be summed up as the one who has the qualities of caring and is proficient in looking after someone or something. In the past, the *matai* found no contradiction in being both a political and religious leader in performing his role as a *matai*, a role which is still expected and recognised today. It is from the duties and status of the *matai tausi-'āiga* and *tausinu'u* that the titles *faife'au tausinu'u* or *faife'au tausi-Matāgaluega*[623] (minister in a parish) are derived.

The concept of *fetausia'i* is one of Samoa's traditions and protocols that best describes the nature of the Samoan self as a relational being.[624] Without the existence of

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[623] The term *Matāgaluega* means a 'parish.' This is a particular title reflecting 'service' used for the MCS ministers.
[624] Tamasese, *The New Morning: A Qualitative Investigation into Samoan Perspectives on Mental Health*, 28.

this relational nature, a Samoan self becomes a non-entity. In this sense, the Samoan self can never be simply an individual. The act of *fetausia'i* decentres the person but not in a way which brackets out the self. The community is inclusive of the self, who, along with others, reflects the ideal of a 'self-in-community.' However, being in close association with others does not mean 'sacrificing' one's own self, nor does it mean 'colonising' others. As Jason Fout suggests, "transformed subjectivity, receptivity and responsibility are co-inherent, as one is involved simultaneously in being constituted by others, while also being a responsible agent in this reception and in the constitution of others."[625]

Fetausia'i replicates the belief that the Body of Christ or church is continually being transformed as its members "are assimilated to Christ... Given that Christ is the image of God and that God's glory shines on his face, the Christian … can transmit an image of the being of Christ for the world only to the extent that he reflects Christ and does not spread about the radiance of his own self."[626] Similarly, *fetausia'i* allows the *alo* or 'face' of the God-in-Christ to be seen among each other by repeating God's acts of caring and loving others, giving sacrificially and honouring others, in a process of living in the way of Christ.

The expression of *fetausia'i* serves not only to challenge the missionaries' understanding of *tautua*, where service is only to be performed from below to those who are in superior positions. It also reorients the importance of everyone's duty to serve one another, regardless of their social status in the community.

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[625] Jason A. Fout, *Fully Alive: The Glory of God and the Human Creature in Karl Barth, Hans Urs Von Balthasar and Theological Exegesis of Scripture* (London: T&T Clark, 2015), 164.
[626] Ibid.

CONCLUSION

In the course of this research for this thesis, the focus was to analyse the problem imbedded in the cultural-philosophical expression, *E lē fa'a'ele'elea se faife'au* – literally translated, "pastors are not supposed to do dirty work."[627] What has been underlined in this ideological belief is its failure to embody the Christ-like qualities of shepherding, stewardship, serving and caring. It prevents the *faife'au* from performing his servant role as 'someone who serves' rather than someone who is being served. The Christological understanding of Jesus Christ as not only the Lord but the Servant-Lord, as evident in the narrative of footwashing (John 13), actually reverses the socio-political understanding of the master or lord as the one who is served, which was assumed in the prevailing master-servant relationship in the social context in which Jesus lived. Some parallels have been drawn between this Graeco-Roman and Jewish context and the influences that have impacted the church hierarchy in Samoa today.

The first chapter explicated the negative impacts of an autocratic leadership model on the MCS, especially its understandings of power, prestige and authority. This chapter highlighted the reasons why this existing leadership structure became normative in the MCS, particularly the influence of the early missionaries. The hierarchy of status in the MCS is a reflection of the Western values that accompanied the early missionaries, which were in part a product of industrialisation, which classified people into elites, middle class and commoners. England was already a 'class society,' a monarchy with a nobility and commoners who served them. Its assumptions about 'who serves whom' came to be reflected in the relationship in the Samoan churches between the minister and members of the church. From a sociological point of view, the cultural values of *tautua* (service) and *fa'aaloalo* (respect) were reconfigured when applied to the clergy in an exclusive and elitist way that promoted the status and material wealth of church leaders, at the cost of the quality of life of their followers.

The concept of 'servant leadership' was elaborated in Chapter 2 as a model which describes the leadership style embodied by Jesus Christ, as explained in Chapter 3. The servant leadership model offers a perspective for critiquing the misappropriated cultural

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[627] This also translates to mean that "pastors/ministers are not allowed to perform duties of those of the lower ranks."

norms that have been applied to the leadership in the Samoan Methodist context.[628] The thesis has established that Jesus' leadership paradigm as 'servant leader' is in fact unparalleled in relation to any other leadership models that have been developed in other arenas, such as businesses and secular organisations.

