

FROM TRADITION TO GOD:  
A QUALITATIVE STUDY TOWARDS REDEVELOPING  
THE SPIRITUALITY OF SAMOAN YOUTH

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by

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## DEDICATION

In the Memory of a  
Very Special Young Man

And Dedicated  
To my brother  
**Norman Otele Pala'amo**  
(25<sup>th</sup> February 1981- 4<sup>th</sup> February 2008)

Whose life touched so many  
In unique and special ways,  
With a constant smile  
That would lead your worries away;  
An empty wheelchair that reminds us now  
Of the life that Norman lived,  
And a spirit that with his first breath,  
Accepted all  
That God was about to give.

Tofā uso

Also In the Memory of  
**“Pā”**  
**Fiu Samuela-Gibbons**  
(12 May 1932- 22 April 2008)

A dedicated and committed father  
To my wife Lemau, and us all,  
And a loving grandfather  
To our son Norman Jr.

Tofā  
Ia manuia le lua malaga

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*Fa'afetai tele*

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## CHAPTER 1

### 1.1 Introduction

As the title of my thesis suggests - *From Tradition to God* – the subject matter of this thesis refers to the concept of a transitional shift from tradition to God. The tradition that the present research addresses as noted in its title, is the Samoan tradition and culture, otherwise known as the *fa'aSamoa*.<sup>1</sup> The sub-title of my thesis gives further clarification to the research at hand. A qualitative approach will be undertaken, with the objective of gaining valuable insights, in working towards redeveloping the spirituality of Samoan youth.

Youth ministry of the Samoan Church<sup>2</sup> – the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa (CCCS) - includes the programs, activities, and outreach programs of the Church, specifically designed for Samoan youngsters. At present, there is no age criteria for whom the Youth Ministry of the Church is directed. However, considering the stages of human developmental theories (see Ch1.3), the age group that the present research considers when it refers to the youth/young people/youngsters herein, are young people between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four years. Youth Ministry becomes the method of transmitting the teachings of the Church, the doctrines, belief systems, and values shared and upheld by the Church, onto its young people. One method of achieving this transfer of knowledge, is through the curriculum of Christian education (CE), designed and administered by the Church.

Samoan young people also participate in Christian education. Therefore CE becomes a major emphasis of the present work. A definition of CE that deserves mention, is suggested by Pazmino and noted by Benson, as being the:

*“deliberate, systematic, and sustained divine and human effort to share or appropriate the knowledge, values, attitudes, skills, sensitivities, and behaviours that comprise or are consistent with the Christian faith. It fosters the change, renewal, and reformation of persons, groups, and structures by the Holy Spirit to conform to the revealed will of God as expressed in the Old and New Testaments and pre-eminently in the person of Jesus Christ, as well as any outcomes of that effort.”<sup>3</sup>*

Upon consideration of this definition of Christian education, it suggests that Christian education becomes the effort of the Church, the family, the Sunday school, and for all Christians, irrespective of context. It therefore correlates to the context of Samoan youth

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<sup>1</sup> The term “*fa'aSamoa*” generally can be translated as the *Samoan way of life*. It can also refer to the Samoan tradition and culture. For its use throughout the present work, I will use it to denote the Samoan tradition and culture.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout the present work, any reference to the “Church” or “Samoan Church” relates to the CCCS – the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa – unless specified otherwise.

<sup>3</sup> Warren S. Benson, “Philosophical Foundations of Christian Education,” in *Introducing Christian Education: Foundations for the Twenty-First Century* (ed. M. J. Anthony; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 26-34.

today, as well as defining many of the dimensions that will be discussed throughout our investigations.

It is important to define spirituality at this point, as ultimately this becomes the concept that our research is working towards developing for the Samoan youngsters. A definition of spirituality given by Larson et al. and noted by Newberg and Newberg, identifies spirituality as:

*“the feelings, thoughts, experiences, and behaviours that arise from a search for the sacred. The term ‘search’ refers to attempts to identify, articulate, maintain or transform. The term ‘sacred’ refers to a divine being or Ultimate Reality or Ultimate Truth, as perceived by the individual.”<sup>4</sup>*

This definition is one that I feel correlates adequately with the situation of Samoan youth today, both in Samoa, as well as the Samoan youth abroad.

The remainder of this chapter will firstly describe the problem that the present research will investigate: namely that CE and Youth Ministry of the Church are at times, unconnected to the spiritual needs and real life themes of its young people. In addition, the underlying research question that will guide our investigations throughout its entirety, as well as how I intend to answer this question, will be disclosed. Finally, discussions will focus upon the applicability of the emotional, moral, and faith developmental theories, to make a ‘forecast’ of what the spiritual needs and real life themes for Samoan Youth are. These theories also will help later on, when I will look for possibilities to the re-contextualisation of CE – and Youth Ministry – concepts, because these theories are fundamental to Christian education and Youth Ministry in the Christian Church today.

Chapter two will then review and disclose the context(s) of Samoan youth today. The *fa’aSamoa* (Samoan tradition and culture) will be incorporated within these discussions, illustrating the effects that it has upon the spirituality of Samoan youth.

Chapter three will incorporate literature review of various CE theories, as well as Youth Ministry that are used successfully in the west, and addresses the question of how these theories may be re-contextualised, to meet the spiritual needs, and real life themes of Samoan youngsters today.

Chapter four will review the current curriculum and programs of CE and Youth Ministry administered by the Church, with regard of meeting the spiritual needs of Samoan youth in Samoa, and abroad. This chapter will also include the insights, opinions, and perspectives shared by a selected group of Samoan youngsters, collaborated and analysed through the process of qualitative interviews. Finally, chapter four will conclude with the recommendations for the Church, in how it can improve its Youth Ministry and Christian education theory, in order to meet the spiritual needs and real life themes of its young people across its parishes both in Samoa, as well as abroad. The very first point of our investigations towards redeveloping the spirituality of Samoan youth within the Church, is to acknowledge and identify, the problem at hand.

## **1.2 The Problem, Research Question, and Methodology**

There is an immediate need for a revival in the Youth Ministry and CE theory administered by the Church (CCCS), at the present time. The above statement represents the voices echoed

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<sup>4</sup> Andrew B. Newberg and Stephanie K. Newberg, “A Neuropsychological Perspective on Spiritual Development,” in *The Handbook of Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence* (ed. E. C. Roehlkepartain et al.; Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2006), 183-96.

by many of the Samoan youth today, as witnessed during the years of my undergraduate studies in Samoa. The instructions of the Church (CCCS) through its Youth Ministry and CE, have at times been unconnected with the young people of today, and irrelevant to the real life issues of the Samoan youth, both in Samoa, and abroad. The youth have at times felt neglected by the Church and some consequently have forsaken their faith altogether, while others have opted to join up with the numerous sectarian movements, Pentecostal, and Evangelical churches present in Samoa today.<sup>5</sup> Some youth simply cannot grasp the messages being taught, either because of the language of instruction, or due to the complexities of these teachings. Commonly the young people feel that their spiritual needs are not being fulfilled by the mainline churches,<sup>6</sup> and thus seek spirituality elsewhere. In reference to the CCCS, the question becomes a matter of how the Church can effectively respond to meet these needs of its young people.

In addition to the current situation for the Samoan youth, the migration of Samoans into countries like Australia, New Zealand and America, has escalated the challenges for the Church in relation to its Youth Ministry and CE. A migration pattern that began approximately from the middle of the twentieth century and still continues today, the Church now consists of not only young people in Samoa alone, but also second and third generation Samoans, who were born and raised abroad. For the numerous parishes, districts, and sub-districts of the Church (CCCS) abroad, the teachings and decision making of the Church, ultimately descend from the headquarters of the Church in Samoa. Likewise, the programs for the youth, and the curriculum of its CE, are designed and distributed from Samoa. However, for many of these second and third generation Samoan youngsters living abroad, language becomes a major obstacle, as many of the parishes abroad maintain the Samoan language as the primary mode of instruction. So for many of these youngsters, connecting their lives with Christ through the instructions of the Church, becomes all the more challenging due to this language barrier.

Worship becomes an important element, when looking at the spirituality of Samoan youth today. In the context of Samoan youth both in Samoa and abroad, there are limited opportunities for the young people to participate in the weekly Sunday worship, on a regular basis. Generally on special occasions in the Christian tradition, like Palm Sunday, Easter, Christmas, and once a year for White Sunday<sup>7</sup>, the youngsters are allowed the chance to partake in the regular service. The participation of the youth (as well as young children) on these significant days, usually are in the form of re-telling the biblical narratives and the Gospel message through drama, and singing songs.

The instructions of the Church, and the language used in the liturgy and worship of the Church is in Samoan, for all parishes in Samoa and abroad, although Samoan youth in the overseas' parishes do not speak the Samoan language well. Worship and the liturgy of the Church, therefore present many limitations in terms of the spirituality of Samoan youth today, due to limited participation by the youngsters, as well as a language problem for some.

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<sup>5</sup> Cf Brij V. Lal and Kate Fortune, eds., *The Pacific Islands: an encyclopaedia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000), 197-99. The Pentecostal and Evangelical church groups in Samoa today include the Assemblies of God, Worship Centre, and Youth for Christ. Also prominent in Samoa today are sectarian movements from the Mormons, Seven-Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witness, and Bahai.

<sup>6</sup> The mainline churches in Samoa today include the Roman Catholic Church, the Methodist Church and the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa.

<sup>7</sup> White Sunday is celebrated on the second Sunday of October, where the service is led by the young children and the youth in each respective parish of the CCCS. The Biblical stories and Gospel messages are portrayed through drama, and the entire service is conducted by the youngsters. They all dress in white, sing songs, and usually after the service there is a feast where the youngsters wear their best clothes.

It would be unfair to place all charge on the Church, in its failure to engage effectively in dialogue with the needs of its youth. The young people themselves need to share responsibility and defend their autonomy, a by-product of the modern trends in Samoa today. However, with the stronghold that the Samoan tradition still has in many areas of society, including the Church, it comes as no surprise that the youth submit to the forces working against them. The danger in speaking out against ones elders, or against the tradition that has been passed down through the generations, far outweighs its benefits. Branded by the community and peers as trying too much to adopt Western views and ideologies, in place of traditional Samoa, generally discourages the youth from breaking away from the normative. In all fairness, the Church has attempted to address the decline in the spirituality of its young people in recent years, but these efforts arguably still need to redevelop further. The objective therefore, is to search for ways in how to further develop the programs of Youth Ministry and the curriculum of CE offered by the Church, for the betterment of the spiritual lives of its young people.

As the theme of my thesis suggests, the call is to *redevelop* the spirituality of Samoan youth. Spiritual development in the past has taken on various forms in Samoa, and being a process within itself, it needs to once again redevelop further, to suit the needs of the young people today. A major part of the problem, as observed, can be identified in the *fa'aSamoa*, the Samoan tradition and culture (this shall be discussed at length in Chapter two). To question ones elders, does not become the normative in Samoa. To question what is learned through CE and the Youth Ministry of the Church, that subsequently are taught by Youth leaders and Ministers (perceived as the young person's elders), is therefore discouraged within the Samoan tradition. To question the Bible and the messages portrayed in it, is also unwelcomed (being the infallible Word of God), again, upheld through the Samoan tradition. Due to these restrictions and limitations, many youth feel trapped within this context of not being able to voice their faith openly. So how do the young people express any concerns about their own faith and spirituality openly, in light of their context today? It becomes rather challenging to be open about your faith as a youngster, as tradition limits this. But Samoa *is* changing, and so too the submission of the youth to having their voices suppressed. The young people today would rather think for themselves, and believe for themselves, rather than to be instructed what they should believe and think regarding their faith. It means developing their own spirituality at their own pace, rather than being dictated by Ministers and Youth leaders of what they should understand and be feeling spiritually. So the question becomes this, how can the Church respond effectively to meet the spiritual needs of its young people, given the context of Samoan youth today?

One possibility in answering this question, is to investigate the CE theory in place for Samoan youngsters at present. Is it effective enough to meet the spiritual needs and real life themes of the youth today? Is it open to discussion and suggestions by the youth themselves, or does it demonstrate a fixed curriculum? Is it applicable and comprehensible by not only youth in Samoa, but also Samoan youth abroad? These are vital elements that need to be considered, and these will become a major emphasis of the present undertaking.

The objective therefore becomes one of recommendation – suggesting ways how the Church (CCCS) can improve its Youth Ministry and CE theory, to effectively meet and fulfil the spiritual needs and real life themes of its young people. To consider the different contexts of its youth, within the design of its programs and education, including second and third generation Samoans born and raised abroad. To include many of the real life issues and social problems affecting the young people today, within its ministry and instructions. Real life issues and themes like drugs, alcohol, sexuality, identity formation, youth crime, and suicide, to name some. Moreover, how these can be connected to Christian teachings like reconciliation, Grace, forgiveness, providence, praxis of faith and love.

Throughout the process of investigation, the following research question will guide the proceedings: *What changes can the Church (CCCS) implement within its Youth Ministry, as well as in its Christian education theory, to help develop the spiritual lives of its young people?* In addition to this question, the following subsequent questions may help keep the research focused upon its objective.

1. *What are the spiritual needs of youth in general, and what are their real life issues and themes in general?*
2. *What are the spiritual needs of the Samoan youth in the Church (CCCS) - both in Samoa and abroad - and what are their real life issues and themes?*
3. *What are some theories of Christian Education and Youth Ministry that are used in contexts outside of Samoa, particular to youth today?*
4. *What are the curricula of Christian Education and Youth Ministry, administered by the Church (CCCS) today, for its youth both in Samoa and abroad?*
5. *Do these curricula of Christian Education, and Youth Ministry, meet the spiritual needs, and the real life issues and themes of Samoan youth in the Church (CCCS), both in Samoa and abroad?*

Qualitative methodology will be adopted for the research at hand. Through a *careful and rigorous inquiry* into the problem being researched (spirituality of Samoan youth), it serves the purpose of producing *formal statements* or *conceptual frameworks*, to understand our problem, and thus provide knowledge that can be *practically useful* for those who are working with our problem.<sup>8</sup> Literature review on CE theory and Youth Ministry, as well as the context of Samoan youth, and the current curriculum offered by the Church, will make up half of the data collected. The scope of the problem as discussed earlier, suggests that the voices of the Samoan youth are not heard within the institution of the Church. So for the purpose of the present research, these voices, from a selected group of Samoan youth, will be heard, collaborated, and analysed, in the form of qualitative interviews.

Primarily, the focus will be placed on the youth in Samoa, as the well as the Youth Ministry and CE theory in Samoa. However, due to the Church extending its mission and membership to include parishes outside of Samoa, it becomes necessary to include the young people from within these contexts, in the present research. Any reference therefore to the Samoan youth/young people/youngsters of the Church herein, will include both those in Samoa, as well as the young people of the Church from abroad, unless specified otherwise. The recommendations for the Church in how to best address and work towards developing the spirituality of its youth, will also take both these situations into account.

This becomes the problem that the present research addresses, and the proposal in working towards a possible solution. However, for any educationist in Christian Education, a sound foundation must first be established, prior to the implementation of any theory. The remainder of this chapter therefore, will focus upon discussions on the emotional, moral, and faith development theories, which underlie all theories of education of the modern Christian Church today.

### **1.3 Spiritual Needs and Real Life Themes of Youth**

Adolescence generally is a time when many changes are occurring in the lives of young people. Physically, the natural biological changes taking place in the youth, adds to the dilemma of their changing lives. In terms of cognitive changes, the mental processes involved

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<sup>8</sup> Cf John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM Press, 2006), 31.

in decision-making, and the view of the world, have developed from that of a young child, and arguably are still in the process of development. The affective dimension of the young person is also undergoing significant changes, and likewise his or her spirituality. It becomes a period of much speculation and curiosity by the young adolescent – questioning ones' parents, defending ones' realised autonomy, and in some instances, questioning ones' faith.

In terms of the spirituality of youth in general, adolescence is a period that must be recognised by religious authorities and the Church, as being crucial to the spiritual development of young people. The youth can either have a hunger and desire for the spiritual (and require that these needs are met), or otherwise feel indifferent towards anything of a spiritual nature. However, the difficulty in meeting these spiritual needs of the youth, is that any attempt to meet these needs, must be applicable to the changes they are experiencing, during this crucial period of their lives. Real life issues like drugs, alcohol, peer-group pressure, sexuality, autonomy – these are some common issues that young people are subjected to, irrespective of one's context. It therefore becomes a duty of religious authorities and the Church to meet these spiritual needs of the youth, within the framework of the many issues working against them.

In consideration of theories that help explain how young people develop during this period of adolescence, appropriate ways to meet the spiritual needs of youth today can be disclosed. One such developmental theorist is James Fowler, an important figure for any Christian educationalist interested in the young person's faith development. The assumption must be stated, that in order to determine how to meet the spiritual needs, and real life themes of youth today, a pre-understanding of how the young person develops in terms of his or her faith, must first be established. Equally important for the purpose of the present research, are the emotional and moral developments of the individual, as suggested by Erikson and Kohlberg respectively. Collectively, all three developmental theories provide a framework of discernment for the Church and Christian educators alike, in their obligatory duty of meeting the spiritual needs, and real life themes of youth today. Our discussions will begin, by first looking at the emotional development of the person.

### 1.3.1 Erikson

One of the most prominent human development theories, is the theory of emotional development, as suggested by Erik Erikson. The foundations of this theory can be traced back to Sigmund Freud, and Erikson's theory can be seen as a revised Freudian theory of personality development.

The focus of Erikson's theory, is on the growth crisis of the healthy personality. It concerns both of the inner and outer conflicts that the healthy personality must endure, in order to emerge from each crisis, with the sense that everything will be fine.<sup>9</sup> The definition of the healthy personality can be summed up by Marie Jahoda and noted by Erikson, as being a unity of one's personality, where one can actively master his or her environment, and perceive the world and the self without distortion.<sup>10</sup> This unity of personality focuses especially upon emotional elements. The healthy personality moves through a series of stages, each characterised by a specific psychosocial attitude. These stages in the emotional development of the person are summed up by Erikson in eight distinct and unique stages.

Stage one is known as the *Trust versus Mistrust* stage, and is evident from birth until the age of one. This stage becomes the foundation for all subsequent personality

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<sup>9</sup> Erik H. Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (London: Faber & Faber, 1974), 92.

<sup>10</sup> Erikson, 1974, *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, 92.

development. The degree of trust experienced by the newborn child does not necessarily rely on the absolute quantities of food or the experience of love, but rather on the quality of the maternal relationship. In turn, this forms a sense of identity for the newborn child, where the infant develops a trust (or mistrust) in his or her immediate and extended environment. In the case of trust, the child develops a sense that everything will be alright.

Stage two is known as the *Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt* stage of development, and can be found in children from the age of two until the age of three. Within this period of early childhood, the youngster experiences rapid muscular development, verbalisation, and develops the ability to co-ordinate various action patterns, characterised by holding on and letting go. Furthermore, the young child develops his or her autonomous will, and learns that sometimes their desires can be adhered to within his or her immediate and extended environment, if they cry long enough. The shame component of this stage means that the child develops a self-consciousness of oneself. In addition, doubt in the young child may produce uncertainty about the ability to manage oneself.

Stage three can be identified as the *Initiative versus Guilt* stage, and pertains to three to six olds. During this period a child will gain the ability to learn, to initiate activities, and to enjoy mastery and achievement. The child's use of language and locomotion permits the child to expand his or her imagination. Playful activities become meaningful for the child, as it also becomes a period of socialising with his or her peers. Intrusive behaviours dominate this stage, identified as intrusion into space through enhanced motor skills; intrusion into the space of others through aggressive language and actions; and intrusion into the world of mystery through curiosity. The child develops a conscience for his or her self-initiated actions, and depending on whether positive or negative reinforcements by a significant adult are placed on the child, a sense of either achievement, or guilt (respectively), is experienced by the child.

The fourth stage in emotional development is known as the *Industry versus Inferiority* stage, and it involves six to eleven year olds. It is a period where the child has entered into the formal education system, where they learn that play is play and work is work, and there exists a qualitative difference between the two. The child learns the values of work, and acquires the skills and tools of technology. Competence in performing tasks helps the child to prioritise what is important, and how to understand how things work. However, repeated frustrations and failures may impose feelings of inadequacy and inferiority upon the child, feelings that they carry forth into the following stages of development.

The fifth stage is labelled the *Identity versus Identity Confusion* stage, and becomes the most important stage in emotional development particular to the present research. It involves the period of adolescence, from the ages of twelve to eighteen. This stage requires the young person to utilise the tools and skills developed throughout the preceding stages of development. Namely to identify with the trust, autonomous will, imagination and the ability to make something work, that has developed within the youngster from birth until adolescence.<sup>11</sup> For the young person, it becomes a search for one's identity within both his or her immediate world, but more importantly, his or her identity in relation to how others perceive them. Within this search for a new continuity and sameness with the other (one's peers and a significant adult whom they idolise), they must now accommodate for sexual maturity that physically their bodies are becoming. However, the counteract in this search for the young person's identity, becomes a matter of confusion. The social settings and social influences directly or indirectly imposed upon the young person can either positively reinforce one's desired identity, or adversely may hinder the young person in his or her search for identity.

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<sup>11</sup> Erikson, 1974, *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, 129.

The sixth stage becomes the *Intimacy versus Isolation* stage, and can be identified with young adults from about nineteen to thirty years of age. This initial stage of adulthood, only becomes a reality when the young person has first found an applicable identity in the preceding stage. Intimacy is both of a sexual and psychological nature, when two people can experience love, friendship, relationship, commitment, and interdependence upon the other. Distantiation (becoming distant from others) is the counterpart of intimacy, and it involves the willingness to renounce, to isolate, and even to destroy forces and others who prevent the young adult from achieving a state of distantiation.

The seventh stage is known as the *Generativity versus Stagnation* stage, identified with adults thirty-one years of age to sixty-five. The basic theme of this stage is rooted in the interest in establishing and guiding the generations to follow. More or less a period where the foundations for the upcoming generations are laid by the individual. It becomes a period of self-reflection, to see what the individual has generated or helped to generate, and whether this may benefit future generations or not. Stagnation occurs when one functions solely for the purpose and benefit of himself or herself in the present, with no consideration at all for those who may follow.

The final and eighth stage in emotional development is classified as the *Integrity versus Despair* stage, generally for those beyond the age of sixty-five. The basic task of this stage is the acceptance of one's own life cycle. A period in one's life, to reflect upon and enjoy the life that has been. The emotion of despair steps in, when one realises upon reflection, that one's life course as it had been, could have been undertaken differently. The integrity associated with a long and fruitful life is overcome with despair. In addition, the looming end is near, which adds to one's feeling of despair.

The emotional development theory as suggested by Erikson, is not enough on its own, to explain the development of the young person into full adulthood. It may help to explain the growth crisis in a healthy personality, and the requirement for the individual to transgress from one stage to the next based on emotional elements. However, in order to gain insights into what is required of the developing youngster in terms of his or her spirituality, we must also look upon other theories of human development. This brings our discussions to investigate how the individual develops, in terms of his or her morality.

### 1.3.2 Kohlberg

The theory of moral development as suggested by Lawrence Kohlberg, was inspired by Piaget's ground-breaking efforts of applying a structural approach to moral development. Following a study on American young boys from the age of adolescence and beyond, Kohlberg discovered three distinct levels of moral thinking amongst young people in general, and prevalent in each of these levels are two inter-related stages.<sup>12</sup>

The first of three levels of moral thinking is identified as the *Preconventional Level*. Children between the ages of four and ten commonly are located within this level. They are generally well behaved, and are able to differentiate between good and bad behaviours that are culturally determined. However, these associations made by the young are constructed through the resulting consequences of positive, or demeaning behaviour (for example punishment, rewards, exchange of favours). Within this level can be found two distinct stages. Firstly, stage one is labelled the *Punishment and Obedience Orientation*. The avoidance of punishment by doing what is deemed as good, is common within this

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<sup>12</sup> Lawrence Kohlberg, *The Philosophy of Moral Development: Moral Stages and the Idea of Justice* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981), 16.

framework. Stage two becomes the *Instrumental Relativist Orientation*, where rightful action is determined and carried out by the child, to meet his or her individual needs, and occasionally to meet the needs of others. Degrees of fairness, reciprocity, and equal sharing are evident in this phase of moral development; however, its application is administered on the grounds of performing a task, in order for others to return the favour.

