TATAKA LE TA’UI A LE ATUA
ROLLING OUT THE FINE MAT OF SCRIPTURE

Mercy Ah Siu-Maliko

LO’U SI’OMAGA MA LE TUSI PA’IA
CONTEXTUAL BIBLE STUDIES

Centre for Theology and Public Issues
Te Pokapū Whakapono me Ngā Take ā-Iwi
Tatala le Ta’ui a le Atua: Rolling Out the Fine Mat of Scripture
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These bible studies originated as part of a project for the New Zealand Institute for Pacific Research (NZIPR) on Church Responses to Gender-Based Violence Against Women in Samoa. Two of the bible studies (O le Talia iia Akara and O le Tosoga Fa’amalosi O Tamara) were published in 2019 by the NZIPR. The other two studies (Atamu ma Eva i le Fa’atoaga i Etena and Liua ia fa’aapei o Keriso) are published for the first time in this collection.

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INTRODUCTION
READING THE BIBLE IN CONTEXT

TATALE LE TA’UI A LE ATUA IN SAMOAN CULTURE

"Tatale le Ta’ui a le Atua" presents a series of Bible studies rooted in the importance of being relational in the Samoan culture. It embraces the belief that the self takes its form from maintaining relationships. "Tatale le Ta’ui a le Atua" as a Samoan saying articulates the necessity to reconnect with one’s God, ancestors, neighbour/s and environment, to reveal a person’s genuine self-identity rooted in the relationship of respect, and concurrently, revealing the image of God in humans.

The word ta’ui has a specific use. It’s a word used to refer to the finest of fine mats that has long been pressed and reciprocally cared for within homes as a treasure. This delicate fine mat is not rolled together with other ordinary rolls of mats or anything else. Although the same pandanus leaves are used to weave fine mats and mats used every day, still a mat cannot be called a treasure, unless it is the finest of fine mats. A fine mat is cherished and protected. It is not simply laid bare, sat on or for someone to trample on, but a fine mat people respect. It is not an ordinary fine mat, displayed using long sticks to hold it up because of its size. It is one fine mat that can be folded and put in an elderly woman’s woven basket or it can be simply held in an orator’s hand. Another view is that because the fine mat has been kept for long, it can become delicate, shiny, and eye-catching. This is the reason why when such fine mat is opened or rolled out, those who roll it out literally have goose bumps and say, “Oh it is the treasure of a noble.” This is the type of fine mat seldom rolled out except on special and significant occasions; then, such a treasure is rolled out in public. The use of this Samoan saying in this project articulates the significant role of scripture as the finest fine mat rolled out to transform human relationships damaged by gender-based violence against women and violence in general.

A SAFE SPACE

Conversations about violence can be challenging and they should take place in a safe and positive way. The bible studies here are designed for groups and it is important for the facilitator to think about ways to create and maintain the discussion as a safe space. The bible studies are intended for facilitators who are experienced in creating safe space. Facilitators should clarify their expectations with the group and stress mutual respect and trust and the shared responsibility to listen. It is also essential to think of pastoral and support services that members of the group could speak to confidentially if they wish to do so, and to provide information on this.

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1 This concept was proposed by Rev. Latu Kioa to articulate the connection between the Samoan symbol of fine mat and scripture. The Samoan explanation of the term was also written by Kioa in the Samoan language and translated into English by the author.
DEFINING GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

GBV is violence that is targeted against individuals or groups on the basis of their gender. This violence is a clear sign of deeply entrenched power inequalities between men and women. While it cuts across class, ethnicity, religion, able-bodiness, age and location, it primarily affects women and girls. The term GBV is hence often interchangeably used with ‘violence against women’. This violence is often perpetrated by men, and women and girls are often the victims. In Samoa and other contexts, GBV always results from unequal power relationships between men and women. Violence is directed specifically against a woman because she is a woman, and because she has less power than her (male) abuser. GBV includes, but is not limited to, physical, sexual, and psychological harm. The challenges raised by GBV in Samoa are examined at more length in a report which accompanies these bible studies.

CONTEXTUAL BIBLE STUDY METHOD

The talanoa approach to Bible studies presented here is rooted in Pacific culture, and is informed by the work of the Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire. The aim of Freire’s model of dialogue for transformation is to empower people through the process of self-awareness or consciousness raising. It is a creative way of enabling people to think for themselves, so that what they learn becomes authenticated in their lives. This includes the sharing of ideas, debates, dialogue, discussion, and working with others as subjects rather than as objects. Freire, in his educational philosophy, advocates that ‘Education is the key to liberation.’ For Freire, education is never neutral. It is ‘political’ in the sense that its main objective is either to maintain the status quo, or to educate for liberation.

Using Freire’s method as a guide to doing Bible studies serves the following purposes: to develop dialogue, participation, self-identity, empowerment and confidence in participants (men and women); and to transform their spiritual lives. This ‘praxis-centred’ methodology attempts to move the participants toward ‘reflection-action’ exercises that will ultimately bear fruit in the form of empowering and liberating Good News for the churches and communities where the participants are situated, and especially in relation to the issue of GBV against women. The Bible studies follow a specific structure that begins from raising awareness to concrete action/s as an ongoing process, taking into account the importance of the contexts and needs of participants. The contextual approach developed here draws on insights and good practice from Latin America, South Africa, and elsewhere, whilst contextualising these in a Samoan reading.
BIBLE STUDY 1
ATAMU MA EVA I LE FA’ATOAGA I ETENA
ADAM AND EVE IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

LO’U SI’OMAGA MA LE TUSI PA’IA
CONTEXTUAL BIBLE STUDIES
ATAMU MA EVA I LE FA’ATOAGA I ETENA...O LE FA’AI’UGA FAI A LE TASI E AFAINA AI MA LE ISI

KENESE 3: 1-19

FOLASAGA: Fa’amatala le fa’asologa: fausia se si’omaga saogalemu, fa’ataua le fa’aaloalo, fa’atuatuaina, ma ia sa’oloto tagata uma e fa’asoa.

FAITAUINA O LE TALA IA PEI LAVA O SE TALANOAGA (NRSV)

Fosi ni se ta’a faa lenei ma i latou o lo’ou auia latou te fa’ateleina (faitau) upu a le gata, āvā, tane, ma le Atua i le tala.

GATA – ĀVĀ: Na fetalai mai ca le Atua, “Aua e te lua ‘a’ai i le lā’au o i le fa’ato’aga?”
ĀVĀ – GATA: Ma te ‘a’ai i fua o lā’au o le fa’ato’aga; ac na fetalai mai le Atua, “Aua e te lua ‘a’ai i le fua o le laau o i le ogatotonu o le fa’atoaga, ‘aua fo’ai nei pa’i iai; nei o ma oti.
GATA – ĀVĀ: Lua te lē feoti lava; ua silafia e le Atua o le taimi lava e te lua ‘a’ai ai i le fua o le lā’au e pupula ai o oulua mata, e avea ai fo’i oulua e pei ni Atua, e iloa fo’i le lelei ma le leaga.

ATUA – TANE: O fea oulua?
TANE – ATUA: Na ou fa’alofo i lou si’ufoha i le fa’ato’aga, ona ‘ou fefe ai lea, auā ua ‘ou lē lavalavā; ona ou lafi lea.

ATUA – TANE: O ai na fai atu ia te oe ua e lē lavalavā? Ua e ‘ai ea i le lā’au na ‘ou fai atu ai ‘aua e te ‘ai ai?
TANE – ATUA: O le āvā na e aumai ma te fa’atasi, na ia aumai le fua o le lā’au, ona ou ‘ai a lea.

ATUA – ĀVĀ: O le ā lea mea ua e faia?
AVĀ – ATUA: O le gata na ia fa’asesē mai ia te a’u, ona ou ‘ai a lea.

ATUA – GATA: Talu ai ua e faia lenei mea, e sili lou malaia i manu vaefa fanua uma, manu vaefa uma o le vao; e te sosolo i lou manava, e te ‘ai fo’i i le efuefu i aso uma o lou ola. Oute fa’atupuina le feitaga i ia te oulua ma le āvā, o lau fanau fo’i ma lana fanau; na te tu’imomomoina lona ulu, a’o ‘oe e te tu’imomomoina lona mulivae.

ATUA – ĀVĀ: Ou te matau fa’ateleina le tigā o lou ma’i to; e te fanaua mai tama ma le tigā, ea i atu lou mana’o i lau tane, e pule fo’i ia iā te oe.

ATUA – TANE: Talu ai ua e usiusita’i i le leo o lau āvā, ma ua e ‘ai i le fua o le lā’au na ‘ou fai atu ai e ‘aua e te ‘ai ai; e malaia le lau’ele’ele ona o oe; e te ‘ai ma le tigā i aso uma o lou ola; e tutupu mai là’au tuitui ma là’au talatala iā te oe; e te ‘ai fo’i là’au afu o le fanua. E te ‘ai fo’i āu mea’ai ma le afu o ou mata se’ia e toe fo’i atu i le ‘ele’ele, auā na faia a’i oe; auā o le efuefu lava oe; e te toe fo’i atu lava i le efuefu.
**TOE FAITAUNA O LE TALA MAI LE VA’AI FA’A-PĀ’AGA/ GALULUE FA’ATASI**

**GATA – ĀVĀ:** Na fai mai le Atua, “Aua e te lua ‘a’ai i lá’au uma o le fa’atoaga?”

**ĀVĀ – GATA:** Ma te ‘a’ai i fua o lá’au o le fa’atoaga; ae fai mai le Atua, “Aua ma te ‘a’ai i le fua o le lá’au o i le ‘ōgātotonu o le fa’ato’aga, ‘aua fo’i ma te pa’i i ai nei o ma oti.’

**GATA – ĀVĀ:** Lua te lé feoti; auā ua silafia e le Atua o le taimi lava e te lua ‘a’ai ai o le a pupula ai o oulua mata, ma e avea ai oulua e pei ni Atua, e te lua iloa fo’i le lelei ma le leaga.

**ATAMU – ĀVĀ:** Tinā, e silafia e le Atua mea e aupito sili ona lelei mo tā’ua. ‘Aua ta te fa’alogo i le gata, ae usita’i i le Atua.

**GATA – ĀVĀ:** ‘Aua e te fa’alogo i ai. O la’u tala moni lava: E avea oulua e pei ni Atua.

**ĀVĀ – ATAMU:** Fa’afetai tele lava. E sa’o lelei oe. E tatau ona ta usita’i i le Atua ma ia ta faia se fa’ai’uga tonu, auā na faia i tā’ua e le Atua ma e tatau fo’i ona atagia iā i tā’ua foliga o le Atua.

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**ULUA’I FAITAUNA O LE TALA**

Tu’u se avaoa e mafaufau ma manatunatu ai i fesili o lo’o i lalo e uiga i le tala sa faitauna, fa’atasai ai ma lona toe faitauna e pei ona fa’asoa mai. Fetufa’a’i i fesili i vaea to’aiitii ona ripiti one lea o le fetufa’a’iiga i le vaitele. Ia fa’asoa atu e le Fu’amatala’upu Fu’amatalaga fa’ao po’opo’opo mo le fa’amālamalama ina atili o le tala.

(1) O le ā le mea o lo’o fa’atatua i ai le tala?
(2) O ai tagata ‘autū o le tala?
(3) O ā ni mataupu tā’ua o lo’o atagia mai le tala?
(4) Fa’atusatusa le tala muamua ma lona toe faitauna.
‘OTO’OTOGA O LE TALA

O le tala lenei i le Kenese 3, na fa’a i le Atua Atamu, o le ulu’a i ali’i, ma Eva, o le ulu’a i tinā, ma sa tu’uina lo lá’ua ‘āiga i se nofoaga matagofie, o le fa’ato’aga lea i Etena. Peita’i, sa lelei mea uma i le amataga mai lona fa’avacina mai. Sa matagofie le fa’ato’aga ma e luá lá’au tāua sa iai: o le lá’au o le ola, ma le lá’au e iloa ai le lelei ma le leaga. Sa matuā manino lelei nafa o Atamu. Sa fa’atonu lelei i le Atua Atamu ina ia va’ai lelei le fa’ato’aga ma ia ‘aua lava ne’i ‘aia fua o lá’au ia e luá, ne’i o la oti. Ua lapata’ia fo’ai i Atamu lana ává o Eva.

Ona sau ai lea o le gata i le fa’ato’aga, ua fa’apeci mai ia Eva, “Lua te lē ʻoti lava; auā ua silafia i le Atua, o le aso lua te ‘a’ai ai, e pupula ai o oulua mata ona avea ai lea o oulua e pei ni atua o lo’o iloa le lelei ma le leaga” (Kenese 3:4-5). Ua i’u ina lá’alitinau Eva i le Atua, a ua talitona i le gata. Ua ia ‘ai le lua o le lá’au, ma ua ia avatu fo’i sina i lana tane ua ‘ai ai, ma le talitonu o le a “pupula ai o lau mata” (Kenese 3:7).

Mulimuli ane, ua iloa i Atamu ma Eva ua la lá’alavā, fa’ato’ā o la lagonaina le mamā mo le taimi muamua, ma ua fatu o lá’ua tītī mai lāu o le mati i fuiufiu ai o la tino.

O le tali o le fa’a’i’uga ua la fa’a, ua fa’a’sala e le Atua le gata, Eva, ma Atamu. Muamua, o le gata fa’amaua’aluga, sa fai ona vae e lua, ua fa’a’sala’ina e sosolo i lona manava e oo mai lava i le aso. E fa’a’opo’opo i lea fa’a’asala, ua ‘ai i le eflu’efiu, o le fa’atuta o lona lava i’uga o le mate. E aofoia ai ma le tumau o le feitaga’i i le va o le gata ma le lávā, ma le va o a lá’ua fa’au. Aisena ua tā’ua atu ai ma le lávā i le fa’a’asala lea ae le aofoia ai ma le tane? Fai mai le fa’a’i’uga a se tasi tagata, “Masalo ona o i lá’ua uma o Eva ma le gata e latalata lo lo soʻotaga i le ola.”

O fa’asalaga sa tu’uina atu i le ʻāvā ma le tane o le fa’amatalaina lea o faiga o le a faegai ai ma le tagata soifua i le lalolagi, ma ua leai sona lelei. O le a tigaina le tinā i lo lá’ua va ma le tane, e tīgā i le taimi e fa’atigā ai e fa’au; o le a tīgāina le tane i lo la va ma le elele na fausia mai ai o ia, e galue ma le tīgā ve totō so’o se mea e tupu mai le ‘ele’ele (v. 17). O le fa’amatalaina lea o mea e tatau ona o i le tane ma le ʻāvā, e fia lava e taumafai e nīsī auala. O mea moni ia o lo’o tutupu ua “lē o ni fa’atonuga po’o ni fa’amatalaga mo se tamaita’i po’o se ali’i,” a’o le fa’amatalaina o to’atūgā o faega ma le soifua o tagata fa’a’pea le ola ga i pulega fa’atamā sa ola ai tagata o Sasa’e Tutotonu Anamua.

O le tala lenei o lo’o fa’amatalaina o le Pa’u/To’ilalo o le ulu’a i tagata, e ui lava o le fa’aupuga lenei i le tala e fa’ai’uga na le Gata, e lē o tusia i le tala a Kenese 3, a’o se fa’amatalaga fa’a-Mataupu Silisili fa’ato’ā fausia i se taimi mulimuli ane, e fa’avea mai talitonu o tagata Kerisiano-Iutaia. O le Kenese 3, e foliga mai o le tala e fa’atatau i ni fa’ai’uga na fa’a i lea avea ma fa’a’avea o le lumana’i o Atamu ma Eva, ma e mafai ona fa’a’pea o se ata lea o le escesega o ituaiga o tagata. Mai lea ulu’a ia ata fa’alemana’afeau, e mafai ona tatau va’ai i matafaioi a ē o lo’o a’asia i le tala: Gata, Tinā, Tamā, ma le Atua.

O le Gata: I le tusi o Kenese, o lo’o fa’ai’aloa ai le gata o se manu tauفا ase’e i lona liliuina lea o se mea na fa’a sā e le Atua e avea ma se itū e lelei. E ao lava ina silafia, “E lē i fa’aoso’osoina e le gata le tinā, (po’o le tamā na la to’alua). E leai fo’i se fa’a-aliga a mea na te ‘ai i le lá’au na fa’asāina. O le fesilagia o le tinā, o iina na aflu ai ona ia tali, sa fa’asolo ona manatu, mafaufau ma fetu’umai po’o le ē sana tali. Na ia tūtū ma le gūgū ae mata’ai.”

O le gata e lē i tā’ua o Satani po’o se mea

10 Ibid.
leaga i aganu’u a Sasa’e Tutotonu Anamua, ae sa feso’otai ma le fā’auluolaina. O le mea moni, “o le gata sa masani lava ona avea ma fa’aialoga o le ola fa’aauau, auā a fale lona pa’u (tino), ona foliga lea o le a toe amata se isi amataga fou.”12

O le Tinā: O ‘Eva o lo’o tā’ua sa fausia a avea ma pā’aga po’o se fesoasoani mo Atamu, ua na’o ia. E mafai ona tatou fesiligia pe aiseā lava ua filifilia ai le tinā e talanoa ma le gata. E le o iai se fa’amatalaga e uiiga lea tulaga mai le tala, peita’i na o ni naia fai a’aga ua mafai ona maua. E iai nisi manatu fa’aapea o gaiotiga a ‘Eva sa fai e fa’aiaoai o o tinā lava ia e matu’ugofie nai lo ali’i, auā na mulimuli fausia i latou ae muamua ali’i, ma e gaua’i gofie fo’i; o le ala lea na pipi’i ane iai le gata i le tinā ae lē o le tamā. (O lo’o atagia fo’i isi uiiga ia fa’atini a iia vaega o le Tusi Paia, e pei o le 1 Timoteo 2:13, o lo’o fa’apea mai, e lea se lenano a le gata i le tamā aui o ‘Atamu na muamua fai, fa’atoa fai aia lea e Eva”). E ese fo’i le fa’auiagaga a nisi, e fa’aapea e sili atu ona “faigofofe, atamai, ma le to’a o tinā nai lo ali’i, e iloa i le lē ‘auai i le talanoaga lea sa fai.”13 Peita’i, pau le mau e mafai ona fa’amatalaina ai le fai a’aga o le fai a’agofie o Eva e talanoa ma le gata, ona o le va’ai fo’a-Isarael iia ia fai a’aga ona te’ena ai le talitonuga fo’a-Kanan a fa’aapea o le gata e “feso’otai ma le tapua’iga o le atua fa法庭 faino le fa’auluolaina.”14 I le Kenese 3, o lo’o te’ena ai lea talitonuga fa’a-atua fa’aapauiap, ma ua atagia ai na’o itū vaivai o le gata ma le tinā.

Atamu: Ina ua fa’aoso’osoina Eva e le gata, sa iai fo’i ma Atamu (Kenese 3:6), ma e le i fa’amanatuina e Atamu iā Eva le lapata’iga a le Atua pe na ia faia sa isi faiga e taofia mai ai o ia mai le ‘āia o le fua o le lā’au na fa’aasāina. E uī lava sa le’i lagona sona leo, peita’i sa auai; o le lē lagonaina o sona leo e lē fa’aapea ai e leai salei galuega na faia, peita’ai, o oana lava lea ioega ma le maliega. E tutusa lelei lava sa o Atamu ma Eva i le la fa’ai’uga na faia e ‘a’ai i le fua o le lā’au. Ina ua ‘a’ai Atamu ma Eva i le lā’au, “ua pupula o lā’u mata, ua la maua le ialo; ma ua la ialo le leaga.”15

Atua: O le ata o le Atua o lo’o savali i le fa’a’ato’a’aga i le mālū o le afiafi ma talanoa o se itū lelei, auā ua atagia ai le Atua e talatalata ia na Ia faia ma Lana faofoaga, ma o se Atua fo’i e alagofie. E manatu nisi pe aiseā lava ua talanoa ai le Atua na’o Atamu, ae lē talanoa ia Eva. Peita’i, “o le upu moni o le talanoa o le Atua na’o Atamu e lē fa’aapea ai e sili atu ona amana’ia e le Atua o ia nai lo le tinā, pe fa’aapea ai fo’i o ia e fa’aaleinoa o la manatu. A fua i le tala, ua talafeagai le talanoa o le Atua ia Atamu. I le amataga … [amataga o le talono] o le ali’i sa fa’ailoa iai e le Atua le sā, ma e tatau fo’i la ona fesiligia o ia e uiiga i le matā’upu ua tula’i mai.”16 O le fainagalo o le Atua, ia mālamalama ia lā’ua uma o faofoaga a le Atua. E tatau lava ona la fa’aaloga ma mulimuli i le Atua.