In contrast to the servant leadership model, the institutional model of the church places emphasis on the powers and rights of those at the top and the structures that uphold this institutional hierarchy, and ignores leader-member dialogue and mutual service. This is the reason why the current institutional model of the MCS is problematic. Avery Dulles describes institutionalism as a system whereby the church considers institutional structures and systems as primary, creating a misrepresentation of the true nature of the church. Here the church is seen as a 'society' which is governed by visible structures that enhance the status, prestige and authority of its officers.

It is this institutionalism that undergirds the MCS, supported by its Constitution (as discussed in Chapter 1), and which has deformed its true nature as the Body of Christ, in which all parts of the body need each other and one is not superior to the other. The deficiency of this institutional model in the MCS is echoed in Dulles' critique of the Catholic Church, in which "[c]lericalism tends to reduce the laity to a condition of passivity, and to make their apostolate a mere appendage of the apostolate of the hierarchy … [when the hierarchy is] concerned with maintaining the right relationships with pope and bishops, they attend less than they should to God, to Christ, and to the Holy Spirit."[629]

Chapter 3 examined the relationship between Jesus and his disciples and how he modelled serving (*tautua*) others in a respectful (*fa'aaloalo*) manner. Jesus intentionally sought to teach his twelve disciples how to serve one another, and commanded them to 'feed' his sheep or lambs (a metaphor used to refer to the crowd or followers of Jesus). In the face of his own impending death, Jesus made it clear that being a disciple would not only need to be centered in selfless service, but would include a share in his redemptive suffering. In the words of New Testament scholar Alexander Stock, "While walking the way with Jesus, the disciples learn that true discipleship means to deny oneself, to be last and least, to drink the cup that Jesus is to drink. … The way of Jesus is the way of the

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[628] This refers to the ideology of *E le fa'a'ele'elea se faife'au* or "Pastors are not supposed to do dirty work." The 'servant leadership' model counters this and shows why the *faife'au* must "serve" in the sense of *tautua* and not in the sense of the word used both in the Samoan Bible and ecclesiastical language: '*au'auna* (which implies a master-slave relationship). See Ma'ilo, *Bible-Ing My Samoan*.
[629] Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 2nd ed., 43.

disciple, and discipleship consists in walking the way with Jesus."[630] Dulles gets more specific regarding Jesus' instructions for his disciples:

> Jesus' disciples were instructed not to vindicate their rights, even when maltreated by others. They avoided all honorific titles, such as rabbi and master, and were urged to seek out humbler forms of service. All this they did willingly, because they found in Jesus and his community a new family, with spiritual ties closer than those of flesh and blood.[631]

In the same way, for church leaders today to follow the way of Christ is to challenge and transform the existing institutionalism, which must include a willingness to suffer for the sake of others, and for the sake of justice. As Jürgen Moltmann writes, "Those who hope in Christ can no longer put up with reality as it is, but begin to suffer under it, to contradict it… Peace with God means conflict with the world, for the good of the promised future stabs inexorably into the flesh of every unfulfilled present."[632] In this light, to continue to use the term *faife'au* as a title for Samoan ministers means resisting all high and prestigious cultural titles, as discussed in Chapter 1 (Section 3). Such high-status titles have led the Samoan people and members of churches to treat ministers as lords and masters.

 Any genuine church leader, then, must be identified by his or her passion to serve those in need rather than being preoccupied with maintaining the ministerial status quo. Servant leaders are those who show genuine empathy for others, serve them with humility, and encourage others to live out their faith and so develop social holiness. This essence of ministry is captured well by J. O. Gooch:

> Can I be holy if my brother or sister is hungry, or homeless, or in prison, or sick or a slave? Can I be holy if I do not do everything in my power to change the situation in which my brother or sister finds himself or herself? Sometimes what I must do must involves challenging the systems that put my brother or sister in that situation.[633]

The MCS could be radically changed if its leaders focused on imitating the way of Jesus, not on self-enrichment but on the wellbeing of others. Instead of misusing the culture of *fa'aaloalo* and *tautua* by focusing it church members serving and obeying ministers, but not vice versa, the church is obliged to reconsider its demands on its members (especially financial demands) and reorient its approach to ministry to reflect Jesus' love, justice, caring and compassion. This would not only more genuinely address people's needs, but

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[630] Stock, *The Call to Dscipleship*, 146.
[631] Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 210.
[632] Moltmann, *Theology of Hope on the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology*, 21.
[633] Gooch, *John Wesley for the Twenty-First Century*, 44.

undercut the false 'prosperity gospel'[634] by which church members' level of giving to the church has made their ministers some of the wealthiest and most powerful citizens of Samoa. This veneration of church ministers as lords is quite visible in the culture of gift presentations, which involve monies and food.