The second level of moral development is the *Conventional Level*, approximately from the ages of eleven through to twenty-five. For the purpose of the present research, this particular level of moral development becomes of great interest. The objective becomes one of maintaining the expectations of the family, the group, or nation of the individual, irrespective of any consequences in doing so.<sup>13</sup> Conforming to these expectations becomes the normative, as well as the justification of the social order, and all persons involved in upholding these expectations. Again, two distinct stages can be found within this level. Stage three is defined as the *Interpersonal Concordance or "Good Boy-Nice Girl" Orientation*. The emphasis is upon conformity to the stereotypical behaviour of what is considered to be good and acceptable behaviour by society. To be considered a good person, stereotypically means to be nice, or simply to have honourable intentions in one's actions. Stage four is defined as *Society Maintaining Orientation*, which basically entails that the individual behaves in accordance to one's duty to society, by respecting authority, and maintaining the given social order.

The third and final level of moral development is identified as the *Postconventional, Autonomous or Principled Level*. This level is associated with persons twenty-five years of age and beyond. It involves the acknowledgement of moral values and principles, that are independent from those who hold to these values. This level also persists of two stages. Firstly, stage five is labelled the *Social Contract Orientation*. Acceptable behaviour tends to be associated with the individual's human rights, in terms of what society has classified as rightful actions, according to these inherent rights. The sixth and final stage as found in this level is known as the *Universal Ethical Principle Orientation*. Central within this stage is the universal principles of justice, reciprocity, and the equality of all peoples. The call is for mutual respect by the collective of individuals, of the inherent dignity that accompanies other persons.

Discussions have now included the various levels and stages of the individual's development, in terms of his or her emotional, and moral dimensions. To complete our understanding of what is required for the developing youngster, in terms of his or her spirituality, we now turn to James Fowler's theory of faith development.

### 1.3.3 Fowler

Arguably, the most significant insights into human development applicable to Christian Education, is the pioneering work found in James Fowler's theory of faith development. Fowler proposes that there are six distinctive stages in the person's capacity for faith activity. These stages are inter-related to the other, and are arranged hierarchically and sequentially. They are arranged in a manner that the individual progressively moves through each of these stages, and in doing so, matures in his or her faith development through each of the respective stages.

Fowler begins at *Stage zero*, labelled as the *Primal Faith* stage. It becomes a pre-language disposition of trust and loyalty on behalf of the newborn child, that formulates

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<sup>13</sup> Kohlberg, 1981, *The Philosophy of Moral Development*, 18.

relationships with those who provide constant primary care.<sup>14</sup> It can be identified as the earliest form of faith foundation, where trust and mistrust is given by the infant, to those who offer primary care and who nurse the newborn infant. This initial stage correlates with newborns, until the age of about two. Following this, the next stage becomes *Stage one*, otherwise known as the *Intuitive-Projective Faith* stage. From the time the child begins to use language as the medium of communication, it becomes evident that the child is involved in an emotional and perceptual ordering of their experiences.<sup>15</sup> This stage corresponds to children from three years of age, until the age of about six. The child begins to discover a reality beyond their everyday experiences, and reconstructions that the child makes of life, represent his or her fantasies and imaginations. The child appreciates stories that speak of good and evil, and the construction of faith is such that the child associates symbols and imagery that visibly represents what is good, and what is not. Symbolic representation of God to the child in this initial stage of faith development, may intertwine anthropomorphic and non-anthropomorphic imagery.<sup>16</sup>

*Stage two* is called the *Mythic-Literal Faith* stage, and constitutes to children aged between six and eight. However, it may also include children up to the age of ten. The thinking and valuing capacities of the child have reached the stage where they are able to understand cause-and-effect relationships. Distinctions can be made between what is fantasy, and what is empirical experience. It becomes a period where the child consciously decides to join and belong to a particular faith community, and likewise share, and take on board the faith stories found within these groups as their own. These faith stories however may be taken literally by the youngsters, and even though the child is able to distinguish between the natural and supernatural, God is still understood in anthropomorphic terms.

*Stage three* in the sequence of faith development, has been labelled the *Synthetic-Conventional Faith* stage. It begins approximately with children aged between eleven and thirteen, a period where the child develops the ability to comprehend abstract ideas, as well as the manipulation of concepts.<sup>17</sup> It may continue into the ages of young adulthood (again for the purpose of the present research, this stage, together with the following fourth stage in Fowler's faith development theory, become of great interest). This particular stage restricts the young person into conforming or relating to the conventional faith, belief systems, and values of the significant 'others' in one's life. They simply adopt for themselves the collective values and faith systems of the faith community, of whom they belong to. The significant 'other' in the young person's life, may include one's peers, teachers, parents, religious authorities, or simply those deemed worthy in the eyes of the young person. A synthesis therefore is required by the young person, of the numerous images of significant others available, to unify one's belief systems, values, faith orientation, and the sense of identity.

*Stage four* is known as the *Individuative-Reflective Faith* stage, and surfaces in the young person from around young adulthood to about the mid-thirties. The transition from the previous stage of faith development into this stage, is crucial for the faith maturity of the individual. As seen in the previous stage, reliance on significant others to justify and to authorise belief systems, values, and commitments of the young person, is vital. Now in stage four of faith development, the transference of authority and meaning that previously was guided and formulated based on significant others, this is now transferred upon one's self. Authority and meaning no longer becomes a relation of the significant others, but now is dependent upon self-identity and worth. The conventional and conforming faith based on

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<sup>14</sup> James W. Fowler, *Faith Development and Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 58.

<sup>15</sup> Fowler, 1987, *Faith Development and Pastoral Care*, 59.

<sup>16</sup> Fowler, 1987, *Faith Development and Pastoral Care*, 60.

<sup>17</sup> Fowler, 1987, *Faith Development and Pastoral Care*, 63.

others (preceding stage) now becomes a personal and private affair. The individual's world view and relation within society and the faith community that surrounds them, is now determined by their individual values and beliefs that they have taken on as their own, and these may become differentiated from the attitudes and expectations of others.

*Stage five* becomes the *Conjunctive Faith* stage. As Fowler's definition of this stage suggests, it entails reuniting a union that previously had been one.<sup>18</sup> Commonly, this stage relates to the mid-life period of the individual. There exists a new quality of autonomous commitment to the individual's views, as determined in the previous stage, while simultaneously respecting the perspectives of others. If stage three was dependent upon significant others, and stage four consisted of self-dependency, then this stage can be seen as interdependent on the other, without losing one's independence. The conjunctive faith stage equips the individual into coming to terms with accepting other faith traditions, that may be considered as strange to the individual. It allows the possibility of dialogue between various faith traditions, an openness that respects the other while still holding onto the beliefs, values and traditions, embedded within the self.

The sixth and final stage of faith development, is labelled the *Universalising Faith* stage. In the process of removing the self as being the central reference point, this final stage of faith development completes the faith journey. God takes over as the central figure, and the individual is drawn away from the self, into active participation grounded in and through God. The individual therefore is drawn towards identifying with God, where God becomes the basis of identity, the basis of understanding, and the basis of one's values and meaning in life. This final stage becomes the complete state of union with God, where the person has matured in his or her faith dimension, through the process of faith development.

Instrumental as it may be, for designing Christian education curriculum relevant to the respective stages in faith development, but Fowler's theory has attracted many critics. Such a critic is Nicola Slee, who perceived Fowler's faith developmental theory as being "*gender blind*" against women.<sup>19</sup> Slee used certain aspects of Fowler's theory, together with her own insights, to develop a theory that was more specific, and applicable to the faith development of women.

Fowler's stages of faith development are such that one must progress from one stage to the next, in order to develop in faith. However, the argument must be put forth, as to the continuity and ease of progression from one stage to the next. Can some people for instance remain in the same stage, way beyond the specified ages as stated in Fowler's theory? Or even more challenging, can they remain stagnant in one of the earlier stages, for most if not all of their adult lives? In some contexts this may very well be the case. Discussions to follow will investigate this tendency, in light of the context of Samoan youth.

#### 1.3.4 The Applicability of the Emotional, Moral, and Faith Development Theories to the Samoan Youth Today

The question needs to be raised in relation to the applicability of the available human development theories, when taking into account the development of Samoan youth today. Do the respective theories of Erikson, Kohlberg, and Fowler correspond to the development of Samoan youth, given that these theories are predominantly focused upon the development of persons in Western civilisations? In particular to the development of young girls, does the

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<sup>18</sup> Fowler, 1987, *Faith Development and Pastoral Care*, 71.

<sup>19</sup> Nicola Slee, *Women's Faith Development: Patterns and Processes* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishers, 2004), 15.

theory of women's faith development by Nicola Slee, fit the situation of Samoan young girls? In essence, do these theories comprise of universal elements, so that they are able to meet and fulfil the spiritual needs and real life themes of Samoan youth today? These questions become crucial when understanding how Samoan youth develop in terms of their emotional, moral, and faith dimensions, especially when the focus of discernment is the spirituality of a specific group of young people. The discussions that follow shall attempt to answer these important questions, in light of the development of Samoan youth.

In relation to Erikson's theory of emotional development, the *Identity vs Identity Confusion* stage (stage five), demonstrates elements of being inapplicable to the development of Samoan youngsters, due to cultural differences. The reason behind this stems from the communal living and culture found in Samoa, where the young person's identity is shaped and formulated by significant others, in his or her immediate and communal environment. The *fa'aSamoa* (Samoan tradition and culture) prevents the young person from self-dependency, and therefore to function within society solely for the self, as this disrupts the communal setting that traditionally is the case for the Samoan people. Identity therefore, becomes an element that is passed down through tradition, and relative to one's bloodline and family ties. The young person identifies him or herself, only in relation to one's immediate and extended family. More important is the chiefly (*matai*)<sup>20</sup> descent, or not, of the young person, that unavoidably becomes the handed-down identity of the youngster within such a family.

The search for one's identity commonly occurs much later in life, way beyond the years of adolescence, for Samoan youth. The youngsters are instructed to obey their elders at all times, and to embrace their identities passed down through their family lines. However, Samoa is becoming more and more in line with the modern and global world. The modern Samoa is adopting the mindset of equal rights for all within any given community, and as a result, many Samoan young people today are questioning these inherent identities, that are imposed upon them. Therefore in relation to meeting the spiritual needs of Samoan youth according to their emotional development, stage five *Identity vs Identity Confusion*, as well as stage six *Intimacy versus Isolation* stage, both need to be considered. The reason, is that Samoan youth tend to stay longer in stage five, where identity formation becomes important, as this occurs at a later stage in the life for the Samoan youngsters. The transition into stage six (*Intimacy versus Isolation*) requires identity formation in stage five, but due to its delay amongst Samoan youngsters, progressing into this next stage of emotional development, takes longer.

In relation to Kohlberg's theory of moral development, the Samoan youth appear to fit in quite adequately into the *Conventional level*, in particular the *Interpersonal Concordance or "Good Boy-Nice Girl" Orientation* stage. Adjusting to one's role in society given the *fa'aSamoa*, means to conform to what the community expects from the young person. Many of the youth therefore, tend to conform to this tendency, and are more inclined to adhere to the good boy – nice girl orientation. The *Society Maintaining Orientation* stage that follows, reinforces this tendency of the youth to adhere to the authorities and maintain the given social order, again an element being passed down through the generations. Kohlberg's theory therefore, is seen as more comprehensible to the situation of Samoan youth at present, illustrating its universal applicability and across-cultures nature. Considering such a theory, it suggests that Samoan youngsters develop similarly with young people from the West, in

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<sup>20</sup> The "matai" or chief, can be considered the head of any family, usually within the setting of the extended family. The traditional nuclear family may have no *matai*, and so the *matai* of the extended family oversees the affairs of these particular families. These honourable titles are bestowed upon worthy leaders in any family, and can be of a high chief status, or as an orator "talking" chief status.

terms of their morality. Therefore meeting the spiritual needs and real life themes of Samoan youth today is possible, with the consideration of Kohlberg's theory of moral development.

Upon consideration of Fowler's stage three, the *Synthetic-Conventional Faith* stage, this fits in adequately with the communal culture that is found amongst the Samoan people. This stage requires the young person to take on the collective values and belief systems of the faith community, of whom they belong. For cultures that are communal-based, and dependency upon the other, are the normative, sharing the values and belief systems of significant 'others' becomes a common occurrence. Such a culture can be found in Samoa. However, the onset of the transition from relying on the values and belief systems of significant 'others,' towards the individuals' self-realised belief systems (the transition into stage four, the *Individuative-Reflective* stage), this occurs much later in life for Samoan people. The *fa'aSamoa*, or the Samoan culture, limits this transition towards individuality, to a much later stage in life. Therefore meeting the spiritual needs and real life themes of Samoan youth today is possible, with the insights suggested by Fowler's theory of faith development. Consideration however must be given, to the delay in the transition into stage four, the *Individuative-Reflective* stage.

In particular to the development of Samoan young girls, Nicola Slee's theory of faith development specific to women, becomes of interest. The argument Slee puts forth, is that existing human developmental theories appear to be "*gender blind*" against women, and at present there exists a scarcity of research specific to the faith development of women.<sup>21</sup> These theories have not considered the real life accounts and experiences of women. The disregard of the women's voice and experiences, is also a major implication of the Samoan culture, especially the voices of young Samoan girls (cf discussions on Mead Ch2.2). Slee's attempt therefore, to read the available human developmental theories in regards to the faith development of women, has taken serious consideration of James Fowler's theory of faith development. However, the suggestion is that Fowler's theory of faith development must not be read on its own for an understanding of her specific target group; it must be juxtaposed with psychodynamic theories of development (rooted in Freudian and Jungian understandings of human development), together with cognitive structural approaches (such as Piaget and Kohlberg's theories of human development).<sup>22</sup> Slee further proposes that in terms of the education (Christian) of women and girls, the emphasis should be placed on revealing the hidden and suppressed experiences of women and girls, affirming them as authoritative and creative.<sup>23</sup> It requires drawing upon the creativity and imagination of women in general, as well as women's relational nature with others, bringing into fruition their artistic gifts through the process of education. Clearly for the situation of Samoan young girls, taking these insights as suggested in Slee's theory into consideration, will definitely assist Christian educators, in the planning and design of Christian education, and Youth Ministry for Samoan young girls.

In short, it may appear that Erikson's theory is inapplicable for the situation of Samoan youth, largely due to the Samoan culture. However, this does not suggest that this theory is invalid for Samoan youngsters, but rather, culturally different for the Samoan youth. The stages associated with the ages of adolescence for Erikson's theory, can be argued to appear at a later stage in life for Samoan youngsters, since this stage centres around individuality, and self-searching for one's identity. The transition of the Samoan young person into becoming more of an individual within the community, as well as his or her search for uniqueness and identity, these occur much later for Samoans, beyond the ages of

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<sup>21</sup> Slee, 2004, *Women's Faith Development: Patterns and Processes*, 15.

<sup>22</sup> Slee, 2004, *Women's Faith Development: Patterns and Processes*, 16.

<sup>23</sup> Slee, 2004, *Women's Faith Development: Patterns and Processes*, 170-171.

adolescence. Collectively, can all these theories of emotional, moral, and faith development therefore be applied for the situation of Samoans, with the aim of meeting the spiritual needs and real life themes of its youth today? Allowing for variations in cultures, and the later onset of individuality amongst Samoans, this more than likely is quite possible. In fact, with the changing Samoa, towards becoming more global, and sharing the values and ideas of the Western world, knowledge of these specific developmental theories, becomes all the more important, when designing programs and curriculum for the Samoan youth of the Church today.

#### 1.4 Summary

In this chapter, the problem being researched has been stated: namely that CE and Youth Ministry of the Church are at times, unconnected to the spiritual needs and real life themes of its young people. The research question that will guide our investigations throughout, has also been disclosed: *What changes can the Church (CCCS) implement within its Youth Ministry, as well as in its Christian education theory, to help develop the spiritual lives of its young people?* The proposal in how our research will work towards a solution to this question, has also been revealed: through literature review on (i) CE theory and Youth Ministry; (ii) on the context of Samoan youth; (iii) and on the current curriculum offered by the Church. In addition, the insights and opinions of a selected group of Samoan youngsters, will also be included in our data. Finally, we have reviewed the fundamental theories to Christian education and Youth Ministry in the Christian Church today: the emotional, moral and faith developmental theories. Reviewing these theories has helped us to answer sub-question one: *What are the spiritual needs of youth in general, and what are their real life issues and themes?* Upon consideration of the stages and levels of human development, the spiritual needs and real life themes of youth, correspond to their respective stages of human development. According to the emotional development of youth, needs and issues relating to identity searching, and formation, become important to the young person. Sexuality also becomes important, as the youth are at a stage for sexual maturity, and curiosity. For the young person's moral dimension, spiritual needs and issues relating to conforming to society, and being accepted by others, become important. Family issues are therefore important, as well as being accepted into ones' circle of friends. Finally, for the young person's faith development, spiritual needs and issues relating to the beliefs and value systems of significant 'others,' become important. These may include issues that help the youngster to 'fit it' with their peers, but more importantly, to be accepted by the ones that the young person looks up to. Applying these theories to the Samoan youth today, we have disclosed that both the moral and faith developmental theories can help meet the spiritual needs, and real life themes of Samoan youth. However, for the emotional developmental theory, a limitation can be foreseen due to the Samoan culture, which leads to a delayed onset of identity searching and formation. Our discussions therefore in the following chapter, will review the Samoan culture and tradition, the *fa'aSamoa*, as well as looking at the context of Samoan youth both in Samoa, as well as the youngsters of the Church abroad.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE CONTEXT OF SAMOAN YOUTH

In order to successfully design curriculum for CE, and programs for Youth Ministry that meet the spiritual needs and real life themes of the Samoan youth today, an understanding of the human developmental theories is required (cf Ch1.3). In particular, the stages and levels relevant to the development of Samoan youngsters. Furthermore, discernment of the Samoan culture and context(s) that the Samoan youth are embedded, also need to be considered. Our discussions in this chapter will first review the *fa'aSamoa* (Samoan tradition and culture), as this plays a major role in the lives of the Samoan youngsters. Discussions will also review literature that specifically focuses on the context(s) of Samoan adolescents. Finally, considerations of the Samoan migrations abroad, as well as the contemporary context of Samoan youth today, will conclude our discussions in this chapter.

#### **2.1 The *fa'aSamoa* – the Samoan Tradition and its Impact Upon the Spiritual Development of Samoan Youth**

In the modern Samoa of today, many of the traditions of old have found their way through to the present day. The family has always been focal to any Samoan, where the individual is regarded in society, relative to his or her family. If the young person descends from a family that has a high ranking *matai* or chief, then more opportunities in life become possible for that youngster. Even in traditional events like marriages, funerals, and village festivities - the family is of the utmost importance. This emphasis on the family, and thus the *matai* system amongst Samoans, has even found its way into the local parishes of the Church. Many office bearers in the Church (besides the Minister) are unsurprisingly, *matai* as well. In fact, in the Church today, there exists an unwritten rule, that you can only be ordained as a deacon if you also hold a *matai* title. So what chance does someone who has no *matai* title at all (including Samoan youth), of being considered important in society, and especially within the Church? The result, involve passive participation in the community, and obedience to the authority of the *matai* without question, as exercised in the family, in the general community, and even in the local parish of the Church.

It is precisely within this tradition<sup>24</sup> that the Samoan youth find themselves, where their voices and concerns are not heard, and where their opinions do not matter. It constricts

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<sup>24</sup> Cf Prof. Dr. H M Kirn, informal discussion on March 19, 2008. During a conversation about this project, Prof. Dr. H M Kirn reflected, that tradition is a positive aspect for religion, and spirituality, especially when considering the present situation of Lutheran Germany - the youth today have to re-invent their own tradition. So for the Samoan youth, they are fortunate to still have a tradition (Samoan), even though the tradition (Samoan) can be considered constrictive in many ways. But for the youth in Lutheran Germany, tradition (German) has been lost, so to experience religion, and spirituality, these youngsters need to re-invent their own tradition, in order to achieve this.

the freedom of speech, dialogue with the church, and open-mindedness of the Samoan youth, in relation to their spirituality. The young person must respect and obey his or her elders, especially when the older generation, are the ones who hold the *matai* titles.

Instructions about all things spiritual, begin for the Samoan youngster in the primary setting of the family. It teaches the young person from a very early age about God, as being a *good spirit*, where all good things originate. Praise and thanksgiving are given to God at all times, in the form of family worship and prayer. The family plays a crucial role in the rearing of the Samoan youth, not only in the formation of social relationships within the larger community, but also in terms of instructions about the spiritual.

In a modern Samoa where individualism, westernisation and modernism, are taking a stronghold over society,<sup>25</sup> the young person finds that they are torn between two realms – the world of modernity, changing the face of Samoa today, and the realm of traditional Samoa. The Samoan youngsters turn to the Church for solace and comfort, but discover that many elements of traditional Samoa, that constrict their realised autonomies, are also found in the setting of the Church.

Even though the *fa'aSamoa* may limit many Samoan youngsters today, to any freedom of expression, or any realised autonomy, the Samoan culture does in fact assist the Samoan family, and also the Church, in dealing with its young people. As one of the Ministers of the Church (CCCS), who was interviewed for this project reflected, the Church can thank the Samoan culture for the discipline that most Samoan youngsters demonstrate today.

**16.Rev. Samoa**<sup>26</sup> “Yes I think...I think...uh...[pause]...that the good thing about Samoa, is the culture. Speaking about the Congregational Christian Church, and its ministry in Samoa for the people of Samoa, I think it's very fortunate that the...that the Samoan culture is what it is, in terms of disciplining the young people.”

**17.Alesana** “uh hmm.”

**18.Rev. Samoa** “And ah...the way...uh...this is what I think anyway, how the parents and how the adults sort of advise, and instruct, and keep an eye on the young people and what they do. It's like the culture that has that aspect in it, that ah...focuses on keeping an eye on the young people, so they won't ah...turn into destructive people, and adults.”

**19.Alesana** “uh huh...so that's mainly because of the culture?”

**20.Rev. Samoa** “Yes...I think that helps the Church a lot. I think sometimes the Church programs can...um...thank the culture for that...um...yeah.”

Rev. Samoa has offered some valuable insights about the relationship between the *fa'aSamoa*, and the Church. The Church actually has many things to thank the Samoan culture, for how it is today. This is in relation to keeping the Samoan youngsters disciplined,

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<sup>25</sup> Cf Thomas W. McDade et al., “Culture change and stress in Western Samoa youth: Methodological issues in the cross-cultural study of stress and immune function,” *American Journal of Human Biology* 12:6 (October 2000): 792-802. Cited 16 November 2007. Online: <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/74000213/>.

<sup>26</sup> The identity of this Minister of the CCCS has been withheld, and changed to be known as “Rev. Samoa,” for the purpose of maintaining the anonymous nature of his participation in this project. Rev. Samoa is a middle-aged Minister who has been dealing with Samoan youth both in Samoa and abroad, for well over a decade. Both Rev. Samoa and his wife are now ministering to one of the parishes of the CCCS in Australia. The interview with Rev. Samoa was conducted on June 24, 2008. The MP3 digital recording of this interview, together with its transcript in full, is currently in my possession. A copy of this transcript in full, is also kept in the PThu library, Kampen.

and to be aware of the many temptations that surround them. Evidently, this is a positive aspect of the Samoan culture and tradition, upon the Samoan youth today both in Samoa, as well as the youth of the Church abroad.

The *fa'aSamoa*, has both positive, as well as negative effects, upon the spiritual lives of the Samoan youth today. In fact, the *fa'aSamoa* has always had an impact upon its people, especially when Samoa first became a Christian nation.