12 Bergant, Genesis: In the Beginning, 14.
13 For an interpretation of woman as a knowledgeable and moral decision maker, see Stratton, Out of Eden, 85–91.
15 Bergant, Genesis: In the Beginning, 14.
16 Ibid.
TUĀ’ELE’ELE O LE TUSI

E pei lava ona tā’ua muamua, o le upu ‘To’ilalo’ ma le fuaitau ‘o le Pa’ū e le’o tā’ua i le tusi fautau lenei. O le tala o se auala ina mafai ai ona manino tagata Isaraelu i aso la i le amataga o le soifuaga o tagata. O tagata nei – ua lē na’o i latou ua tā’ua o tagata Isaraelu, a’o latou uma o tagata i Sasa’e Tutotonu Anamua – o lo latou talitonuga ta’atele e tatau lava ona o’o mai le agasala. E ui o lea, e lē fa’aapea ua leai ai se fa’amoemoe talu le agasala. O le upu moni, o le isi auala a mālamalama ai i le Kenese 3 o lo’o fa’atatau i le “fa’amatalaina o le fa’agāsologa o le olaga ina i mafai ona o’o atu i le fa’amatuaina o le tagata. ... O le se’e ese mai lea o le tagata mai le fa’aafielelelega a le Atua, ma o se tuluga talafeagai lea pe afai e fia tupu ma fia iloa e le tagata ia lava.”

E le gata i lea, a’o le fa’amoemoe lava o le ‘avea ma tagata,’ o lona a’oaina lea e iai a’aifiaga o le agasala, ma o se ‘autū tauave pea i le tusi atoa. O le fa’asalaga o Atamu, Eva ma le gata o lo’o atagia ai le fa’aauauina pea o nei a’aifiaga.

O SE VA’AI FA’AMATĀ’UPU SILISILI I LE TALA

I luma atu o le Kenese 3, sa feoa’i fa’atasi lava le tagata ma le Atua i le usita’i ma mafuta fa’atasi. O le tala ia Atamu ma Eva o lo’o atagia ai se mea na tupu i le tagata ina ua ia taumafai e sopo atu ma le tuā’oi o lona fa’asinomaga, aemae o lona manatu e fia tu i le tulaga o Lē na faia o ia. O le tala i le fa’ato’aga i Etena o se va’aiga loloto ina ia mafai ona iloa tonu ai le uiiga moni o le tagata, i le tulaga o ona tuā’oi fa’asinoina e ala i ni fa’ai’uga le lelei aemase o avanoa e mafai ai ona ia faia ni fa’ai’uga talafeagai. O se fa’amatalaina fo’i, o le filifiliga sa’oloto o se meaālofa ua tu’uina i le tagata ina ia filifili ai le lelei ina ia tua lelei, po’o le leaga e o’o ai i puapuaga. O le tala lenei o se fa’amanaatu o le a lava le fa’atinoga e fa’atino ai le maeālofa o le filifiliga sa’oloto o lo latou lava lea faitalai. Na faia e le Atua le lalolagi o se nofoaga e lelei, fe’oe’oea’i, ma matagofie, ma o tagata o ni tuamonea e tatau ona fa’atinoina lea tuasiga ma o lo latou lea nafa i le lalolagi. Na faia e le Atua tagata ma ua lelei ma ia faia ni fa’ai’uga poto ma lelei ina ia atagia ai foliga o le Atua i totonu ia i latou. O ā lava fa’a’ai’uga fai a se ali’i po’o se tinā e toe ifo lava le fuiniu i lona lapalapa e fua i a latou fa’ai’uga fai.

O SE A’OA’OGA E FESO’OTA’I MA ASO NEI

I le si’omaga o Samoa ma isi atumotu o le Pasefika, o lo’o matuā manino ai le fa’auigaina o le tala lenei ia Atamu ma Eva, o le tinā na mafua ai ona o’o mai o le agasala. E aga’i le va’ai i le itū e fa’aapea o Eva na muamua lē usita’i i le Atua, ma e fa’aapea ai o tinā o latou ia o lo’o matua’ia le agasala, ma āfua ai ona tosina atu ai ma ali’i i le agasala. Peita’i, i la latou toe va’ai ma faītaino le tala, sa auai fa’atasi Atamu ma Eva ina o fa’aososoina ma le ‘aina o le fua o le la’au na fa’asāina. Lona uiga sa ia auai fa’atasi fo’i i le fa’atinoga o le lē usiusita’i, e ui lava sa lē lagona sona leo.

E sili atu ona manuia tagata Samoa ma le Pasefika mai le matuā ‘elina i le loloto o lenei tala ina ia manino ai e avanoa tutusa lelei tinā ma ali’i ma sa’oloto e faia fililiga lelei po’o o le lē lelei fo’i. O lo’o mafai fo’i ona atagia fo’i i le tala lenei nisi o tu ma aga i aso anamua a o tatau atumotu, o le galulue fa’asiasi lea o tinā ma ali’i. O Samoa anamua, sa ia atua tama’ita’i ma atua ali’i.

O se tasi o atua malosi sa ia o Nafanua, o ia lea – e lē gata o se tama’ita’i ta’uta’ua i le tala fa’asolopito i le vaitau po’o le sefululima seneturi – a’o ia fo’i lea na tu’ufa’atasia Samoa uma ma perofeta ane i le taumu’u mai o le fa’a-Kerisiano. O le tu’uaia ai na’o Eva i le ulua’i agasala o se tulaga ua lē sa’o pe a fu’a i le tala a Kenese 3, fa’apea le ‘au Kerisiano na latou taliaina le mataupu silisili fa’a-tamā i le tala fa’asolopito o le ekalesia, aemaise ai atumotu Kerisiano o le Pasefika o nei aso, o e maualuga la latou va’ai i tama’ita’i o aso la.

**FA’AAOGĀINA O LE TALA IA ATAMU MA EVA INA IA FA’AILOA AI SAUAGA FA’ASAGA I TINĀ MA TAMAI’ITA’I (GBVAW)**

Fetufaā’iga i vaega to’aitiiti, talanoaina ai fesili nei:

1. **E fa’apefea ona afaina le va’ai a tagatalotu e fa’asaga i tinā, e ala lea i le fa’ailoa mai o Eva na fa’a’ama’iteina le fa’a’oso osoga ma o ia fo’i o le mafua’aga o le ulua’i agasala?**

2. **Afai o tinā ua fa’a’ailoa mai na fa’a’oso osina ali’i, e fa’apefea ona ava lea ma ala e talitonuina ai o latou e pule i tinā, aemaise lava le fa’atinoga o la latou pule ua o’o ai lava i le sauāina o tinā?**

3. **Afai, e pei ona fa’a’ailoa mai e le Kenese 3, e tutusa lelei lava le sesē o Atamu ma Eva i lo la le lē usita’i uma i le Atua i le fa’ato’aga i Etena, e fa’apefea ona fesoasoani le toe fa’ainaga lenei o le tala i le va o tama’ita’i ma ali’i ina ia mafai ona fo’i sauāga i totonu o aiga o le ekalesia?**

**Talosagaina se sui mai vaega to’aitiiti ta’itasi latou te saunia mai ripotia pe a tauaofia fa’atasi. E mafai ona fa’aaoagaina se gaioga/ata pu’upu’u, pese, po’o se isi lava awalalai mai vaega e fa’a’ailoa mai ai la latou ripoti. Ta tusa e le ta’ita’i aotelega o manatu fa’aalia i se laupapa po’o ni nusipepea ua tu’uina mai.**

**FA’ASAGA MO NISI FA’ASOA FA’AOPO’OPO**

1. O fa’apefa ona e afaina mai a’afiaga o le talitonuga masani lenei o le Pa’ū/ To’ilalo i le taimi nei?

2. E fa’apefa ona e toe fa’anigaina i lou aiga ma lau ekalesia le tala ia Atamu ma Eva i le Kenese 3 i se auala e mafai ai ona atagia le galulule fa’atasi o le tinā ma le ali’i i le faia o fa’ai’uga talafeagai ma tonu?

**MAI LE SILAFIA I LE FA’ATINOAGA:**

Fa’atulaga nisi e fai ma vaega to’a’itiiti i totonu o lau ekalesia e mafai ona galulule fa’atasi e fausia se a’oa’oga fa’a-le-Tusi Paia mo fanau laiti e fa’aaogaina ai le tala ia Atamu ma Eva i le Kenese 3. Mafaufau i se auala e atagia ai Atamu ma Eva, o i lā’ua uma na lē usiusita’i i le Atua, ma le gata ua na’o o se auala ‘fa’ama’ite fesili’i nai lo le va’ai iai o Satani. E fa’apefa ona fa’atinoina e lau vaega le fa’amatalaina o le tala? O le valiga e le au Kerisiano o le tala lenei mai le fia o seneturi talu ai, o lo’o atagia ai lava Eva o se tinā tau fa’a’oso’oso, e masani fo’i ona fa’atusa i le ma’ai’a, o se foga sasa’o lanumūmū (foga lanumūmū e feso’ota’i ma le lē mamā po’o le agasala). O le ā se auala sa’o ma talafeagai fa’a’ailoa ai o ia, aemaise lava le va’ai fa’a-Samoan mai le Pasefika.

Ae fa’apefa ona fa’a’ailoa Atamu? Ia fausia fa’amatalaga fa’a-Tusi Paia mo fanau i le 8-12 taua le matutua, ma ia faia ni a’oa’oga fa’a-Tusi Paia ma i latou, pe fa’ai’u fo’i i le toe fa’atinoina se tala e fa’a’aata ai lava le tala lenei.
ADAM AND EVE IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN...THE CHOICE ONE MAKES DETERMINES ONE’S FATE

GENESESI 3: 1-19

FACILITATOR: (Explaining the process: creating a safe space, developing respect, trust and the freedom to share)

Select four participants to read the voices of the serpent, woman, man, and God in the text. Then allow time to reflect on the questions below. Discuss these questions in small groups and then report back briefly to the large group. The facilitator will then provide explanatory and background material.

READING THE TEXT AS CONVERSATION (NRSV)

SERPENT – WOMAN: Did God say, ‘You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?’

WOMAN – SERPENT: We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.’

SERPENT – WOMAN: You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

GOD – MAN: Where are you?

MAN – GOD: I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

GOD – MAN: Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?

MAN – GOD: The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.

GOD – WOMAN: What is this that you have done?

WOMAN – GOD: The serpent tricked me, and I ate.

GOD – SERPENT: Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.

GOD – WOMAN: I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.

GOD – MAN: Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, you shall not eat of it; cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.
AN ALTERNATIVE READING OF THE TEXT FROM A PARTNERSHIP PERSPECTIVE

SERPENT – WOMAN: Did God say, ‘You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?’
WOMAN – SERPENT: We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.’
SERPENT – WOMAN: You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’
ADAM – WOMAN: Woman, God knows what is best for us. Let’s not listen to the serpent, but obey God.
SERPENT – WOMAN: Don’t listen to him. I’m telling you the truth: You’ll be like God.
WOMAN – ADAM: Thank you. You are right. We should obey God and make the right decision, because God created us and we should reflect God’s image.
GOD – MAN: Where are you?
MAN/WOMAN – GOD: We are right here in the beautiful garden we are to look after.
GOD – MAN/WOMAN: You are obedient creatures. You will prosper because you have put your trust in me.
WOMAN/MAN – GOD: You are a caring God for you have given us the freedom to experience the joy of making wise decisions.
GOD – MAN/WOMAN: You have been tempted, but you did not fail. You have listened and obeyed, therefore you will live a fruitful and blessed life.

INITIAL READING OF THE TEXT

Allow time to reflect on the questions below in the light of the actual text, and also the alternative reading offered. Discuss these questions in small groups and then report back briefly to the large group. The facilitator will then provide explanatory and background material.

(1) What is the story about?
(2) Who are the main characters in the story?
(3) What are the most important issues raised in the story?
(4) Compare the two versions of the story.
SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

In this narrative from Genesis 3, God created Adam, the first man, and Eve, the first woman, and placed them in a perfect home, the Garden of Eden. In fact, everything was in order at that moment in time. The garden was beautiful and had two important trees: the tree of life, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam’s duties were clear: God told him to tend the garden and not to eat the fruit of those two trees, or he would die. Adam passed that warning on to his companion, Eve.

Then the serpent entered the garden, and said to the woman, “You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:4-5, NRSV). Instead of believing God, Eve believed the serpent. She ate the fruit and gave some to her husband to eat, believing that “your eyes will be opened” (Genesis 3:7, NRSV). Afterward, Adam and Eve realised that they were naked, felt shame for the first time, and made loin cloths from fig leaves to cover themselves.

As a result of the decisions they made, God cursed the serpent, Eve, and Adam. First, the proud serpent, which had previously been upright, was cursed by being doomed to crawl on its belly from that time forward. Adding to its humiliation, it was destined to eat dust, a symbol of death. The curse also included a permanent hostility between the serpent and the woman, and between its offspring and hers. Why was the woman mentioned here, rather than the man? As one commentator concludes, “Probably because both she and the serpent were closely associated with life.”

The curses given to the woman and the man are actually explanations of the hardships they were set to face as humans in an imperfect world. The woman will suffer in her relationship with the man, experiencing pain in childbirth; the man will suffer in his relationship with the ground from which he was made, having to toil hard to make anything grow from the ground (v. 17). These are descriptions of what men and women can expect, regardless of anything they might try to do. These realities are “not a command or prescription given to the woman or the man,” but simply a description of the struggle for survival and the patriarchal world that defined life in the Ancient Near East.

This story is often labeled a tale of the Fall of humanity, even though this concept is not found in the Genesis 3 story itself but is a theological expression developed at a later time in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Genesis 3 is more a narrative about certain decisions that were made that determined the destinies of Adam and Eve, who can be seen as representations of the human race. With this introduction in mind, it will be helpful to look at the role of each of the characters in this story: Serpent, Woman, Man, and God.

The Serpent: In Genesis, the serpent is portrayed as a cunning creature who promotes as good what God had forbidden. It should be noted, however, that “The serpent does not directly tempt the woman (or the man with her). It never suggests that she should eat from the forbidden tree. It does ask key questions that provoke the woman’s response, that cause her to think and reflect, to consider her options.

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19 Ibid.
Then it stands back silently to watch.”20 Serpents were not considered to be embodiments of Satan or Evil in Ancient Near Eastern cultures, but were associated with fertility. Indeed, “the serpent was often considered a symbol of everlasting life, because it sheds its skin and seems to start life over again.”21

The Woman: Eve is presented as someone who was created to be a companion and helper for Adam, who was lonely. We may ask why the woman rather than the man was chosen to be the serpent’s conversation partner. No explanation is found for this in the passage itself, but various reasons have been offered. Some interpreters have claimed that Eve’s actions show that women are more gullible than men because, having been created after the man, they are inferior; thus a woman would be more easily taken in by the serpent than a man. (This is a stereotype of women found elsewhere in scripture, as in 1 Timothy 2:13, which says that women cannot have authority over men because “Adam was formed first, then Eve”). Other interpreters have suggested, in contrast, that Eve was much more “appealing, more intelligent, and more assertive than the man, who seems to remain in the shadows during this conversation.”22

However, the most logical reason for portraying Eve as the serpent’s conversation partner may be found in ancient Israel’s opposition to the Canaanite fertility cults that surrounded them, where the snake was “closely associated with a goddess of fertility.”23 In opposition to these cults, Genesis 3 portrayed both the serpent and the woman in a negative light.

Adam: When the serpent tempted Eve, Adam was with her (Genesis 3:6), and Adam did not remind her of God’s warning or do anything to stop her from eating the forbidden fruit. Although he was silent, he was fully present; his silence does not signify passivity but, rather, consent. Adam and Eve are equally responsible for their choice to eat the fruit. By eating the fruit, both Adam’s and Eve’s “eyes are opened, a reference to attaining insight; they now have firsthand knowledge of evil.”24

God: The picture of God walking in the garden in the cool of the evening and speaking is appealing, as it places God close to God’s creatures and to creation, and makes God accessible. Some have wondered why God only speaks to Adam, and not to Eve. However, “the fact that God addresses only the man does not mean that God is more interested in him than in the woman, or that the man is the spokesperson for both. This may simply be a matter of literary consistency. Since ... [previously] it was the man who received the prohibition, it follows that he is now the one questioned about it.”25 God wants both the man and the woman to learn to be creatures rather than to try to be the Creator. They must learn to listen to and follow God.

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21 Bergant, Genesis: In the Beginning, 14.
22 For an interpretation of woman as a knowledgeable and moral decision maker, see Stratton, Out of Eden, 85–91.
24 Bergant, Genesis: In the Beginning, 14.
25 Ibid.
BACKGROUND TO THE TEXT

As mentioned earlier, the word ‘Fall’ and the concept of ‘the Fall’ are not mentioned in this passage. This story was a way for the people of ancient Israel to make sense of the beginnings of human life. For these people — not just those who came to be called the People of Israel, but all Ancient Near Eastern peoples — there was a common understanding that sin was to be expected. However, humans were not hopeless in the face of their sinfulness. Indeed, one way to understand Genesis 3 is that “it describes a process of maturation... Humans move out from under the parental hand of God, a necessary move if they are to grow up and become truly human.”26 At the same time, part of this process of ‘becoming human’ was learning that there are consequences for sin, a theme found throughout scripture. The punishments of Adam, Eve and the serpent show what these consequences entail.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON THE TEXT

Before the events in Genesis 3, humanity was walking with God in obedience and fellowship. The story of Adam and Eve reveals what happens when humans attempt to go beyond their creatureliness and instead assume the role of the Creator. The Garden of Eden narrative is a profound reflection on what it means to be human, in terms of both the limitations imposed by unwise decisions and the opportunities offered to make wise decisions. It is also a description of the gift of free will offered to humanity to choose the good in order to flourish, or else the bad that leads to suffering. This story is a reminder that what humans do with the gift of free will is up to them. God created the world to be a place of goodness, harmony and beauty, and humans as its stewards who are meant to exercise caring and responsibility for the world. God made humans who ideally will be capable of making wise and good decisions that reflect God’s image in them. Both men and women are morally responsible for the choices they make.

A CONTEXTUAL REFLECTION

In Samoa and many Pacific Islands contexts, the story of Adam and Eve has typically been interpreted as depicting the woman as the author of original sin. The focus has been on the fact that Eve disobeyed God first, and that therefore women are the originators of sin, and temptresses who steer men into sin. However, as our exploration of the text has shown, Adam was present with Eve as a participant during the temptation and the eating of the forbidden fruit. He was a full accomplice in the act of disobedience, even though he was silent.

Samoans and Pacific Islanders can benefit from digging more deeply into this story to discover that men and women are equal as conscious beings who are free to make both good and bad choices. This understanding should resonate with the ancient traditions of our island cultures, in which women were understood as complementary with men. In ancient Samoa, there were goddesses as well as gods. Indeed, one of the most powerful deities was the goddess Nafanua, who – as both a historical figure in the fifteenth century and a deity – unified Samoa and prophesied the coming of Christianity. Blaming Eve alone for original sin has done a disservice to the original text in Genesis 3, to Christians who were the recipients of patriarchal theology throughout church history, and to Pacific Islander Christians today, who had a more positive view of women in their ancient past.

USING THE STORY OF ADAM AND EVE TO RAISE AWARENESS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (GBVAW)

Meeting in small groups, discuss these questions:

1. How has the portrayal of Eve as a temptress and the source of original sin affected the church’s view of women?

2. If women have been depicted as tempting men to sin, how might this have led men to believe that they need to control women, even to the point of controlling them through violence?