Evelyn Kallen has observed that genuine *tautua* and *fa'aaloalo* in Samoan culture can be seen in reciprocal feasting and wealth exchange at all levels, and these traditions have long insured the equitable distribution of economic resources among Samoans.[635] In this traditional way, *tautua* and *fa'aaloalo* are understood as acts of mutual receiving and giving, and not a vertical practice which benefits one group or individual more than another. However, this is not the way the distribution of resources is practiced in the church. The unequal distribution of resources (which flow upward from the church members to the ministers) reflect a social injustice. This is clearly addressed in the book of Proverbs 13:23: "Abundant food is in the fallow ground of the poor, but it is swept away by injustice." This is not true *tautua* and *fa'aaloalo*.

As addressed in Chapters 1 and 3, the demands, traditions and cultural frameworks of the church have been influenced by the decisions made by the leadership that are not biblically grounded. This calls for a serious revisiting of the model of ministry which Jesus lived out. To serve the church (*tautua-lotu*) is undeniably a duty of all members of the church. But the church leadership needs to play its serving role as well in order for the cycle of reciprocity (*fetausia'i*) to be complete. As stated in Chapter 4, the culture of *fetausia'i* is a mutually transforming relational orientation that exceeds the usual boundaries of identity set by individualism, as it reflects the love and care of God that forms persons into a community.[636] This relationality of God must be reflected in the relationships among all members of the church community, clergy and laity alike. According to the biblical narratives discussed in Chapter 3, the very being of God (through Jesus) is inclusive of all relationships, and we are called to emulate this relationality in the way we treat others.

If the church does not reflect this relational reality of God as modelled by Jesus, it is not truly church. It can never be authentically church unless it is willing to move away from its comfort zones (absolute structures, ideologies and norms) to carry on Christ's work in the world, which is its serving mission. As discussed in Chapter 2, this transformation only

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[634] Bentley, "The Formation of Christian Leaders: A Wesleyan Approach," 562.
[635] Kallen, *The Western Samoan Kinship Bridge*, 36.
[636] Young and Ford, *Meaning and Truth in 2 Corinthians*, 259.

happens when we no longer place our focus primarily on self but, instead, place the needs of others first.

Chapter 3 developed a biblical and theological foundation for the Samoan cultural value of *fetausia'i*, exemplified by Jesus' own relational approach as a servant leader in his earthly ministry. The biblical theology of 'servant leadership' with reference to the presentation of Jesus as not only 'Lord or Master' but also 'Servant' was explored in this chapter. This discussion centred on three incidents that occurred in Jesus' life prior to the crucifixion: first, when Jesus served as a slave in the narrative of footwashing (John 13); second, when Jesus told his disciples to go and look for food to feed the multitude (Luke 9); and finally, Jesus' act of offering himself as a living sacrifice on the cross, which marks the highest point of his service as a true leader (Matthew 27, Mark 15). Our analysis revealed how these events are part and parcel of the 'theology of the cross' and thus highlight the importance of the servant leader paradigm.

It is reasonable to conclude that unless Christ literally 'washed,' 'served,' 'fed' and 'was crucified,' all narratives about his servanthood are only theological fables. In these acts of footwashing, feeding people and crucifixion, one discovers a new theological imperative for the MCS regarding how to build a community of faith by loving others through simple acts of humble and sacrificial service.[637] From a relational hermeneutics lens, Christ is God and Lord yet lowered himself to become the commoners' servant.

This is the theological positioning that should guide our everyday practices and beliefs. The reciprocal act of God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son becoming one, actualised through the 'self-emptying' of Jesus, is the model that can reflect the social reality of *fetausia'i* in the church. As conveyed in the thesis, God came to the human community in Jesus Christ, who lived beyond the boundaries put in place by human customs and traditions, beyond conventional religious and political leadership codes, beyond the confines of institutional structures, systems and elite social status that existed in his day. His actions and teachings were all centred on 'caring' (*tausi*), 'loving' (*alofa*); 'respecting' (*fa'aaloalo*); and 'serving' (*tautua*) one another.

In Chapter 4, I examined the cultural setting of the proposed model of *fetausia'i.* This cultural model is recommended as the most contextually meaningful solution for the

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[637] Marsh, *Saint John*, 481-91.

problem of the leadership crisis in the MCS, explored in Chapters 1 and 2. This model highlights a mutually respectful, mutually serving relationality as a way to reduce the gap between the clergy and members of the MCS. The *fetausia'i* concept is presented as a cultural model that resonates with the image of God revealed in the example of Jesus as Servant. Clearly, *tautua* and *fa'aaloalo* are the two main pillars of the Samoan cultural concept of *fetausia'i. Fetausia'i* is simply about reciprocity in relationships, illuminated through acts of caring and sharing. It is a relational and inclusive concept employed in this thesis as an alternative leadership model that is culturally rooted in the *fa'a-Samoa* (Samoan way of life). Since *fetausia'i* is a model of reciprocity, it encapsulates a mutuality in relationships that promotes community cohesion. It is meant to reflect equal treatment of everyone, regardless of social standing in the community.