### 2.1.1 The *fa'aSamoa* and the Christianising of Samoa

Religion has always been intertwined with the Samoan culture, ever since the first Protestant LMS (London Missionary Society) missionaries introduced the Gospel in 1830 into Samoa.<sup>27</sup> When the first Protestant missionaries arrived into Samoa, they brought with them a sacred text that was unknown to the Samoans. It was in a language foreign to them, but more importantly, it contained many allusions to a monotheistic people who worshiped a single and Supreme God. Samoans however were not unfamiliar with such worship, as at the time they were already partaking in their own traditional worship. But this worship was to a plurality of gods.

Every family had its traditional ancestral god, in addition to their village and district gods. Traditional worship entailed given homage in the form of ancient chants, food offerings, and the igniting of a simple fire, as well as in prayer. Prayer was commonly a prayer of thanksgiving, followed by a prayer of cursing. Thanksgiving to the gods for fruitful harvest in the plantations, and for successful catch in the seas. Cursing for the purpose of bringing about ill-will and disorder upon one's neighbours, but more so upon the personal gods of these neighbours. This was the context of Samoa that the first missionaries arrived into, and it was not long before the entire archipelago of Samoa was Christianised.

As Samoa was already accustomed to its own traditional worship, the task for the missionaries became one of re-inventing and redirecting this worship of the Samoans away from their traditional gods, towards the Supreme God of the Christians. Evidently, the early Protestant missionaries succeeded in their cause, mainly due to the assistance, and role that the *fa'aSamoa* (the Samoan tradition and culture) played in the process. The most effective way that they achieved this, was by incapacitating the personal gods of the Samoans.<sup>28</sup>

The *fa'aSamoa* assisted the early missionaries in Christianising Samoa. The worship to the plurality of gods was in place - a common practice of the *fa'aSamoa*. The *matai* (chief) system of the *fa'aSamoa*, meant that if the *matai* converted to Christianity, then his entire family would follow suit. These contributed to helping the missionaries with their task. However, Christianity itself had an adverse effect upon the Samoan culture. Many Christian teachings conflicted with the Samoan culture (of the pre-Christian times), and so the *fa'aSamoa* of old adjusted to accommodate for Christianity.<sup>29</sup> In fact, Christianity today has

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<sup>27</sup> Cf Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa* (Suva: University of South Pacific, 1987), 68.

<sup>28</sup> Cf Meleisea, 1987, *Lagaga*, 54. The antique gods of the Samoans commonly were represented in their natural environment – mammals and creatures of the sea, animals of the land, and even certain plants and trees. The missionaries then began to prove to the Samoans that what they had regarded as gods, were nothing greater than good food. For example, certain types of fish were represented as ancestral gods to many Samoans. So the missionaries disproved the absoluteness of these gods, by cooking, and eating these fish, and more importantly, surviving through the ordeal.

<sup>29</sup> Cf Meleisea, 1987, *Lagaga*, 67-68. Monogamy was introduced into Samoa; clothing of the Samoans changed to include the attire of the European missionaries; and the authority of the *matai* no longer was absolute.

become an integral feature in the Samoan way of life, and the Samoan culture, that Samoa presently has as its motto – “Samoa is founded on God.”<sup>30</sup>

## **2.2 Margaret Mead’s *Coming of Age in Samoa*: The Context of Samoan Youth in the Twentieth Century**

A book that was first published in 1949, seems an unlikely point of reference for the purpose of the present thesis. In saying so, *Coming of age in Samoa* by Margaret Mead does raise some interesting points, and parallels can be drawn from Mead’s work in Samoa, with the contexts of Samoan youth today. In addition, the limitation of research conducted on Samoan young people to date, means that a review of *Coming of age in Samoa*, forcibly becomes a valid starting point.

In searching to meet and defend the thesis of her work in Samoa, Mead discovered vast differences between the civilisation of the peoples of Samoa, and that of her own. Mead suggested that the attitude, and the role of the Samoan young boy or girl within the family, as the telling factors for this difference. Early on in life, the Samoan youngsters are taught many significant roles to play, that directly become intertwined in the adult life of the community. These roles are learnt in the social relationships that are evident in the Samoan family, the Samoan household, and the Samoan society in general. The relationships found within these social frameworks provide the context for understanding the Samoan people, in particular the adolescents of Samoa today, both in Samoa, as well as Samoan adolescents abroad.

Due to its controversial findings, Mead’s work in Samoa has not been far from criticism. It must be noted that most Samoans view Mead’s findings in a negative light, given the representation of promiscuous young adolescents that Mead painted of Samoan people.<sup>31</sup> It has not been my intention to refute Mead’s research in such a manner, neither has it been to follow in the shadows of Derek Freeman, a noteworthy critic of Mead’s work in Samoa. Rather, the intention has been to discover how, and if any legitimate conclusions can be drawn that are relevant to the objective of my research into the spirituality of Samoan youth today. Interestingly enough, Mead has made some credible observations of which she must be commended. Firstly, in regards to the complex relationships that Mead observed within the Samoan family, village life, and formal gender relations. Secondly, the traditional Samoan household and its role in the nurturing of the youth. Finally, the education of Samoan young people within these primitive institutions, and within the social settings the youngsters were located. These observations become the focus of the present review of Mead’s work, for the reason that they disclose an understanding of the context of Samoan young people not only at the time of Mead’s study, but more importantly, for all future studies of Samoan youth.

### 2.2.1 Complex Social Relations in the *Āiga* – the Samoan Family

The Samoan household becomes an economic unit within itself as Mead discovered, as work in the plantations, fishing expeditions, and reef collections, become a collective effort of the entire household. These activities fall under the sole supervision of the head of the family –

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<sup>30</sup> Cf Meleisea, 1987, *Lagaga*, 70.

<sup>31</sup> Cf James E Cote, “A Social History of Youth in Samoa: Religion, Capitalism, and Cultural Disenfranchisement,” *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 38 (1997): 217-234. Cited 25 Nov 2007. Online: <http://www.cos.sagepub.com>.

the *matai*.<sup>32</sup> Within any given Samoan household, several nuclear families may be found, who are blood or marriage relatives to the other, and who occupy up to five or six Samoan houses in close proximity to each other (houses are more like open-walled huts). These several families within the same household may have two or more *matai*, but only one may carry the ranking of being a high chief. The remaining *matai* will take up the roles of talking chiefs, or orators and assistants to the high chief, who becomes the primary leader for the entire family.

The most important relationships within the Samoan household that influence the lives of the young people in Samoa, are the relationships between boys and girls that call each other “brother” or “sister,” whether by blood relation, marriage or adoption.<sup>33</sup> However, by the time these young girls and boys reach the age of puberty, sexual experimentation with neighbouring households become a real threat. The brother-sister relationships are such, that the brothers tend to become over-protective of their sisters, especially when social interactions within the larger community, and the neighbouring households, take place.

The setting of the *āiga* - the family – is of great importance for any study of Samoan people. It is where the young people first learn the foundations of their place and role in the community. It is also within this social setting that the first relations with society are formulated. Mead accurately observed this important aspect of the Samoan way of life, the very fabric of Samoan people as found in the institution of the family. Every family has a *matai* (a chief), who becomes the sole authority and the head to the entire family.<sup>34</sup> The *matai* in any family are usually male, who hold one of two standings; he can either be a *high chief* (a chief of high rank), or a *talking chief*, a lower ranking chief who serves as an orator and assistant to a higher ranked chief.<sup>35</sup> These initial relationships are important when understanding the way of life of Samoan people, as they form the grounds for acceptance of the individual, into the community at large. To be born into the family of a high chief, can be seen as an inherent privilege, as it simultaneously is accompanied with prestige and status. A young girl or boy therefore who comes from such a family, tends to succeed within the wider community of Samoa. The young girl enjoys the opportunity to become the *taupo* or princess per se of the village. The young boy has a claim to inherit his father’s title of a high-ranking chief, conjointly with the inherent status that it pertains. These social relations are important for the young person, as they can either benefit, or hinder them, from progressing successfully within the wider Samoa.

Mead is absolutely correct in suggesting that the relationship of the individual within his or her immediate family, is dependent upon one’s age and gender.<sup>36</sup> It is a difficult relationship for any outsider to Samoa to comprehend, due to the terminologies used. For example, a son to his mother is called a *tama-tama* (or a male child), and yet a son to his father is called *atali’i*. A daughter to her father becomes *afafine*, yet to her mother she is known as a *tama-teine* (female child). A brother to his sister is known as *tuagane*; the sister to her brother is *tuafafine*; a brother to his brother is called his *uso*; and likewise a sister to her sister also shares this same title of *uso* (simply, siblings of the same gender). The relationship lines commonly are referred back to the father of the family. The son is known as the father’s son or *atali’i*, rather than a male child to his mother, *tama-tama*. Likewise, the

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<sup>32</sup> Margaret Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa: A Study of Adolescence and Sex in Primitive Society* (New York: New American Library, 1949/1955<sup>8</sup>), 34.

<sup>33</sup> Mead, 1949/1955<sup>8</sup>, *Coming of Age in Samoa*, 36.

<sup>34</sup> Mead, 1949/1955<sup>8</sup>, *Coming of Age in Samoa*, 35.

<sup>35</sup> At the time of Mead’s study in Samoa, *matai* predominantly were male. However, the tradition in Samoa today has accepted female *matai*, and the inclusion of women into being donned the honour of a *matai* is gradually becoming acknowledged by most traditionalist Samoans.

<sup>36</sup> Mead, 1949/1955<sup>8</sup>, *Coming of Age in Samoa*, 163.

daughter is referred to as the *afafine* of her father (daughter to her father), rather than as a *tama-teine* (female child to her mother). The significance thus can be seen in linking the young person to the father's bloodline, again illustrating the patriarchal tendencies of the Samoan tradition. The importance of these family relationships, is that even though a *tama-tama* (male child to his mother) may be younger in years to an elder female sibling, he still is regarded as more significant than she is within the family, simply because he is a male child. If he also happens to be the eldest male child, then his status within the family reaches new heights. These are very complex and important relationship titles within the Samoan family, and Mead observed these relations quite adequately.

The age and gender of each child within the family are important, as these become the components where worth and value of the child are derived from. The senior siblings are respected by the younger ones; they carry all the responsibility in the daily chores and organisation of the household, and instruct and supervise the younger ones to carry out these tasks. The younger ones remain voiceless, and somewhat develop an inferior complex to their elder counterparts, whose authority they cannot question, regardless of how incompetent these elder siblings may appear. It is precisely this context of social relations in Samoa, as observed by Mead, that illuminates the problem addressed in this study: the inability of the younger generation to voice their opinions, as a product of the environment in their upbringing. The inabilities of the younger generations to voice their concerns, and their exclusion from any roles of responsibility, have carried forth to the Samoa of today. Consequently, the attitudes of the Samoan youth today towards their religion, and thus their spirituality, have been hindered by their voices and concerns not being heard within the Church. If we are to take Mead's work with all seriousness, history has continued to the Samoans of today, in this regard.

The most important finding regarding social relations as discovered by Mead, is the suggestion of promiscuity among young Samoan girls, and thus the rejection of Christianity's moral premium of chastity, by the Samoans.<sup>37</sup> According to Mead, this standpoint is absolutely meaningless to the locals and not at all possible in Samoa, given the ease that Samoan girls succumb to clandestine love affairs, and their attachment with many lovers. However, this contradicts Mead's earlier observation, of the taboo girls have towards their male counterparts.<sup>38</sup> The initial attitudes that a girl develops towards boys, are that of avoidance and antagonism. They are not permitted within Samoan traditions to be in the same room with boys, to be seen walking at night with boys, and this results in a shamed avoidance of boys all together. This practice starts from about eight or nine years of age, until the young girl reaches about thirteen or fourteen. Ironically, this shamed avoidance and the taboo of boys, consequently may be the reasons behind Mead's observation regarding the promiscuity of Samoan adolescent girls.

### 2.2.2 Education of Samoan Youth

The first and foremost institution of educational learning for Samoan young boys and girls, is found in the family setting. The family as a learning unit is not unique to the Samoan society. In the Ancient Jewish tradition, the family became the primary source of learning for young Jewish boys, where instructions about the Torah were meticulously taught, and memorised.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Mead, 1949/1955<sup>8</sup>, *Coming of Age in Samoa*, 70.

<sup>38</sup> Mead, 1949/1955<sup>8</sup>, *Coming of Age in Samoa*, 63.

<sup>39</sup> Cf Kevin E. Lawson, "Historical Foundations of Christian Education," in *Introducing Christian Education: Foundations for the Twenty-First Century* (ed. M. J. Anthony; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 17-25.

Even in the modern Western civilization, the family can still be seen as the primary institution for learning and instruction for both boys and girls.

According to Mead, Samoan children do not learn to work, through learning how to play, as found in most primitive peoples.<sup>40</sup> From the time the children are four or five, they learn to perform definite tasks, that contribute to the wellbeing of the adult community at large. Tasks like child minding, sweeping the house, fruit picking, reef fishing, and basic chores, are learnt by the Samoan children, and the allocation of these tasks depends on the child's age and competencies. So by the time when formal education is introduced into the lives of young Samoan children, they have already learnt many tasks that have real meaning in the adult lives of the community. Therefore in regards to Christian education, it is somewhat incorporated into the scheme of learning, at an early stage in the lives of the Samoan children. As religion is part and parcel of the adult community and adult life, the children are introduced into religion, from the very moment that they are taught definite tasks, which benefit the larger community.

### 2.3 The Context of Samoan Youth in the Twenty-First Century

We have determined in our discussions so far in this chapter, the role that the *fa'aSamoa* has played upon the spiritual development of the young people of Samoa. We have also reviewed literature that specifically has focused upon adolescents in Samoa, in the twentieth century. Our focus will now turn to the context that the young people find themselves, in the modern Samoa of today. As disclosed in the previous chapter, the present work primarily will be focusing upon the youth, and the Youth ministry in Samoa. But for the reason that the Church (CCCS) has extended its mission and membership to include the local *and* overseas' congregations, special consideration must be given to the Samoan youth within these parishes abroad. Our discussions therefore, will investigate the effects that the migration of Samoans into regions outside of Samoa has had, upon the spirituality and real life themes of youth both *in* Samoa, as well as second and third generation Samoan youngsters born and raised abroad.

#### 2.3.1 The Migration of Samoans Away from *Home*

The migration of Samoans into regions outside of Samoa, is a pattern that began from the middle of the twentieth century.<sup>41</sup> Even today, this pattern still continues. The travelling Samoans have migrated to New Zealand, Australia and also America in search of employment, education, and brighter future prospects, for not only their travelling family members, but also for families who have remained back in Samoa.<sup>42</sup> The courageous move into new lands has therefore not only been for personal economic and educational reasons, but it also serves the prosperity of extended family members in Samoa. Mead discovered the importance of the family to Samoans in her study (cf Ch2.2.1), and notably this tendency is carried forth to the situation of Samoans today. The emphasis upon the family is especially upheld by these immigrant Samoans, as they still live according to their traditional values, in

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<sup>40</sup> Mead, 1949/1955<sup>8</sup>, *Coming of Age in Samoa*, 149.

<sup>41</sup> Cf Matori Yamamoto, "Samoan Diaspora and Ceremonial Exchange," n.p. [cited 30 July 2008]. Online: <http://www.t.hosei.ac.jp/~matoriy/paper/migrant.htm>.

<sup>42</sup> Cf Helen Ware, "Pacific instability and youth bulges: the devil in the demography and the economy," n.p. [cited 16 November 2007]. Online: [http://www.apa.org.au/upload/2004-3E\\_Ware.pdf](http://www.apa.org.au/upload/2004-3E_Ware.pdf).

these foreign countries they are trying to set up as their new *home*.<sup>43</sup> Considering the communal culture, and the family emphasis and values that accompany the *fa'a Samoa*, this tendency of the Samoans who have relocated abroad, is to be expected. In the process of leaving their homes in Samoa, and trying to set up a new place they can call home in foreign lands, the immigrant Samoans have been posed by many challenges. Some of these challenges facing immigrants worldwide are acknowledged by Stephen Castles and Alastair Davidson, in their discussions about the migration patterns of immigrants.

The interesting points that Castles and Davidson raise relevant to the migration patterns of Samoans, are found in the concepts of *home-building* and *place-making*. The *home* can be identified as a place that most people value, where there exist feelings of belonging, and a sense of security, and where the acceptable values and behaviours are upheld.<sup>44</sup> However, the idea of one's home is not only limited to a building as such, but this can extend its boundaries to include a community, a village, a state, and even a nation. The home becomes the venue where outsiders are kept out, and those who belong to that home are let in. For the immigrant Samoans, *home* is Samoa, and leaving home means the challenge of setting up a new home, in New Zealand, Australia and America.

An important aspect connected to one's home, is the concept of *house rules* suggested by Feher and Heller and noted by Castles and Davidson – these house rules are in conflict with the traditions and cultures that the immigrants bring with them.<sup>45</sup> The point is that with migration, it means that one leaves one's home behind, and takes up residence in someone else's home. House rules refer to the traditions, practises and acceptable norms and behaviours that help the members within any home, to function harmoniously. Clashes therefore arise from the intrusion into someone else's home, a home that already has its own set of house rules. The intruders, in this case the immigrants, work towards building up a place they can call home again, in these new and foreign lands.

The concept of *home-building* suggested by Hage and noted by Castles and Davidson, involves “the building of a feeling of being at home, using affective building blocks based on four key feelings: security, familiarity, community and a sense of possibility.”<sup>46</sup> Within the setting up of the new home, the *sense of possibility* allows for the new immigrants to leave the comfort, security and protection of the home, in search of employment, education and integration into the new environment. The introduction of materialistic symbols, including food items from one's homeland into the new home, serves the purpose of re-igniting nostalgic feelings towards the home that had been left behind.<sup>47</sup> It also produces a safe haven where the immigrants can return to after searching for possibilities, in their new located countries of residence.<sup>48</sup>

*Place-making* involves the extension of the concept of home-building, into the surrounding neighbourhoods, and environments of the immigrants.<sup>49</sup> This however is only made possible, when there appear to be patterns of the clustering together of certain ethnic groups into particular suburbs and neighbourhoods. For the case of the Samoans who have migrated to Australia, the outer west, and south west suburbs of Sydney can be classified as

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<sup>43</sup> Cf Anthony Giddens, *Runaway World: How Globalisation is Reshaping our Lives* (London: Profile Books, 2002), 58.

<sup>44</sup> Stephen Castles and Alastair Davidson, *Citizenship and Migration: Globalization and the politics of belonging* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), 130.

<sup>45</sup> Castles and Davidson, 2000, *Citizenship and Migration*, 130.

<sup>46</sup> Castles and Davidson, 2000, *Citizenship and Migration*, 131.

<sup>47</sup> Cf Charles R. Foster, “The Changing Family,” in *Religious Education as Social Transformation* (ed. A.J. Moore; Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1989), 37-65.

<sup>48</sup> Castles and Davidson, 2000, *Citizenship and Migration*, 131.

<sup>49</sup> Castles and Davidson, 2000, *Citizenship and Migration*, 131.

such a cluster, where the concept of place-making has become quite visible to the general public.<sup>50</sup> For the situation of the emigrant Samoans into New Zealand, the southern suburbs of Auckland demonstrate the concept of place-making. In America, the clusters of Samoans are fairly widespread, however, generally the San Francisco and Los Angeles regions are where many Samoans have made their homes away from Samoa. So for these emigrant Samoans who have made the move abroad in search of possibilities for their families, they have had to adapt to many changes. The youngsters within these situations also have been confronted by challenges on many fronts.

### 2.3.2 Home-Building and Place-Making Through Worship

Commonly as one of the initial transitions of setting up home in these new countries, the search for somewhere that these emigrant Samoans can worship takes high priority. It is a practise that is common amongst many ethnic groups.<sup>51</sup> Religion becomes an important form of expression for their ethnic identities, to many immigrants.<sup>52</sup> The travelling Samoans are no exception. For many who have made the trip to these foreign countries, searching for a Samoan Church for the purpose of worship becomes a common event. As indicated previously, with the *fa'aSamoa* being shaped by the Christian tradition (cf Ch2.1), Christianity itself becomes a way that many immigrant Samoans, can still feel connected to the home that they had left behind. It helps them in settling into a new place, to worship together with other Samoans, who also are trying to fit into the new cultures and environments that surround them. They share the same faith, the same language, the same foods, and the same search for possibilities for their individual, and extended families. Fortunately for many Samoans who have migrated in recent years, the Church (CCCS) has parishes in the major cities in Australia, New Zealand and America for them to attend. Even though the distances to the nearest Samoan Church may be significant for some of these immigrants, they are still prepared to make the effort to attend Church. The situation was quite different though, when these migrations began around the middle of the twentieth century, with no parishes of the Church (CCCS) set up, at that time, in these foreign countries.

### 2.3.3 Contemporary Youth Culture

The contemporary culture of today is such that commonly large corporations' aim to market and profit from the youth culture of any context, and Samoan youth are no exception. They relegate the youth in general, into becoming passive consumers within the market economy, by drawing upon the urban youth culture of adolescents. The images of what it means to be cool, as depicted by MTV and trend setters of the modern era – these are disclosed by David White as cultural forces that make up this urban youth culture.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, multi-billion dollar corporations spend large sectors of their budgets to determine ways how they can tap into this youth market. Young people become objects of economic markets, and they become passive consumers. The intellect of the youth and their inherent gifts from God are not tapped

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<sup>50</sup> Cf Cited 31 March 2008. Online: [http://www.pacificyouth.nsw.gov.au/comm\\_today.htm](http://www.pacificyouth.nsw.gov.au/comm_today.htm).

<sup>51</sup> Cf Castles and Davidson, 2000, *Citizenship and Migration*, 134.

<sup>52</sup> Castles and Davidson, 2000, *Citizenship and Migration*, 138.

<sup>53</sup> David F White, *Practicing Discernment with Youth: A Transformative Youth Ministry Approach* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2005), 56.

into, as the values, norms, habits, and imaginations of the youth, are shaped by contemporary culture, in particular the market economy.<sup>54</sup>

In relation to the Samoan youth, there are many forces working upon the Samoan youngsters today, both in Samoa, as well as for the Samoan youth abroad. The underlying tradition (*fa'aSamoa*), is still acknowledged and upheld by the youth. But on Samoa, influences from abroad are working against this – from the media; through information and technology; from education; from the modern and global world; and from Samoan youth from abroad, who frequently visit the islands. Therefore, to identify a definable Samoan youth culture at present is somewhat difficult, as many different faces of Samoan youngsters can be observed. Some have identified themselves with the hip-hop culture<sup>55</sup> that they see on MTV and through the media, and thus have perceived this image as being *cool*. They even speak English with borrowed American accents, to identify with this imported culture. Others are more conservative in favour of the Samoan tradition, but you still may see tints of the western way of life, usually in what they wear, and the values they hold. The youth are becoming more individualistic, seeking advancement in education and employment through personal initiative, for their own stability first, and then only for their families second. The values of the youngsters have changed, from before the time the Samoans had any contact with the LMS missionaries.<sup>56</sup>

The Samoan youth abroad have (even) more of an identity crisis, in trying to identify themselves with their Samoan heritage. This crisis is the result of many cultures and forces working upon the youngsters abroad. The Samoan Church is commonly one of the remaining domains where these Samoan youngsters abroad, can identify themselves as being Samoan. Even in the home, the Samoan language is used less and less, and the influences of the western way of life, and modern living, are adhered to.

For the situation of the youth in Samoa today, the contemporary culture is such that the young people are attracted to the urban youth culture depicted through MTV, the internet, trends set by celebrities, and the market economy, that have hit the islands in recent years. The Samoan youth today have thrown away the traditional clothes of the past,<sup>57</sup> in favour of the hip-hop street wear of the West, particularly borrowed from the United States, New Zealand and Australia. Long full length jeans, and various stylish Nike and Adidas basketball and casual shoes, are commonly seen around the main township of Samoa. This is quite odd, considering the extreme heat and humidity one can experience in the tropics. Open air sandals are replaced for closed shoes that match the new attire, and it is somewhat becoming a popular trend amongst the Samoan youngsters. Over recent decades, it had been quite easy to spot travellers into Samoa from abroad, namely Samoans born in Australia, New Zealand and the US. But with the growing trends, especially in the clothing and the general appearances of young people, it is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish between the *overseas' Samoans*,<sup>58</sup> and the local youngsters.