3. If, as the Genesis 3 passage suggests, Adam and Eve were equally guilty of disobeying God in the Garden of Eden, how can this revised view of women and men be helpful in combating domestic violence in the homes of our church members?

Ask the reporter for each small group to share the group’s responses for the whole group. This can be communicated through a role play, song, or any other method chosen by the group. The facilitator will summarise the responses on a whiteboard or newsprint.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

1. How are you struggling with the effects of the traditional understanding of the Fall right now?

2. How could you, in your family and in the church, re-interpret the story of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3 in a way that would view women and men as more equal partners and moral decision-makers?

FROM AWARENESS TO ACTION:

Organise a small group within your church which will work together to create a new bible study for children in your church based on the story of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3. Think of ways to portray Adam and Eve as being equally responsible for disobeying God, and the serpent as a figure that ‘raises questions’ rather than being a personification of Satan. How would your group visually illustrate the story? In Christian art for many centuries, Eve has been portrayed as a very sexualised temptress, often with wild, flowing red hair (red hair being associated with wantonness). What would be a more accurate way of portraying her, especially in a Samoan or Oceanian context? How should Adam be depicted? Develop an illustrated bible study for children ages 8-12 and then conduct this study with them, perhaps concluding with a dramatic re-enactment.


BIBLE STUDY 2
O LE TALA IA AKARA
THE STORY OF HAGAR

LO’U SI’OMAGA MA LE TUSI PA’IA
CONTEXTUAL BIBLE STUDIES
O LE TALA IA AKARA

KENESE 16: 1-16 O LE TALA IA AKARA ... (E SILAFIA E LE ATUA TAGATA UMA)

FAITAU LE TALA IA FAAPEI O SE TALANOAGA (NRSV)

Filifisi te to’afo mai ia i latou olo o auai i le mafutaga e faitau ma faaleiona upu ma lagotau o Sarai, Aperamo, Akara, ma se isi to’atavi e avea ma faamatala’upu o le tala, e pei ona tusia i le Tusi Paia.

[FAAMATALA’UPU]: O Sarai, o le avā a Aperamo, sa lē fanau o ia. Sa ia te ia se teine-pologa mai Aikupito e igoa ia Akara, ua faapea atu Sarai ia Aperamo,

(SARAI-APERAMO): Ua e silafia ua finagalo le Alii ia ‘ou lē fanau, alu ia oe i la’u teine-pologa; atonu ou te maua ai ni fanau ia te ia.

(SARAI-APERAMO): Ia luga ia te oe lo’u agaleagaina! Na ou tuuina atu la’u nei teine-pologa ia te oe, ae ina ua ia iloa ua to o ia, ona ia faalaogaina ai lea o a’u. Ia faamasino mai le Alii ia te oe ma a’u!

(APERAMO-SARAI): Faauta, o ia te oe le pule i lau teine-pologa, faitalia lava oe i se mea e te faia ia te ia.

(AGELU-AKARA): Akara, le teine-pologa a Sarai, o fea e te sau ai nei a o fea foi a e alu i aia?

(AKARA-AGELU): Ua ou sola ese mai lo’u matai tamaitai o Sarai.

(AGELU-AKARA): Ia e toe fo’i nei i lou matai tamaitai, ma e faalogo ma usita’i ia te ia. O le a ou faatoateleina lau fanau ma e le mafai ona faitauina ona o le toatele. O le a to oe ma e fanauina se tama tane; e te faaigoa ia te ia o Isamaeli, aua ua faafogaina e le Alii lou tiga. O le a avea o ia ma asini vao, o le a fai tagata uma mona fili, e avea foi o ia ma fili o tagata uma.

(AKARA-AGELU): O oe o Pere-Laaroi; Po ua ou vaai ea i le Atua ma ou ola pea ina ua mae’a ona ou vaai ia te Ia?

[FAAMATALA’UPU]: Ua fanauina e Akara se tama tane mo Aperamo; ma ua faaigoa e Aperamo lona atalii mai ia Akara, o Isamaeli. Ua valuefulu ma le ono tausaga o Aperamo ina ua fanau Isamaeli mai ia Akara.

ULUA’I ILOILOGA O LE TUSI ... 

Ia manatunatu lelei i fesili ua tuuina atu i lalo. Faalanafei fesili nei i ni vaega to’aitiitu ona tuuina ana lea o le aotelega o finagalo fa’aalia i luma o le vaiatele. Ia fa’amalahalama e lē o loo ta’ilia’ia le iloiloga ni fa’amatalaga (tu’a’ele’ele) e uiga i le tusi faitau.

(1) O le a le mea o loo faatatasi i aia le tala? 
(2) O ai tagata ‘autū o le tala? 
(3) O le a se mea taua e faatatasi i tagata ‘autū ta’ito’ataisi? 
(4) O a ni fe’au poo ni mata’upu taua o i le tala?
AOTELEGA O LE TALA

O le tala ia Akara i le Kenese e 16 ua na o sina vaega o le tala atoa e faatatau ia Aperamo.27 I lea manatu, e atagia mai ai o Akara e le taula tele i le tala. E u i lava na o Akara le tagata mai le mataupu lene i fona ola ona talanoa ma le Atua, peitai e manatu nisi au faitofoa o le Tusi Paia o le tala o loo ‘autu lava ia Aperamo ae le o Akara. Latou te manatu o le tua faataunu o le fofolaga a le Atua mo se sulia o Aperamo, o le ute lea o le tala nei, ma e faataua nisi ae le o Aperamo.28 Peitai, o nisi au vai tofoa, o loo latou faatauaaina Akara o se uluia tamaitai i le tusi o Kenese na fona ona talanoa ma se ageu a le Alii, o ia foi le uluia tagata na faa le suafa o le Atua i le Tusi Paia Eperu. O ia foi o le uluia tina na muamua fofolafa iai i le Atua ni e o le a fananuai mai ia te ia. O itu ia e loa ai le taula o Akara ma e mafai ai ona manatu nisi o le au faatau i le tala lene i le Kenese e 16, o loo faatau is Akara. E le o Aperamo. O le tala e faatau i se tina e le taulaoa ma “o se faa huihufaiia ai le tala faasolopito o le faa olataga.”29 E mafai foi ona faapea o le tala lene i o lea ia faafafai dia o lea “Akara ma le Atua-o-Lo-Silasila mai.”30

TUĀ’ELE’ELE O LE TUSI FAITAU

Ina ia mafai ona malamalama i le tuā’ele’ele o le Tusi, e taua le sueue i nafa o Akara, Sarai ma Aperamo o i le tala. O la nafa sa faatinoina sa fua lava i lo latou siosiomaga eamaise o le soifuga na ola ai tagata i lena taimi.

Akara...Iona uiga sa “fai ma tagata sola fa’anana,” “sola ese,” “sola.” E u i lava o Akara o se tamaitai Aikupito, peitai o lona igoa e afua mai le magaga Eperu. E foliga mai o sona igoa sa faaigoaina ai e Aperamo poo Sarai ona o lo la malamalama’aga faa-Aikupito.31 E faamatalaina Akara i le tala o se tamaitai e le i faa ona aiga, mativa, ma o se pologa foi. Afa o se tamaitai pologa mai Aikupito, e leai la ni ona malosi’aga. Lona uiga e tele ni itu ma’ale’ale e mafai ai ona afina ona lona ola – o se tasi o ia itu ona o ia o le tamaitai/teine, o lona tulaga o se pologa, o le tagata nua ’ese, e le gata lea e leai ma se ali e aiga i ai, lona e matua leai ona malu poo ona faalagolagomaga. E u i ia itu uma ia ta’ua, peitai na avea lava o ia ma mea tau faamata’a’u ia Sarai ma Aperamo (Ken.16: 5-6). Talu ai ona o lea ua mafai ona faanaunia i Sarai e Siti Pia a Sarai. O loo faamatalaina o se teine pologa mai Aikupito (shiftiah i le magaga Eperu) a Sarai. O le shiftiah e o se pologa teufale pei o le to’atele, peitai, o ia o se meatotino a lona matai tamaitai. I lea faauiga, o le tuina atu o Akara o se shiftiah e Sarai ia Aperamo, o le tulaga aloa’ia faaletuafono ina ia maau ai se atali mo Sarai. O Akara sa faaiaunia ua na o se meatotino sa fa’a aoga mo ni feuaiga e ona “matai.” O i o loo faamatala mai ai le leai o sona malosi’aga poo ona loto e faa ia le tala nei ma lona afina gofie i sauaga, faatama’ia’ia ma le olopalaana.

27 In Genesis 16, Abraham is called Abram, and Sarah is known as Sarai. It is only in Gen 17.5 that God rename them as Abraham and Sarah. The name Abram means “exalted father”, while Abraham sounds similar to a Hebrew term meaning “father of many.” Both Sarai and Sarah mean “princess.”
I le manatu o James Okoye, “o Akara sa matauina o se meatotino, o se oloa e mafai ona fa’aagogaina i soo se taimi e mamoaia ai e soo se tasi pe a finagalo malie iai o lona matai. E le tau faanoia pe se a sona lagona e uiga i fetuunaiga ua fa’a mo ia; ae poo a foi ni ona lagona e le afaina ai se faaiuga mo lona faaaogaina.”32 E augapiu lava ma se leo o Akara i le tala atoa. E leai lava ma sina taimi e faapea na talanoa faatasi ai Sarai ma Aperamo ia Akara. O le leai o se leo o Akara o se tasi o faailoilo o le leai o sona malosi’aga.

Sarai… I le Kenese 16, o loo faamatalaina ai Sarai o le ava a Aperamo, ma o se “tina e pa.” E ui e foliga mai o loo fa’a uma e Sarai tonu o le aiga, ma e talu ai o le leai o sana tama o i o loo taoto ai le faamamafa a lona aiga, aemaise o le faamatalaina o ia (Sarai) i le tala. Mulimuli ane, o le faafitauli o Sarai ua avea ma faafitauli o tagata uma o lona aiga, e ui o loo faamatalaina o ia o se tina ua faaipoipo, mauoloa toe saoloeto. O le faamatalaina o lona tulaga faatinia, e fua lava i luga o ona nafa masani i le aiga o se avâ ma le tina. O i o loo fausia mai ai ona “agava’a” mo lona aiga. Ma, o lona lē fanauina o se tama ua avea o se faafitauli. O le ala lea ua ūnaia ai o ia e sauaina Akara, o lē e lē mafai ona tali ane i se upu. O le fuā o Sarai i si teinetiti na fa’aagogaina e fai mona suimumo’e, na te fanauina mo ia se tama mai lana tane na mafua ai ona ia osofā’ia loa i teinetiti. O le tala lenei ua taula’i le le afaina o Akara. O le faauiuga a Phyllis Trible le le tala lenei o loo faavae i luga o le pule a Sarai, o le matai tamaiai, i lana pologa, o Akara.33 O i o loo matuā manino mai ai a faafesaga’i le tagata pule ma le tagata e leai se malosi’aga, e i’u lava ina masani e se sauaina.

E tusa ai i tu ma aga a Isareuel anamua, soo se tina e pa e le fanau o se matuā luma lava. O lea tina ua leai sona mamalu pe amanaia foi. E fai ma mea ula a nisi tina! E lua ni vaega e tatau ona vaai ia Sarai: (1) o le nofo pa ai pea i lona olaga atoa, talia le luma, poo le faatali se’i alofagia o ia e leova; poo le (2) tuuina atu o lana auana teine, o Akara, ia Aperamo ina ia maua mai ai sona suli.34 Na filifili e Sarai le vaega lona lua, auā ua na silafia o se tama e fanau mai e Akara o le a avea ma ana tama. Sa ioena faatasi e Sarai ma lana tane le mea ua manatu i ai Sarai, ona o le lagona e fia maua se tama. Fai mai le manatu o Renita Weems:

O le mana’o o Sarai ua atagia ai le tali masani a ulugalii faapenei e lē aloa pe leai se fanau—o le tali a se tagata ita, lē mautonu, ma tiga. Ma oute masalo o le ita leaga o Sarai ia Akara ina ua tō, e iaie le feso’otai ma lona tiga. E o’fo’i i le taimi a’o le’i fanau Akara, o le putaputa ane lava o le manava o Akara, o se foliga vaia lea ia Sarai o lona lē fanau aemaise lava o lona nafa tonu lea o le faasuliina o le aiga, a ua faatino e le isī tagata ac e le o ia. O le to a Akara o le faamaonga lena i tagata uma o tiga o feagai ai ma Sarai aemaise o lana faai’uga e fia maua mai sana tama mai se isī. Ua o se faamata’u i lona soifua i aso uma ma lona tagata. Ae ina ua faaliagā (vaai maualalo) e Akara ia Sarai, o se mea na lē fetau i le vaai a Sarai – o le mea ua tulai mai nei ua pona’ia ai le tele o isī mau mea, ua pisia ai se mea lelei sa manatu iaia ma ua manatu e tatau ona tuuina atu loa se faai’uga talafeagai ma fetau lelei mo Akara.35

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O Sarai o se tina e lē femoumoua’i sona manatu! Talu ai o lona lē fiafia i le mea ua tulai mai, ua faanoanoa ai ia Akara. Ina ua tō Akara, o iina na suia ai ona foliga ma lana vaai ia Sarai. E manatu Renita Weems o le tō a Akara ua fafagu ai se lagona sa natia i totonu ia te ia: o lona tāua, o le mafua’aga o lona soifua ma le mea o aga’i i ai lona faasinomaga36 e pei ona faamaonia i le fuaiupu e 4b: “ua iloa e ia ua tō o ia, ona ia faaleaga ai lea i lona matai taimai.” Poo le a lava se isi mafuaaga, ua le toe tutusa le vaai a Akara i lona matai taimai e pei ona i ai i le ulua’ia taimai. O lea suiga ua avea ma faamata’u ia Sarai. O le tu’ua’ia e Sarai o Aperamo i le fuaiupu i 5 masalo e faapela ona o le leai o sona leo ina ia maua ai le faafita. O lea fa’ataumua ina lea ona fa’ataunuuina le folafolaga a le Atua na te fanauina se tama. Sa telē lona a’afiaga ona o le lē fanau o Sarai ma lona lē mafai ona fa’ataumuuina lea folafolaga.

Aperamo… o le ata o le pule faa-augatamā aeraise o le faatulagaga o le Ulua’i Feagaiga e pei ona faata’oto mai i totonu o lenei tala. I le tala lava lenei, o Aperamo o le tane a Sarai. O se tasi o augatamā, peitai sa gaua’i ma leai sona leo i totonu o le mataupu atoa lenei e 16 o Kenese. Sa na o le faatino lava o faatonuga a Sarai la te momoe ma lana pologa, ae ina ua alia’e le faafita, sa leai lava sona leo. Sa lagona e Aperamo le tatau ia te ia ona fa’ataumuuina le folafolaga a le Atua na te fanauina se tama. Sa telē lona a’afiaga ona o le lē fanau o Sarai ma lona lē mafai ona fa’ataumuuina lea folafolaga.

O SE VA’AI FA’A-MATĀ’UPU SILISILI
E ui lava e ese le ituia faaialaga tagata lea ua ola a’e ai Akara e pei o le tala nei, o loo faamanafa e le tala le taura o tagata taitotasi i lalo o le pule a le Atua. O Akara o se ata faatusa lea o le fa’aauauina pea o folafolaga mo le faalataga ma manuia e taula mai lea ia Aperamo/Aperamo. Sa fa’aali le Atua ia Akara i le vao ma folafola i ai o le a to ma ia fanauina se tama tane na te faaigaia ia Isamaeli, e avea foi o ia o se “asini vao,” e le mafai ona pule ai se tagata pe faalataina e pei tasi.38 E le fai o ia ma pologa pei o Akara; ae peitai e sa’oloto o ia i le vao. E fai tagata uma mona fili, e fai foi o ia ma fili o tagata uma; e faatu foi e ia lona fale’ie i luma o ona uso (vv. 11-12). O le faamoaiga lea na silasila Ieova ma Ia faafogaina Akara ma ona tiga. O Akara o le tina muamua lea o le Tusia Paia na ulua’i folafola i ai e le Atua se fanau e to’atele, ma e le mafai ona faitauina ona ua to’atele. Sa

36 Ibid.
tali i le loto talitonu moni ma le faatuatua Akara i le Atua. Na ia ta’utino lava ua aapa mai le Atua e lavea’i ia te ia: “O Oe o Pere-La’aro, o le Atua ua silasila mai” (v. 13). Na faaigoaina e Akara le Atua e ala i le ageulu na la fetaualatala’ai, “O le Atua ua silasila mai i lo’u tiga.”

O le suafa o le Atua, Pere-La’aro, e le o tā’u i a se lava vaega o le Tusiga a Eperu. O le igoa lea na faaigoa ai e Akara le Atua, na maua mai i lona lava iloa o le Atua; ima ua ia mauninoa lona lumanai ma se faamoemoe fou. E na o Akara lava le tagata nuu ese o loo i totonu o tusitusiga a Eperu na ia faaigoaina le Atua i se igoa fou.

E le gata i lea, o le ta’utinoga a Akara ma lona faaigoaina o le Atua e faamatala mai ai ia i tatou i le faa’iloa tagata le Atua na o Aperamo ma Sarai; peitai na silasila mai le Atua (o le uiga o le igoa Isaamael) ia Akara i le taimi na faaonoana lona aemaise o ona mafiatiaga. Na fa’a’aii le Aiga ia Akara, ma la talanoa, ma Ia faia ni folafolaga ia Akara i pei ona ia faia i Aperamo. O le fa’a’aii mai o le Atua, ua fa’a’a’a’a’ai e na o Ia e malu puipuia ai le tagata ua taotaomiga ma tuulafo’a’iina. O le tulaga faaletagata o Akara na matua aliali i le la talanoaga ma le Atua. Na folafola e le Atua ia Akara o le a avea lana tane ma ta’ita’i o se nuu tele. O le Atua o Akara e mo tagata uma, e le na o i latou o fa’ai ma ulu/pule. O le avea o Akara ma “sē ua filifilia” e le Atua – e mafai ai foi ona tatou faa’e a filifilia foi e le Atua so’o se tasi e o’o lava i tagata lē tauloa ma lē amana’ia. O le Atua lo latou malosi ma lo latou ‘olo.

O le tala ia Akara o se matua lu’itau tele mo Kerisiano e le o manatu mamafa i mataupu e a’aia ai le faatinoina o le amiotonu mo tagata uma. O le tala i sē na lē amana’ia ma faiautulaia, a ua talanoa ma vala’au i ai le Atua. O le tala ia Akara o loo manino ai e siitia i luga ma galulue faatasi le Atua ma č lē tauloa ma a’afia i totonu o aiga, ekaesia ma so’o se faalapopotopota. O loo faamatu mai i le le lenei, e lei na se tagata e ta’u o se tagata-noa i le Atua ma e amanaia ma tutusa tagata uma i le Atua, ma e tatau fou ona faa’pe’a i tatou. O le tala ia Akara o loo vaiva mai ai le taua o tagata taitoatasi i pulega faa-le-Atua. O se tala na te umaaia se fe’au mo tagata uma i le aiga o le Atua. Poo a lava ni o tatou escesega, o le Atua lava lo tatou mapusaga. Fai mai Marina Hofman:

E lē tau mateina vaega na feta’aii ma Akara—o lona sauāina ma le lava’e’a’iina e le Atua, aemaise o lona lagona mautinoa—na suia ai lona olaga. Ina ua ia feta’aii ma faigata, o iina na mafai ai ona faaa’e ai se isi amataga fou mo ia, o se ola ua toe amata, e le mai le amataga i le olaga na soifua ma ola a’e ai, a o se amataga fou ua afua atu i naí motugā’a’ia e mea ua tutupu i lona ola. E mafai ona tatou lē ioeina le tote faafo’iga e le agelu o Akara i lē na sauāina o ia; ona o le luma tatou manatu i se Lalolagi e tatau ona sa’o ma tonu, ma sa tatou i le agelu ona lavae’a’i ia Akara i le mea ua tutupi ia te ia, aemaise ia puipuia mai o ia i nisi mea e faamo o tutupi mulimuli mai. Peitai, o le olaga o Akara —e pei foi o i tatou ia—tatu te ola i le Lalolagi o mea lē tonu ma lē sa’osa’o. E tatau ona toe fo’i Akara, o le toe fo’i a le tagata ua maua se is faasinomaga fou ma ua faamalosi’auina o ia, e lē me i luma masualalo, a ona ua ia mautinoa mai le Alii. E lē tūtí-inoa sona lumanai’i, a ua mautino le faatumuina i le fa’amoeemoe e afua mai le Atua. Sa va’aiinmo i le Atua i le vao ma ua toe fo’i o se tagata ua suia.