Fa'aaloalo has a rich meaning of facing one another with mutual love. When Jesus invited his disciples to love one another, the Samoan word used is *fa'aaloalo*.[638] Its meaning includes respect, honour, service, trust and justice, and implies mutual bonds of relationship, even covenant, which are expressed in ethical, social, cultural and religious commitments. Our ethics as Samoan Christians must be deeply rooted in the moral soil of a relational God who embraces and cares for humanity.

In the Samoan context, we have seen that church ministers have been placed in the most respectful position[639] in society, even compared to traditional leaders such as *ali'i* (high chiefs) or *tulāfale* (orators), or to political leaders like the head of state, prime minister or chief justice, or any CEO. Because of the respect, honour and prestige associated with the title "Reverend" in the Samoan culture, we have seen how alluring it is for prospective ministers to enter the ministry. The greatest ambition is to have the title "Rev." visible before one's name. The thesis has highlighted the biblical warning against this attitude, which was not uncommon among religious leaders in Jesus' day, as evident in this paraphrase of Matthew 23:5-7: "They do all their deeds to be seen by others; for they make their robes long and put stripes on their sleeves. They love to have the place of honour at

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[638] Fa'alafi, *Carrying the Faith: Samoan Methodism 1828-1928*, 28.
[639] Selota Maliko states, "Ever since Christianity became established and amalgamated with the *fa'a-Samoa*, church ministers have been accorded perhaps the most revered status in Samoan society. They are given the best house in the village and are shown the traditional respect of sitting at the *tala*, a special seat in the Samoan *fale* that is considered sacred and assigned only to the high chiefs." Maliko, "Restorative Justice: A Pastoral Care Respose to the Issue of *Fa'ate'a Ma Le Nu'u* (Banishment) in Samoan Society," 131.

banquets and the best seats at sporting events, and to be greeted with respect at the mall, and to have people called them Reverend."[640]

This warning is apt for the Samoan church context. However, this thesis maintains that the ministerial title *faife'au*, reflecting the 'one who serves' (*tautua*) or 'the one who waits upon others with a bowl of water and hand towel' (*taule'ale'a*), remains the most fitting title, equivalent to the title 'servant of God,' for the ministers of the church. It simply needs to be recovered as a model of service rather than its present alignment with prestige, power and wealth.

Again, our model for this re-envisioned *faifeau* is Jesus himself, who willingly became a servant of all. He modelled this understanding of ministry in his inner circle of disciples, in the face of their own human shortcomings, such as John's and James' ambitions for higher status (Matt 20: 21), and Judas' intent to betray Jesus (John 13:2). Personal ambition is as old as human history, and raises its ugly head many times in Scripture. The writer of the Gospel of John makes note of how this ambition can stand in the way of the liberation offered by Jesus: "Nevertheless, many, even of the authorities, believed in him [Jesus]. But because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved human glory more than the glory that comes from God." (John 13:42-43, NRSV)

It is this fear of loss of prestige and the resulting desire to safeguard one's position that prevents Samoan ministers from becoming servant leaders. These are the kinds of questions they need to be asking: "Do the prominent and the wealthy exercise undue influence and receive excessive attention in our churches? Are the marginalised of society also marginalised in our congregations? Do those of lower status feel welcome?"[641] An honest response to these questions would perhaps shed some light on the many public commentaries and critiques of Samoan ministers, some of which we have heard in the course of the thesis. These public comments, criticisms and attacks should not be taken lightly, for they are a way of relating a message that needs to be revealed. Should the church ignore the burning issues related to what has gone wrong in the Samoan churches' understanding of church leadership, the prospects for healthy and vibrant churches in the future are dim.

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[640] Hill, *Servant of All: Status, Ambition, and the Way of Jesus*, 41.
[641] Ibid., 105.

In summary, let us recall Avery Dulles' 'Church as Servant' model, which emphasises the importance of the role of the church as servant towards its members, a theology of church and ministry that obviously outweighs any 'institutional' ideals. Based on our recovery of the richness of Samoan cultural ideals of service, reciprocity and mutual respect, and the theology of servant leadership in the New Testament, this thesis has argued that the cultural practice of *fetausia'i* (reciprocal caring) and *tautua* (selfless service) should be reoriented and revived as a guiding contextual theological framework for the mission of the MCS. From a relational perspective, serving the way Jesus served in the context of the church would breach the gap instituted by its hierarchical structure. Being a servant leader honours both the person and ministry of Jesus and the sacred 'relational space' or *va-tapuia* between all people in Samoa.

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