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<sup>54</sup> White, 2005, *Practicing Discernment with Youth*, 39-40.

<sup>55</sup> Cf This can be illustrated by the “gangsta” image, as disclosed in the interview with Elisapeta (see Ch4.3.2.3 response line no.16); also disclosed in the interview with Tony (see Ch4.3.2.2 response line no.66).

<sup>56</sup> Cf Cote, 1997, “A Social History of Youth in Samoa,” 231.

<sup>57</sup> Traditional wear for males is a cloth that is wrapped around the body from the waist down, about 2metres in length and 1metre in width. They come in a single colour, or an array of floral and pastel colours, commonly made from cotton or microfiber material. A very practical solution to the humidity and heat found in tropical Samoa, that averages temperatures of 27 degrees Celcius during the dry season.

<sup>58</sup> I have used this term commonly placed upon Samoans who were born and raised abroad and frequently visit the islands, in search of their true Samoan identities. Their knowledge and pronunciation of the local language is quite strange, and it is no hidden mystery the influences from the west that they import into Samoa.

In addition, many of the issues that accompany the modern and global Samoa of today, have also began to surface. Issues like drugs and alcohol, teenage pregnancy, abuse, sexuality, suicide, and identity formation – these are becoming real issues in the lives of the youngsters, and these issues are beginning to dictate, the contemporary urban culture, of the Samoan youth today.

## 2.4 Summary

In this chapter, we have reviewed the *fa'aSamoa*, and the role that it plays upon the spirituality of Samoan youth. From our discussions, we can conclude that there are both positives, as well as limitations, presented by the Samoan culture and tradition, upon the lives of Samoan youth today. The relationships of the Samoan family, the Samoan household, and the education of the Samoan youth (as Mead discovered), have been frameworks that have assisted in our review of the contemporary contexts of the Samoan youth today. Finally, we have reviewed the migration patterns of Samoans away from home, and the way that these have impacted upon the Samoan youth. Upon consideration of the contemporary youth culture, together with our discussions in this chapter, we are able to answer our sub-question two: *What are the spiritual needs of the Samoan youth in the Church (CCCS) - both in Samoa and abroad - and what are their real life issues and themes?* In essence, we can conclude, that these include issues relating to the autonomy of the Samoan youngsters, both in Samoa and abroad, within the social relations of the family, the community, and also within the Church. Issues that also surface from the contemporary urban culture of Samoan youth, including drugs and alcohol, teenage pregnancy, abuse, sexuality, suicide, and identity formation – these issues need to be met for the Samoan youth today. Moreover, the need for the Samoan youngsters to understand, and to relate, to the teachings received through the CE and Youth Ministry of the Church. Finally, the need for the Samoan youngsters to participate actively, and willingly, in the worship, liturgy, and affairs of the Church. Our discussions therefore in the following chapter, will draw valuable insights, from several CE theories, and Youth Ministry used predominantly in the west. These insights will help us to determine, how the Church can work towards meeting the spiritual needs, and real life themes of its young people in the Church today.

## CHAPTER 3

### RE-CONTEXTUALISING A CHRISTIAN EDUCATION THEORY / YOUTH MINISTRY FOR SAMOAN YOUTH

For any theory of Christian Education, and Youth Ministry, to be re-contextualised effectively to meet the spiritual needs and real life themes of youth in Samoa, it first must adhere to the emotional, moral and faith developmental stages as outlined in Chapter One. It must also consider the contexts of the Samoan youth both in Samoa and abroad, within the design and planning of its curriculum and programs (as discussed in Chapter Two). For the Samoan youth today, the opportunities to learn about God may be seen as being limited to the context of religious instructions offered by the Church. However, education can also present itself in a more social, and communal setting. Education therefore, is not only present in the sense of formal instructions by the Church, but also entails non-intended learning. The following discussions will begin, by first focusing upon the three-fold direction of education (Christian education) as disclosed by Karl Nipkow.<sup>59</sup> Discussions will then allude to theologising with young people, followed by a review of *Participatory Learning theory*, and the education of the soul. These specific theories are of interest to the present research, as they all are subject (youth) orientated. Each of these theories offers many elements and insights, that may benefit the situation of Samoan youth in the Church today. However, collectively, they have the potential to reshape, and revive the Youth Ministry, and CE administered by Church, to meet the spiritual needs, and real life themes of Samoan youth today.

#### 3.1 Three Directions of Education

As mentioned above, Karl Nipkow distinguishes three directions in education, notably an intentional, a functional and an extensional direction of education. First and foremost, the primary meaning of education is its *intentional* direction, as found in the classical form of methodically planned or *explicit* teaching. This direction as discussed by Nipkow, can be connected with formal Christian education, in particular, with the teachings of the Church through its formal CE curriculum, catechisms, as well as through newsletters and the written curriculum. In regards to the situation of Samoan youth, this direction of education (through the *Autalavou* – Youth groups, and through its CE theory) has evolved very little, since the Church (CCCS) became independent from the London Missionary Society in 1962.<sup>60</sup> The

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<sup>59</sup> Karl Ernst Nipkow, *God, Human Nature and Education for Peace* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003), 144.

<sup>60</sup> Auatama Esera, "Christian Education Through Autalavou in the Ministry of the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa: A Critical Evaluation of the Curriculum," (unpublished BD Thesis; Suva: Pacific Theological College, 1993), pg vi.

argument therefore can be made, that this is one major reason why the CCCS must rethink its CE theory and Youth Ministry today, to ensure they are applicable, and relevant, to the real lives of the Samoan youth today.

Secondly, is the *functional* direction of education. It involves the *non-intended*, or *implicit* dimension of Christian education. Nipkow gives the example of an infant in a household, learning the non-verbal cues of relationship formation between father and mother, and stereotypical behaviour based on gender relations within the family.<sup>61</sup> For the situation in Samoa, this functional education can take on many forms. The Samoan people are communal in many ways – sharing households (normally two or more ‘nuclear’ families within the single household), sharing resources, and sharing belief and value systems. These are all dimensions within the lives of the Samoan youth where they can apply, and test, the teachings they have learnt in CE administered by the Church. It becomes the case of the application, and justification of not only what they have learnt, but more importantly, the inherent beliefs and values shared within the household, and passed down through the generations. The evening devotions in the Samoan household, which are a common practise of all Samoans (both in Samoa and abroad), can be identified as representing the implicit dimension, or the functional direction of education.

Thirdly, is the *extensional* direction of education, or the *indirect* dimension of education. This particular direction of education, can be simplified as a practical application of the intentional dimension of education: applying what has been learned in the primary stage of education, into one’s real life situation. As the name suggests, it becomes an *extension* of education into one’s life. This can be seen as one of Nipkow’s goals in relation to the education of peace, his attempt to integrate all three directions of education.<sup>62</sup>

In relation to the three directions of education, Nipkow focuses on the integration of all three directions of education. This integration can be considered, as a most urgent task for the CCCS at present. The intentional and functional directions of CE, I believe are already interdependent upon each other. However, both need to be redeveloped further, to meet the spiritual needs and real life themes of Samoan youth today. In addition, the extensional direction of education could be identified as a possible shortcoming of CE taught by the Church, for its young people both in Samoa, and abroad. Simply, the application of what the Samoan youth have learnt in the intentional, and functional directions of education, into their real life situations.

Our discussions we now review literature concerning *Theologising with Young People*, to ascertain how this theory of Christian education, together with the *Three directions of education*, may be considered applicable, and relevant, in relation to the Samoan youth today.

### 3.2 Theologising with Young People

The concept of learning about God, involves knowledge that is centred not only around, and about God, but also (and more importantly), about how young people can easily translate this discernment into their real life activities.<sup>63</sup> It is an issue that Christian Educators must bear in mind, if they are to successfully invoke spiritual awakening, in the ones whom they are

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<sup>61</sup> Nipkow, 2003, *God, Human Nature and Education for Peace*, 144.

<sup>62</sup> Nipkow, 2003, *God, Human Nature and Education for Peace*, 144.

<sup>63</sup> Terence Copley, “Young People, Biblical Narrative and ‘Theologizing’: A UK Perspective,” *Religious Education* 100:3 (July 2005): 254-265. Cited 26 March 2008. Online: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00344080591001924>.

teaching about God. Learning about God can be considered as a form of art<sup>64</sup>, for the reason that the Christian educator must adapt tools similar to being a skilful artist: with creative use of colours and paint strokes, the artist must select the right combinations of both, to illustrate the desired effect; the artist must also find inspiration to begin the process of art drawing and painting. For the Christian educator, the task becomes one of deciding the right mixture of information about God to be taught to the youth, and selecting the appropriate environment or context (the right canvas to be used) where this information can be easily understood and construed by the youth. Finally, the Christian educator must seek inspiration for any teachings about God, and, with God-talk and God-imagery as the subject matter for instruction, divine inspiration becomes a most worthy starting point.

The point is that knowledge alone, is not necessarily the single most important goal of CE and religious instructions of the Church – but rather, what does this learned knowledge of God, make the youth *feel* about themselves, about others, and about God? A learned knowledge of God is indeed an important dimension of an individual's life, but equally as important, is the affective element that this learned knowledge of God plays upon the individual. To understand this point more, the proposal is directed towards the concept of theologising successfully with young people.

This brings us to the present discussion of theologising with young people. How then can Christian educators paint a picture of God, that brings about significant meaning to the real life activities of young people? In particular to the situation in Samoa, how can Christian educators successfully theologise the Gospel message, God-talk, and God-imagery with the Samoan youth? To answer this, I shall explore the notion of *Ordinary Theology* as proposed by Jeff Astley.

### 3.2.1 Ordinary Theology

The definition of what constitutes an ordinary theology is given by Astley as being:

*“The theology and theologising of Christians who have received little or no theological education of a scholarly, academic or systematic kind.”*<sup>65</sup>

In short, it refers to the open discussions of those who partake in God-talk reflections, by ordinary persons, who have not received formal theological training, or scholarly theological education. God-talk in this case can be referred as a form of discourse about speaking, and reflecting on God, by both theologians and laity alike. Throughout Astley's essay, his main argument, is that ordinary theology needs to be studied more extensively, to fully understand the lay-person or ordinary person's view of God, and the images of God that Christianity has learned, and taught *about* and *of* God. The idea that the perspectives of what God really means to the ordinary person, based on formal and informal education of the Christian – this should entail what doing theology is all about. Although Astley's concentration of ordinary theology has focused particularly on the ordinary adult Christian, a close parallel can be drawn, to youth in general.

To place this argument into the discussion of theologising with young people, it may be put forth, that young people are prime candidates for being *ordinary* people. The notion that young people are undergoing a period of adolescence that sees changes in their developmental makeup (cf Ch1.3), the ideologies of youth, and thus their perspectives about

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<sup>64</sup> Cf Jeff Astley, *Ordinary Theology: Looking, Listening and learning in theology* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2002), 58.

<sup>65</sup> Astley, 2002, *Ordinary Theology*, 56.

and of God, can be identified as being *ordinary*. It becomes a period of uncertainty amongst the youth, where they question many things, including their pre-understandings of the Gospel message: a period where the devoted young Christian, may even take on the *ordinary non-believing* doubts and scepticism about God, from their *ordinary non-believing* peers.

One of Astley's concerns of theologising with ordinary people, requires putting the *learner first*, amongst all things. It involves treating the learner as a whole person, complete in heart and mind, where significant learning constitutes the learner perceiving the subject matter as relevant for his or her needs and real life activities.<sup>66</sup> Theologising with youth therefore means to treat young people as whole beings (in terms of education), with the capacity for affectivity (feeling), and discernment about and of God, and the mental maturity to translate these *feelings* or *experiences about* and *of* God, into their real life affairs. Christian Education and educators can draw on this *learner first* approach to education, in addition to the many directions that Christian education has on young people.

In terms of Samoan youth abroad as well as youth in Samoa, they may be considered to fit Astley's profile of being *ordinary* youngsters. They are exposed to feeling ordinary within the family, through the Samoan tradition, and also in the setting of the Church. The conceptual framework of *learner first*, this may benefit the Samoan youth to translate their biblical knowledge, into successfully theologising the Gospel message, God-talk, and God-imagery, into their real life affairs. Christian educators in the Church need to consider this learner first approach in the teaching process, drawing out the gifts, and potentials, that many of Samoan youth are capable of. To assist the Samoan youngster in successfully theologising the Gospel message, the Gospel needs to be taught in a way that can easily be understood, by these ordinary youngsters. Such a method that may serve this purpose, would be to re-contextualise the metaphors found in the Bible, to meet the needs and contexts of Samoan youth today.

### 3.2.2 Re-Contextualising Metaphors

Young people in general require a special language to communicate with each other. This commonly is the case with the contemporary youth culture, in any given context. For the situation of Samoan youth, the colloquial *young peoples' language* today, often includes the borrowed hip-hop gangsta language, that is heard and learnt through the media, movies and the internet (cf Ch2.3). It becomes a way where young people who share the same values, interests, and contemporary culture, can connect to each other. Similarly, in the religious setting, metaphoric and symbolic language, allows youngsters the ability to understand certain concepts expressed through the biblical narratives. Understanding these metaphors, transforms the social interactions of the youth with each other, and the faith community. More importantly, discernment helps the youth to grasp abstract words and concepts.<sup>67</sup> In order to assist the youngsters in understanding the metaphors presented in the Bible, re-contextualising metaphors into various symbols, imagery, and language suitable to any particular context, may prove helpful.

There are some metaphors found in the Bible that simply are too difficult for youth, especially the youth in Samoa, to understand. An example of such a metaphor, is that of *Jesus as the Good Shepherd*. The difficulty in understanding this metaphor for youth in Samoa, is due to the reason that Samoa has never been exposed to the breeding, caring and the

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<sup>66</sup> Astley, 2002, *Ordinary Theology*, 18.

<sup>67</sup> Cf Gary L Sapp, "Adolescent Thinking and Understanding," in *Handbook of Youth Ministry* (ed. D. Ratcliff and J. A. Davies; Birmingham: R.E.P Books, 1991), 70-96.

maintenance of sheep. Samoa has never bred sheep throughout its history. All knowledge of sheep, and thus sheep-caring and nurturing for Samoans, is only determined through books, and the media. How then can Christian educators in Samoa re-contextualise this particular metaphor, so that youngsters in Samoa can understand the image of Jesus, as being a *good* shepherd? To answer this, I have presented a re-contextualised metaphor of Jesus, appropriate and relevant to the Samoan context, as the *Ultimate Carer* of pigs.<sup>68</sup> By using an animal used as a commodity of trade, gift-bearing, and value to the Samoan family, youngsters in Samoa can understand what it entails to be a good shepherd, by comparing this concept to being a good carer of pigs. The comparison therefore, is that Jesus as the *Good Shepherd* is re-contextualised for the Samoan context, as the best, or the *ultimate* carer of pigs.

Theologising with youngsters has to take into consideration the conceptual frameworks of ordinary theology, as well as to re-contextualise metaphors, to suit the spiritual needs, and particular contexts of the youth. Our investigations will now focus upon a theory that may also prove beneficial, towards the spiritual development of Samoan youth today - the theory of *Participatory Learning*.

### 3.3 Participatory Learning Theory

Religion in Samoa arguably can be identified, as *tradition* and *convention* (social norms), working collectively in the community of faith. Within this community of faith, are found the practices, the traditions, and the doctrines of the Church, all participating in everyday life. However, it becomes problematic when tradition becomes an obstacle itself, as presently is the case for Samoan youth both in Samoa and abroad (cf Ch2.1). The participation of the Samoan youngsters in the faith community is merely an act of *obedience* (to their elders and parents), as opposed to *active* and *freewill* participation. The reason is that the Samoan tradition restricts the Samoan youth into having little or no say at all, in matters directly affecting their lives (cf Ch2.1). The *fa'aSamoa* (Samoan tradition and culture) limits the Samoan youth in many ways, discouraging any inclination to autonomy, on behalf of the youngster.

*A Participatory Learning Theory* as discussed by Chris Hermans, is a theory that possibly may be adopted for the situation of the youth in Samoa, as well as for the Samoan youth in the overseas' parishes of the Church (CCCS). It has the potential of providing a more applicable framework for CE and ministry for the Samoan youth, in the context of the modern Samoa today. The basis of this theory as noted by Hermans, includes four premises suggested by Russian learning psychologist, Lev Vygotsky – the developmental, social, mediated, and meaningful premises in learning.<sup>69</sup> The theoretical framework of the *Participatory learning theory* means that these four premises in learning are integrated, and as a result, they must be administered collectively. Our discussions to follow will investigate these premises, and the applicability of each of these premises for the situation of the CE theory, and ministry for the Samoan youth both in Samoa, and abroad.

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<sup>68</sup> Alesana Fosi Pala'amo, "Jesus, the Ultimate Carer of Pigs: A Samoan Contextual Christology", (unpublished; Apia: Malua Theological College, 2004).

<sup>69</sup> Chris A M Hermans, *Participatory Learning: Religious Education in a Globalizing Society* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 269.

### 3.3.1 Developmental Learning

The first premise of *Participatory learning theory*, is identified as *developmental learning*. It does not entirely coincide with Piaget's (and others) concept of human development, which suggests development as being a natural process, in that if there are sufficient stimuli in the child's environment, cognitive development will naturally follow<sup>70</sup>. Developmental learning suggests that cognitive processes can be understood in terms of their development, namely their origin, and the change that it brings about in the human psyche.<sup>71</sup> It means that in order to understand the cognitive processes involved in human development, one must look for its origins in *history, culture, and institutional practices*, in which human beings are embedded. Relating this premise of developmental learning to CE, it means that all mental activity within the religious sphere, cannot be understood without interaction between the developing person and the religious practices, that incorporate the religious stories, symbols, rituals, customs, and roles of the individual person. If we then are to identify the mental development of Samoan youth, we must first investigate their origins in terms of their history, culture, and institutional practices. This very point actually suggests, how one could re-contextualise *participatory learning* into the situation of Samoan youth today.

Developmental learning, would therefore incorporate a discussion of the origins of the culture the Samoan youth are embedded in, as discussed earlier in light of the *fa'aSamoa* (cf Ch2.1). It would also involve an investigation into the institutional practices that the Samoan youth participate in, in regards to their spirituality. Finally, it would incorporate a close analysis of the current Youth ministry and CE theory in place, for the Samoan youth today (see Ch4.1).

The premise of developmental learning, offers a rather applicable method of explaining the development of any group of people, that incorporates the culture and traditions of the group, as well as working across any, and all cultural boundaries. For this reason, I find the premise of developmental learning beneficial to the present research, as it may help to suggest a theory of CE applicable for the Samoan youth today. Furthermore, developmental learning offers two teaching frameworks that may work effectively for Samoan youth, frameworks known as *scaffolding* and *appropriation*.

*Scaffolding* refers to the analogy of learning, as the erection of a framework (by the teacher or adult) to support or guide the pupil in the process of learning. It involves offering the learner enough support required to complete any particular task. Recent discussions on this teaching framework of developmental learning, suggests a passive role that the learner plays, in the teacher-learner relationship. However, it has been argued that the learner is not in fact passive throughout the process of *scaffolding*, as the learner requires an active participation, in order to complete any task that is given.<sup>72</sup> The learner is given an array of meanings (for example, various biblical stories), and they must compose for themselves the most relevant, and applicable meanings, that suit their own situation and context at any given time. This I believe is where the Samoan youth feel frustrated in the present CE in place today – Christian educators are erecting the *scaffolding* necessary in the learning process, the problem is that these scaffolds remain, throughout the whole learning process. The Samoan youth are not given the opportunity to think for themselves, and to learn for themselves, but rather are dictated of what they should be learning from the whole process. In this regard, the youth are clearly seen as passive participants in the learning process at present, but this itself carries forth from the culture and the tradition of the *fa'aSamoa* (cf Ch2.1).

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<sup>70</sup> Hermans, 2003, *Participatory Learning*, 280.

<sup>71</sup> Hermans, 2003, *Participatory Learning*, 282.

<sup>72</sup> Hermans, 2003, *Participatory Learning*, 304.

*Appropriation* is a teaching framework within developmental learning, that may help alleviate the passive participation of Samoan youth today, in the learning process. The aim of this framework, is for the learner to develop the ability to regulate the learning process, him or herself. It means that the learner must be able to monitor and rectify all learning functions before, during, and at the conclusion of the learning process<sup>73</sup>. It requires the learner to consider his or her prior knowledge into performing any given task, and then combine this knowledge with any new information that is learnt, and then finally, to learn how to think for him or herself in order to complete the given task. It means that the scaffolding metaphor has functioned its role as the initial support, but when the learner is confident enough to stand unsupported, then this scaffolding is no longer required. This appropriation of the learning process is absent in Samoa at present, but it is a process that could possibly appeal to many Samoan young people today. It may empower the Samoan youth to think for themselves, to fend for themselves, and it will allow them the autonomy into what they really believe and feel. It may finally give them the motivation to actively participate in the institutional practices of the Church, rather than to participate out of obedience, and loyalty, to their elders.

### 3.3.2 Social Learning

The second premise of *Participatory learning theory*, is identified as *social learning*. The process of learning is embedded in the social settings of the learner. The father, who reads the Bible to his son at bedtime, is a different setting to the reading of the bible during Sunday worship. For this reason, learning cannot be defined entirely by the cultural, or religious tools that are used in the process (the stories, symbols, rituals, customs etc). The learning process must also take into consideration, the different social settings that the young people are located in.

The situation of Samoan youth is such that there are various social settings that affect the learning process of the youngsters, in regards to CE and Youth ministry. The first setting is found in the family. It is common that evening devotions take place every day, around dusk, in the typical Samoan household. It is a quiet time for singing, prayer, and reflections on the biblical narratives. For the Samoan immigrants abroad, some households still attempt this traditional practise. The challenge however, is that work and sporting commitments for members of the household, mean that the youth, and money-earners for the household miss out on this devotional time. In Samoa itself, this practice is still observed in many households, but it is slowly losing its value. Many who are working find it difficult to return back home before dusk, as responsibilities at work prevent them from participating in this practise. Autonomy is taking dominance over the tradition of old in Samoa, as many Samoan youth are committing themselves first to their work, education, and sporting responsibilities, ahead of allowing the time for one of the traditional practises of Samoans. As a result, many young people today are not exposed to this social setting (an example of this premise of social learning), that has taught the Samoan youth about reverence, and worship to God, throughout the generations.

The framework of social learning is such that the learners not only learn from the teacher of Christian education, but also from each other. The circle of participants therefore of any learning process, may be extended from the individual teacher-pupil relationship, to include the collective of all the pupils, sharing in the learning process. This becomes quite important in any setting of community, and in the case of the faith community, it means that

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<sup>73</sup> Hermans, 2003, *Participatory Learning*, 307.

everyone within the faith community learns and develops their faith, not only from the formal teachings of the religious setting, but also from each other.

### 3.3.3 Mediated Learning

The third premise of *Participatory learning theory*, is known as *mediated learning*. This framework requires the student to learn the mental tools necessary, in order to transfer knowledge that is learnt, to interpret, and give meaning to various symbols in any given context. The way in which this is achieved, is through the use of an expert mediator, who teaches the student how to transfer knowledge. In relation to CE, it means that the student must learn how to transfer what they have learnt, and apply this knowledge, into different situations and contexts. To give meanings to the symbols, rituals, stories, and traditions found in the religious practices they partake in, into the different contexts that they find themselves in.