FESOTAIGA O LE TALA MA LE ASŌ
O le tala ia Akara o loo mafai foi ona atagia i totonu o Samoa, o le va masani lava feagaia ai o alii ma tamaitai ma e mafai ona avea ma sao i le sauaina o nisi foi tamaitai. O ituaiga sauaga nei e afa mai ona o le lē tutusa o le pule o loo maua ma tamaitai ma alii i lo latou siosiomaga o loo soifua ma ola ane ai. O le malosi ma le pule a le itupa o alii Samoa, e afa mai i tu ma aga masani a pulega faatamā a Eperu pei ona maua i a latou tusitusiga. O le upu moni, o le va feagai ai o tane ma tina i Samoa, ua fau málo lava pulega faatamā. O se tasi o faataitaiga faigofie o nei pulega lē tutusa ona o le ituaiga tagata (alii poo le tamaitai), o loo mafai ona atagia i le faiga o nofo tane i totonu o aiga a o a latou tane. E mafai ona faapea, o tulaga pagatia o feagai ai ma nofo tane, na te faamatalaina tiga ma puapuaga o feagai ma tagata. O gaioiga a Sarai ma Akara i le tasi o Kenese 16: 1-16, e o gatusa lele ma le tali a se tagata o a’afia ma e mafai ona fesoasoani lea vaai na te faamatalaina le ituaiga tali na tali atu ai Aperamo aemaise o le tali na tali atu ai. O lea ua e iloa lelei lava ua finagalo le Alii ia ‘ou lē fana; alu la’ia i la’u teine-pologa; atonu ou te maua ai ni fana; mai ia te ia. O le mea leaga ua ia faia ia te a’u, ia i ou luga lea! Sa ou avatu la’u teinepologa ia lava momoce, ae ina ua tu o ia, sa vaai maulalo mai ia te a’u. Faamasino mai le Atua ia te ce ma a’u i le nei mea! O lau teine-pologa, o loo i lalo o lau lava pule; pule oc ma le mea e fai i ai.

1. O a ni foliga o loo atagia mai le felafolafoa’iga a Sarai ma Aperamo?
2. O le a le popolega tele o Sarai i le tala nei?
3. Mai i lea felafolafoa’iga/talanoaga, e lē o tā’ua lava le igoa o Akara, peitai a faalu a faaioa a Sarai o “lana teine-pologa” a’o Aperamo o “lau teine-pologa.”
4. O le ola “tau-tuua’i i isi” o se tasi o a’upega e masani ona fa’aogaina e i latou a faatinoina sauaga o le GBVAW. O e vaai o tupu lea faiga i lou siosiomaga?

FESOTAIGA O LE TALA MA LE ASŌ

FA’AAOGAINA O LE TALA IA AKARA E FAALAULOA AI SE FE’AU TAU A E UIGA I SAUAGA E FAAVEA I LUGA I ITUAIGA TAGATA E PEI O SE ALII PO O SE TAMAITAI/TINA (GBVAW)

Ia vavae i ni vaega to’aiiti, ona tofi lea o nisi e faatauina le talanoaga a Sara ma Aperamo, ma ia faaia i fesili o loo i lalo ina ia mafai ona maua le agaga ma lagona moni o upu sa felafolafoa’ia a’i Sara ma Aperamo:

O lea ua e iloa lelei lava ua finagalo le Alii ia ‘ou lē fana; alu la’ia i la’u teine-pologa; atonu ou te maua ai ni fana; mai ia te ia. O le mea leaga ua ia faia ia te a’u, ia i ou luga lea! Sa ou avatu la’u teinepologa ia lava momoce, ae ina ua tu o ia, sa vaai maulalo mai ia te a’u. Faamasino mai le Atua ia te ce ma a’u i le nei mea! O lau teine-pologa, o loo i lalo o lau lava pule; pule oc ma le mea e fai i ai.

1. O a ni foliga o loo atagia mai le felafolafoa’iga a Sarai ma Aperamo?
2. O le a le popolega tele o Sarai i le tala nei?
3. Mai i lea felafolafoa’iga/talanoaga, e lē o tā’ua lava le igoa o Akara, peitai a faalu a faaioa a Sarai o “lana teine-pologa” a’o Aperamo o “lau teine-pologa.”
4. O le ola “tau-tuua’i i isi” o se tasi o a’upega e masani ona fa’aogaina e i latou a faatinoina sauaga o le GBVAW. O e vaai o tupu lea faiga i lou siosiomaga?

TALOSA o vaega to’aiiti to’aiiti i tofi mai so latou sui e faasoai ma le aotelega o a latou tali. E mafai ona faaioa mai sa latou tali e ala i se ata puupuupu, pese, po o se isi lava auala latou te manatu e talafeagaiai. O lē o loo fa’aatauia le vaega leni, na te saunia se aotelega o tali ma tusia i luga o se laupapa poo se pepe siata.

41 Ibid.
42 Ibid.
NISI FESILI MO NI FAASOA FA’AOPPOOPO

Mai fesili o loo i lalo, faalototele ia i latou o loo auai ina ia mafai ona latou faasoa mai i mea o loo feagai ma i latou i aso ta’itasi. O le ā se sao tauta o le tala lelei mo i latou e mafai ai ona mafaufau loloto i mafutaga i totonu o latou aiga, suu, ma ekalesia.

1. O i ai ni faataitaiga o mea o loo tutupu mai lou lava siosiomaga e tutusa lelei ma le tala ia Akara?

2. E mafai ona e matauina lelei nisi ituiaiga GBVAW o loo atagia i totonu o le tala?

3. E mafai ona e aumaia ni faataitaiga o le GBVAW mai totonu o lou lava nuu?

4. E fa’apēfeqa (auala) ona e faailoaina faalaau ‘itele nei ituiaiga sauaga mo le nofo silafia e tagata uma?

5. O a nisi mea e mafai ai le GBVAW o e matauina i totonu o lou lava siosiomaga.

MAI LOU ILOA MA MALAMALAMA UA MAUA I LE GALUEGA FAATINO

Ina ua e malamalama e ala i faatalanoaga, felafolafa’oga ua iloa tonu ai faafitaui, e tatau loa ona aga’i i latou o loo auai ina ia mataitū poo auala e faaiola ai le GBVAW mo le silafia lautele e tagata uma. E le gata i lea, e tatau foi ona faamanino poo a ni auala mo ni galuegoa faatino ma fa’aauauina pea ma toe ililo ni nisi auala talafeagai mai totonu o Samoa lava ia. Mo se faataitaiga, e mafai ona valaaulia se sui mai se Faalapotopotopoga tuma’oti e lava se tomai i le mataupu nei [GBVAW] ina ia faasoa i ekalesia, ma ia fa’atautaia ni a’oa’oga e vala’aulia ai le mamalu lautele o le atumu. O faamatalaga uma e faatatau i mafuaaga o sauaga i totonu o aiga ma ona a’afiaaga, e tatau ona faailoaina i se auala faigofie ma ‘aua nei avea o se mea tau faafēfē, a o se auala ina ia atagia ai le alofa/agape. O ni fa’aata’ita’iga o mea moni na tutupu e uiga i le GBVAW (e aunoa ma le faailoaina o suafa) e mafai ona fa’aagaina o ni tala mo nisi auililiga ma su’esu’ega mo i latou o loo auai, ma saili auala e fofo ma toe tapu’e ai le soifua e le gata o tagata ua a’aafia a o i latou foi na faatinoina sauaga, ina ia mafai ona taofia ma faamuta loa sauaga.

THE STORY OF HAGAR

GENESIS 16: 1-16. THE STORY OF HAGAR... (GOD SEES ALL)

KEY OBJECTIVES

• To raise awareness of the story of Hagar as a biblical text.
• To promote a thoughtful and informed discussion of challenges raised by the story and to explore its themes of power, gender inequality, and family violence.
• To connect the text with experiences today and consider how the church should respond.

INTRODUCTION TO THE GROUP

Explain the process: creating a safe space, developing respect, trust and the freedom to share.

READING THE TEXT AS CONVERSATION (NRSV)

Select four participants to read the voices of Sarai, Abram, Hagar, and another to read the narrator’s part, as indicated in the text.

[READER]: Now Sarai, Abram’s wife, bore him no children. She had an Egyptian slave-girl whose name was Hagar, and Sarai said to Abram,

(SARAI-ABRAM): You see that the Lord has prevented me from bearing children; go into my slave-girl; it may be that I shall obtain children by her.

(SARAI-ABRAM): May the wrong done to me be on you! I gave my slave-girl to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the Lord judge between you and me!

(ABRAM-SARAI): Your slave-girl is in your power; do to her as you please.

(ANGEL-HAGAR): Hagar, slave-girl of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?

(HAGAR-ANGEL): I am running away from my mistress Sarai.

(ANGEL-HAGAR): Return to your mistress, and submit to her. I will so greatly multiply your offspring that they cannot be counted for multitude. Now you have conceived and shall bear a son; you shall call him Ishmael, for the Lord has given heed to your affliction. He shall be a wild ass of a man, with his hand against everyone; and he shall live at odds with all his kin.

(HAGAR-ANGEL): You are El-roi; Have I really seen God and remained alive after seeing him?

[READER]: Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael.
INITIAL ANALYSIS OF TEXT

Allow time to reflect on the questions below. Discuss these questions in small groups and then report back briefly to the large group. The facilitator will then provide explanatory and background material.

(1) What is the story about?
(2) Who are the main characters in the story?
(3) What is important about each character?
(4) What are the most important issues in the story?

SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

The story of Hagar in Genesis 16 is often regarded as only an incident in the larger Abraham story. This view does not recognize the importance of Hagar in the story. Although Hagar is the only figure in the chapter who experiences dialogue with God, many scholars tend to focus on Abraham rather than on Hagar. They regard the delay of God’s promise of descendants to Abraham as the central theme of the story, and deal with characters other than Abraham only marginally. Other scholars, however, highlight the importance of Hagar as the first woman in Genesis to encounter the angel of the Lord, and the first person to name God in the Hebrew Bible. Hagar is also the first woman to receive the promise of descendants from God. This emphasis on the importance of Hagar’s experience directs readers to realize that Genesis 16 is a story about Hagar. It is not about Abraham. The story tells of a marginalized woman “who complicated the history of salvation.” It may be called the story of “Hagar and the God-Who-Sees.”

BACKGROUND TO THE TEXT

To understand the background of the text, it is important to examine the roles of Hagar, Sarai and Abram in the story. Their roles were played according to the background and context of the text.

Hagar…means “to be a fugitive,” “to flee,” “flight.” So even though Hagar was an Egyptian, her name was Hebrew. This means her name was probably given to her by Abram or by Sarai because of their experience in Egypt. Hagar is portrayed as single, poor, and a slave. As an Egyptian slave woman, Hagar is powerless. So she is marginalized in more than one way – by virtue of her gender, her status as slave, and as foreigner, as well as the fact she has no male kin to support her. But her presence still poses a threat to Sarai and Abram (Gen. 16: 5-6). Hagar’s ability to produce an heir is a serious threat to the barren Sarai. The role of Hagar is introduced in Genesis 16 in relation to Sarai. She is introduced as the Egyptian slave (shiftiah in Hebrew) of Sarai. Shiftiah is not an ordinary household slave, but, rather, a living property of the mistress. So, Hagar the shiftiah of Sarai was legally given to Abram to bear a son for Sarai. Hagar is valued as a sexual object to be used by her “owners.” This emphasizes her powerlessness.

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44 In Genesis 16, Abraham is called Abram, and Sarah is known as Sarai. It is only in Gen 17.5 that God renames them as Abraham and Sarah. The name Abram means “exalted father”, while Abraham sounds similar to a Hebrew term meaning “father of many.” Both Sarai and Sarah mean “princess.”
in this story and her vulnerability to abuse, exploitation and violence.

According to James Okoye, “Hagar is seen as a possession, a disposable commodity that can exchange hands at the will of the owner. She does not need to be asked what she feels about the arrangement; her feelings are of no consequence in the transaction.” Hagar is silent in the entire narrative. Sarai and Abram never speak to Hagar directly. Hagar’s silence is another sign of her powerlessness.

Sarai...In Genesis 16, Sarai is introduced in relation to her husband Abram, and as a “barren woman.” Although Sarai seems to be running the affairs of this family, her experience of childlessness is the main focus of her household, as well as of her narrative. Thus, Sarai’s problem has become a problem for the whole family, despite her being described as married, rich, and free. As a woman, she’s still defined in terms of her social roles of wife and mother. This is where she gets her social “value” from. Therefore, childlessness becomes a trauma for Sarai. It drives her to abuse the defenseless Hagar. Sarai becomes jealous of the young fertile surrogate of her husband and attacks her. This story becomes focused on the victimization of Hagar. Phyllis Trible interprets the story based on the power that Sarai, the mistress, has over a slave, Hagar. It underlines the fusions between power and powerlessness, which often lead to a cycle of violence.

In relation to the traditions and customs of Ancient Israel, a woman who was not able to have children was in a shameful situation. This woman would lack dignity and respect. She would become the laughing stock of other women! Sarai had two options: (1) to remain barren for the remainder of her life, tolerating shame, or until YHWH changed her circumstances; or (2) to present her own maid, Hagar, to Abram who would bear children on her behalf. Sarai chose the second option, because she knew that the son born of Hagar would be regarded as her own. Sarai took the initiative with her husband, taking charge on the issue of offspring. According to Renita Weems:

[Sarai’s] response reflects a typical response to the traumatic experience of infertility coupled with childlessness—a response of anger, frustration, and violence. And I suspect that Sarai’s negative reaction to the success of Hagar’s pregnancy is also linked to her own pain. Even before the birth, Hagar’s growing belly is a visible reminder to Sarai that she cannot bear children and that her natural role is being filled by another. Hagar’s pregnancy acts as a public confirmation of Sarai’s painful reality and her decision to procreate through other means. It is a threat to her way of life and sense of self. And so when Hagar shows resentment toward Sarai, it upsets Sarai’s equilibrium—this one part of life comes to taint all other experiences, spoiling her appreciation of the present and overwhelming her capacity to respond to Hagar with reasonable and appropriate measures.

Sarai was a very determined woman! But in the process of changing destiny, she became very disappointed with Hagar. When Hagar became pregnant, her attitude toward Sarai changed. Renita Weems claims that the pregnancy awakened something in Hagar: her sense of self-worth, her sense of purpose and direction as evident in verse 4b: “When she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress.” Whatever the reason, Hagar could no longer see her relationship to Sarai her mistress in the same way as before. This change in Hagar threatened Sarai. Sarai’s criticism of Abram in v. 5 may be understood as her response to his silence in the face of Hagar’s taunts. Hagar seemed to sense she’d attained some degree of power, given her status as mother-to-be. And that threatened Sarai’s own power in the household. Sarai’s appeal to Abram indicates that he is responsible for generating Hagar’s claim to motherhood and equal status.

Abram’s response that “Your slave-girl is in your power; do to her as you please” (v.6) results in Sarai dealing harshly with Hagar, to the extent that Hagar runs away from her. Abram seems to admit his responsibility and his lack of authority over Sarai’s legal rights here. In spite of his power as patriarch, Abram acknowledges passively Sarai’s appeal, and agrees to the legal authority that Sarai invokes. This indicates Abram’s unwillingness to step in and resolve the conflict.

**THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION**

Regardless of the exclusive nature of the culture in which Hagar exists, this story highlights the importance of each person in God’s reign. Hagar symbolizes the continuation of God’s promise of salvation and blessings to Abram/Abraham.

In the desert, God appeared to Hagar and promised that her son Ishmael would grow and be a “wild ass of a man,” one who would not be dominated, or domesticated. Neither would he be a slave like Hagar; rather he would be free in the desert. His hand would be against all, and all would be against him, but he could succeed in erecting his tent before all his siblings (vv: 11-12). All this confirmed the fact that God had seen and responded to Hagar’s suffering. Hagar became the first woman in the Bible to be given the promise of numerous descendants. Hagar responded to God with a trusting spirit and faith. She confessed that God had come to her rescue: “You are El-roi, a God of seeing” (v. 13). Hagar named the God whom she encountered through the messenger, “The God who saw me in my distress.” This name of God, El-Roi, occurs nowhere else in the Hebrew Scriptures. It is Hagar’s name for God, born of her own experience: that of having been given a future and a new hope. Hagar is the only person in the Hebrew Scriptures to give God a brand-new name.

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53 Ibid.
Moreover, Hagar’s confession and naming tell us that God has not exclusively committed Godself to Abram and Sarai; rather God heard (the meaning of Ishmael) Hagar in her misery and saw her suffering. God appeared to Hagar, conversed with her, and made promises to her that approximated those given to Abram. God is clearly shown as the protector of the oppressed and exploited here. Hagar’s humanity is affirmed through her encounter with God. God promised Hagar that her son will be the leader of a great nation. The God of Hagar is for all people, not only those in power. Hagar becomes a “chosen one” of God—perhaps emphasizing that God chooses even those in very vulnerable and marginalized positions. God empowers and protects them.

The story of Hagar challenges Christians’ lack of concern about issues of social injustice. It is a story of an outsider, being encountered and called by God. Her story clearly shows that God lifts up and works with those who are marginalized or victimized in families, churches and societies. This story reassures us that no one is an outcast to God and that God’s social order is inclusive and ours should be too. The story of Hagar highlights the importance of each person in God’s reign. It is a story that brings forth the message of inclusivity in the household of God. Regardless of our respective differences, we can all find comfort in God. According to Marina Hofman:

There is no doubt that Hagar’s experiences—both the abuse and the divine intervention and affirmation—change Hagar. In facing her reality, Hagar is able to begin again, to live in the present, starting not from the beginning but from the point at which her life was disjointed. We may be uncomfortable that the angel sends Hagar back to her abuser; we may want a fair and just world where the angel will intervene in Hagar’s situation and prevent any future abuse or mistreatment. But in Hagar’s life—as in ours—the world is neither fair nor just. Hagar must return to Sarai, but she returns with a new sense of identity and an empowerment that comes not from an unjustified arrogance but from divine affirmation. Her future is not empty, but rather is filled with divine hope and purpose. She has seen God in the wilderness and returns a changed person.57

A CONTEXTUAL REFLECTION

The story of Hagar has parallels in the Samoan context, in the attitude among men and women that tends to contribute to gender-based violence against other women. This type of violence is a result of the inequality of power experienced by women in the environment in which they live and exist. The power and authority held by men in Samoan society is part and parcel of patriarchal norms and values Samoans inherited from Hebrew Scriptures. In fact, patriarchy continues to control gender relationships in Samoan society. One clear example of these gendered power inequalities is in the treatment of a nofotane (wife) within her husband’s family. Arguably, the experiences of nofotane can be explained from the perspective of trauma. In Genesis 16: 1-16, the actions of Sarai and Hagar are consistent with the responses of trauma victims and this lens may also help to explain the response of Abram and

the community. Consequently, feelings of irritability, anger, and violence are normal responses to trauma, as victims fight to remain in control, and this is precisely the response we see in Sarai’s subsequent victimization of Hagar. Abram’s silence can also be viewed as his struggle to maintain his own power and control as patriarch over Sarai and Hagar.

USING THE STORY OF HAGAR TO RAISE AWARENESS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (GBVAW)

In the small groups, ask a volunteer to read the exchange between Sarai and Abram, then reflect on the questions below to capture the experiences articulated in the words used by Sarai and Abram:

You see that the Lord has prevented me from bearing children; go into my slave-girl; it may be that I shall obtain children by her. May the wrong done to me be on you! I gave my slave-girl to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the Lord judge between you and me!

Your slave-girl is in your power; do to her as you please.