For the case of the Samoan youth, learning becomes the ability to transfer the knowledge of the bible stories, into their everyday life situations. The expert mediators in this case, become the parish minister and his wife, who are the primary Christian educators for the youth in Samoa, as well as the youth in the parishes of the Church abroad. The Samoan youth arguably have a sound knowledge of the biblical narratives, as this has been a focal point of Christian education in the Church (CCCS) for many years now (see Ch4.1). The *affective level*, or *emotional* dimension of this knowledge, is somewhat neglected. How does the young person feel spiritually when the story of the Good Samaritan is recited? What implications does such a story have on the real life issues of the young person? These are examples of questions that may generate affective responses on part of the youth, to help them apply the knowledge they have learnt in CE, into their real life situations.

### 3.3.4 Meaningful Learning

The fourth and final premise of *Participatory learning theory*, is identified as *meaningful learning*. This mode of learning has four main characteristics as discussed by Hermans<sup>74</sup>. Firstly, the contents of learning are embedded in a historical, cultural, and social context, and meaningful learning results from the participation in social-cultural practices. Secondly, learning becomes meaningful, when it is found to be applicable to the different situations in any given context. Thirdly, learning becomes meaningful, when it includes the interrelationship of the cognitive, affective, motivational, and behavioural learning processes. Finally, learning is considered meaningful, when one's social identity is taken into account.

The most important aspect of this premise of meaningful learning applicable to the situation of the Samoan youth today, is the concept of alienation, that occurs when CE itself becomes irrelevant to the real life situations of the young people. In particular, when the learning is (i) unrelated to the everyday realities in a particular domain; (ii) learning is not connected with the student's prior knowledge, and the application to future, and new situations, is unclear; (iii) learning is reduced to one of the four learning processes – cognitive, affective, motivational, behavioural – rather than incorporating all four dimensions; (iv) learning is unrelated to the social identity of the learner.<sup>75</sup> This sums up the situation at present for Samoan youth quite sufficiently, for the following reasons: the teachings received

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<sup>74</sup> Hermans, 2003, *Participatory Learning*, 326.

<sup>75</sup> Hermans, 2003, *Participatory Learning*, 326.

from CE, are unrelated to the everyday activities of the Samoan youth; the application of knowledge to their real life issues is minimal; learning is reduced mainly to the cognitive dimension of youth, at the neglect of the affective, motivational and behavioural dimensions; and finally, the social identity of the Samoan youngster is neglected. The call for Christian educators in Samoa today, as well as those in parishes of the Church abroad, is to work around these limitations, and design curriculum that may be considered as *meaningful* to the real lives of the Samoan youngsters.

The theory of participatory learning, has many advantages for the objective of our research. It most certainly has the potential to be applied into the context of CE in Samoa, as the premises of developmental, social, mediated, and meaningful learning, illustrate the advantages of implementing such a theory. Participatory learning is such a theory that if administered correctly in Samoa, the result would be a more applicable, and a refreshed outlook on learning, appealing for the youth. The youth may then develop the necessary mental tools to think for themselves, and to develop their own learning processes, where the scaffolding erected by the Christian educators in the Church can be removed, without the fear of collapsing the structure that it had been supporting. With this new way of applying what they have learnt to their real life situations, the youth can give their own meanings to the symbols, and stories, they have learnt in their participation in church affairs. But more importantly, participatory learning theory gives them the forum to express their new found freedom, in a liberated way of open thinking. It is envisaged, that this theory may guide the Samoan youth both abroad and in Samoa, to successfully develop into young adults mentally, religiously, and more importantly, spiritually.

Participatory learning theory in all its positives, is not enough on its own to suggest a re-contextualised CE theory for the Samoan youth today. The same can be observed for the concept of theologising with young people. For this, our discussions will allude to another concept, that may prove helpful, in re-contextualising a CE theory and Youth Ministry, for Samoan youth today – the concept of the education of the soul.

### **3.4 Education of the Soul**

In determining how the concept of educating the soul can benefit Youth ministry for any given context, David F White's *Practicing Discernment with Youth: A Transformative Youth Ministry Approach*<sup>76</sup> provides many answers. It discloses various methods of successfully engaging youth in the programmes, and activities administered through ministry. It also provides valuable insights into how youth ministry can guide the youth into becoming active participants, and 'Disciples of Christ'. Even though White's discussions are focused upon American adolescents, the methods disclosed have the potential to transcend cultural boundaries, and limitations. Youth ministry in Samoa for example, already practises some of these methods (cf Ch4.1), and this demonstrates the *across-cultures* element to many of the propositions suggested by White.

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<sup>76</sup> David F White, *Practicing Discernment with Youth: A Transformative Youth Ministry Approach*. (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2005).

### 3.4.1 The Gifts of God as found in the Youth Today

The *Gifts of God* as found in the youth, becomes a very important element in White's discussions. It means drawing upon the inherent gifts from God, in young people – their heart, mind, soul and body – to relocate their worth and esteem, back into the urban youth culture of which that are placed. The shortcomings of the urban youth culture, are that none of these gifts are tapped into, so that the youth become passive consumers within the market economy (cf Ch2.3). But the youth have so much more to offer the community, if only they were allowed to do so. They have the potential to heal the wounds of the world that we all live in, if they were guided correctly, into how they can draw upon their inherent gifts from God within.<sup>77</sup>

White's criticism of the education system, also follows this line of thought of not utilising the young peoples' full potentials. Education (secular) gears the youth to the need of attaining a good education, for securing a good job in the future. The aim therefore, falls in line with contemporary culture – a good education, leads to a good job with a decent salary, that means a greater buying power, and this should lead to a more comfortable quality of life. However, it does not prepare the youth into how they should respond in a world that needs healing, more importantly, how they themselves can reflect the love of God, into the world. The goal in life it seems, is to secure a good education, in order to become materialistically viable in the market economy.

In addition, White is critical of the present Youth Ministry in many of the congregations within his Church (First Methodist Church of America). White claims that they could do so much more, in preparing the youth for discipleship in Christ. The present Youth ministry in his Church falls short of tapping into the inherent gifts of God, as found in young people. Commonly the youth are relegated to the basements of church buildings, to participate in activities that keep them busy and occupied. There are limited opportunities for the youth to utilise their full potentials<sup>78</sup> – through their minds, hearts, souls and bodies – as the activities administered are rarely thought provoking, or spiritually stimulating.

Furthermore, youth ministers tend to retell the gospel message in a manner that fits the urban youth culture of contemporary society.<sup>79</sup> To try to make the gospel digestible for the youth, it is broken down into a message easily understood by the young people. It is retold in a fashionable way that becomes exciting, fun, and *cool* for the youth<sup>80</sup>.

A parallel can be drawn with these tendencies of youth ministry in America, with that of the Youth Ministry administered upon Samoan youth. The activities practised, are rarely thought provoking, or spiritually stimulating. Commonly programs involve discussions of the biblical narratives, but the connection with the real life themes of the Samoan youth, is missing. The application into the real lives of the Samoan youth, and how they as the younger generation of Samoa, can help heal the wounds of society, is not adhered to by youth ministers. So in this sense, the cognitive dimension – the knowledge and understanding of

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<sup>77</sup> White, 2005, *Practicing Discernment with Youth*, 33.

<sup>78</sup> Cf Rev. Fosi Pala'amo, informal discussion June 21, 2008. During a discussion about this project, Rev. Pala'amo (a retired Samoan Minister, with forty years in the ministry) reflected that a similar perspective in relation to Samoan youth, was held by Rev. Dr. David Williams, Principal of Trinity Theological College, NZ during the late 1960's. The perspective that Pacific Islander youth, including Samoan youth (at that time), they could be compared to a tree, that had been pruned at its top – thus restricting the tree from growing any further, beyond a specified height. Notably, the concept of limiting the Samoan youth to grow, to blossom, and to realise their talents and gifts, has carried forth to the Samoan youngsters of today, both in Samoa and abroad.

<sup>79</sup> White, 2005, *Practicing Discernment with Youth*, 54.

<sup>80</sup> White, 2005, *Practicing Discernment with Youth*, 54.

biblical text – becomes the focus of bible study, and reflections, within youth ministry in Samoa, as well as in the overseas’ parishes of the Church. But as White explains, the total potential of the young people is found in all dimensions – the heart, the mind, the soul and the body. Only then, will the fullness of God’s gifts embedded in the young people, be illuminated. A focus on the full potentials of youth, in realising their inherent gifts from God, is much needed in the youth ministry for Samoan youth today.

### 3.4.2 Youth Ministry Incorporating the Four Dimensions of the Youth

Incorporating the four dimensions of young people in totality, becomes the crux of White’s discussions. These lay the foundation for a successful and effective Youth ministry, in any given context. In taking White’s point further, the four-dimensional model of youth ministry not only works within any given congregation, but more importantly, given the situation of Samoan youth both in the overseas’ and local congregations, it has the potential to work *across-cultures*. Our discussions will now investigate each of these four dimensions of the youth, and disclose valuable insights and methods, that may benefit ministry for Samoan youth today.

#### 3.4.2.1 *The Heart – Listening*

White claims that to know God, one must first listen to his or her heart<sup>81</sup>. It is through the heart, that the young person can open up completely to God, and His interventions in our lives. By listening to our hearts, it generates the space to reflect on our hidden and unhidden motives, and responses, within our surrounding context(s), in ways where we may realise the manifestation of God’s love and purpose in our lives. Moreover, when we listen to our hearts, we can hear ourselves better, and learn to understand our formation within the setting of the family, the society around us, the injustices of the world, and how God transforms our worlds within these constructs<sup>82</sup>.

This becomes an important element in Youth ministry, that may assist the youth in realising how they can respond to the many fears and hopes in their lives. It allows the space for their hearts to speak, and for their emotions to take charge, rather than their intellects. In addition, it allows the youth to problematise various situations they are faced with – to remove these problems from their respective contexts (school, work, church, family), and analyse their meanings. For youth ministry, it entails developing *heart themes* that correspond to any particular context the youth are located, and then to openly listen to the heart speak. Examples of heart themes include anger, frustrations, love, empathy and guilt, to name a few. It therefore becomes the task of the youth minister to administer methods suitable to the particular youth group, that may stimulate listening to the heart. Methods include discussions in small groups of various heart themes, timed writing, role-playing, and centred or focused prayer meetings.

Youth ministry in Samoa can benefit from this conceptual framework, as listening to the hearts of young people, is far from the agenda of the Church at present. The emphasis at present as stated earlier, is to teach the young people about the stories of the bible. However listening to the heart of Samoan youth may prove a rather interesting challenge, because first the youth minister must try to engage the youth into this method of doing reflection. I can

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<sup>81</sup> White, 2005, *Practicing Discernment with Youth*, 67.

<sup>82</sup> White, 2005, *Practicing Discernment with Youth*, 97.

foresee many young people giggling at the prospect of sitting around in small groups, talking about heart themes, saying comments like – “*the heart can’t speak, it pumps blood!*” But once the Youth group (*Autalavou*) leader can overcome these obstacles in introducing something *new* into the current practices in Samoa, the young people will actually realise, just how loud their hearts can actually speak. They may realise, just how much the Samoan tradition has suppressed the voices of their hearts, for so long.

### **3.4.2.2 The Mind - Understanding**

As listening to the heart draws out our emotions for any given situation, the mind gives us the ability to identify the causes of any problematic situation, and possible ways how we can rectify them. However, many practices within present youth ministry limit the use of young peoples’ intellects, by relegating young people into becoming passive participants in the process. The contemporary youth culture restricts the young people in using the full capacity of their intellect, by relegating them into becoming passive consumers. However, the young people can often find significant healing to the wounds of the world around them, when they discover the power of their minds<sup>83</sup>. Through critical reflections and observations, the youth have the potential to understand the many problems and situations they face in life.

Knowledge is one thing, but how to react to this knowledge is another. The objective of Youth ministry I feel is not only to teach biblical knowledge (of the bible stories, as well as real life themes affecting them) but more so, how the youth must respond, upon receiving this knowledge. The emphasis of ministry for Samoan youth at present, is placed upon biblical knowledge and understanding. So for this dimension of the youth, the situation in Samoa is suffice at present. However, translating this knowledge into the praxis of faith, and how the youth should respond in many areas of their lives, is an area of Youth ministry both in Samoa and in its parishes abroad, that can be improved.

### **3.4.2.3 The Soul – Dreaming and Remembering**

Two aspects of the soul – contemplation and imagination, are important for any Youth ministry, as it assists in developing the young persons’ spirituality. This can be achieved through focused and centred prayer, and theological reflections on part of the young people. Prayer is a time for contemplation, to reflect on what one is praying for, and to come into unity with the triune God.<sup>84</sup> For this reason, prayer becomes a crucial component of any ministry, for the spiritual enrichment of the youth.<sup>85</sup> Bible study becomes a time for reflection, in connecting the scriptures with the context(s) the youth are located in, at any given time. The two working together can revitalise the soul of the young person, to a liberated inner feeling of connection with God.

Interestingly enough, White claims that young people are disturbed with ideas that have no clear relationships with the realities that surround them<sup>86</sup>. This as mentioned earlier, is the downfall of the ministry in place for Samoan youth today: the inability of the Church through its Youth ministry to connect the Christian messages, values, and teachings, to the

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<sup>83</sup> White, 2005, *Practicing Discernment with Youth*, 136.

<sup>84</sup> Cf Richard R. Osmer, *The Teaching Ministry of Congregations* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 291.

<sup>85</sup> Cf Charles M. Shelton, *Adolescent Spirituality: Pastoral Ministry for High School and College Youth* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 121.

<sup>86</sup> White, 2005, *Practicing Discernment with Youth*, 172.

real life themes of the Samoan youth. The ritual of prayer itself is far from generating any deep contemplation or reflection within the youth. In fact, the language used, and the metaphors identified within the prayer, have become part of the Samoan tradition of praying. It becomes more a routine – first the prayers of thanksgiving, then confessions and finally intercession. These are the prayers that the Protestant missionaries taught the first Christians in Samoa, and this tradition has been passed down to the young people today. There exists no room for creativity in the ritual of prayer, as any deviation from the norm will invoke criticism from the faith community at large. In saying this, some ministers have tried to re-invent the ritual of praying, in the traditional context of Samoa.

In a service that I conducted two years ago in Samoa, this became one of my challenges. A number of youngsters in the Youth group I was assigned to, complained that praying in the liturgy of the Church (CCCS), was a time for them to fall asleep. Upon asking for the reasons why this was so, the general response, was that they regarded the prayers during the service as being boring, routine and spiritually empty. The language used by the minister during the prayers generally was the same (from minister to minister); the items prayed for were similar, and it became more of a routine, than a time for contemplation and reflection. So during this particular service that I led, I introduced responsive prayers (with the congregation), to the music of a guitar playing softly in the background; the lights were switched off, and replaced with candles flickering amber light. The aim, was to generate an environment different to the normative, that hopefully would not render the young people off to sleep, but instead invoke some sort of spiritual meaning through the prayers. After the service, I was met with mixed emotions from the congregation. The majority of the elder parishioners questioned my motives in conducting such a service. My colleagues and peers also had a fair bit to say, in relation to my stepping too far away from tradition. However, the young people enjoyed the experience, and surprisingly, stayed alert throughout the entire service.

#### ***3.4.2.4 The Body – Action***

This final dimension as discussed by White, puts all three dimensions discussed previously, into relationship with each other. By listening to our hearts, we can open ourselves up to the Divine. By understanding our situations in life, we can respond accordingly. Through contemplation and imagination of the soul, we can reflect on how God would want us to respond to heal the wounds of the world. These all lead into affirmative action on our part, into, and for the world, as a true disciple of Christ. The aim therefore of Youth ministry, is to guide the young people to realise that they possess the intellect of the mind, the desire of the heart, the mediation of the soul, and the response of the body, to act as a disciple of Christ in the world around them. This holistic approach to Youth ministry is adaptable in many contexts outside of the United States, and it is an approach that arguably will become beneficial and successful, for Youth ministry in the context of Samoa, as well the overseas' parishes of the Church today.

#### **3.4.3 Our Dance with the Holy**

The dance that White speaks of, is an interesting element that fits in well with the context of Samoa. It speaks of our dance with the Holy, that involves us in whole – moving us in heart,

mind, soul, and body, to the rhythm of God's love and grace in our lives<sup>87</sup>. We cannot dance with our intellects alone, similar to someone who has memorised the sequences of steps to any specific dance. All four dimensions must come into play, into the act of dancing with God. But in becoming a better dancer, one must learn the steps, follow the heart and soul of the music, and respond physically to this rhythm. The youth can draw a lot from this analogy, especially in the modern youth culture of rap and dance. A Christian parallel can be drawn between our dance with God, and the real life context of youth today, that is not only fitting to the modern times, but also comprehensible to the youth.

Dancing in Samoa has always been a major part of our culture. Traditional dance – the *Siva Samoa*, is taught to young children at an early age, and one of the factors of being accepted by the local community, is to be considered a good dancer. Even in the context of the Church today, this currently is one of the methods used to engage, and unite the Samoan youth, not only within Samoa, but also Samoan youth from abroad.<sup>88</sup> It becomes a medium of expression of our culture, as well as the unification of all Christians. However, an additional role of the dance within the Church, besides bringing people together, is for the purpose of monetary fundraising. To compare the *Siva Samoa* with *our dance with the Holy*, many youth and adults in Samoa, will be enlightened with such an analogy. It offers a theological dimension to the *Siva Samoa*, an integral part of the Samoan tradition and culture, that continues today. Learning the routines, and gestures of the dance, the *Siva Samoa*, is one thing. But more important, is the affective dimension to dancing. In combining together the mind, heart, soul and body, we can learn how to become better dancers with God in our lives. Only then, when all dimensions have become one, are we able to dance harmoniously with God, to the rhythm of His love leading our lives.

### 3.5 Summary

In this chapter, the guiding question that has been directing our investigations herein, has been to review theories of Christian education and Youth Ministry that are used in contexts outside of Samoa, specifically targeting young people (cf Ch1.2 sub-question three). Our review of these theories, has helped us in working towards re-contextualising a Christian education theory, applicable and relevant to the situation of Samoan youth today. In addition, our discussions have included methods and insights that may assist with improving the current Youth ministry administered by the Church (CCCS) for its young people in Samoa, as well as young people in the parishes of the Church abroad. The *extensional direction* of Christian education (Nipkow) requires continuity into the real life situations of the Samoan youth. The *learner first* approach in *Ordinary Theology* (Astley) may empower Samoan youngsters with the mental tools, to successfully theologise the Gospel message, God-talk and God-imagery into their real life affairs. The conceptual frameworks of *scaffolding* and *appropriation*, found in the *Participatory Learning Theory* (Hermans), may assist the Youth ministry targeting Samoan youngsters, by allowing them the autonomy to think for themselves. Finally, the Youth ministry particular to Samoan youngsters, may benefit from the *education of the soul* (White), in allowing the inherent gifts of God as found in the youth – the heart, mind, soul and body – to surface and exemplify, to the potential that they are capable of. Our final point of investigations in the following chapter, will be the review of the current programs of Youth ministry and the curriculum of CE, specifically for the Samoan

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<sup>87</sup> White, 2005, *Practicing Discernment with Youth*, 140.

<sup>88</sup> Cf In May 2008 at the General Assembly of the CCCS in Samoa, youth from numerous parishes, districts and sub-districts of the CCCS both in Samoa and abroad, all met up for cultural performances, as well as discussions about numerous Biblical themes.

youth today. It will also include hearing from the Samoan youngsters themselves, as they share their opinions regarding their spiritual needs, and real life themes. Only then, are we able to answer in full, the underlying question that has been driving our research throughout.

## CHAPTER 4

### MEETING THE SPIRITUAL NEEDS AND THE REAL LIFE THEMES OF SAMOAN YOUTH TODAY

*“The focus of ministry within any parish, and within the Church (CCCS), must be given to the young people. They are the ones who need it most, but more importantly, they are the ones who will continue the Church into the future, beyond our time.”*

*(The late Rev. Elder Atapana Alama, 2005)<sup>89</sup>*

Adolescence is already a confusing period in the life of any young person. Add in the issue of culture, and it intensifies the confusion even more. Add in the search for identity, and again this becomes even more confusing for the youngster.<sup>90</sup> Add in the need to fit in with the changing world around them, and again, the cocktail becomes all the more challenging for the young person. These factors are important, and need to be acknowledged, especially when trying to accommodate and meet the needs of any group of young people. In regards to the situation of Samoan youth, are these factors reflected in the instructions of the Church, geared towards the spirituality of its youth? Do the youth feel an exemplified connection with God, when partaking in the worship, programs and activities designed especially for them by the Church? Moreover, are the curricula of CE and programs of the Youth Ministry suffice, to meet the spiritual needs and real life themes of the Samoan youth today? The need for the Samoan youth to feel accepted and heard within the faith community; the need for spiritual enrichment; the desire for biblical understanding of the Gospel message; and more importantly, how an understanding of God can help in the everyday issues of young people, about drugs and alcohol, sexuality, identity formation, crime, suicide, and family life. In addition, an understanding of how Christian themes like reconciliation, Grace, forgiveness, providence, and praxis of faith can be connected to the lives of many young people, especially within this challenging period of their developing young lives. A close analysis of the current curriculum and programs administered by the Church, shall focus upon these questions, and shall disclose just how far the spiritual needs and real life themes of the youth are met, within the CE, and Youth Ministry of the Church today.

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<sup>89</sup> Alesana Fosi Pala’amo, “Visitation to Magiagi CCCS Parish”, (unpublished; Apia: Malua Theological College, 2005). During the practical component of my Bachelor studies, my field work included visitation with the Magiagi Parish of the CCCS in Samoa. The Minister of this parish, the late Rev. Elder Atapana Alama, boldly emphasised that throughout his thirty year ministry in this village, his emphasis has always been the young people. The fruits of this emphasis has seen the Youth build and finance the Church Hall, purchase and operate a passenger bus, and the purchase of DJ equipment for use at Church functions and socials. To date, the Youth are still instrumental in all the affairs of this particular parish of the CCCS in Samoa.

<sup>90</sup> Cf Harley Atkinson, *Ministry with Youth in Crisis* (Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1997), 19. According to Atkinson, adolescence is a period when youth undergo an identity formation that includes the consideration of the values, beliefs and goals received from the young person’s family, church, school and peers.

## 4.1 Youth Ministry and Christian Education in Samoa today

There are several institutions where Youth Ministry and Christian Education are administered to the Samoan youth in Samoa, as well as the Samoan youth abroad. The introduction for many Samoan youth to Christianity, can be found within the young person's family. In addition to the setting of the family, and supplementing the instructions received through the Church, the secondary education system also provides elements of Christian education, and ministry for Samoan youth today.

### 4.1.1 The Secondary Schools

The secular education system in Samoa is structured in a way that incorporates Christian teachings within its curriculum. This however is termed *religious education*, within the setting of the secular schools. As Samoa predominantly is a Christian nation, religious education in secular schools comprise of Christian teachings, as there is no demand at present to include other world religions into the curriculum. For the secondary schools and colleges that are owned and operated by the Church (CCCS),<sup>91</sup> the educators who teach religious education within this setting, are often graduates and ministers from Malua Theological College. However, for the private and government secondary schools, religious education is taught by educators who are proficient in the field of religious studies. The curriculum is designed to help the Samoan youth, to understand various real life themes such as love, responsibility, honesty, humility, tolerance, peace, and endurance.<sup>92</sup> Methodologies used for instructions within the secondary schools involve lectures, and open group discussions with the youngsters.

In order to uphold a Christian emphasis within the secular education system today, the daily morning assembly includes the recitation of the Lord's Prayer, and the singing of Protestant hymns. This has been practised in the secondary schools and colleges in Samoa from the time of the LMS missionaries, and this tradition continues in the schools of today. The only difference however, is that English hymns are beginning to take precedence over the traditional Samoan Protestant hymns.

### 4.1.2 The *Autalavou* – Youth Groups

The *Autalavou* (Youth Groups) has been in operation in the Church since its introduction as a pilot project by Misi Peretiso (Rev. J Bradshaw) in 1958.<sup>93</sup> Initially introduced into the village of Utualii in Samoa, the project was continued by Rev. Faigame Tagoilelagi in 1962, after successfully completing his studies in Christian Education in the United Kingdom. Also in 1962, the *Aoga Aso Sā* (Sunday School) program was introduced, and together with the *Autalavou* (Youth groups) project, the Christian Education Department of the Church (CCCS) was established, under the leadership of Rev. Faigame Tagoilelagi.<sup>94</sup>

As an integral component of the Youth ministry in Samoa today, the *Autalavou* (Youth groups) serves many purposes. Firstly, it provides outreach programs and activities

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<sup>91</sup> Cf Cited 26 July 2008. Online <http://www.cccs.org.ws>. These schools include Leulumoega Fou College, Maluafo College, Congregational Senior College, Nu'uausala College, Papauta Girls College, and Tuasivi College.

<sup>92</sup> See Appendix IV.

<sup>93</sup> Esera, 1993, "Christian Education," 8.

<sup>94</sup> Esera, 1993, "Christian Education," 8.

organised by the Christian education of the Church, specifically for the Samoan youth in its parishes both in Samoa and abroad. Secondly, it administers the curriculum of Christian education (designed by the Christian Education department of the CCCS) for Samoan young people both locally and abroad.<sup>95</sup> Finally, it acknowledges the inclusion of/ it serves to include the youth as active members of the Church. In many ways, the *Autalavou* (Youth groups) indeed serves the purposes that it intends to. However, in some instances, the *Autalavou* (Youth groups) itself, through its structure and application into the respective parishes of the Church, constricts the Samoan youth into becoming passive participants, limiting autonomy on behalf of the young person.

A major part of the reason why the *Autalavou* falls short of meeting its projected goals, for some parishes, is that there are no age criteria for the *Autalavou*. This becomes problematic for some parishes of the Church (especially parishes abroad) as the *Autalavou* generally equates to *all* members of the Church, both young and old. To counterbalance this tendency, of no clear distinction between who should constitute the *Autalavou* (Youth groups), and who should not, some parishes have formulated two types of *Autalavou*. Firstly, a general Youth group simply called *Autalavou*, which is open to all members of the Church. Secondly, a Junior Youth group, called *Autalavou Laiti*, catering for those who actually are considered as a *young person*. By implementing an age criteria, the youth themselves have the possibilities of leading the *Autalavou* (Youth groups), with less involvement from the older members of the congregation, who at present are included in the *Autalavou*.<sup>96</sup> For the Samoan youth to lead the *Autalavou* (Youth groups) themselves, this must be at the discretion, and supervision, of the parish minister and his wife. This is the recommendation for the *Autalavou* (Youth groups), and one that requires close attention and consideration by the Church authorities.

#### 4.1.3 Christian Education Within The Church

In the setting of the Church, the *faiifeau*, or the Parish Minister (together with his wife) take on the role as Christian educators, extending upon the foundations set down earlier within the setting of the family. It is rarely the case, that the young people know nothing of God and various facets of the Gospel message, when they attend Sunday school and *Autalavou* (Youth group) meetings for the first time. They have already been taught about God, and what He does, within the setting of the family. The parish minister and his wife simply extend upon these teachings, by escalating the young person's knowledge and understanding of God to new heights.

In terms of the curricula for CE taught by Ministers in their respective congregations, this is arranged and distributed by the Christian Education department of the Church in Samoa. The curricula are issued annually, to each district and sub-district, and likewise each parish both within Samoa and abroad. As the array of topics and themes for the CE especially designed for the young people demonstrate, there is great emphasis placed on biblical knowledge.<sup>97</sup> Consequently, this does not become a weakness of the Christian education

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<sup>95</sup> See Appendix III, for a list of topics for *Autalavou* (Youth groups) for 2008, set down as the curriculum for Christian education by the Christian Education department of the CCCS.

<sup>96</sup> The concern in relation to the older members of the Church dominating these Youth groups (*Autalavou*), was raised by John, one of the Samoan youngsters interviewed for this project (see Ch4.3.2.1 response line no.100).

<sup>97</sup> Refer to the list of topics and themes of the annual curricula issued by the Christian Education department of the CCCS as found in the following documents - Appendix I: Class of Young People aged 14-16 yrs; Appendix II: Class of Young People/Junior Youth aged 17-20 yrs; Appendix III: Lesson Book for Youth Groups (*Autalavou*).

theory in Samoa, as any theory of Christian education in essence must endorse a sound theological foundation. An illustration of the emphasis placed on biblical knowledge can be found in the General Assembly of the Church (CCCS) for 2008. A competition was held inviting all the youth in the Church (both in Samoa as well as Samoan youth from abroad), in search of the youngster who possessed the greatest knowledge of the Bible. The emphasis is placed on knowing one's Bible, but how does this knowledge shape and drive the youth in living their lives according to God? How does God provide solace and comfort for the real life issues affecting the youth? Knowledge of the Bible is a positive element of the instructions of the Church, but equally as important, is how this knowledge can be transferred into acting out one's faith in God.

In contrast to this emphasis on biblical knowledge, certain Christian themes are absent within the curricula set down by the Church. Themes like forgiveness, and the practise and application of the young person's faith. The theme of helping others who are less fortunate, cannot be located within the curricula, which appears quite strange given the sharing and communal nature of the Samoan culture. Real life issues pertaining to adolescence are topics that also are relegated from the curricula. Issues like drugs and alcohol, sexuality, suicide, youth crime – these are very real issues affecting many of the youth in Samoa today, and yet many of these issues have been excluded from the curricula, issued by the Christian Education department. In saying so, it is commendable that in some parishes of the Church, these very issues are addressed with the Samoan youth of these parishes (see Ch4.3.2). The curriculum issued has begun to include issues like HIV/Aids, which can be seen as a positive development in recent years.<sup>98</sup> It simply needs to continue along this line, and include many more of the real life issues affecting its young people today.

In addition to the Sunday school lessons, the Parish Minister and his wife run a program called 'Pastor School' (*Aoga faifeau*). This program runs through the week, solely for the young children and youth of each respective parish. In Samoa itself, these programs are practical, and easy to run, due to the close proximity of the families of the church to the Minister's house or church hall, where this program takes place. However, in countries abroad like Australia, New Zealand, and America, it becomes rather difficult to administer this particular program, due to the vast distances parishioners and their families live from the church building or Minister's residence. The curriculum for these programs are also designed by the Christian Education department of the church, and they include topics like the history of the CCCS; the coming of the gospel to Samoa through the missionaries of the LMS; Biblical narratives; handwriting and mathematics; the Samoan alphabet and the Theology of the CCCS.

Recent developments in the Church have seen the launch of the official, and inaugural website of the Church (CCCS) in 2008. This technological advancement will benefit members of the Church both young and old, either in Samoa or abroad, with updated information, and announcements concerning the Church. It also provides information about the history of the Church, the parishes both in Samoa and abroad, together with the districts and sub-districts they belong to, as well as many downloadable publications issued by the Church.<sup>99</sup> A positive aspect of this website, is the bi-lingual nature that it holds. This website is still in its early stages, but it is envisaged that in due course, it may also include forums and open discussions specifically designed to empower, and invite the participation of the Samoan youth both in Samoa, as well as Samoan youth abroad. In addition, the doctrines and theology of the Church (CCCS) in time, will become available on this site.

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<sup>98</sup> Cf Appendix II: May 2008 topics 1, 2.

<sup>99</sup> Cf Cited 7 July 2008. Online <http://www.cccs.org.ws>. These publications include *Tusi Au Taumafai*, The Christian Endeavour; *Tusi Au Leoleo*, The Watchers' Prayer Union; *O le Sulu Samoa*, The Samoan Torch (A monthly publication of the CCCS that has been circulating since 1839).

In addition to the launch of its website, the Church has also seen the continued support of various international organisations, assisting the Youth ministry in Samoa today. From the 29<sup>th</sup> of August until the 5<sup>th</sup> of September of this year, the Council for World Mission plans to hold a *Youth Camp* in Samoa, for young people of its member Churches in the Pacific region.<sup>100</sup> This initiative will include various activities, from sports and recreation, presentations, visitations to various institutes, as well as community work in Samoa. Indeed Samoa is fortunate to be hosting such a project specifically for young people, with the opportunities for the Samoan youth to learn from their peers from other churches, cultures, and neighbouring countries. Such a project will benefit not only the Samoans youngsters themselves, but more importantly, it has the potential to re-develop Youth ministry in Samoa today.

#### 4.1.4 Summary

In response to our sub-question four: *What are the curricula of Christian Education and Youth Ministry, administered by the Church (CCCS) today, for its youth both in Samoa and abroad?* – we can conclude from our discussions thus far, that there exist many avenues for Christian education and ministry specifically for the youth, to be administered to the Samoan young person. The curriculum has changed very little in recent years, in response to the needs of the youth today. With Samoa becoming westernised at an alarming rate, changes to the emphasis of CE and Youth Ministry administered by the Church, need to be addressed. If not, then the curriculum that the CCCS still holds to in its parishes today, may become stagnant, and inapplicable, to the real life themes and spiritual needs of its youth. The emphasis needs to be placed upon acting out the young persons' faith, in response to the biblical knowledge attained, that has been the focal point of instructions in the past. *Do these curricula of Christian Education, and Youth Ministry, meet the spiritual needs, and the real life issues and themes of Samoan youth in the Church (CCCS), both in Samoa and abroad (sub-question five)?* In terms of the need for biblical knowledge<sup>101</sup>, this clearly is the case. However, important themes like forgiveness, reconciliation and the praxis of one's faith still need to be addressed. Recent developments in the curricula have included certain important issues important to any young person,<sup>102</sup> but these need to (re-)develop further, and include many more of the real issues affecting the Samoan youth today. In doing so, not only will it satisfy the spiritual desires of its young people, but it may enrich the youth, with an exemplified experience with the Divine.

Our conclusions have been derived, through the review of the current curriculum, and programs in CE and Youth Ministry administered by the Church today. We shall now review the insights received from some of the Samoan youngsters themselves, to see just how far their spiritual needs, and real life themes, are met by the Church.

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<sup>100</sup> Cf Cited 7 July 2008. Online <http://www.cccs.org.ws>. The member churches of CWM that will participate in this Youth Camp in Samoa include: Ekalesia Kelisiano Tuvalu (EKT); Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand (PCANZ); Congregational Christian Church in Samoa (CCCS); United Church of Solomon Islands (UCSI); Congregational Union of New Zealand (CUNZ); Congregational Christian Church of American Samoa (CCCAS); United Church of Papua New Guinea (UCPNG); Nauru Congregational Church (NCC); Kiribati Protestant Church (KPC).

<sup>101</sup> Cf Appendix III: Mar 08 – Apr 08 topics 1-6; May 08 topics 1-4; June 08 topics 1-4; July 08 topics 1-3.

<sup>102</sup> Cf Appendix II: May 2008 topics 1,2; Nov 2008 topic 2; Appendix III: July 08 topic 4; Oct 2008 topics 1-4; Nov 2008 topics 1-4; Dec 08 topic 2.

## 4.2 Qualitative Interviews with the Samoan Youth

Up to this point in our investigations, we have identified the foundations important for any CE theory (Ch1.3). We have also disclosed the context of Samoan youth today (Ch2). We have conducted a literature review of CE theory and Youth Ministry, that may be applied for CE and ministry for the Samoan Youth (Ch3). Finally, we have investigated the current programs of Youth Ministry, and the curriculum of the CE within the Church (CCCS) today (Ch4.1). From these we can conclude, that certain spiritual needs and real life themes of Samoan youth are being met, and some are not. Our final point of investigation is to ask the Samoan youngsters themselves, to hear their insights, opinions, and perspectives regarding their spiritual needs and real life themes.

The methodology of qualitative interviews had been used to serve this purpose. The interviews are qualitative in nature, as they aim to produce formal statements or conceptual frameworks, that may us to understand the spirituality of Samoan youth. These insights will provide knowledge that may be practically useful, in helping us answer our underlying research question. Due to the limitations of time, space, and resources, personal face-to-face interviews with the selected participants for the study, was not possible (as my subjects are in the Pacific, and I am here in Europe). To work around this, qualitative interviews were conducted through telephone communication, and these interviews were digitally recorded, for later transcription into written text.<sup>103</sup>

The selection criteria for involvement in the study are fourfold. Firstly, the young people selected must be easily contactable by telephone. Secondly, they must be considered representative of the general population of Samoan youth, both in Samoa, as well as Samoan youth abroad. Thirdly, there must be a balanced representation of both genders of Samoan youth within the selected group. Finally, the young people selected must be willing to speak openly, and freely, about their respective spiritualities. In meeting all these criteria, a group of four young persons were selected. Residing in the island of Upolu, Samoa, a young male and female met the criteria. Likewise, a young male and female residing in Australia, met the criteria for the Samoan youth abroad. The identities of these young persons have been withheld, and changed, to maintain the anonymous nature of their participation in the research.

The first of the four interviews was conducted with John, a sixteen-year-old male who was born and raised in Australia.<sup>104</sup> John has been to Samoa about four times since the age of twelve, and his insights relate to his experiences both in Samoa as well as in Australia. He attends one of the Samoan parishes of the Church (CCCS) in Australia, and actively attends Sunday worship, Sunday school and *Autalavou* (Youth group) meetings on a regular basis.

The second interview was conducted with Tony, an eighteen-year-old male from the island of Upolu in Samoa.<sup>105</sup> Originally from New Zealand, Tony has been living in Samoa for the past four years. Tony migrated to Samoa with his family in 2004 for family reasons. In his village, Tony actively attends Sunday worship, as well as *Autalavou* (Youth group) meetings on a regular basis.

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<sup>103</sup> Cf Andrea Fontana and James H. Frey, "Interviewing: The Art of Science," in *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials* (ed. N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln; Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1998), 47-78.

<sup>104</sup> This interview was conducted on June 21, 2008. The MP3 digital recording of John's interview, as well it's transcript in full, is currently in my possession.

<sup>105</sup> This interview was conducted on June 25, 2008. The MP3 digital recording of Tony's interview, as well it's transcript in full, is currently in my possession.

The third interview was conducted with Elisapeta, a nineteen-year-old female, also from the island of Upolu in Samoa.<sup>106</sup> She has been living in Samoa for most of her life, only leaving in the late 1990's to live in Australia for four years. In her village in Samoa, Elisapeta attends Sunday worship and *Autalavou* (Youth group) meetings on a regular basis.

The fourth and final interview was conducted with Makerita, a nineteen-year-old female who now resides in Australia.<sup>107</sup> She had been living in Samoa for most of her life, only leaving in the early part of this year to further her studies abroad. She attends one of the Samoan parishes of the Church (CCCS) in Australia, and actively attends Sunday worship, as well as *Autalavou* (Youth group) meetings on a regular basis. As requested by Makerita, her interview at parts becomes bi-lingual, as this makes it easier for her to express her point (I have included an English translation in brackets of what she has expressed in Samoan).

The interviews involved asking open-ended questions to the Samoan youngsters about issues concerning their spiritual needs and real life themes. The average duration of each interview was twenty-three minutes. The overall insights that these selected Samoan youth have disclosed, illustrate the success that the interviews produced. These insights have contributed valuable knowledge that may help us in working closer, to answering the underlying question that has been guiding our entire research. The analysis of these interviews, will demonstrate the success that this process in our investigations had produced.

### 4.3 Analysis of the Qualitative Interviews

The key question that has underlined our research thus far still stands: *What changes can the Church (CCCS) implement within its Youth Ministry, as well as in its Christian education theory, to help develop the spiritual lives of its young people?* This question also becomes the underlying question for the purpose of the interviews. In searching for answers to our underlying question, I have asked open-ended questions, that relate to the spirituality/spiritual needs, and real life issues/themes of youth in Samoa, and abroad. The objective of doing so, is to test/retest predictions I have discussed in earlier sections of the present work. For the process of analysis, I have used the following methodology to collaborate vital information, that may help us answer our underlying question. Firstly, I have grouped the responses of each of the interviewees, into important factors relating to the spirituality of the selected group of youngsters. Secondly, I have structured the analysis of each of the respondents' insights within these relevant factors, in four ways: (i) a description; (ii) an interpretation; (iii) link to theory discussed earlier; (iv) proposed solutions. Concluding each relevant factor, I have included a summary. Finally, I have included an overall summary to the process of analysis. It is envisaged that through the process of analysis, we can gather valuable insights, that may help us in working closer towards answering our underlying question.

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<sup>106</sup> This interview was conducted on June 27, 2008. The MP3 digital recording of Elisapeta's interview, as well as its transcript in full, is currently in my possession.

<sup>107</sup> This interview was conducted on June 28, 2008. The MP3 digital recording of Makerita's interview, as well as its transcript in full, is currently in my possession.

## 4.3.1 Spirituality

### 4.3.1.1 John's Insights on Spirituality

1. **Alesana** "Can you please tell me, what do you see as your spiritual needs today as a young person of Samoa?"
2. **John**<sup>108</sup> "...um...[slight pause]...um...a better understanding, especially of the message that we are trying to be taught at Church. It makes it kind of difficult with the Samoan language to understand."
3. **Alesana** "ok."
4. **John** "I mean it makes it hard to understand Church stuff you know."
- 
19. **Alesana** "...your needs that make you feel spiritual, do you think they have being met by the Church?"
20. **John** "...um... no...not really. But as I said before like I don't even understand the messages that are taught. And...[slight pause]...um... there are not enough things for us, for the youth in being able to contribute...because we are always being told of what to do by the Church."
- 
25. **Alesana** "...in relation to knowing your Bible, do you think the Church helps you to do this, like to teach you about the Bible and the stories in it and stuff?"
26. **John** "Oh nah yeah, that's yeah...that's good."
27. **Alesana** "That's good?"
28. **John** "Yeah, nah, Sunday school teachers are like really good."
- 
85. **Alesana** "Ok, are there any things that the fa'aSamoa helps you with your spiritualness? Like, I know a big tradition within our, I don't know if it's more fa'aSamoa or more the Church, but how we do, you know, the Lotu Afiafi [Evening Devotions in the family/household] at night, do you think that helps you as a young person to grow spiritually?"
86. **John** "Yeah, yeah ...nah, that's really helpful, that's really good."

#### 4.3.1.1.1 Description

The underlying difficulty for John, notably is the language barrier. As one of his responses suggests, a *better understanding* would help him feel connected with the messages that are being taught at Church. Despite the language difficulty, Sunday school is good for John, so too are the evening devotions in the home that John participates in.

#### 4.3.1.1.2 Interpretation

For many second and third generation Samoan youth like John, who were born and raised outside of Samoa, the language becomes a major difficulty. In this instance, the Samoan Church becomes the venue for many of these youngsters to learn the Samoan language. The Samoan Bible therefore, becomes the primary tool for learning the native language of the Samoans. Likewise, the Samoan household also serves this very same purpose, of teaching the Samoan language for its youngsters. The evening devotions in the Samoan home, arguably are one of the traditions that have remained with the immigrant Samoans, in

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<sup>108</sup> A copy of the full transcript of this interview with John, is located in the library of PThu, Kampen.

countries abroad. For many youngsters like John, these devotions serve a positive role in connecting one's self with God. The youngsters feel involved and comfortable, for there are no strangers around them but their own parents, siblings, and occasionally, extended family members.

#### 4.3.1.1.3 Theory

Given John's background, as a second generation Samoan, born and raised in Australia, and considering also that the language of instruction of the Church worldwide is in Samoan, the difficulty due to the Samoan language had been anticipated for John's case (cf Ch1.2). In terms of knowing one's Bible, the emphasis by the Church upon biblical knowledge for its young people, has been the case for many years (cf Ch3.3.3). John seems to be content with this aspect in the Church, even though previously he had stated the difficulties due to the language. It comes as no surprise, that John doesn't feel that the Church meets his spiritual needs, largely due to his lack of understanding of the Samoan language (cf Ch1.2).

#### 4.3.1.1.4 Solution

A possible solution to help John, and many other second and third generation Samoans of the Church abroad, is for the Church to adapt a more bi-lingual approach to its Youth Ministry and CE theory. The Samoan language can still be the primary mode of instruction, as the Church in many ways, provides the connection of Samoan youngsters abroad with their Samoan identity. By having English translations for many of the messages and teachings given by the Church, these will help these youngsters understand the fullness of the Gospel message.

#### 4.3.1.2 *Tony's Insights on Spirituality*

1. **Alesana**      *"My first question is, what do you see as spirituality to you, as a young person in Samoa? Like, what does it mean to be spiritual?"*
  2. **Tony**<sup>109</sup>      *"...um...[slight pause]...I guess...it's just... like going to Church, you know, like, doing all that stuff that it says in the Bible, like obeying your parents...that's what we learn here in Samoa, oh and being Samoan kids you learn it at an early age."*
  3. **Alesana**      *"Ok, that's very good. And so what do you see as your spiritual needs, like what are things that you need in order to achieve this?"*
  4. **Tony**            *"...um...I guess we need...a proper environment, like an actual place where we can freely go to Church."*
- 
7. **Alesana**      *... "Ok, so, environment, so you can go to Church freely, easy to get there. Do you feel there are any other needs that you need for your spirituality?"*
  8. **Tony**            *"...um...I guess... a supportive family I reckon."*
  9. **Alesana**      *"ok."*
  10. **Tony**           *"A family that supports you, in, like what kind of religious things you take part in."*
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<sup>109</sup> A copy of the full transcript of this interview with Tony, is located in the library of PThu, Kampen.

107. **Alesana** “I just have to ask about the *fa’aSamoa*, the Samoan tradition, does this play any part in your spiritual development, do you think?”
108. **Tony** “[slight pause]...um... yeah...I think that, the whole...like, discipline idea.”
109. **Alesana** “...yeah...”
110. **Tony** “Even...like, it helps...for when, we must obey our parents and stuff.”
111. **Alesana** “uh huh.”
112. **Tony** “...and like...it helps us...like, not to give in, to the temptations...like, drugs and alcohol.”
113. **Alesana** “Ok.”
114. **Tony** “I mean, it’s like...staying to the...Samoan way, or whatever.”
115. **Alesana** “So do you think it restricts you in any way...the *fa’aSamoa*?”
116. **Tony** “...um...yeah...I guess, you know...the whole, relationship thing...”
117. **Alesana** “uh huh.”
118. **Tony** “...you know the *fa’aSamoa* is like, we’re all...brothers and sisters.”
119. **Alesana** “...yeah...”
120. **Tony** “...you know, especially in the Church...so it’s kind of hard... on most kids.”
121. **Alesana** “So to have a relationship with someone from that Church?”
122. **Tony** “Yeah...because they are going through that phase.”
- 
125. **Alesana** “...yeah...do you think, having your opinion worthy, and that, in the *fa’aSamoa*, because you know with the *fa’aSamoa*, you very much obey your parents and elders all the time, do you find that limiting for you?”
126. **Tony** “...um...[long pause]...um...sometimes, it can get like, frustrating.”
127. **Alesana** “ok.”
128. **Tony** “...you know because sometimes like...you just have to learn like...oh because...sometimes you like...you can’t speak, and other times how they don’t listen to you.”
129. **Alesana** “uh huh.”

#### 4.3.1.2.1 Description

Interestingly with Tony’s response to factors relating to his spirituality, four elements come into play. Firstly, that spirituality is closely linked with attendance at Church, and keeping the Bible teachings such as obeying one’s parents. Secondly, that environment is important to his spirituality. Thirdly, having a supportive family, also plays a major part in his own spirituality. Finally, the *fa’aSamoa* can prove limiting at times.