1. What sort of experience is conveyed in the exchange between Sarai and Abram?
2. What is Sarai’s main concern here?
3. In this exchange, Hagar’s name is not mentioned, but she is identified twice by Sarai as “my slave girl” and by Abraham as “your slave girl.” How might labels or identifications such as these contribute to GBVAW in Samoa and other societies?
4. “Transferring the blame” is a common tactic used by perpetrators of GBVAW. Do you see this happening in your community?

Ask the reporter for each small group to share the group’s responses for the whole group. This can be communicated through a role play, song, or any other method chosen by the group. The facilitator will summarise the responses on whiteboard or newsprint.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

In the light of questions below, encourage participants to reflect on their own experiences. How has this story enabled them to think beyond the surface level in their relationships in families, society, and religious institutions.

1. Are there any specific examples from your own community that relate to the story of Hagar?
2. Can you identify the types of GBVAW happening in the text?
3. Can you give examples of GBVAW from your community?
4. How can you address these forms of violence in public?
5. Name the contributing factors to GBVAW in your community.

FROM AWARENESS TO ACTION

In gaining awareness through discussions, dialogue and naming the problem, the participants can also move on to identify specific actions to be taken to raise the public’s awareness on GBVAW. In addition, the participants should also name practical ways to continue the process of action and reflection relevant within the Samoan context. For example, representatives of NGOs and other professionals who have expertise in dealing with [GBVAW] could be invited to visit churches, where workshops could be held that are open to the public. Information about the root causes of

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58 Ibid.
59 Ibid.
domestic violence and its devastating effects on victims could be presented in a non-threatening way, as a compassionate practice of alofa/agape. Examples of real incidents of GBVAW (with pseudonyms) can be used as case studies with participants critically analysing them and suggesting restorative alternatives to avoid violence.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY AND FURTHER READING**


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BIBLE STUDY 3
O LE TOSOGA FA’AMALOSI O TAMARA
THE RAPE OF TAMAR

LO’U SI’OMAGA MA LE TUSI PA’IA
CONTEXTUAL BIBLE STUDIES
O LE TOSOGA FA’AMALOSI O TAMARA

2 SAMUELU 13:1-22

TAITAI: (Fa’amatala le fa’asologa o le tala: fuafua lelei se nofoaga talafeagai, fa’ataua le vafealoa’i, ma ia maua le lagona o le fa’atuatuaina ina ia sa’oloto tazma e fa’asoa)

FAITAU LE TUSI PAIA IA FA’APEI O LO’O FAI SE TALANOAGA (NRSV)

Filifili mai nisi se to’alima mai ia i latou o lo’o auai i le mafutaga e fa’aitau ma fa’aleaina upu ma lagona o Ionatapa, Amanono, Tavita, Tamara ma Apisaloma, ma se isi to’atasi e avea ma fa’amatala’upu o le tala, e pei ona tusia i le Tusi Paia.

[FA’AMATALA’UPU]: Sa i ai le tuaufafine o le atali’i o Tavita o Apisaloma, o le tama’ita’i ladele lava, o lona igoa o Tamara; ma sa mana’o i ai le isis 1 atali’i o Tavita o Amanono. Sa avea le mana’o o Amanono i lona tuaufafine o Tamara ua fai ma ala ua fa’ananoa ai, ma ua i’u ai lava ina ma’i; auā o Tamara o le taupou ma ua ia lē mafai ai ona ia faia se mea ia te ia. Peitai, sa iai se tasi uo a Amanono e igoa ia Ionatapa, o le atali’i o le uso o Tavita e igoa ia Sama; peitai, o Ionatapa, o le tagata fai togaifiti poto tele.

(IONATAPA-AMANONO): O oe o le atali’i o le tupu, ae aisea ua e tino vale ai i lea aso ma lea aso? E te le ta’u mai ea ia te a’u?

(AMANONO-IONATAPA): Ua ou mana’o ia Tamara, le tuaufafine o lo’u uso o Apisaloma.

(IONATAPA-AMANONO): Vaai oc, taoto i lou moega, ma e fa’atagā ma’i; ma, a sau lou tamā e asi mai oc, ona e fai lea i ai, ‘Se i sau lava Tamara lo’u tuaufafine e auam sa’u mea e ai, ma laulau mai o i’u luma, ina ia ou iloa ai, ma ia fafaga mai ia te a’u.’

(AMANONO-TAVITA): Malie lou loto, se’i tuli mai lo’u tuaufafine o Tamara ma ni nai fasi-keke ma a’u, ma sau se’i fafaga a’u.

(TAVITA-TAMARA): Sae e alu i le fale o lou tuagane o Amanono, ma tapena sana mea’ai.

(AMANONO-TAMARA): Aumai le mea’ai i totonu o lo’u potu, ma e sau e fafaga a’u… Lo’u tuaufafine e, sau ia, ta te momoe ma a’u.

(TAMARA-AMANONO): ‘Aua, lo’u tuagane e, ‘aua e te toso ia te a’u, auā e lē faia fa’apea i Isaraelu; ‘aua le faia lena mea leaga! O a’u fo’i, e fa apēfea ona ou fa’ate’a o lo’u luma; a o oc, e tusa ma se ulavave o Isaraelu; o lenei se’i lua talanoa ma le tupu auā na te lē taofia a’u mai ia te oc.

(AMANONO-TAMARA): Tula’i ia, inā alu ese atu ia ma a’u!

(TAMARA-AMANONO): ‘Aua, lo’u tuagane e; o le mea sesē ua e faia – E lē sili ea ona leaga o lou tuliga o a’u i fako nai lo le mea ua e faia ia te a’u’.

(AMANONO-‘AU’AUNA): ‘Ave ia i fako o lenei fainine aia ia te a’u ma fa’amau le faitoto’a o i tua.

(APISALOMA-TAMARA): Sa ia te oc ea Amanono lou tuagane? O lenei, lo’u tuaufafine e, ina fa’alologo ia oc, auā o lou tuagane o ia, ‘aua e te toe mafaufau i le mea ua tupu.

[FA’AMATALA’UPU]: Ona nofo fua ai lea o Tamara i le fale o lona tuagane o Apisaloma. Ua fa’alogo Tavite le tupu i nei mea uma, ona ita tele ai lea o ia, peitai ua ia lē a’oa’i ia Amanono, auā ua ia alofa ia te ia, ma o ia fo’i o lana ulumatu. A o Apisaloma, ua lē mafai ona tautala atu o ia i se upu leaga pōo se upu lelei ia Amanono; auā ua ia ‘ino’ino ia Amanono, ina ua na toso ia Tamara lona tuaufafine.
ULUA’I ILOILOGA O LE TALA

Ia manatunatu lelei i fesili ua tua‘ina atu i lalo. Fa’atalatalamaa fesili nei i ni vaega o t’aiititi ona tua‘ina ane lea o le aotelega o finagalo fa’aalalia i luma o le vaitele. Ia fa’amalamalama e le o lo’o ta’ita’i le iloiloga ni fa’amatalaga (tu’a‘ele’ele) e uiga i le tusi faitatu.

(1) O le ā le mea o lo’o fa’amatala e le tala?
(2) O ai tagata ‘autū o le tala, a’o ā fo’i ni o latou sao taua i le tala?
(3) O ā ni matā’upu taua o lo’o mafai ona atagia mai le tala?

MANATU AOAO O LE TUSI FAITAU

O le tala lenei uiga i se toso-teine poo se tosoga fa’amalesi o totonu lava o le aiga o le tupu o Taiuta. O Amanono o le ulumatua o atali’i uma o Taiuta. O lona tina o Ainoama. O le tosoga e Amanono o le tamaita’i la te tinā escese ae tamā fa’ataasi, o le ata manino lea o ituaiga sosioete o lo’o pulea malosi o le itupa o ali’i, ma e manatu lava latou o la latou faiitalia fa’aaoagāina ai tino o tamaita’i i so’o se mea e manana’o i ai. O le tosoga e Amanono o lona tua-teine (tamā fa’ataasi), mulimuli ane ua toe ‘ino’ino i ai, ma i’u ai lava ina ia tulia i_fafo_o o la o lona olaga ato’a; e aunoa ma le ta’uina i se tasi.61 O mea moni lava o lona, O Amanono o le ata lafo’ia lea o lona tamā o Taiuta aemaise o ane mea na fai i nisi o tina i totonu o le si’omaga e malosi ai lea pulea e ali’i (silasila i le afainia ai o le tina i Patisepa i le 2 Samuelu 11-12). O le isu tagata ‘autū o Ionatapa, o le atali’i o le uso o Taiuta o Sama. O Ionatapa o le tagata fai toghafi poto. Na ia fa’atoaualu Amanono e le auala e fa’aasē ai Taiuta, ina ia mafai ona ia (Amanono) maua se taimi na’o laua ai ma Tamara. O Tamara o le afainia o le tupu o Taiuta. E iloa Tamara i le tala nei o le tua‘afine o Apisaloma. O ia (Tamara) lea sa tosoina, fa’aalagaina ma ua sauainia ona o le malosi o faiga ma le aganu’u a Eperu, lea e pulea e ali’i.

O ‘Taiuta le isu tagata o lo’o ta’ua i le tala, peita’i e foliga mai e leai ma sona lea. O le leai o sona lea i le mea na tupu, o le fa’ailoga lena o lona lagolagoina o faiga ma aga masani i pulega fa’a-ali’i. O le leai fo’i o se leo o ‘Taiuta ua ia tata liao ai le avanoa mo Apisaloma e ola ai peiscai o se tagata o lo’o naunau e sailia lea moni le le aifo le matautumonu ona o lona tua‘afine o Tamara. Peita’i, o lona lagona moni o lo’o nātia, o le fa’asisili’apumale o le gaupule, lona uiga ua manatu e sili atu lana pule nai lo lona uso o Amanono ma lona tamā o Taiuta. O le tala lenei o lo’o aumai i se fe’a au taula mo tina (poo le ā le a lea ituaiga soifua o soifua ai) o ē ua masani ona fa’aaoagāina e fa’i alofaga o nisi, ma ua avea ma mea fa’amālie mana’o o le itupa o ali’i. O le taunu’uga o ituaiga faiga fa’apenei, e i’u ai lava ina tala e tina o se vaega lava o lo latou soifua lea sauainia ma le lē lagona o latou lea, aemaise lava le manatu ia maopopo ‘āiga ma nu’u. O nisi atumu’u e pei o Samoa, e ala ona sauainia nisi ona o fai o matautumonu lea e lea i totonu o le si’omaga o le fai o le aifo le matautumonu. “I lo’o tusia o lo’o fasiloaia ma nei, o fai o matua manino ai le lē tutusa/paleni o le fai’asöaina o le malosi/pule i le va o ali’i ma tama’ita’i.

I le tala ia Tamara o se tala i le toso-teine ma e tutusa lelei ma le mata’ifale aemaise le sauainia o tina ma tama’ita’i. “I le gagana Eperu o lo’o tusia ai le Tusi Paia, … o le upu toso-teine, e mafai ona afoia ai i totonu a’afiaga o le maloa, pooto le tino, pooto le sa’olotoga, aemaise lava pe afoi sa

fa’aaoagaina le tulaga o le toso fa’amalosi e aunoa ma le loto malie poo ioe i ai o se tamaiai.”


64 S. Bar-Efrat, Narrative Art in the Bible. JSOTSup (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 265.


Sa iaie se taupulepulega ‘autasi ma se faufauga i nisi e fa’asaga i lē ua agasala (Ionatapa ma, e le’i māfaufauna fo’i e auai ma ‘Tavita) ma o se ‘autasiga fo’i ina ia ‘aua lava nei aliali le mea na tupu (Apisaloma ma Tavita).

Mulimuli ane, sa matuā aliali le tai ma sui (Apisaloma), peitai o le tāu tai ma sui mata’utia sa faia lava e aunoa ma se sao o lē na a’afia. O le faiga uma o tonu ma talanoaga i mea na tutupu i le tala lenei, sa augapiu lava ma se leo o Tamar, ua na’o ona tuagane lava ma lona tamā sa auai. I le 2 Samuelu 13: 31, o lo’o tā’ua ai le tamā o tagata ‘autū o le tala e to’atolu, fa’atasi ai ma ana auauana, sa o latou sāci i o latou ofū, fetağisi ma auē “ua matuā tiga” i aso uma, ua lē ona o lē na a’afia, a ona o lē na toso-teine ma le uso le toso-teine.66 Ona o le malosi o le leo ma pulega fa’a-augātamā (ali’i), ua foliga mai ai o le a’afia o Tamar i le faiga-āiga fa’i fa’amalosi, ua lē afaina lea, ma ua avea ai o se tāi fo’i lea a Tamar ma lona aiga. E pei fo’i ona tā’ua e Esther Fuchs e fa’aapea:

E mafai ona finauina e fa’apea, pe ana leai le malosi o leo ma pulega fa’a-augātamā (ali’i) lea na afua ai ona usitai le taupou o Tamar ona o le fa’atonuga a ona tuagane ma lona tamā, se mea manu lava e le alu Tamar i le fale o Amanono. O le afaina ai o Tamar i le mea na tupu o le fa’atō’á tupu ina ua fa’amalosi e Amanono ia Tamar, peitai, na amata mai ina ua fa’atonu e lona tamā o Tavita e alu i le fale


64 S. Bar-Efrat, Narrative Art in the Bible. JSOTSup (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 265.


o Amanono e tapena se mea’ai ma lona tuagane sa fa’atagā ma’i. E le’i muta lona afaina auā sa fa’atonu fo’i e lona tuagane (Apisaloma) ona o lana puipuiga fa’atuagane ina ia “‘aua nei tautala.” Afa i lea na faoa e Amanono le teine muli/taupou o Tamara, ua fāoa fo’i e Apisaloma le avanoa e tautala ai Tamara mai le puipuiga a lona tuagane “lelei,” peitai ua sili ona ogaoga lana tā nai lo uiga matagā sa faia ia te ia e lona tuagane “leaga.”67

TUĀ’ELE’ELE O LE TUSI FAITAU

O le leai o se leo o le tamā lenei o Tavita, ua fa’aialoa ai lona lē mafaia ona a’oa’i lona atali’o i Amanono. O le ituaiga lē tautala lenei e ta’ua o le fa’aufiufi, poo se gaoiga fo’i ua faia lava ma le mautinoa ina ia tanuma’i i lalo o se fala, ma le fa’amoeomoe ia ‘aua nei aliali. O le upu moni o le mea lea e ta’ua o le lē faia o le amiotou. O le solitulafono a Amanono o le ata moni lea o le ituaiga tagata e iai Tavita. E taua tele mo le silafia, o le leai o se leo o Tavita, o le mafuaaga fo’i lea o lea o le se o Apisaloma ma afua ai ona ia taunafai fo’i i Tamara ia auā nei tautala. O le taotaomia o leo e i’u ai ina tali atu i le fa’a’o’olima ma le fāsiotia tagata fa’amoeomoeina. O le tala lenei o lo’o fa’aialoa ai o le aiga o se nofeofaga e tatau lava ona matuā aliali ai le alofa, le puipuiga ma le malu o Tamara a ua avea ma nofeofaga ua fa’alataina ai o ia ma sauāina ai. O lo’o fa’amantu mai fo’i i le tala lenei, o le sauāina o tina ma tama’ita’i e mafai lava ona tupu i totonu o soo se aiga. O Amanono, o le atali’i o Tavita mai ia Ainoama, sa mana’o ia Tamara, o le tuafafine moni o Apisaloma, o le fanau a Tavita ia Maka.68 O lona mana’o tele ia Tamara na afua ai ona ia manatu e fa’atagā ma’i, ma o’o ai loa ina fau e lona tausoga o Ionatapa se togasiti (v. 3-5). Ona o le malu lelei o le puipuiga o teine taupou, sa lea ai se avanoa e va’ai ai Amanono ia Tamara (v. 3), peitai na ia talosaga ia Tavita ina ua aiasi atu ia te ia o le aloalii, ina ia aui’ina atu Tamara ia te ia ma ia fa’amasloa loa. Na ia le talaiaina lana augani ane, ina ua ia fa’aialoa ia a’afiaga ogaoga o i laua uma e o’o i ai; e foliga mai sa mafai ona tote nofo o se tane ma sona tuafafine e esese o la tina (cf. Kenese 20:12), e ui mulimuli ane ua tapu i le tulafono (Levitiko 18:9; 20:17; Teuterenome 27:22). O le mea moni sa limataitaina le mana’o o Amanono e lona malosi fa’atane ae lē o se alofa, na iloa ina ua mulimuli ane toe ‘ino’ino ia Tamara.

FE’AU FA’ALEAGAGA MAI LE TUSI FAITAU

O le taimi lava e tutupu ai sauaga, ua tatou tu’ufesili fo’i, “o fea ea o i ai le Atua?” O le lesili fo’i lea o lo’o leisili ai le tala lenei ia Tamara. O le mea moni, e ui lava o le Atua auai, ac na te aumaia fa’aitalia i le tagata, ma e mafai fo’i ona tatou faia ni fa’ai’uga e le lelei ma o’o ai lava ina solia ma olopalaaina tina ma tama’ita’i e aemaise lava i latou e fa’apena e masani ona aliali ma fai e i latou o lo’o pulea isi tagata, aemaise lava i tina ma tama’ita’i. O Amanono, Ionatapa, Tavita ma Apisaloma sa taflisauaonoa i le ituaiga pule malosi lea, ma o le pule fo’i lea sa limataitaiaina ai mea uma sa o latou faia. O a latou fa’atinoga nei e i’u ai ina pogisa ai ma la latou vaai i le Atua. E maua fo’i ituiga manatu fa’apito nei ma le nanau i le pule i

68 Ibid.
totonu o le siosiomaga o tatou ola ma soifua ai. A feagai loa ma ituiga fa’aasososoga nei, ona lu’itauina loa lea o i tatou o Kerisiano ina ia taofimau a tatou aga tausili fa’a-kerisiano o le alofa, agalelei ma ia faia le amiotonu i tagata uma, ina ia mafai ona lacev’aiina tagata uma.

**FESO’OTAIGA O LE TALA MA LE ASŌ**

E ui lava o le tala lenei o lo’o fa’aailoa ai nisi mea na tupu i Isaraelu i le fia tausaga ua tuana’i, peitai e le ese ma mea o tutupu i le siosiomaga o tatou ola ma soifua ai i le asō. O se tala o lo’o fa’aalia ai nisi o mea o tutupu ma o lo’o lo’e fa’aaloalo ai ma nisi i o tatou lava siosiomaga. I su’esuega a le Matagaluega o Tina ma Tama’ita’i, ma Atina’e Manuia o Nu’u (MWCSD) o lo’o atagia ai e fa’aapea:

- e masani ona aliae ni sauaga i totonu o aiga pe afaia le le manino ma iloa totonu poo a nafa ma aga tautosili. Mo se fa’ataitaiga, e ala ona sauā le tane i lana avā ona e le fa’aaloalo lana avā i lona tina. O ituiga faiga ia ua masani ai nisi aiga, ma ua avea ai lava o se mea ua latou taliaina o le vaega o lo latou soifua fa’a-Samoa. Ao ituiga amioga sauā nei, le le o se vaega o le anagau’u a Samoa. Peitai, ua fa’aaga o tane o se avanoa fa’aali ai la latou pule sauā ma le pule malosi i a latou avā.

O le fa’itauina o le tala lenei ia Tamara ua manino mai a nisi o mea e mafai ona tutupu i totonu o Samoa. O se tala e mafai ona fa’amanino maia nisi o itu pogisa o mea moni o lo’o tutupu i totonu o aiga, nu’u fa’aapea le ekalesia le lo’o lo’o tatou ola ma soifua ai. O Tamara o se “alo tama’ita’i o le tupu” e “atamai, lototele ma (ua matuā noatia o ia e fa’asoa ona mafatiaga),”70 peita’i sa le’i mafai e lona atamai ona lacev’a ia te ia mai le fa’alumaina ma le matagā. E leai lava ma se esecsega ma tina ma tama’ita’i Samoa o lo’o feagai ma sauaga ma le fa’alumaina ma i’u ai fo’i ina to’u’ua’ia i latou i mea na tutupu ia i latou.