#### 4.3.1.2.2 Interpretation

The importance of having a supportive family to Tony, to support all his religious activities, is an element that in the typical Samoan household, the normative is actually the reverse. The young person commonly is instructed into supporting, and sharing the religious activities, beliefs, and values of his or her family. However, considering that Tony originally is from abroad, where individuality can abundantly be found in society, requiring a supportive family to help develop *his* spirituality, is understandable. Tied in with the elements of respect and discipline, is the urge not to succumb to the temptations of drugs and alcohol. It could be part respect, but a major part could actually be fear, if the young person was ever caught by his or her elders, participating in such delinquent behaviour. This fear would be from contemplation of the disciplinary actions from one’s parents, older siblings, and Uncles, if one were to find themselves in such a situation. The negative aspect of the *fa’aSamoa* relates to his inability to

voice his opinions, and concerns, where the elders simply do not listen to what he has to say. In addition, the *fa'aSamoa* restricts his relationship status, especially being at an age (eighteen) when this is very important to any young person, in any context. It is considered disrespectful to court someone from the same village as yourself, or even from the same parish. As Tony stated, your peers in these contexts are considered your “brothers” and “sisters,” and thus the unwritten rule of the *fa'aSamoa* is that you must not develop any courtships in such situations.

#### 4.3.1.2.3 Theory

When we consider Tony’s case of originally being from New Zealand, where members of the individual parishes may live significant distances from the Samoan Church, Tony’s response of the environment being important for his spirituality, becomes a valid point (cf Ch2.3.2). In addition, having a supportive family, plays an important part in his spirituality. This illustrates the importance of the family to many Samoan youngsters, a contributing factor of the *fa'aSamoa*, as also discovered by Mead (cf Ch2.2). In addition, the *fa'aSamoa* has demonstrated both positive, and negative effects, upon Tony’s spirituality. It helps the young people in general remain disciplined, and respect their parents (cf Ch2.1). Again, Mead discovered this element in the Samoan people (cf Ch2.2).

#### 4.3.1.2.4 Solution

The positive elements of the *fa'aSamoa*, need to be upheld and embraced by the Church, as they appear to be working towards helping youngsters of the Church today. In particular, it helps in maintaining discipline amongst the Samoan youth, as well as respecting one’s elders and parents. At the same time, the Church must also be more flexible, and open to the opinions and concerns the Samoan youth may have, especially when they do not receive such freedom in the home.

#### 4.3.1.3 Elisapeta’s Insights on Spirituality

**21. Alesana** “...would you say, that for your needs, your spiritual needs as a young person, the things you need to maintain and develop your spirituality, do you think the Church helps you to do this?”

**22. Elisapeta**<sup>110</sup> “...[long pause]...um...um...personally...not really...um...not really.”

**23. Alesana** “ok.”

**24. Elisapeta** “...um...like here, we only have like, you know, Youth...and that...which is alright...but...um..[slight pause]...the way it’s done here, in my village...it kind of limits, how I can express myself.”

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**20. Elisapeta** “...[long pause]...well...I kind of wish the Bible knowledge was a bit more...advanced...mine is not bad, kind of...half-way, not as good...but...you know, from the Bible knowledge that I have, I am...pretty confident, that it helps me...sort of focus on...where I am supposed to be...and...um...[slight pause]...how I’m supposed to...you know, react to...to those temptations in life.”

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<sup>110</sup> A copy of the full transcript of this interview with Elisapeta, is located in the library of PThu, Kampen.

- 63. Alesana** “ok...ah...can you see any, in terms of the *fa’aSamoa*, the Samoan tradition, does that play any part in your spirituality, in your spiritual development?”
- 64. Elisapeta** “...um...to me, it does...because...ah...with the *fa’aSamoa*...it plays a part...in my spirituality, like...you know, we have the whole...respect your parents, so yeah...yeah, it plays a role.”
- 65. Alesana** “A positive role, or a negative role?”
- 66. Elisapeta** “...um...[slight pause]...mostly a positive one...I guess.”

#### 4.3.1.3.1 Description

By using the term “Youth” (response line no.24), Elisapeta is referring to the Youth groups or the *Autalavou* that the Church runs. Within this setting (of the *Autalavou*), she feels restricted and confined, into how she can freely express her ideas and opinions.

#### 4.3.1.3.2 Interpretation

In Elisapeta’s context, of being raised predominantly in Samoa, she feels that the Church could be doing more to help meet her spiritual needs. However, taking into account that she had spent some time living abroad, it is quite possible that a more freely expression of her views and opinions, is something that she had experienced while living outside of Samoa. The present way the *Autalavou* (Youth groups) operates in the Church, is that no age criteria are put in place. This could possibly explain why Elisapeta feels restricted in expressing her ideas and concerns, because commonly these Youth groups are dominated by the older generation in any given parish. Even though Elisapeta is content with her knowledge of the Bible, she still would rather it to be a bit more advanced. The interesting point that she raises, is how she uses this knowledge. It helps her to respond to life’s temptations, and it teaches her how she should respond to the world around her, as a true Christian.

#### 4.3.1.3.3 Theory

In terms of Elisapeta’s knowledge of the bible as helping her to respond effectively as a Christian to the many temptations of life, this demonstrates a positive aspect of being able to connect the biblical knowledge (as emphasised by the Church), with the real lives of some of its young people (cf Ch3.3.3). The positive role that the *fa’aSamoa* plays towards her spirituality, is largely connected to the concept of respecting ones parents, a major component of the *fa’aSamoa* (cf Ch2.1).

#### 4.3.1.3.4 Solution

A possible solution to the limitations of freedom of speech, and expression, in the setting of the *Autalavou* (Youth groups), is to enforce an age criteria for these groups. This will allow the youth themselves, to lead, and to dominate the discussions within these groups.

#### 4.3.1.4 Makerita’s Insights on Spirituality

- 4. Makerita**<sup>111</sup> “...yeah...um...[long pause]...um...I think, spirituality to me is like...um...kind of the connection you have with...um...Jesus.”

<sup>111</sup> A copy of the full transcript of this interview with Makerita, is located in the library of PThu, Kampen.

5. *Alesana* “yep.”  
 6. *Makerita* “...yeah...[long pause]...”  
 7. *Alesana* “ok...so what sort of things help you to do that, to connect the outside world with Jesus?”  
 8. *Makerita* “...praying...prayer...and um...and going to Church.”  
 9. *Alesana* “uh huh.”  
 10. *Makerita* “...um...reading the Bible... and singing in the choir...I guess.”

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13. *Alesana* “...all the things you have mentioned that get you connected with Jesus, my question is about whether the Church helps you, to achieve all that?”  
 14. *Makerita* “our Church...like the **EFKS** (CCCS) ?”  
 15. *Alesana* “Yes our Church.”  
 16. *Makerita* “...um...[slight pause]...honestly I don’t...for me, personally I don’t...I don’t feel that way...like I don’t feel, that it does help me.”

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28. *Makerita* “...um...[long pause]...ah...well the fact that you know when we go to Church, we go and we sit there, and we listen, and it’s so general, the **lauga** (sermon) is so general, it doesn’t really affect the youth...do you know what I mean?”  
 29. *Alesana* “yep...yep.”  
 30. *Makerita* “A **lauga mai le faifeau, e lē** (when the Minister preaches, it is)...it’s so general...like for us youth it’s so hard to connect to the **lauga** (sermon), because it’s like...do you get what I mean?”  
 31. *Alesana* “yeah...I understand what you mean...so he is preaching to other people besides the youth”  
 32. *Makerita* “yeah...and because us youth, I believe us youth we need more attention, you know what I mean...and for the **faifeau** (minister), he doesn’t take that effort.”  
 33. *Alesana* “uh huh.”  
 34. *Makerita* “...to give us more attention, through his **lauga** (sermon)...because all he...well his job is for like the...the general people...um...yeah.”

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44. *Makerita* “A duty...yeah it becomes like a duty now. It’s not something that you will enjoy...it’s a duty now...and for sometimes I feel like...I have to be that someone else to fulfil that duty, and I can’t be myself.”  
 45. *Alesana* “uh huh.”  
 46. *Makerita* “...do you know what I mean?”  
 47. *Alesana* “yep...I know what you mean. So it’s more like a duty, rather than a choice, to go to Church.”  
 48. *Makerita* “yeah yeah...and for that I don’t have that...spiritual connection, and because it’s a duty I kind of resent it...do you know what I mean?”  
 49. *Alesana* “yep...”  
 50. *Makerita* “And I think, I also think that it’s not just for me, but for, like the general youth in Samoa, you know... **e tau ina ia fa’ataunu’u** (it is done just to be done)...and again with the **lauga** (sermon) and everything, **ona e lē o goto lelei i totonu o le loto o le tamaititi**, (it’s not sinking into the hearts of the young person)... **ona e le o** (because it is not) ...direct, it’s so general...yeah.”

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104. *Makerita* “...um...[long pause]...ok, I think again, it comes back to that whole, not being able to open up to your parents, or the **faifeau** (minister) or the youth leaders because you have that barrier, you know that cultural barrier where...**e fa’asā** (it’s not allowed) ...and it’s disrespectful if you talk that way.”

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**122. Makerita** *“But then again, because I have so much respect for my parents, I will have to stick with this Church. The whole **fa’aSamoa** thing, respect your parents, and that.”*

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**128. Makerita** *“And then...I don’t worship for any other reason, but because it’s part of me, do you get what I mean?”*

**129. Alesana** *“so you worship because it is a duty.”*

**130. Makerita** *“That’s in our Church, that’s what I mean...yeah.”*

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**148. Makerita** *“and plus you know the **Lotu** (Church), i **faiifeau** (the ministers), they’re supposed to be good role models, and you and I know that **faiifeau** (ministers) nowadays, some of them are just, not like that.”*

**149. Alesana** *“yep.”*

**150. Makerita** *“some of them, I’m not saying all...you know just setting good role models, and embracing, you know...youth to be open, be there to listen to them.”*

#### 4.3.1.4.1 Description

Spirituality to Makerita, is the connection that one makes with Christ. To achieve this, the praxis of faith becomes important to her – attending Church, through prayer, reading the Bible, and singing in the Choir. However, the Church limits this for her, for the reasons that she has given.

#### 4.3.1.4.2 Interpretation

It appears that Makerita feels let down by the Church, in meeting her spiritual need of establishing a connection with Christ. Youth in Samoa are becoming more individualistic, and beginning to think and feel for themselves, as opposed to following the belief and value systems of the larger faith community. This is in line with Samoa taking on many elements of the western, global, and modern world, namely, the realisation of one’s autonomy. Considering that she has now made the move to live in Australia, the importance of becoming an individual, may present itself more in Australia. Makerita may only be realising now, since departing from mainland Samoa, just how much her participation in the Church was more of a duty, rather than for her own spiritual enrichment.

#### 4.3.1.4.3 Theory

The discussions by Makerita about the *fa’aSamoa*, are in line with earlier discussions of the *fa’aSamoa*. Respecting ones elders and parents, as well as the inability for youngsters to openly express themselves, are common characteristics of the *fa’aSamoa* (cf Ch2.1). It suggests passive motivation out of respect and obedience, rather than free-will and active involvement in Church affairs (cf Ch3.3). The point that Makerita raised about Samoan youth requiring more attention by Ministers, has been the emphasis of some Ministers of the Church (cf the late Rev. Elder Alama, Ch4.0), and one that others in the Church can learn from.

#### 4.3.1.4.4 Solution

The Church somehow needs to work around the limitations of the *fa'aSamoa* (Samoan tradition and culture), and become a safe haven where Samoan youth can feel comfortable about discussing burning issues. This is important, especially if the *fa'aSamoa* prevents this from happening, in the setting of the young person's home. In relation to seeing worship, and participation in Church affairs as a duty, a possible solution, would be the implementation of a *Participatory learning theory*. This could be one way to reach out to the Samoan youth, and give them the desire, and the attitude, to actively be involved in the Church.

#### 4.3.1.5 Summary

Upon consideration of the descriptions, interpretations, and theory, behind the insights given by the selected group of Samoan youngsters, I shall now present a summary of the solutions proposed for the Church, in working towards meeting the spiritual needs of its young people today.

1. The implementation of a bi-lingual approach to its Youth Ministry and CE theory, for the parishes of the Church outside of Samoa.
2. The Church must maintain the emphasis upon the family, as found in the *fa'aSamoa*, as this helps with the discipline of the young people.
3. The Church must be more open to the opinions and concerns the youth may have.
4. A possible solution to the limitations of freedom of speech, and expression, in the setting of the *Autalavou* (Youth groups), is to enforce an age criteria for these groups. This will allow the youth themselves, to lead, and to dominate the discussions within these groups.
5. The implementation of a *Participatory learning theory* could be a way to reach out to the Samoan youth, and give them the desire, and the attitude, to be actively involved in the Church.

### 4.3.2 Daily Life Issues

#### 4.3.2.1 John's Insights on Daily Life Issues

**67.Alesana** *"...in relation to drugs and alcohol, do you think these are topics that are open for discussion by the Church, by Youth leaders, Ministers and the Church in general?"*

**68.John** *"Yeah, yeah nah... that'll be alright."*

**69.Alesana** *"Ok, does that happen at the moment?"*

**70.John** *"Yeah, yeah. Like...um...we're taught not to be involved with these kind of things, like, because of what they can do...and how...how people of God, shouldn't be taking part in practices, such as drug-taking and that."*

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**73.Alesana** *"In relation to suicide...does the Church address this issue, of suicide?"*

**74.John** *"...um... the Church doesn't...well my Church doesn't, address it as much as it should. Not really...not really happening to us...it's not so much an issue at our Church, you know...um...not so much because it doesn't happen to people, you know, but it may need to be talked about more."*

75. **Alesana** “Ok, so it’s not an issue at your particular parish, you’re saying?”  
76. **John** “Yeah...I mean like, it could...it could be talked about more...like...it happens a lot. I bet of lot of people at my Church would know people that have been in that situation.”

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53. **Alesana** “So do you think that, like for example the topic about sex and all that, do you think these are sort of things that the Church should be teaching its young people? Do you think it’s important?”

54. **John** “...um...[slight pause]...um...no...I wouldn’t say anything to the Church about anything to do with things like that.”

55. **Alesana** “Do you feel like you can’t talk to them?”

56. **John** “Yeah that’s it...I feel like I can’t, to me it’s like they are not open.”

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66. **John** “You see, the Church is a special place for worship and stuff.”

---

John reflected on the positive changes he would like to see in the Church.

100. **John** “...well... with the Youth, less involvement by the Church and the older ones...like, the whole idea of the Youth is, to be the Youth.”

101. **Alesana** “Ok, so less involvement by the elders?”

102. **John** “Yeah...yeah.”

103. **Alesana** “Any other changes you would like to see?”

104. **John** “...um...[long pause]...um...for like, Samoan churches in Australia, more English...yeah...more English, a bit more, so that everyone can understand the message that we are trying to be taught.”

#### 4.3.2.1.1 Description

When John refers to “Youth,” (response line no.100) in that he would rather less involvement from the Church, and the older ones, he is referring to the *Autalavou* (Youth groups).

#### 4.3.2.1.2 Interpretation

Interestingly in John’s responses, is that the instructions taught by his Samoan parish, emphasis that the *people of God* should not partake in practises like drug-taking. It remains to be seen just how much of the social, psychological and physical ramifications of drug / alcohol abuse and addiction are discussed, when these sort of issues are talked about. However, it is encouraging to hear that these issues are in fact discussed, in the setting of Youth groups (*Autalavou*). Suicide on the other hand, is an issue that could be talked about more in John’s context. In a country where many different cultures converge with the other, the effects and onset of suicide would presumably be more noticeable in Australia, than in Samoa. Another interesting point that John makes, is that the Church is considered as a sanctuary, a “special place for worship.” This insight could help explain why some youth in general, feel that they cannot openly discuss certain topics with the Church, like sex, and all matters concerning the sexuality of young people. The Church may be seen as all things Holy, and by talking about sex, it may somehow render unholy, the sacred image of the Church, that they identify with.

#### 4.3.2.1.3 Theory

In terms of the Church addressing some of John's daily life issues, this had been anticipated previously, as a positive element of the Samoan Church today (cf Ch4.1). The limitation that John experiences in talking openly to the Church about certain topics, corresponds to the limitations presented by the Samoan culture in doing so (cf Ch2.1).

#### 4.3.2.1.4 Solution

As a solution, the Church could try to become more open with the Samoan youth, especially in discussing certain topics that are difficult to address. In addition, John would like to see less involvement by the Church and the elder generation, in the operation of the *Autalavou* (Youth groups) – to let the Youth groups be led by the youth themselves. To achieve this, having an age criteria (cf Ch4.1.2), would solve this in John's context. Furthermore, the implementation of a more bi-lingual approach by the Church in its instructions upon the Samoan youth, would benefit youngsters who do not have a sound understanding of the Samoan language.

#### 4.3.2.2 Tony's Insights on Daily Life Issues

**65.Alesana** “...can you tell me what you see as some issues that are facing you as a young person in Samoa, you know ...some issues...like the basic stuff?”

**66.Tony** “...[slight pause]...um, I guess like the issue that's been like, rising here in Samoa, would be gang violence or something.”

**67.Alesana** “uh ok.”

**68.Tony** “like, all these kids... are like, representing the colours and stuff, and they don't even know what it means.”

**69.Alesana** “yeah ok.”

**70.Tony** “...and another one is, like, teenage pregnancy.”

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**75.Alesana** ... “The Church, do you think that the Church addresses these issues, through the programs for the Youth, and through the Christian Education?”

**76.Tony** “...[slight pause]...um...yeah...we always talk about in Youth. They tell us, like what we would like to talk about, and we bring up stuff like that.”

**77.Alesana** “Ok, uh huh.”

**78.Tony** “...um...yeah...we, we talk to Youth leaders about it, and they give us their opinions, and it, like...it helps us, when we come across, a friend that is going through those issues.”

**79.Alesana** “Yes.”

**80.Tony** “...And it helps us, to talk to them...and to help them through it...”

**81.Alesana** “uh, huh.”

**82.Tony** “...and it helps us not to get into that.”

---

**93.Alesana** “yeah...and would you say the same goes for drugs and alcohol, and youth crime?”

**94.Tony** “...oh yeah,...yeah.”

**95.Alesana** “and how about suicide, I know that's big, you know... is that talked about?”

**96.Tony** “...[slight pause]...uh....yeah, I guess...yeah, we've talked about that.”

**97.Alesana** “uh huh.”

98. **Tony** “...yeah, but I reckon most kids here, they don’t really think it’s a problem.”
99. **Alesana** “uh, ok”
- 
39. **Alesana** “Ok. Do you think that the Church allows you the space and freedom to grow spiritually as a young person, in general, if we’re talking about the Church in general? Do you think it allows you that?”
40. **Tony** “...um...allows to...?”
41. **Alesana** “Your freedom to grow spiritually...”
42. **Tony** “...um...[long pause]...yeah...I guess so...cos..., well with kids, the Samoan kids, they are forced into the Church, or like they are born into the Church, out here, so it just becomes natural to them all the time.”
43. **Alesana** “ok.”
44. **Tony** “...and...it becomes a part of their life.”
- 
49. **Alesana** “so they hate it, being forced onto it and things.”
50. **Tony** “Oh because they’re like...like forced to go, they don’t really have a choice.”
- 
139. **Alesana** “...and finally, what changes would you like to see in the programs run by the Church, specifically for the youth, as well as in its CE, that may benefit your spiritual growth?”
140. **Tony** “...um...[long pause]...um...nah I reckon we should just work on...trying to, get all the other churches, to be kind of like, how it happens here.”
141. **Alesana** “uh huh...yes.”
142. **Tony** “...like you know, some of the Churches outside of my village, like they’re not really... the Youth is not really active, or they could be more active, like ours.”
143. **Alesana** “yeah.”
144. **Tony** “yeah...so I guess, programs like that should be...the same for other Churches...like all around Samoa, in the other churches, in the other villages.”
145. **Alesana** “ok, so you feel that your village is pretty good then?”
146. **Tony** “Well...yeah...um...but some kids still don’t, know like...like what Christianity is, like what we believe in.”

#### 4.3.2.2.1 Description

Tony’s reference to “colours and stuff,” refers to the colours that identify various street gangs, as found in America. The Bloods, a gang originally from Compton, California are associated with the colour red, with its gang members wearing red handkerchiefs. The Crips, a gang originally from Los Angeles, California identify themselves with the colour blue, and gang members commonly wear blue handkerchiefs.<sup>112</sup> Tony has noticed this trend growing in Samoa today. Tony’s village in Samoa adapts an open approach in dealing with its young people. The youngsters are given the freedom to voice their opinions openly, within boundaries set by the Youth leaders.

#### 4.3.2.2.2 Interpretation

It seems that for Tony’s context in Samoa, the Church positively addresses many of the issues that he has raised. The issue of suicide for example, is discussed in the context of the Youth

<sup>112</sup> Cf Cited 21 July 2008. Online: <http://www.gangwatchers.org/gang-names.html>.

group (*Autalavou*) in Tony's village. However, the depth of these discussions, and the involvement of the youth in dialogue with Youth leaders and Ministers during these sessions, can be interpreted as being inadequate, as some youngsters do not see the importance of discussing such issues. Gang violence is noted, and this is an issue that has been imported into Samoa through the media, the internet, and through Samoan youth visiting and migrating back into Samoa from abroad. Tony has observed that many youngsters in Samoa today are mimicking some of these American gangs, and yet they do not really understand the delinquent lifestyles that these gangs represent. The teachings that Tony receives from his Youth group (*Autalavou*) not only helps him in dealing with various issues on a personal level, but more importantly, how he can then transfer this understanding into helping his peers. Clearly from his responses, there are many positives surfacing, from having an open approach when dealing with the youth, as is the case for the Youth group that he attends. Tony's insights about the general youth in Samoa, tells us that most are born into the Church, and they are forced into their involvement with the Church.

#### 4.3.2.2.3 Theory

Teenage pregnancy has been identified by Tony as a daily life issue in Samoa, and parallels of this issue can be drawn with Mead's findings (cf Ch2.2). In regards to the Church meeting some of the real issues of Samoan youth, this appears to be the case in Tony's context (cf Ch4.1). The ability for Tony to transfer the teachings he receives from his *Autalavou* (Youth group) into his real life situation, is an element that can be achieved for other Samoan youth who are incapable of doing so, through the implementation of *mediated learning* (cf Ch3.3.3). For attendance at Church and involvement as being something that the Samoan youngsters are born into, it illustrates the inherent role that youth must fulfil within the family, but more importantly, within the Church (cf Ch1.2; Ch2.1). The youth have no choice in whether they are involved in the Church, or not, they are forced from birth (cf Ch3.3). It also suggests that religion to most Samoan youngsters, is something that is passed down from one generation to the next (cf Ch2.1).

#### 4.3.2.2.4 Solution

To solve the issue of Samoan youngsters feeling forced to participate in Church affairs, the Youth Ministry administered by the Church could incorporate the *Four Dimensions of Samoan Youth* – the heart, mind, soul, and body – into its programs (cf 3.4.2). This will produce a refreshed ministry for Samoan youngsters, that may alleviate these feelings of passive involvement, through obedience to the tradition handed down. In relation to teaching what Christianity really is to Samoan youngsters, CE theory of the Church could include *Theologising with Young People*, to achieve this.

#### 4.3.2.3 *Elisapeta's Insights on Daily Life Issues*

Elisapeta reflected on the many influences upon her life, as a young person in Samoa today.

**10. Elisapeta** “...um...especially in Samoa where there is a lot of influences from overseas countries...and different ways of life, that are introduced into our culture, and also the Church....and also to...young people like me.”