O lo’o manino i su’esuega a le Matagaluega (MWCSD) le s’itiia ai o le fuainumero o sauaga fa’asaga i tina ma tama’ita’i mai le 46% i le 2000 i le 60% i le 2017. I totonu lava ia o Samoa, ua avea le tutupu so’o o sauaga fa’apenei ua manatu ai o se vaega masani o le soifua o aiga le sauāina o tina ma tama’ita’i, ma ua ta’atele ia ituiga sauaga.71 O le su’esuega a le Matagaluega (MWCSD) ua fa’amautinoa ai nisi o vaega o lo’o mafai ona tofu sao i le sauāina ai o tina ma tama’ita’i: “misa ona o fanau (26%), le fa’afia le tamā ona o le amio a le tina i le va ma lona aiga (fa’ata’itaiga. vaai maulalo i lona aiga) (18%); le gaua’i o le tina i le tane (14%), ma le lē fa’amalieina o le tane i le gaii a le tina i totonu o lona aiga (12%).”72 Sa fa’aailoa e le Matagaluega (MWCSD) i a latou su’esuega nisi o vaega nei e mafua ai sauaga i Samoa:

O le na’aafia o se tina ua 24 tausaga le matua ma lana fanau teine to’alua, ma e nonofo o le aiga o lona to’alua. Na fa’aipoipo i le tausaga lava lea na i’u mai ai mai le aoga maualuga. O lona to’alua e 28 tausaga le matua ma o se inisinia. O e o lo’o nonofo fa’atasi i le aiga o lona to’alua aofia ai ona matua, o ona tuafafine e to’afo ma o latou taito’alua ma a latou fanau. E alu lava le tamāloa fa’agaluega ae tu’u lona to’alua ma lana fanau i lona aiga. Ua amata ona sauāina lagona o le tina nei e le tina ma le tuafafine o lona

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72 MWCSD, xviii.
to’alua. Ua ‘au fa’atasi ma fa’asaga-tau atu ia te ia, ua amata ona lalau e le’o ia o se to’alua lelei. Ua le masino fo’i le taua’ifusu ma le aiga o lana tane. Ua i’u ina ‘au lona to’alua i lona aiga ma ua oo lava ina fa’aoollima ia te ia. Ua sili atu ona alofa lona to’alua i ona matua ma ona tuafafine nai lo ia. Peitai, na te malamalama lelei i le poga’i tonu o le tutupu o nei mea uma: ua le fiafia le aiga o lona to’alua ona ua ia iloaina le mataifale o le aiga o lona to’alua. O lo’o aafia ai le tamā o lona to’alua ua toe nonofo lava ma lona afaﬁne-fai. E pei lava o le tulaga masani, o le mataifale ma le sauaēna e o fa’atasi, ma o mea na tutupu i le’i le sauaēna o lo’o atagia mai ai le mea moni o lo’o tupu e le tutupu o aiga ma o se numi lea i le va o aiga ma tagata taito’atasi. Ua manatu ua tatau ia te ia ona alu e se ina ia sa’oloto mai ai i sauaga tuua’asolo i totonu o le aiga.73

A fua i ai i le fa’atuputupula’ia peo o mataupu e fa’ataitai nei le aiga o lona tina ma tama’ita’i a aoﬁa ai ma le mataifale), ua tatau nei loa ona talaiaēna i Samoa o lo’o sauaēna tagata i totonu o ona lava lofoifale ma ioemia o sauaē i totonu o aiga ua foliga mai lava o se mea ua masani mai a’i Samoa i le soﬁuaga o aso uma.74 O le itu e sili ona fa’anoanoa ai, ua solomusa lava i ekalesia o se tasi o pou’tu malosi ma le fa’aaloalogia e mafai ona latou faia ni suiga, peitai, ua le gata ua saō mai sauaga i totonu o aiga, a ua latou auai fo’i ma latou. A le o le taumaia e pui pui i latou o lo’o agasala pui le taumaia e uufui ma mo’oni mata i sauaga nei o lo’o alia’e i le tonutu o ekalesia.75

E pei lava o Isaraelu anamua, sa fausia ma limataiainia lava Samoa e ona augatamā ma o se tulaga lava sa masani mai ai aemaise i pulega ma le va nonofo ai i totonu o aiga ma nu’u. O faiga masani ia ua mafai ona manatu ai o le sauaēna o tina ma tama’ita’i, o mea lava e masani mai ai le olaga. E gata i lea, ua oo lava i le Mataupu Silisili ma le fa’auiagaga o le Tui Paia, ua latou fa’aauau lava o ni faiga masani e pei ona tauave mai ai e augatamā. O le fa’auiagaga masani o fuaiatau ma tala o le Tusi Paia, ua fa’aogaina pea e fa’i ma ‘alofofa o le pule sauā a alii i tina ma tama’ita’i aemaise lo latou taumaia e fa’aaoga le sauaē “a’oa’i” ai tina mai fanaua. E le gata ua suia ai le agaga moni o le tala o i le Tusi Paia, a ua lagolagoaina ai le le pa’iina o le pule i le va o le tane ma le tina.76 I ekalesia Samoa:

o fa’auiagaga masani lava mai augatamā o le Tusi Paia o lo’o tumau pea ma e le fesiligia. O le le hū’iina o nei faiga ua masani ai ma le fa’auigaga o le Tusi Paia … o se sao fo’i lea i le fa’afita’i o le sauaēna o tina ma tama’ita’i … Ona o ituaga faiga masani nei ua leva, ua atilī fa’amalosia ai le taoaomia pea o tulaga o nai tina ma tama’ita’i.77

75 Filemoni-Tofaeno and Johnson discuss this reality in the context of various types of abuse occurring on the campus of an island theological school, all of which were minimised or ignored by those in authority. See Joan Filemoni-Tofaeno and Lydia Johnson, Reweaving the Relational Mat: A Christian Response to Violence Against Women from Oceania (London: Equinox Press, 2006), Chapter 6, “The Praxis of Violence Against Women in the Oceanian Theological School Setting,” 124-138.
77 Filemoni-Tofaeno and Johnson, Reweaving the Relational Mat, 96.
Fa’atalanoa fesili o lo’o i lalo e feso’otai i le tala:

1. Fa’amata o ta’atele ituaga sauaga nei fa’asaga i tina ma tama’ita’i ona o le itupa o ali’i i tonotou o aiga ma nu’u o silafia e tina?

2. Ua tâmâu lava le aganu’u lenei o le usita’i o tina ma tama’ita’i, e pei fo’i o Tamara; e fa’apêfêa ona avea lea itu ma ala e solia ma sauâina ai latou e le itupa o ali’i?

3. Sa le i mafai e Tamara ona tete’e atu, sa leai ma se leo, ma o se tulaga fo’i o lona taumafai e tali atu i le mea ua tupu, sa i lima lava e lona tuagane. E fa’apêfêa ona fa’afesootai le vaega lea ma le tu a Samoa o le feagaiga e le tuagane lona tuaafafine e pei ona ta’ua i lalo?

4. O taumafai ea tuagane e puipuia mai o latou tuaafafine mai sauaga e mâfua ona o ia o se teine po’o se tama?

5. E mafai ca e tuagane, e pei o Apisaloma, ona latou fa’atinoina se aualae e taua ma sui ai (poo le amiotonu) ona o latou tuaafafine?

6. E fa’amata e tatau ona fa’amalosia lea faiga, po ua o se aualae e taomia ai leo o tina ma tama’ita’i, ae le tuu le avanoa ia i latou e finauina ai e i latou le mea tonu e tatau ona fa’atasi?

Tatalo i taitai o vaega laiti taitasi e fa’asoa ake a latou lalo i luma pe a potopoto fa’atasi. E tatau i lê o lo’o taitaia le talanoaga ona ia tapenaina se tâoafaiga o tali uma na fa’asoa ake mai vaega laiti uma ma ia tusia i luga o se laupapa po ni nusipepa.

FESILI AUĀ NISI FA’ASOA

[Afai e lava se taimi, ona fa’asoa fa’atasi lea o tagata uma i fesili ua tahu. A leai, ia fautuaina sui auai uma a maua se avanoa ona latou manatunatu lea i fesili nei pe a ta’ape.]

1. O mafai e fa’ataitaiga ia na e matauina mai lou lava siosiomaga ona toe fafagu ia te oe le tala ia Tamara?
2. O a nisi vaega poo ituaiga sauaga fa’asaga i tina ma tama’ita’i o lo’o taatele i lou lava aiga ma lou siosiomaga?
3. O a nisi mafuaag a o lo’o avea ma ala e sauāina ai tina ma tama’ita’i i le siosiomaga o e i ai?
4. O a ituaiga suiga o moomia i totonu o lau ekalesia ina ia fa’aafaigofie ai ona fa’ailoa le fa’aftauli o sauaga fa’asaga i tina ma tama’ita’i?
5. O le a sou finag alo e uiga i le fuaitau, “ua i’u lava le tala ia Tamara e aunoa ma ia”, ae fa’apē‘e a ona feso’otai ma sauaga e fa’asaga i tina ma tama’ita’i i totonu o lou lava aiga?

FA’ATINOGA O LE MALAMALAMA UA MAUA

Mai lo latou malamalama ua maua mai e ala i fefa’asoaiaiga i totonu o vaega laiti fa’atasi ai ma le lautele, ia fausia loa ma fa’ailoa ni auala talafeagai e tatau ona fa’atino e i latou uma sa auai, ina ia fa’alauiloa ai le mataupu o le sauāina o tina ma tama’ita’i i totonu o ekalesia, aiga ma nu’u. E fa’aono agai i latou e toe fa’aolaola le taua o aga tausili e pei o le fa’aaloalo, alofa ma le fa’aamaoni ina ia fesoasoani ai i tina ma tama’ita’i ua afaina ona o sauaga i totonu o aiga, aemaise ai fo’i le fesoasoani atu ia i latou sa fa’atinoina sauaga. E fautuaina fo’i fa’a fa’atuia nisi o su’esuega i tala o le Tusi Paia mo tagata lotu i totonu o le nu’u, ma ia fa’aauauina pea le laugaina ma talatalanoa aemaise lava tulaga mana’oga i le vave tatau ona fa i se suiga i le soifua feso’otai o tagata aua le manuia au i luma o tagata uma.
THE RAPE OF TAMAR

2 SAMUEL 13: 1-22, THE RAPE OF TAMAR... (VIOLENCE FROM WITHIN)

KEY OBJECTIVES

• To raise awareness of the story of Tamar as a biblical text.
• To promote a thoughtful and informed discussion of challenges raised by the story and to explore its themes of power, gender inequality, and rape.
• To connect the text with experiences today and consider how the church should respond.

INTRODUCTION TO THE GROUP

Explain the process: creating a safe space, developing respect, trust and the freedom to share.

READING THE TEXT AS CONVERSATION (NRSV)

Select five participants to read the voices of Jonadab, Amnon, David, Tamar and Absalom, and another to read the narrator’s part, as indicated in the text.

[READER]: David’s son Absalom had a beautiful sister whose name was Tamar; and David’s son Amnon fell in love with her. Amnon was so tormented that he made himself ill because of his sister Tamar, for she was a virgin and it seemed impossible to Amnon to do anything to her. But Amnon had a friend whose name was Jonadab, the son of David’s brother Shimeah; and Jonadab was a very crafty man.

(JONADAB-AMNON): O son of the king, why are you so haggard morning after morning? Will you not tell me?

(AMNON-JONADAB): I love Tamar, my brother Absalom’s sister.

(JONADAB-AMNON): Lie down on your bed, and pretend to be ill; and when your father comes to see you, say to him, ‘Let my sister Tamar come and give me something to eat, and prepare the food in my sight, so that I may see it and eat it from her hand.’

(AMNON-JONADAB): Please let my sister Tamar come and make a couple of cakes in my sight, so that I may eat from her hand.

(DAVID-TAMAR): Go to your brother Amnon’s house, and prepare food for him.

(AMNON-TAMAR): Bring the food into the chamber, so that I may eat from your hand... Come, lie with me, my sister.

(TAMAR-AMNON): No, my brother, do not force me; for such a thing is not done in Israel; do not do anything so vile! As for me, where could I carry my shame? And as for you, you would be as one of the scoundrels in Israel. Now therefore, I beg you, speak to the king; for he will not withhold me from you.

(AMNON-SERVANTS): Put this woman out of my presence, and bolt the door after her.

(ABSALOM-TAMAR): Has Amnon your brother been with you? Be quiet for now, my sister; he is your brother; do not take this to heart.

[READER]: So Tamar remained, a desolate woman, in her brother Absalom’s house. When King David heard of all these things, he became very angry, but he would not punish his son Amnon, because he loved him, for he was his firstborn. But Absalom spoke to Amnon neither good nor bad; for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had raped his sister Tamar.
INITIAL ANALYSIS OF TEXT

Allow time to reflect on the questions below. Discuss these questions in small groups and then report back briefly to the large group. The facilitator will then provide explanatory and background material.

(1) What is the story about?
(2) Who are the main characters in the story and what is important about each character?
(3) What are the most important issues in the story?

SUMMARY OF TEXT

This is a narrative about a rape that happens in the household of King David. Amnon is the first-born among King David’s sons. He is the son of Ahinoam. Amnon’s raping of his half-sister conveys the patriarchal culture that assumes men have the right to use women’s bodies as they wish. Amnon rapes his half-sister Tamar, loathes her, and finally throws her out to live the rest of her life ashamed and in silence.79 In fact, Amnon is a true reflection of his father David’s treatment of women in the wider patriarchal society (see his violation of Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11-12). Another character is Jonadab, the son of David’s brother Shimeah. Jonadab is a shrewd and cunning person. He advises Amnon on how to deceive David, so that he (Amnon) can get time alone with Tamar. Tamar is the daughter of King David. In the story she is introduced as the sister of Absalom. She is the victim of rape, violence and the rough power games of Hebrew patriarchal culture.

David is also part of this narrative, but seems to be silent. His silence indicates his support of patriarchal norms and values. David’s silence also opens the way for Absalom to pretend that he is vindicating justice for his sister Tamar. But in reality, Absalom’s behaviour is motivated by a desire for power – over his brother Amnon and his father David. This story also conveys the message about women (regardless of context) often being used as scapegoats to maintain male power and superiority. Consequently, women tend to internalise violence and powerlessness as norms they have to endure, for the sake of maintaining the stability of family and society. In many societies including Samoa, gender-based violence (which is used interchangeably with phrases such as domestic violence and violence against women) is a clear manifestation of deeply entrenched power inequalities between men and women.

In Tamar’s story we find a rape which combines elements of incest and violence against women. “In the Hebrew Bible … the concept of rape, without excluding psychological or social or political or emotional domination, of necessity includes the use of physical force/violence in compelling a woman to non-consensual sexual intercourse.”80 What is remarkable here is the narrator’s description of Amnon’s physical overpowering of Tamar: “And being stronger than her, he seized her and lay with her”(13:14).81 This description reveals both Amnon’s use of physical force in overpowering Tamar despite Tamar’s verbal attempts to resist Amnon’s shameful sexual advances. Amnon succeeded because

he was stronger than Tamar and did not listen to her voice.\(^8^2\) The narrator’s elaborate descriptions of Tamar’s explicit reaction after the rape (vv. 14-16: “and she went away, crying aloud as she went”) leave the reader without a doubt that a forced sexual encounter (rape) has taken place.\(^8^3\)

Despite Tamar’s expectation that Amnon would marry her (v. 16, cf. Ex 22:16; Deut 22:8), she was put away with contempt (vs. 15, 17-18) and immediately went into mourning. Tearing her long gown, which she was wearing as a virgin princess, was a sign of grief rather than lost virginity, as was putting ashes on her head and placing a hand on her head (cf. Jer 2:37). David, according to v. 21, was angry when he heard what had happened, “but he would not punish his son Amnon, because he loved him, for he was his firstborn.” David’s leniency probably incurred Absalom’s resentment, but he restrained himself for the time being (v. 22).

There is a conspiracy of men aiding and assisting the perpetrator of the crime (Jonadab and, inadvertently, David) and a male conspiracy of silence after the act (Absalom and David). Finally, there is a raw form of retribution in the end (Absalom), but this brutal act of revenge is done quite apart from the victim. All power to act or even to speak is taken away from Tamar by both her brothers and her father. In 2 Samuel 13:31, the father of all three of the principal characters in this drama, as well as all his servants, are seen to mourn, cry and weep “very bitterly” day after day, not for the victim, but for the rapist and the rapist’s brother.\(^8^4\) Patriarchal power structures make Tamar’s rape possible, and also guide both her and her family’s responses to it. As Esther Fuchs notes:

It could be argued, however, that were it not for the patriarchal order compelling the unmarried daughter and sister to obey her father and brothers, Tamar may never have gone to Amnon’s house in the first place. The real victimization of Tamar does not begin with her rape by Amnon but with David’s ordering her to go to Amnon’s house and prepare food for her would-be sick brother. Her victimization does not end with Absalom’s seemingly caring instructions for her to “be quiet.” For if Amnon robs Tamar of her virginity, Absalom robs her of her own voice. In many indirect ways the protection of the sister by her “good” brother is just as harmful as her abuse by her “bad” brother.\(^8^5\)

**BACKGROUND TO THE TEXT**

David’s silence as a father is revealed in his failure to discipline his son Amnon. This type of silence is a form of cover-up, or a deliberate act of sweeping a crime under the rug, hoping that it will go away. In truth it is a denial of justice. Amnon’s crime was a true reflection of David’s own selfhood. It is important to note that the silence of David led to Absalom’s silence and his attempt to silence Tamar. This was a form of silence that was released through physical retaliation and murder. This story also shows that the home that was supposed to provide love, protection and care for Tamar

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became a site of betrayal and violence. This story is therefore a reminder that violence against women in all contexts often happens within the home. Amnon, son of David and Ahinoam, fell in love with Tamar, full sister of Absalom, both children of David and Maacah.\(^{86}\) His desire for Tamar was so intense that it made him ill, and he had to resort to a form of trickery proposed by his cousin Jonadab (v. 3-5). Apparently, virgins were under close guard, and Amnon did not have access to Tamar (v. 3), but a request to David, when he visited the crown-prince, brought Tamar to him and he raped her. He did not listen to her pleading, in which she indicated the serious consequences for both of them; marriage between brother and half-sister appears to have been possible at this time (cf. Gen 20:12), although later such marriages were prohibited by law (Lev 18:9; 20:17; Deut 27:22). Amnon was obviously driven by will to power, not love, and his action was followed by an intense loathing of Tamar.

### Theological Reflection on the Text

When violence happens, we often ask “where is God?” The same question is raised by the story of Tamar. The fact is that, although God is always present, God gives us free will, and we can make bad decisions that lead to the violation of women and other vulnerable people. These bad decisions are often made by people to assert their power and control over others, often women and girls. Amnon, Jonadab, David and Absalom were obsessed with power, and this guided their actions. The consequences of their actions blinded them from focusing on God. This same self-centredness and desire for power is also present in our communities today. In the face of such temptations, our challenge as Christians is to uphold our Christian values of love, compassion and justice for all, so that all may have life.

### A Contextual Reflection

Although this story reflects realities in ancient Israel, it is also a story that is not so alien from our own society today. It reveals the realities which some people in our own communities encounter. The Ministry of Women Community and Social Development (MWCSD) Study underlines that:

> violence normally takes place at home when such roles and values are misunderstood and unappreciated. For instance, the husband may physically abuse his wife for disrespecting his mother. Generally, family members would endorse such an act and as a result it becomes a norm in the Samoan society. Such violent behaviour as stressed earlier is not linked to the Samoan culture. This is an illustration of power and control on behalf of the man to assert control over his wife.\(^{87}\)

Reading the story of Tamar brings to the surface several realities that can be found in Samoan communities today. It is a story that articulates the darker realities in the communities and churches to which we belong. Tamar was a “princess” who had “wisdom, courage and (ultimately unrelieved suffering),”\(^{88}\) yet her wisdom did not save

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86 Ibid.
her from being victimised and experiencing great shame. Likewise, Samoan women as victims of violence are also often made to feel ashamed and end up taking the blame for what happened to them.

The Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development (MWCSD) Study noted that incidents of violence against women have increased from 46% in 2000 to 60% in 2017. In Samoa, social attitudes tolerate the abuse of women in the home, and such abuse is common.90 The MWCSD Study also affirms the following as contributing factors to women’s violence: “disagreement over treatment of children (26%), husband not happy with wife’s behaviour towards his family (eg. looks down on them) (18%); respondent disobeying her partner (14%) and partner not satisfied with the wife’s performance within the family (12%).”90

The MWCSD presented this case study to highlight some of these factors contributing to domestic violence in Samoa:

Victim 2 is a 24 year old mother of two young daughters living with her husband’s family. She got married in the same year she graduated from high school. Her husband is a 28 year old mechanic. People living together in the husband’s family include his parents and four sisters who are also married with children. The husband goes to work and leaves the wife and children with his family. Emotional abuse by the mother-in-law and husband’s sisters started to emerge. They ganged up against her, calling her names and that she was not a good wife. Physical fights between her and the family became frequent. The husband too joined in and frequently bashed her with his fists. The husband was more loyal to his parents and sisters than to her. She was aware of the main cause of all this: that her husband’s family was disappointed that she knew about the incest case in the family. This involved the husband’s father whose current wife is actually his step-daughter. As is so common, incest and violence coexist and the experience of Victim 2 highlights the fact that what breeds family violence is often a mishmash of complex family and individual histories. She had to leave to be free from this vicious cycle of family violence.91

Considering the increasing incidences of violence against women (including incest), Samoan society is being called to acknowledge the reality before them and admit that domestic violence has become a normative aspect of everyday life in Samoa.92 Sadly, the most respected and powerful agent of transformation, the church, is all too often not only silent about domestic violence, but also takes part in it. It either protects perpetrators or downplays and turns a blind eye to the domestic violence occurring in its midst.93

As in ancient Israel, Samoan society is based on patriarchal norms and understandings of authority and power relations in the family and wider society. These norms at times justify violence against women.

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90 MWCSD, xviii.
93 Filemoni-Tofacono and Johnson discuss this reality in the context of various types of abuse occurring on the campus of an island theological school, all of which were minimised or ignored by those in authority. See Joan Filemoni-Tofecano and Lydia Johnson, Reweaving the Relational Mat: A Christian Response to Violence Against Women from Oceania (London: Equinox Press, 2006), Chapter 6, “The Praxis of Violence Against Women in the Oceanian Theological School Setting,” 124-138.
Furthermore, a patriarchal theology continues to shape Samoans’ interpretation of the Bible. A literal reading of biblical passages is still used to justify men’s dominance over women and their physical “discipline” of women and children. The Bible is not only taken out of context but used to buttress the imbalance of power between men and women.\textsuperscript{94} In the Samoan churches:

traditional patriarchal interpretations of the Bible have been and remain unquestioned. The uncritical imposition of this approach to biblical hermeneutics … is a contributing factor to the problem of violence against women… It is through the influence of this tradition that the inferior status of women has been reinforced.\textsuperscript{95}

**USING THE STORY OF TAMAR TO RAISE AWARENESS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

*In the small groups, ask a volunteer to read the following quotation, perhaps more than once:*

Tamar is someone whose story is still very modern. Tamar was sexually assaulted, not by a stranger, but by someone she knew. The violation took place not in a desolate remote place at the hands of a stranger, but by a member of her own family in his home. Tamar was exploited through one of her most vulnerable traits – her kindness, her culturally instilled obedience and her upbringing to take care of the other. Tamar said ‘No’ and her ‘No’ was not respected. When Tamar sought help she was told to hush it up. The process for achieving justice and restitution was taken out of her hands entirely and carried forward by her brother. No other women are even recorded in this story as having a voice or a role in coming to Tamar’s aid. It became men’s business; and in the end, it was Tamar’s perpetrator for whom her father mourned, not for her. In fact, the end of Tamar’s story happens without her.\textsuperscript{96}

**Discuss the questions below that arise from the quote:**

1. How common is it for women in our communities to experience violence from men they know?
2. Like Tamar, Samoan women are also imbued with a culture of obedience; how would this make them vulnerable to being exploited by men?
3. Tamar was not allowed to resist, was silenced, and that any revenge was placed in the hands of her brother. How might this relate to the sister-brother covenant in Samoa as explained in the quote below?
4. Do brothers seek to protect their sisters from gender violence?
5. Would they, like Absalom, take it upon themselves to seek vengeance (or justice) on behalf of their sisters?
6. Is this something to be encouraged, or does it only serve to silence sisters, rather than giving them agency to seek their own justice?

*Ask the reporter for each small group to share the group’s responses for the whole group. The facilitator should then summarise all responses from the small groups on a whiteboard or newsprint.*

\textsuperscript{94} Mercy Ah Siu-Maliko, “Public Theology, Core Values, and Domestic Violence in Samoan Society” (Phd thesis: University of Otago, Dunedin, 2015), 292-3.

\textsuperscript{95} Filemoni-Tofaeono and Johnson, *Reweaving the Relational Mat*, 96.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

[If there is time, the whole group can reflect on these questions. If not, participants can be encouraged to reflect on their own after they have left the session.]

1. Are there examples you have observed in your community that remind you of the story of Tamar?

2. What are the most common forms of violence against women in your community?

3. What are the contributing factors to women being violated in your community?

4. What forms of transformation are needed in your church to better address the problem of violence against women?

5. What do you think the expression “the end of Tamar’s story happens without her” means, and how does it relate to stories of violence against women in your community?

FROM AWARENESS TO ACTION

From the awareness they have gained through this discussion group, participants are invited to identify concrete actions they may take to address gender based violence against women within their churches, families and local communities. They may move toward reviving the importance of values of respect, love and justice to assist women who are victims of domestic violence, and also to help men and others who are perpetrators of violence. Pastors are also encouraged to offer a series of Bible studies for parishioners in their community, and to continually preach and dialogue on the urgent need to transform human relationships for the wellbeing of all people.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND FURTHER READING


LIUA IA FA’APEI O KERISO

2 KORINITO 3: 7-18

FOLASAGA: Fa’amatala le fa’asologa: fausia se si’omaga saogalemu, fa’atāũa le fa’aaloalo, fa’atuatuaina, ma ia sa’oloto tagata uma fa’asoā.

FAITAU LE TALA IA FA’APEI O SE TALANOAGA (NRSV)

Ia tofu le tagata ma lana fuaiupu e faitau mai le tusi faitau.

7. A e afai sa fa’aapei le mamalu o le sauniga na oo mai ai le oti, na togia ai i mata’ittus i ma’a, ua le mafai ai le fanauga a Isaraelu ona pulato’a atu i sofoga o Mose, o le pupula lea e fa’automia;
8. e le matuā sili ea le mamalu o le sauniga ua o’o mai ai le Agaga?
9. Auā afai sa mamalu le sauniga na o’o mai ai le fa’asala, e matuā sili lava ona mamalu le sauniga ua o’o mai ai le amiotonu.
10. Auā foi o le mea na mamalu e leai sona mamalu i lenei mea, ona o le mamalu e silisili cse.
11. Afai fo’i sa mamalu le mea e fa’automia, e matuā sili le mamalu o le mea e tūmau.
12. O lenei, ona ua ia te i matou o lenei fa’amoemoe, matou te matuā fa’aalitino;
13. a e pei o Mose, na tu’u e ia le ufuifi i ona sofoga, ina ia le mafai ona pulato’a ai o le fanauga a Isaraelu i le iuga o le mea ua fa’automia;
14. a e peita’i sa fa’atausoina o latou manatu; auā ua oo mai i nei ona po o tūmau pea lea lava ufuifi pe a faitauina le feagaiga tua, e lei fa’ailoa ua fa’automia lea talu Keriso.
15. A ua oo i nei ona po, o lo’o iai lava le ufuifi i o latou loto pe a faitauina Mose.
16. A e peita’i pe a liliu i le Ali’i, ona aveescina ai lea o le ufuifi.
17. O le Ali’i foi o le Agaga ia; o le mea o iai le Agaga o le Ali’i, o iai le saolotoga.
18. A o i tatou uma, o lo’o va’avaai i tatou uma i le pupula o le Ali’i e peisea’i o i ai se fa’ata ma o tatou mata, e le ufitia, ua liua ai i tatou ua foliga i ai na le pupula e o’o i le pupula, fa’apei ona mai le Ali’i le Agaga.

ULUA’I FAITAUINA O LE TALA

Tu’u se avanoa e mafau fa’ao le fesi i lo’o i tala. Fa’atalanoa fesi nei i ni vaega to’aiiti ona tu’uina a lea o ripoti i le vaitele. Tsa tu’uina a le fosi i le ta’ita’i fa’amatalaga uma ma tu’a ele’ele o le tusi.

(1) O a ni upu poo ni va’aiga o lo’o mafai ona aliali manino mai le tala sa faitauina?
(2) O le a sou lagona i le uiga o le tala? O le a se fe’au tāua?
(3) O le a tonu lava le ‘ese’esega o Mose ma Jesu i le tala?
AOTELEGA O LE TALA

O le tala lenei o lo’o fa’atatau i le liua. O lo’o taumaфаo Paulo e sosо o ma fa’atusatusa le sofuа fa’atautua ma le galuega a Mose (i le Feagaiga Tuai) ma le fa’atautua o le ‘au-kerisiano ma le Galuega (o le Feagaiga Fou) i le ulua’i senetur i Korinito. O le va’ai a Paulo e ‘esеsе ‘sina mamalu’ o lo’o tau’ave e Mose, e pei o le uiga o le ufiufi e ufi aи ona mata mai le malamalama o le mamalu o le Atua, ma le ‘mamalu (e leai se ufiufi) tele’ o Keriso. I le manatu o Paulo, e sili atu le galuega i le Feagaiga Fou nau lo Mose. O le galuega a Mose i le Feagaiga Tuai o lo’o fa’amatalaina ai e fa’apeа ua na o ia lava o sе auala ai le mamalu o le Atua. A o le galuega a le Agaga e ala i le Feagaiga Fou ua sili atu lona mamalu, ma e mafai ona fa’apeа o foliga iа o le ekaiesia Kerisiano i le lumana’i. Fai mai Paulo, “O lenei, ona ua ia te i matou o lenei fa’aamoemoe, matou te matuа fa’aalitiino” (3:12).

E iai le fesoasoani a George Guthrie e uiga i le tala lenei, e pei ona ia tа’ua e lua vaega o fausia ai pо ‘gaiоiga’ o le tala lenei: 3:7-11 ma le 3:12-18.97 O le vaega muamua, e fa’atauai le ‘aутu lenei o le ‘mamalu’, o se ‘aутu e fa’avae mai le tusi o Esoto 34:29-35. O le fa’aaoaiga o le ‘sina ma le teле’, e mafui le manatu o Paulo i le mamalu tele i le Feagaiga Fou. I le gioaiga lona lua, o lo’o fa’atauai le 3:12-18 i le va o tagata o ufiufi o latou mata ma le ‘leiа se ufiufi, o lo’o fa’aaoaiga e fa’a’esе ai le ufiufi i foliga o Mose ma le ‘e ufiufi i e mulimuli ia Keriso. O lo’o fa’aaoaiga i le tala le ufiufi o mata fa’amatala ai se ‘olo o lo’o tu i le va o e mulimuli ia Jesu ma le mamalu o le Atua, o mea ia o lo’o a’afia ai le fa’atinoga o le galuega. O fuaiupu e 3:12-13a o lo’o fa’aauau ai pea ona та’ua le ‘esеsеga o le ufiufi o Mose ma le leai o se ufiufi o le galuega o lo’o та’ua e Paulo i tagata kerisiano i Korinito. I le 3:14-16, o lo’o fa’ialoa ai e Paulo i latou o lo’o ‘uфiufi mata fa’alexaga’ o le loto ma i latou le’e ufiufi mata o le loto iа Keriso.

O gaiоiga nei e lua i le tala o lo’o “tu’uфa’atasia i se auala ina ia tagia ai le tala atoa i le 3:7-18 mai le se’esе mai leа i le taula o le ‘mamalu’ sa i foliga o Mose, i le mamalu uiga’esе i foliga o i latou lo’o i lalo o le ‘feagaiga Fou.”98 Aemaise lava i le 3:6-13, o ‘esеsеga nei i le ‘mamalu’ po’o le atagia o le malamalama o le Atua e mafua ona ‘esеsе galuega a le Feagaui Tuai ma le Feagaiga Fou. O lo’o fa’atusatusa foi e Guthrie e se isу auala:99

Galuega i le Feagaiga Tuai

Galuega a le Tulafono e fa’siотi (3:6, 7) Galuega o le fa’asala (3:9)
O se galuega o lo’o ufiufi (3:13)

Galuega i le Feagaiga Fou

Galuega a le Agaga o le ola (3:6, 8) Galuega a le amiotonu (3:9)
Galuega e fa’atino i le malamalama (3:12)

O le veape katageо (καταργέω - katargeо) – ‘faia e aunoa ma se po’o se fa’atinoa e lе ‘aуга’ – e fa’aаа оna та’ua i le tala (3:7, 11, 13-14), “e fa’aluа i le gaiоiga muamua o le tala, e lagolago ai le ‘aутu o le ‘mamalu tele i le galuega a le feagaiga fou (3:7-11), ae fa’aluа i le gaiоiga lona lua, e lagolago ai le galuega e sili ona faia ma le sa’oloto i le feagaiga fou (3:12-18).”100 I le vaega muamua, o lo’o fa’aaoaiga ai e Paulo ni upu e fa’amatalaina ai le mea na tupu i foliga o Mose (3:7, 11). I le vaega lua, o lo’o fa’amatalaina ai le mea na tupu i tagata

98 Ibid., 44.
99 Ibid.
100 Ibid.
Isaraelu o ē na maā’a pea o latou manatu. (3:13-14), e fa’apena ni mea na tutupu ia i latou o ē o lo’o “ufuifi le loto” i lona taimi (3:14-15) ma “liliu i le Ali’i” (3:17). Se’i vaganā ua ‘ave ‘ese le ufuifi fā’ato’a mafai ona iloa ma malamalama mea uma ma le uiuga moni o le ola o le Feagaiga Fou.

O lo’o matuā manino le manatu lenei i le 3:16-17: e na’o le Agaga Paia na te aumaia le fa’asa’olotoga moni o le agaga. “A liliu se tasi i le Ali’i, ua ‘ave’esea le ufuifi [tauso]. Talu ai o le Ali’i o le Agaga, ma o le mea e iai le Agaga o le Ali’i, o iai foi le sa’olotoga.”

O le Agaga na te aumaia le fa’apupulaina, fa’aaliga ma le fa’amalosi’au. E ui lava e ‘ese’esе lеs u ma le Agaga Paia, peita’i le i le tala lenei le “matuā manino e tasi lava lа’uа, аuа o le Agaga Pa’a o le ola leа o le Kerisо toctu ua tu’uiна аtu i тагата talitonu ма tумаi i i totonu ia i latou.”

O le fuaiupu e 18 leа e fa’amateai le та’i ona o lo’o fa’amataina ai uiga o Kerisо o lo’o fausia i totonu ia i тато. A тато vaa’va’ai i le mamalu o le Аtuа e fa’apeci ona тато vа’ai i le fā’ata, ma o тато foliga e leа se ufuifi, ua feluia’ina i тато iа fa’apeа o Kerisо ma ua саunia lе o galуe. O leеni liua о se faiga e fa’aauau маlіe pea se’ia tаunu’i i le ola fa’amamаіίна, ‘ма le mamalu le le mamalu’. Ma o se аuа o le suiga “ма le Ali’i, o Iа o le Agaga” (3:18).

TUĀ%ELE’ELE O LE TALA

E тусі le тусі lоna lуа a Paulo i le еkаlesia i Korinито, o lo’o фегаи ma “se itu’aiga ekelesia e fa’aaliali aganу’u, ma o lаnа vailа’au o le matuа tаumаfai e fa’aaliali pei o le ata manino le моni o le еkаlesia, le mamunu o le ola e tatau ona soifua аi аemaiise o lаnа galуega molimuа.”

О i latou o lo’о i le isи itu’i-malec (o le ‘au fa’alialiа’) o i latou iа o fa’ia’ога тeтe’e i Korinито e na’о ni ‘Kerisiano’ i le та’u, ае fa’атино a latou galуega i lalo o ta’ita’iga ma аgа таusii i аlеnа le ulua’i senetуri. O le мата’у’упу tonu leа o lo’o таlаnoа iа iа Paulo i le 2 Korinито, poo le a lаvа o latou ‘томai’ i le va-tagата (10:10; 11:6) ма lo latou manatu о i latou o ‘au’auna a Kerisо (11:23), о lo latou tofi fa’ia’оga уа fа o se таuvaga ma foliga маi аi е еle Kerisо ma se isи talalelei leа le таlа’iіна; е еle le аgaga e molimuа аi (11:4). О le agaga tonu leа на alа iа ona fa’ааогаia a Paulo la тато тусі, 2 Korinито 3:7-18 о le fаfugu mo Kerisiano i Korinито inа моni le galуe - о se mamunu mo ta’ita’i о lo’o fa’avaeina i le ‘mamalu’ e leа se ufiufа i таlа iа fa’aaogаia mo Kerisо на lo fa’ia’оga таuфа’aсеsе e “fa’аве i agаnu’u lo latou Iоla,” о ituaiga mamalu sesē ia.

I luma atu о le 2 Korinито, na útia ai Paulo ona о ta’ita’i о le isи itu’i-malec, fa’атаsi ai ma Kerisiano mai Korinито ona о lo latou lе mаlamala e fa’amаutinoa lаnа galуega (11:5, 11; 12:11). I le Mata’upu и 12, iа ia fa’anоanoа ona о le fе’еsе’esеа’iga ма le таutаvа о le еkаlesia i Korinито ona o lea iа на latupu, ma ua i’u аи ina “fе’upuа’i, fa’аfuаfuа, itа, manatu fa’апito, fa’alu마luma, muimui, fa’amuаuluga, ma fa’ama’ia” (12:20). Е le о le manatu о Paulo iа laугаtаsa le еkаlesia. I luma atu i le 1 Korinито 12:12-27, на ia fatаuiaina ai vaega

103 Guthrie, “Kоtupууко and the People of the Shining Face,” 42.
104 See Bruce W. Winter, After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001).
‘ese’ese o le ekalesia. E ui o lea, na ia tatalo i le ekalesia ina ia mafaufau ia “tusa ma Keriso Iesu” (Roma 15:5) – ina ia maua le “manatu o Keriso” (Filipi 2:5-11). O le ala lea, ole’a mafai ai ona maua le felu’ina e ala i le galuega a le Agaga ma i’u ai i galuega o le filēmū, ‘olī’oli, ma le alofa. “O le upu fa’ai’u a Paulo i le 2 Korinito e le o se talosaga i le ekalesia, a’o le fa’amālosi’a’u mo tagata Korinito ina ia fai ma foafoaga fou e pei ona fa’aa’upega’ina ai latou e le Agaga.”

O lea fa’amālosi’a’u e iai ona a‘afiaga e mulimuli mai mo le galuega.

MAFAUFAUGA FA’AMATĀ’UPU SILISILI I LE TALA

I se va’ai fa’amatā’upu silisili, o le tusi lona lua a Paulo ia Korinito o se vala’au ia fa’amuriina i le Agaga, ma ia ogātotonu Keriso i le galuega. “O le avea o se ‘au’auna e galue i lalo o le alofa tūnoa i le feagaiga fou lona uiga ua tatou tatala atu le avanoa, o le mafuta lea ma le Ali’i ma i si e ‘auona ma se ufimata,’ ma tatou fa’ai’o atu ma le mautunoa e mafai ona foi latou maua lea ituaiga mafutaga. E mafai ona latou iloa le auai o le Atua soifua ma e suia fo’i o latou lagona ona o le talalele, ma e feso’ota’i mai ai i i tatou le Atua i le mamalu silisili’e se fa’a-le-Atua.”

O se mātā’upu tā‘u a tele mo i latou o lo’o galu’u i le galuega tala’i le auala o le toe felu’ina i le lē pei o ta’ita’i i le malamalama’aga i lona uiga fa’aleaganu’u – se ‘ta’ita’iga e fa’avae i faiga fa’aleaganu’u.’ Latou te le mulimulita’i i le ‘atamai tā‘ofiofimamau’ e uiga i ta’ita’i, e fa’a’pe i le lenei, o ta’ita’i o i latou e ‘pulea i le malosi’ isī tagata, poot se tagata laulaulo e fai ma ta’ita’i ona o o latou ituaiga tagata, poot le fa’a’pea fo i latou e i ai o latou feso’ota’iga fa’apitoa i le Atua. O ta’ita’i o le Feagaiga Fou e ola ia pei lava o Keriso e ala i le mauainia ma le talaiaina o le malamalama, poto, alofa mutumutivale o le Agaga o Keriso.

O le tala lenei o lo’o fafagu mai ai ni fesili taua mo Tagata Kerisiano o le Vasatele, ae patino lava ia Samoa. O lo’o aga’i tomu le matā’upu lenei e fa’atatau i fa’af’au’u ma ta’ita’i o le ekalesia ua si’itia atu o latou tulaga i tofīga. O le malosi, pule, ma le tamā’o’aiga e feso’ota’i i le avea ma fa’af’au uai fai ma ala e tosina ai ali’i e avea ma fa’af’au. E tā‘u a levea ai na’o ali’i ma fa’af’au e o ekalesia e Samoa. A ua avea lea ma auala e fa’atatuiana’i ai le talotonga fa’aleaganu’u e na’o ali’i e fetau mai le tofī fa’af’au, e ui lava o lo’o iai le sa’olotoga i tama’ita’i Samoa e avea ai ma ta’ita’i i i i fo’i fa’alāpotopotoga i Samoa, o e o’o lava i suafa māta, pei’a i le upu moni e to’atele atu māta ali’i nai lo mātai tama’ita’i.

Ona o le itū e pei ona tā‘u a ua tatau ai ona tatou fesili ifo i se fesili tā‘u: “I fa’a’pea e mafai ona felu’ina tagata Kerisiano uma e le mamalu o le Atua, e pei ona fa’ai’o mai e le Agaga Paia e ala ia Iesu Keriso, ma fa’ai lea felu’ina e o e’o atu i le galuega molimapua i le ekalesia, o le ā se lua iai i le itūpō o tinā (fa’a’pea ma tamā) i Samoa ma fa’alāpotopotoga a tagata Pasifika?”

107 Guthrie, “Koropypo and the People of the Shining Face,” 56.
FA’AAOGAINA O ‘AUTŪ MAI LE TALA INA IA FA’ALAUOLOA AI SAUAGA FA’ASAGA I TINĀ MA TAMA’ITA’I (GBVAV)

O le olaga fa’a-Feagaiga Tuai e mafai ona fa’amālamalamaaina o se olaga e ave le fa’amamafa i ana tu ma aga, ma le fa’aupega o mea ua masani mai ai. E le’o mafai ona fesiligia le talitonuga o le ekalesia, i le lē amana’aina o tinā ma tama’ita’i. O le ituiaiga mamanu lea e tā’ua o le ‘poto e lē fetalaa’i.’ O le poto lē fetalaa’i i le tele o a tatou ‘aulotu i aso nei e manatu o ali’i lava ia e fai ma ta’ita’i a’o tina lava ia o le gaua’i, usita’i ma tu ma tia. O le isi lenei mea ua fai ma sao i le sauāina o tinā ma tama’ita’i o le ‘pau lava o le mea ua masani ai.’ O le olaga i le Feagaiga Fou, e ese, o se olaga o le sa’olotoga mo tagata uma i le Agaga. O le soifuaga mo i tatou ua mulimuli ia Keriso ina ia fa’atāa’u le ‘poto na te felua’ina,’ poto na te tūlei esea mai i tatou mai le manatou o mea lava ua mea masani mai ai. O le soifuaga i le Feagaiga Fou, e mafai ona feliu’ina ai tagata uma. O le ā le uiga o lenei mea mo tina ma tama’ita’i, aemaise i tinā ma tama’ita’i o lo’o fa’alupega mane,
ona o ali’i.

O le isi toe fa’a’upuina o le fesili: A fa’a’apea e ufimataina pea ali’i i a tatou ekalesia, ma ‘pule ai lava i tina,’ e fa’a’apefa ona avea lea ma ala e afaina ai le galuega molimau a le ekalesia ina ia o’o i ona o’o’o’oga ina ia fū’ua le fa’a’ātoatoa o le sauāina o tinā ma tama’ita’i a’o tatou fa’alāpotopotoga? O le tala sa ilioiloina mai le 2 Korinito o lo’o manino ai le ‘ese’esega i le va o i latou o lo’o ‘ufimata’ (ua le mafai ona va’u i le feliu’ina ʻātoatoa i le malalamalama ma le mana o le Agaga o Keriso) ma i latou e ‘lei ni ufimata’ (ma ua mafai ona fātū’ina ma tapenaaina mo le galuega ona o lo latou ola ua fa’a-Feagaiga Fouina). O le fa’u a le Aposetolo o Paulo mo TAGATA UMA o mulimuli ia Keriso ina ia tu’u ‘esc ufimata uma o lo’o punitia ai tatou mai le olaina o le olaga o le Feagaiga Fou. O le a le uiga o lenei mea mo le galuega molimau mo i latou fa’egai mai sauaga? O le fesili lenei o lo’o fa’avae mai le agaga o fesili o lo’o tā’ua i lalo.

FESILI MO NISI FEFA’ASOOAA’IGA

1. E fa’a’apefa ona avea tina ma tama’ita’i o ni ‘tagatanu’u lona-lua’ iā tatou ekalesia e fai ma auala e fa’atupula’ai ai mea o tutupu e uiga i le sauāina o tinā ona o lo latou kenera, pe Samoa poo se Tagata Pasefika fō’i.

2. Afa’i e tāofiofi lava tofi mo le ‘galuega’ ma ‘ta’ita’i’ o le ekalesia ia na’o ali’i, o lona uiga ea o le galuega ma le ta’ita’iga e lē mafai ona fa’ati no e tinā ma tama’ita’i? E lē ua taofia ai e tinā ma tama’ita’i mai le fa’a’ātoatoaaina o le ‘mamalu’ pe a ‘ave ‘ese le ufimata’ o le ola lea i le Feagaiga Fou?

3. Afa’i ua vala’auina Kerisiano uma ina ia liua i le mamalu o Keriso, o le ā se taua o lea fe’au i le galuega a le ekalesia mo le tausiga o tina mo tama’ita’i o lo’o a’afia i sauaga e mafua ona o latou o tinā ma tama’ita’i? E fa’a’apefa ona molimau a tatou ekalesia i tagata ua sauāina fa’ata’asai ma e sauā?

Fa’atalanoa fesili o i luga i ni vaega to’a’itiiti. Talosagaina se sui mai vaega to’a’itiiti ta’iti aitasi latou te saunia mai ripoti pe a tauaofia fa’a’atasai. E mafai ona fa’a’aogaina se gaioiga/ata pu’upu’u, pese, poo se isi lava auala mai vaega e fa’a’ailoa mai ai la latou ripoti. Ia tusia e le ta’ita’i aotelega o manatu fa’aalia i se laupapa poo ni nusipepa ua tu’uina mai
MAI LE ILOA I LE FA’ATINOGA

Fau se tala ina ia mafai ona fa’atino i totonu o aulotu/ekalesia ta’itasi e fa’ailoa ai le ‘ese’esega o le olaga i le Feagaiga Tuai ma le Feagaiga Fou. E mafai ona fa’ailoaina lenei va’aiga i le fa’aagogaina lea o le ata o le ufimata (e ufiufi ai) ma ‘ave’esefi le ufimata.’

Ia vaevacina i latou o fa’atinoina le tala i le ‘au-ufimata’ ma le ‘lē ‘ufimata’ ma fa’afeso’ota’i a latou tāaga i le fa’affāuli o le sauāina o tinā ma le tali a le ekalesia i lenei fa’affāuli. Amata i se va’aiga e fa’ailoa ai le tinā o lo’o ūgā ma puapuagā ma ua fai si umi o feaga i ma sauaga, ma o lē o lo’o sauāina o ia o lona lava to’alua poo lana pā’aga o se ta’ita’i i le ekalesia. E fa’apefea ona fa’aogāina le ufimata o i latou o fa’atinoina e tali atu ai i tulaga fa’apenei? Ae fa’apefea se tali a i latou e ‘le’o ufiina mata’?

A māe’a le tala fa’atino, ona fa’a lea o se talanoa ma i latou uma o lo’o auai, ia ‘autū poo le ā se aualā sili e molimauina ai e o tatou tagatalotu le olaga suia i le Feagaiga Fou, e pei ona tutusa le alofa o le Atua i tagata uma ma le vala’au a Keriso ina ia olaaina le ola alofa, mutimuivala ma le fai meatonu.
7. Now if the ministry of death, chiselled in letters on stone tablets, came in glory so that the people of Israel could not gaze at Moses' face because of the glory of his face, a glory now set aside,

8. how much more will the ministry of the Spirit come in glory?

9. For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, much more does the ministry of justification abound in glory!

10. Indeed, what once had glory has lost its glory because of the greater glory;

11. for if what was set aside came through glory, much more has the permanent come in glory!

12. Since, then, we have such a hope, we act with great boldness,

13. not like Moses, who put a veil over his face to keep the people of Israel from gazing at the end of the glory that was being set aside.

14. But their minds were hardened. Indeed, to this very day, when they hear the reading of the old covenant, that same veil is still there, since only in Christ is it set aside.

15. Indeed, to this very day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds;

16. but when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed.

17. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

18. And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.

Allow time to reflect on the initial questions below. Discuss these questions in small groups and then report back briefly to the large group. The facilitator will then provide explanatory and background material.

1. What words or images stand out as you look back over the passage?

2. What do you think this passage is about? What is its core theme?

3. What is the main difference between Moses and Christ in the passage?
SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

This passage is about transformation. Paul is making a connection and a comparison between the faithful life and ministry of Moses (the Old Covenant) and the Christian life of faith and ministry (the New Covenant) in first-century Corinth. Paul contrasts the ‘lesser glory’ associated with Moses, who had to place a veil over his face to cover up the light of God’s glory, with the ‘greater (unveiled) glory’ of Christ. Paul is arguing that the ministry of the New Covenant exceeds that of Moses. Moses’ ministry in ushering in the Old Covenant was indeed an expression of the glory of God. But the ministry of the Spirit through the New Covenant is even more glorious, and that leads to great expectations for the future of the Christian church. Paul says, “Since, then, we have such a hope, we act with great boldness” (3:12).

George Guthrie’s commentary on this passage is helpful, as he notes that the passage consists of two sections or ‘movements’: 3:7-11 and 3:12-18. The first focuses on the theme of glory, a theme taken from Exodus 34:29-35. Using a ‘lesser to greater’ argument, Paul argues for the greater glory of the New Covenant. In the second movement, 3:12-18 deals with veiled vs. unveiled people, contrasting the veiled Moses with the unveiled followers of Christ. Here the ‘veil’ represents a barrier standing between Jesus’ followers and the glory of God, which has implications for the practice of ministry. 3:12-13a contrasts the repeated veiling of Moses with the ‘unveiled’ ministry to which Paul is calling the Christians of Corinth. In 3:14-16, Paul contrasts those who have ‘spiritually veiled’ hearts with those whose hearts are unveiled by Christ.

These two movements in the passage “combine in such a way that the whole of 3:7-18 moves from a focus on the glory on Moses’ face, to the superabundant glory on the faces of all those under the new covenant.” Especially in 3:6-13, these differences in ‘glory’ or the reflected light of God are contrasted in terms of Old Covenant vs. New Covenant ministries. Guthrie compares them in this way:

Old Covenant Ministry
Ministry of the Law that kills (3:6, 7)
Ministry of condemnation (3:9)
A veiled ministry (3:13)

New Covenant Ministry
Ministry of the Spirit who gives life (3:6, 8)
Ministry of righteousness (3:9)
Ministry conducted with openness (3:12)

The verb καταργέω (katargeō) – ‘to do away with or render useless’ – appears four times in the passage (3:7, 11, 13-14), “twice in the first movement of the passage, supporting the theme of the greater glory of new covenant ministry (3:7-11), and twice in the second movement, supporting the topic of the greater confidence of new covenant ministry (3:12-18).” In the first section, Paul uses the term to describe what happened to the glory on Moses’ face (3:7, 11). In the second, he is speaking of what happened to the Israelites whose minds were hardened (3:13-14), as well as what happens to the “veiled hearted” person in his day (3:14-15) who “turns to the Lord” (3:17). It is only when the veil is removed or let go of that one can fully be exposed to what New Covenant life is all about.

3:16-17 in fact makes this point clearly: that spiritual freedom only comes through the Holy Spirit. “When when one turns to the

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109 Ibid., 44.
110 Ibid.
111 Ibid.
Lord, the veil [of blindness] is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”

The Spirit brings enlightenment, revelation and empowerment. Although Jesus and the Spirit are not one and the same, in this passage “dynamically they are one, since it is by the Spirit that the life of the risen Christ is imparted to believers and maintained within them.”

Verse 18 ends the passage by describing the process of Christ’s character being formed in us. As we see God’s glory as though reflected in a mirror, with our faces unveiled, we are transformed into Christ’s likeness and empowered for ministry. This transformation is a gradual process of sanctification, ‘from glory to glory.’ And the agent of change is “the Lord, who is the Spirit” (3:18).

BACKGROUND TO THE TEXT

In Paul’s 2nd letter to the Corinthian church, he was dealing with “a form of celebrity culture, and for his antidote he presents a crystal-clear picture of authentic ministry, embodied in his own pattern of life and mission.” His opponents (the ‘celebrities’) were the renegade teachers in Corinth who were ‘Christian’ only on the surface, carrying out their ministries under the influence of first-century Greek values. Paul is making the case in 2 Corinthians that, despite all their ‘skills’ in public speaking (10:10; 11:6) and their claims to be ministers of Christ (11:23), these competing teachers were actually preaching a different Jesus and a different gospel; they were ministering by a different spirit (11:4). It is in the light of this problem that Paul uses our passage in 2 Corinthians 3:7-18 to call the Christians in Corinth to true ministry – a pattern of leadership grounded in the unveiled ‘glory’ centered in the Spirit rather than in the false teachers’ “culturally-conditioned understanding of leadership,” which is a false kind of glory.

Earlier in 2 Corinthians, Paul had already been stung by these opposing leaders, and by the Corinthian Christians’ failure to affirm his own ministry (11:5, 11; 12:11). By Chapter 12, he was bemoaning the division and competitiveness in the church at Corinth that was the result of this situation, which had resulted in “quarreling, jealousy, anger, selfishness, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder” (12:20). It was not that Paul was calling for uniformity in the church. Back in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, he had commended the diversity of the congregation. Rather, he was appealing for the congregation to think “according to Christ Jesus” (Romans 15:5) – to have the “mind of Christ” (Philippians 2:5-11). In this way, the Spirit’s transformative work would result in ministries of peace, joy and love. “Paul’s closing in 2 Corinthians is not simply an appeal for the church to get along, it is an exhortation for the Corinthians to be the new creation that the Spirit is equipping them to be.”


114 Guthrie, “Kataqyéso and the People of the Shining Face,” 42.


THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON THE TEXT

Theologically, Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians is a call to Spirit-infused, Christ-centred ministry. “To be a minister living under the grace of new covenant ministry means that we have an open, ‘unveiled’ relationship with the Lord and with others, and we confidently proclaim that others can have this relationship as well. They can know the presence of the living God and be transformed on the basis of the gospel, which communicates to us God in all of God’s glorious goodness.”

An important point is that those who engage in ministry in this transformed way are not leaders in the worldly definition of leadership – a ‘culturally conditioned understanding of leadership.’ They do not follow the ‘conventional wisdom’ about leaders, namely that leaders are those who practice ‘power over’ others, or celebrity figures who lead because of their charisma, or even because of their claim to have special access to God. New Covenant leaders grow into the likeness of Christ by receiving and accepting the light, wisdom and compassion of the Spirit of Christ.

A CONTEXTUAL REFLECTION

This passage raises important questions for Christians in Oceanian communities, focusing particularly on the Samoan context. This is a context in which church ministers and church leaders have been historically elevated to the most prestigious positions in society. The power, authority and material wellbeing associated with being a fai‘ēau (pastor) have created a great drawing card for men to become church ministers. It is very relevant that clergy in Samoa are all men. This has led to the taken-for-granted cultural assumption that only males are suitable to be pastors, even though Samoan women have some leeway to be leaders in various other sectors of Samoan life, and even to become matai (chiefs), although in reality there are far more male chiefs than female chiefs.

This social reality leads us to ask this crucial question: “If all Christians can experience and be transformed by God’s glory, revealed by the Holy Spirit through the person of Jesus Christ, and if this transformation is meant to result in ministry, what should this mean for the ministries of women (as well as men) in Samoan and Pacific Islands communities?”

USING THE THEMES IN THE TEXT TO RAISE AWARENESS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (GBVWA)

Life in the Old Covenant can be understood today as a lifestyle that places considerable weight on the traditions, customs and habits of the status quo. It does not question the accepted view of ministry, from which women are excluded. These patterns are known as ‘conventional wisdom.’ Conventional wisdom in many of our churches today assumes that men should be leaders and that women should be submissive, obedient and in the background. This has contributed to an acceptance of violence against women as ‘just the way things are.’ Life in the New Covenant, in contrast, is a life of freedom for all in the Spirit. This is a life in which we as Christ’s followers embrace ‘transformational wisdom,’ wisdom that jolts us out of our conventional view of the way things are. In New Covenant life, everyone can be transformed. What does this mean for women, especially women who have experienced violence from men?

118 Guthrie, “Korapēko and the People of the Shining Face,” 56.
Another way of posing this question is: *If only men assume the mantle of ministry in our churches, such that they have ‘power over’ women, how might this affect the church’s ability to minister effectively to the problem of violence against women in our communities?* The passage we have studied from 2 Corinthians makes a clear distinction between those who are ‘veiled’ (and therefore are unable to see the full transforming light and power of Christ’s spirit) and those who are ‘unveiled’ (and are thus able to embrace and be empowered for ministry because of their New Covenant life). The Apostle Paul is calling on ALL followers of Christ to take off every ‘veil’ that prevents us from living this New Covenant life. *What should this mean for our ministry to those affected by violence against women?* This question will be fleshed out by posing key questions in the following section.

## QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

1. How is the fact the women are ‘second-class citizens’ in our churches relevant in the face of the rampant incidence of gender-based violence against women, whether in Samoa or in other Pacific Islands contexts?

2. If ‘ministry’ and ‘leadership’ in the church are restricted to males only, does this imply that such ministry and leadership cannot be envisioned in the faces of women? Are they being denied the full ‘glory’ of the ‘unveiled’ New Covenant life?

3. If all Christians are called to a transformed life in the glory of Christ, what does this suggest about the church’s ministry of care for women who are the victims of gender-based violence? How should our churches be ministering to both the victims and the perpetrators of such violence?

Discuss these questions in small groups. Ask the reporter for each small group to share the group’s responses for the whole group. This can be communicated through a role play, song, visual art, or any other method chosen by the group. The facilitator will summarise the responses on whiteboard or newsprint.

## FROM AWARENESS TO ACTION

Create a drama to be shown in local churches that contrasts life in the Old Covenant with life in the New Covenant. This can be portrayed visually through using the images of being ‘veiled’ (covered up) and ‘unveiled.’ Divide the cast into the ‘veiled’ and the ‘unveiled’ and relate their actions to the problem of violence against women and the church’s response to this problem. Begin with a scene that demonstrates the pain and agony of a woman who has experienced this violence, and whose abusive husband or partner is a leader in the church. How do the ‘veiled’ characters respond to their situation? How do the ‘unveiled’ characters respond?

Following presentations of the drama, hold discussions with those present, focusing on how all members of our churches can be better witnesses to the transformed life in the New Covenant, in which everyone is equally loved by God and called by Jesus to live out a life of love, compassion and justice.
BIBLIOGRAPHY AND FURTHER READING


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Other Works by the Author