14. **Elisapeta** “...oh yeah...um...[long pause]...um...oh well, I’ve seen that...um...a lot of the youth are being influenced...by the western way of life.”
15. **Alesana** “uh huh.”
16. **Elisapeta** “...and they like go through the whole...um...violent, or...gangsta sort of...um...you know they have that sort of...um...image.”
17. **Alesana** “ok.”
18. **Elisapeta** “...um...I’ve seen it around a lot...um...it’s sad, because, you know...they’re losing...um...a lot of the...like...um...they’re losing their identity. And also they forget about their...the Church...about...you know, about God...they just go their own way.”
- 

43. **Alesana** “...if I can ask you about some of the issues that young people are facing in Samoa today...what are some of the real life issues, that you are facing as a young person?”
44. **Elisapeta** “...um...[slight pause]...um...I’ve seen a lot of um...young people, I guess...doing drugs.”
45. **Alesana** “...really?”
46. **Elisapeta** “...you know...enjoying the whole...um...that sort of way of life, like I see a lot of kids drinking...and smoking...um...[slight pause]...it’s actually increasing here in Samoa.”
47. **Alesana** “...really?”
48. **Elisapeta** “...yeah...and a lot of youth enjoy it.”
- 

52. **Elisapeta** “...um...[slight pause]...yeah, I think many of these issues are addressed...by the Church.”
53. **Alesana** “ok...and yet the young people are still doing it?”
54. **Elisapeta** “...yeah.”
55. **Alesana** “ok...in terms of, like specific topics, like say sexuality, and topics about sex, and suicide, do you think these sort of topics are talked about?”
56. **Elisapeta** “...oh suicide?...um...yeah...we actually had suicide as a topic.”
57. **Alesana** “Oh really?”
58. **Elisapeta** “Yip...yeah...and we had a debate about it...like...if it was the Will of God, the issue of suicide, or if it wasn’t. So it was really good.”
59. **Alesana** “uh huh. And topics about young peoples’ sexuality, and topics about sex, are those sort of topics talked about, or even mentioned?”
60. **Elisapeta** “...um...no...I don’t think we have covered...yeah we haven’t covered them at all.”
61. **Alesana** “Do you think it should cover it?”
62. **Elisapeta** “Yeah yeah we should...yeah...we should.”
- 

Elisapeta shared her views about what the Church could do, to help in dealing with her daily life issues.

30. **Elisapeta** “...oh...oh ok...um...I think...something that they can do to help, is probably...to have like...youth trips, like youth camps, a lot.”
31. **Alesana** “uh huh.”
32. **Elisapeta** “...they’re really interesting, you know...you have a lot of different...um...opinions, you know, people wanting to express themselves,

*especially if you're amongst people that you are more comfortable with...like in age groups, your age group...and that sort of thing."*

**33.Alesana** "yeah."

**34.Elisapeta** "...I think the Church should have more...activities, for us...you know, Youth.

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**78.Elisapeta** "...ok...um...[slight pause]...um...I think they should be more open."

**79.Alesana** "uh huh."

**80.Elisapeta** "Like...to ideas that the youth have...because a lot of the youth have great ideas...but are not heard."

#### 4.3.2.3.1 Description

Elisapeta makes a reference to a "gangsta" image (response line no.16), that she has observed many of the youth in Samoa displaying. This refers to the street gang image, as depicted and borrowed from American contemporary society. Again Elisapeta makes a reference to "Youth" (response line no.34), referring to the *Autalavou* (Youth group) that she attends in her village.

#### 4.3.2.3.2 Interpretation

As Elisapeta has observed in her village in Samoa, there seems to be a great influence from the western way of life, being imported into Samoa. This consequently has had an effect upon her spirituality, as well as playing a major role in shaping her identity. With the migration patterns and movement of Samoans abroad, and then returning to Samoa, this identity crisis as disclosed by Elisapeta, is unavoidable. The "gangsta" image that Elisapeta speaks of, may have made its way into Samoa through the media, internet, and her visiting Samoan peers, who frequent the islands in search of their own Samoan identities. However, with many influences from the western way of life making its way into Samoa, it becomes a challenge in Samoa today, to distinguish between the locals, and the Samoan youngsters from abroad. Even though her Youth group covers important issues, it still needs to develop further and include sensitive issues like sexuality, and topics about sex. But as our discussions for other youngsters have mentioned, this is largely due to the respect element as found in the *fa'aSamoa*.

#### 4.3.2.3.3 Theory

As predicted, suicide is one of the issues that the youth in Samoa need to understand, and learn how to deal with (cf Ch1.2). For Elisapeta's context in her village in Samoa, the Church does indeed address some of the issues she has raised (cf Ch4.0). Her insight regarding suicide is that not only is suicide discussed in her Youth group (*Autalavou*), but it is done so in a manner that is creative and thought-provoking for the young people. Again, demonstrating a positive role that the Church is taking in this respect (cf Ch4.1). The issue of identity as Elisapeta has raised, is an element of the Samoan youngsters that has been discussed earlier, and affecting both the youngsters in Samoa, as well as the Samoan youth abroad, in search of their Samoan heritage (cf Ch2.3.3).

#### 4.3.2.3.4 Solution

A solution for the Church to involve the Samoan youth more in Church affairs, is to hold more activities, like Youth trips and camps, catering for the Samoan youngsters. In addition,

as many of the other interviewees have also suggested, the Church needs to become more open, and inviting, to the fresh ideas and opinions that many of the youngsters have. It must also become more flexible, in listening to the burning, and often unspoken issues affecting the Samoan youth today.

#### 4.3.2.4 *Makerita's Insights on Daily Life Issues*

64. **Makerita** “well in Samoa there is the whole....um....ok...suicide.”
65. **Alesana** “uh huh.”
66. **Makerita** “...um...teenage pregnancy.”
67. **Alesana** “yeah.”
68. **Makerita** “...um...[long pause]...abuse.”
69. **Alesana** “like child abuse, or sexual abuse?”
70. **Makerita** “...um, well...I think both...yeah.”
71. **Alesana** “ok...[long pause]...would you say drugs and alcohol, would that be an issue?”
72. **Makerita** “yep...yep.”
- 
75. **Alesana** “yeah like if you as a young person have these sort of issues, do you feel the freedom to go up to your Youth leader, your minister...?”
76. **Makerita** “No I don't.”
77. **Alesana** “ok.”
78. **Makerita** “...um...I think that...*i totonu lava o Samoa* (within Samoa)...it's different...you know some kids find it hard to approach their youth leaders.”
79. **Alesana** “uh huh.”
80. **Makerita** “because you know, *e iai le mea fa'aaganu'u, e fa'aaloalo* (there is something in our culture that requires you to be polite)...where you don't talk about that kind of stuff.”
81. **Alesana** “yes...yes...respect your elders and that”
82. **Makerita** “yeah...and those issues...are like, I don't know, like...unspoken of, you know, at Church.”
- 
85. **Alesana** “Do you think it should be open, *i totonu lava o Samoa* (within Samoa)?”
86. **Makerita** “...oh I think it should be open, I think...yeah.”
87. **Alesana** “ok...so in terms of topics about sex, and sexuality, would you say that's open?”
88. **Makerita** “...do I think it should be open?”
89. **Alesana** “yeah...do you think it is open, and whether it should be open?”
90. **Makerita** “I think it's not open, between the Church and the youth, it's not open, in Samoa...and I think it should, yeah I think it should.”
91. **Alesana** “uh huh.”
92. **Makerita** “I mean...it is evident those issues are rising like...suicide, and teenage pregnancies, and it's because... *e le o iai se* (there is no)...[pause]...you know you're supposed to nurture your kids, tell them this and that, don't do this and that and if you don't tell them, then, they're going to have to learn the hard way.”

Makerita discussed some positive changes in the Church, that she would like to see.

**96. Makerita** “you know someone that is able, and someone that’s ready to listen to kids, and not like...you know like...control them...you know *e le pei o matua* (not like parents)...when you try to tell them something and they go...*e leai, talanoa mai i na mea* (no, don’t talk to me about those things)...you know?”

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**132. Makerita** “...um...[long pause]...um...have like, like, you know to have sessions where youth can come together, and like...talk about their issues, and then after that, we can just, start singing, and that...”

**133. Alesana** “you’ll like to see more of that, or some of that?”

**134. Makerita** “...I’d like to see more of that.”

**135. Alesana** “uh huh.”

**136. Makerita** “...and just have someone there who listens, as well...even if they can’t do anything just listen, just so we can have our issues raised.”

**137. Alesana** “yep.”

**138. Makerita** “...like...more activities, or something.”

#### 4.3.2.4.1 Description

Makerita has named some re-occurring issues like suicide, and teenage pregnancy, that her fellow interviewees have disclosed as well. The consensus from her insights, is that the Church is not open enough, yet it should be, to deal with these burning issues facing many of the Samoan youth today.

#### 4.3.2.4.2 Interpretation

Makerita actually gives us insights as to why certain issues are not discussed with youth leaders, Ministers, and the Church in general. It comes down to the *fa’aSamoa* (the Samoan culture). Due to the respect element (for one’s elders and parents), it is perceived as disrespectful, to raise these type of topics in discussions (cf Ch1.2; Ch2.1). For topics about the young persons’ sexuality and sex in general, these still need more time and development in the context of Samoa, before such topics become open for discussion in the setting of the Church (see Ch2.3; Ch4.1). Makerita’s concern though, is that in relation to certain issues that are especially on the rise – for example teenage pregnancies and suicide – they are restricted by tradition, to be open for discussion. The danger of this tendency, is that young people end up learning the hard way - through experience.

#### 4.3.2.4.3 Theory

Makerita has noted suicide and teenage pregnancies as being issues that are found in Samoa, and that are also on the rise. These issues had been identified in earlier discussions, as issues facing Samoan youth, in the contemporary youth culture of Samoa (cf Ch1.2; Ch2.3.3).

#### 4.3.2.4.4 Solution

The challenge for the Church today, is to somehow work around the limitations of the *fa’aSamoa* (Samoan tradition and culture), to incorporate discussions, on the sensitive, and often avoided topics and issues, affecting the Samoan youth today. In relation to the changes the Church can make, first it must be more open towards the youth. It must also become better listeners - to have someone who will listen attentively to the issues and needs of the

Samoan youth. To have more open discussion groups for the youth – where young people can come together, worship, sing songs and openly discuss burning issues in their lives.

#### 4.3.2.5 Summary

After consideration of the insights and interpretations that we have disclosed above, the following is a summary of the proposed solutions, in order for the Church to meet the daily life issues of its young people.

1. The Church must become more open to the opinions and concerns of its young people, especially accommodating for certain sensitive issues. The Church must also learn how to become better listeners, to hear the concerns of young people.
2. An age criteria must be enforced for the *Autalavou*, to allow the youth to lead this integral part of Youth Ministry themselves.
3. A more bi-lingual approach to the Youth Ministry and CE theory administered by the Church.
4. The implementation of the *Four Dimensions of Youth* – the heart, mind, soul, and body – into the ministry for Samoan youth of the Church.
5. For CE theory, the implementation of a *Participatory Learning Theory*.
6. More activities for Youth to participate in, like Youth trips and Youth Camps, as well as more open forum discussion groups for the Samoan youth.

### 4.3.3 Faith

#### 4.3.3.1 John's Insights on Faith

**13. Alesana** *“Well, you mentioned the Church, do you think there are some things in the Church that help you to feel spiritual? Like for example, Sunday school, or singing, or doing plays or things like that?”*

**14. John** *“Yeah, nah it's all good like that.”*

**15. Alesana** *“uh huh.”*

**16. John** *“Yeah things like that are pretty good...it's just making the connection with the message and us, you know.”*

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**89. Alesana** *“Ok, is your belief in God something that you have learned or experienced by yourself?”*

**90. John** *“...um...[long pause]...um...well...learned, is all from my Church background and that, but, experience...well...don't know yet.”*

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**96. John** *“...um...probably more, more about being taught...more about been passed down.”*

##### 4.3.3.1.1 Description

John finds it difficult to make the connection of the Gospel message with his own life. But this may have a lot to do with the language difficulties that he experiences, being a second generation Samoan born and raised abroad.

#### 4.3.3.1.2 Interpretation

The interesting point in John's insights about his belief in God, is that through his background in the Church and from what has been passed down to him, this has given him a learned knowledge of God. But even more interesting to John's testimony, is that he is yet to experience God. This in fact has been one of the presumptions as stated earlier, that a learned knowledge of God does not necessarily lead to an actual experience of God (cf Ch3.2). However, with the emphasis that is placed on biblical understanding in the curriculum of Church, this is one domain that the Church can also re-think, how to stimulate positive experiences of God within its young people.

#### 4.3.3.1.3 Theory

One of the main emphasis of the Church at present, is upon a sound knowledge of the bible, for its young people (cf 4.1.3). However, the emphasis of the Church should focus also on the affective dimension of Samoan youngsters (cf Ch3.2).

#### 4.3.3.1.4 Solution

A possible solution for the Church to stimulate experiences of God for its young people both in Samoa, and abroad, would be to extend its focus on Youth Ministry and CE theory that predominantly has been placed on biblical knowledge, to include the affective, and emotional dimensions of its youth.

### **4.3.3.2 Tony's Insights on Faith**

**18. Tony**        "*....yeah...oh... I actually know what I believe in.*"

**19. Alesana**    "*You know what you believe in now...so like, what made that happen, that was different from before?*"

**20. Tony**        "*Well, before, in New Zealand, I didn't really go to Church. Because... yeah, my parents didn't like start until like somewhere in 2000...2002, it was just my Grandma that went to Church. And I went sometimes...but I didn't really know what it was all about.*"

#### 4.3.3.2.1 Description

Tony knows what he believes in, due to the point that he raised - that he didn't really go to Church before, only when his parents started attending Church.

#### 4.3.3.2.2 Interpretation

Tony is quite comfortable with his spirituality, as he had already realised for himself, his true beliefs in God. It is a belief in God that he had found for himself. So in relation to the human developmental theories, as discussed in the opening chapter, Tony has transgressed into Fowler's fourth stage of faith development, the *Individuative-Reflective Faith* stage. Tony has started to believe, think, and fend for himself.

#### 4.3.3.2.3 Theory

The faith stages of Fowler correspond to Tony's case, in that he has moved away from the shared beliefs and values of the larger faith community, and has realised his own beliefs (cf 1.3.3).

#### 4.3.3.2.4 Solution

Christian educators in the Church must take into consideration, the stages of human developmental theories (as we have discussed in Ch1.3), when designing programs and curriculum for Samoan youth.

#### **4.3.3.3 *Elisapeta's Insights on Faith***

**71. Alesana** *"Ok...your belief in God and what you know of God, is that something that you've developed or learned by yourself?"*

**72. Elisapeta** *"...[pause]...no...um...I think I learned a lot...a lot of it from...you know, a lot of the people around me."*

**73. Alesana** *"uh huh."*

**74. Elisapeta** *"Like from my Dad...or Youth leaders...and...friends, because a lot of my friends they're very supportive...and like...hard out Christians."*

#### 4.3.3.3.1 Description

Elisapeta lays claim to those around her, as responsible for her present belief in God.

#### 4.3.3.3.2 Interpretation

Now with this insight, we can make the connection to another point stated previously, that the belief and values systems of Samoans, are passed down through tradition. It is fortunate for the Samoan youth today, that Christianity has intertwined with many of the traditions of Samoa, that are passed down from one generation to the next.

#### 4.3.3.3.3 Theory

Elisapeta's belief in God, as being passed down through tradition, had been anticipated for the case of Samoan youth today (cf Ch1.2; Ch2.1; Ch2.2). Since the *fa'aSamoa* has largely been influenced by the Christian tradition, the tradition that is passed down to the younger generations today, is actually both the Samoan tradition itself, as well as Christianity (cf Ch2.1).

#### 4.3.3.3.4 Solution

The Church must accommodate for the continuity of the positive elements of the Samoan tradition into future generations, for it assists the Church in many ways, in terms of dealing with its young people.

#### 4.3.3.4 *Makerita's Insights on Faith*

Makerita discussed her venture away from the Church (CCCS), in search of her faith.

**118. Makerita** *“But I just wanted to know...I just wanted to find, somewhere so I can connect with Jesus, you know. I mean if I can't find it in my own Church, well why not try the other Churches?”*

**119. Alesana** *“And did you find connection?”*

**120. Makerita** *“Did I find connection?...Yes, yes Sana I did. Yes I did. You know, **ou alu atu i totonu o le potu...** ( I went into the room...) ...I just felt this, this warmth, and everyone singing and you know opening their hearts, and then I started singing...**te'i lea ua ou tagi** (all of sudden I started to cry)...and then I felt, I felt like I had made it or something, you know like that feeling?...yeah that's how I felt, and then I started crying...yeah [sighs].”*

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**126. Makerita** *“...um...[pause]...uh, I think it's mainly passed down, mostly. Because you know, I grew up in the Church, I had to go to Sunday school and they teach me all these different things....”*

##### 4.3.3.4.1 Description

Makerita's reference to the “other Churches,” relates to the Evangelical and Pentecostal Churches present in Samoa today. The actually Evangelical Church that she visited and found the connection with Christ she was yearning for, is the Worship Centre in Apia, Samoa (she disclosed this earlier during the interview). Makerita experienced this account, prior to her move to Australia.

##### 4.3.3.4.2 Interpretation

Makerita's decision to try other Churches (Pentecostal, as well as some of sects in Samoa), is a common dilemma facing many Samoan youngsters today, both in Samoa and abroad. Do they stay with the CCCS, out of respect and obedience to their families, even though the connection with God is minimal? Alternatively, do they go and search for a healthy connection with God, elsewhere? Makerita chose the latter, and from her responses, we can conclude that she indeed found the connection she was yearning for. Makerita concurs with the other youngsters interviewed, that her belief in God is an element that had been passed down to her, through the Samoan tradition.

##### 4.3.3.4.3 Theory

The move away from the Church (CCCS) for some of the youth, to have their spiritual needs met, is a tendency that had been predicted earlier (cf Ch1.2). Furthermore, the belief in God that the Samoan youth have today, had also been predicted as being the result of the Samoan tradition being passed down (cf Ch2.1; cf Ch2.2).

##### 4.3.3.4.4 Solution

In order for the Church to prevent some of its young people, from searching to have their spiritual needs met outside of the Church, it must seriously re-think its present Youth Ministry, and CE theory. The implementation of *Theologising with Young People* (cf Ch3.2), may help the Samoan youth to experience the connection with Christ, that they are yearning

for. The recommendations provided from this project, will assist the Church in many ways, by enriching the spiritual dimension of the Samoan youth of the Church, a quality that they are yearning for.

#### **4.3.3.5 Summary**

The following summary of solutions will assist the Church, in meeting the spiritual needs of its young people, as determined from our discussions about faith, with the selected group of Samoan youngsters.

1. Extend the focus of Youth Ministry and CE theory in the Church at present, from biblical knowledge, to incorporate the emotional and affective dimensions of the Samoan youth.
2. Christian Educators in the Church must take into consideration the human developmental theories, when designing programs and curriculum.
3. The Church must maintain a continuity of the positive elements of the *fa'aSamoa* into the future, as this assists the Church in its mission, in many ways.
4. *Theologising with young people* may help Samoan youth, to experience a connection with Christ.
5. The Church must consider the recommendations presented herein, to meet the spiritual needs of its youth, and prevent some of its young people from searching for their spiritual needs, to be met elsewhere.

#### 4.3.4 Language

##### **4.3.4.1 John's Insight on Language**

**46. John**      *"...um....[slight pause]...um... for me like, yeah it goes back, to being able to have an understanding, behind it all; if I fully understood what I was saying then maybe I would feel that. I mean I can't say that I feel it because I like it, also I can't say that I wouldn't. For me like...um...because we are speaking it in Samoan all the time, and doing it in Samoan all the time...it kind of like doesn't make sense really."*

##### 4.3.4.1.1 Description

John reflects upon his participation in drama, and plays, that are performed by the *Autalavou* (Youth groups) and Sunday school classes, on special events in the Christian calendar. His references to "feel that" and "feel it" (response line no.46), correspond to the connection that he makes to the Christian message, when he partakes in these plays and drama. Language becomes a major obstacle, for John, in making this connection.

##### 4.3.4.1.2 Interpretation

Language poses a problem for John, given his situation. This is an area of concern for the Church leaders today, and it has been the subject of debate in recent times. However, the responsibility falls upon the Minister of each parish to address this language problem, in the local and the global setting of the Church. The problem however, is that some of the

Ministers in the parishes of the Church abroad, are reluctant to use English as an alternative mode of instruction. This is due either to their own limitations, or for the reason that the Samoan Church usually is the last venue where youngsters abroad, can learn the Samoan language.

#### 4.3.4.1.3 Theory

The opportunities for the participation of Samoan youth in the worship, and liturgy of the Church, are very limited. Often, it becomes a matter of performing plays and drama on special events in the Christian calendar (cf Ch1.2). Even more limiting for many of the youngsters abroad, is that the instructions of the Church worldwide are in the Samoan language, and yet many do not speak, or understand, the native language of the Samoans well (cf Ch1.2).

#### 4.3.4.1.4 Solution

A more bi-lingual approach by the Church in its instructions for young people of the Church abroad, will not hurt the youngsters abroad in losing their knowledge of the Samoan language, and thus their identities as Samoans. The benefit, will be that these youngsters may actually understand the Gospel message being taught. Ministers have the obligation to deliver and share the Gospel message in a manner that is comprehensible by all, including confused second and third generation Samoan youngsters abroad. The same also can be done in Samoa (a more bi-lingual approach), to help those who struggle with the English language.

### 4.3.5 Overall Summary from the Analysis Process

Many important and valuable insights can be derived from the responses, reflections, and interpretations, as disclosed from the interviews. Primarily, Christian Educators need to consider the human developmental theories (Ch1.3), when planning programs and curriculum for CE and Youth Ministry for Samoan youth. In relation to the lack of activities where the youngsters can actively participate and contribute, a possibility to rectify this, could be the implementation of a *Participatory learning theory* (Ch3.3). This could be one way to reach out to the Samoan youth, and to give them the desire to be actively involved, rather than seeing their participation in the Church, as more of a duty. More involvement and participation of young people during worship, may also serve the purpose, for the youth to feel more involved with the Church. Having an age criteria for the *Autalavou* (Youth groups), will serve the purpose of allowing youngsters to lead, and participate actively within these groups, free from being dominated and controlled, by the older members of the Church. Youth camps and Youth trips, may also be beneficial for Samoan youngsters today.

An emphasis of Youth Ministry today, should be placed on trying to elicit a positive connection of the Gospel message, with the contemporary lives of the Samoan youth. To achieve this, the emphasis upon biblical knowledge, needs to expand to include the affective, and emotional dimensions of Samoan youth. The challenge for the Church, is to try to make this connection, between the Gospel and the real lives of the youngsters, in a manner that interests the youngsters into keep coming back for more. *Theologising with Young People* (Ch3.2), will also help maintain this connection. Furthermore, a more bi-lingual approach by the Church, will help Samoan youth of the Church abroad, in understanding the Gospel message that is being taught.

For topics about the young persons' sexuality and sex in general, these still need more time and development in the context of Samoa, before such topics become open for discussion, in the setting of the Church (cf Ch4.1.3). In the context of the interviews, the youngsters avoided discussing such topics, even when asked directly.<sup>113</sup> The challenge for the Church now (together with the Samoan youth themselves), is to somehow work around the limitations of the *fa'aSamoa* (Samoan tradition and culture), to allow for open discussions about the sensitive, and often avoided topics. Prevention is better than cure, and the Church (as well as the Samoan youth themselves), should be taking the standpoint of the former. Discussing these topics, may actually become a preventative measure, but first, the youngsters must feel comfortable in doing so. The Church must also become open to the suggestions, and opinions of its youngsters, by becoming better listeners to the many concerns they may have. The implementation of the *Four Dimensions of Youth* (Ch3.4.2) – the heart, mind, soul, and body - may help the Church in becoming open for its youth, by allowing for their full potentials to be realised.

The Church still needs to maintain the emphasis upon the family, as this in turn helps the Samoan youth in many ways. The continuity of upholding the positive elements of the Samoan tradition into future, will also assist the Church in maintaining the discipline of its young people, as well as the emphasis placed upon family values.

Working towards meeting and maintaining the spiritual needs, and real life themes of the Samoan youth, is an on-going process, and this needs to continue in its development, and re-development. It requires Youth leaders and Ministers to become proactive, creative, and understanding, to the many barriers the young people are confronted with, in making the spiritual connection with God.

#### **4.4 Recommendations for the Church Towards Meeting The Spiritual Needs and The Real Life Themes of Samoan Youth Today**

We began our investigations by first analysing the emotional, moral, and faith developmental theories, but more importantly, the applicability of these theories for the situation of Samoan youth in the Church (CCCS) today (Ch1). We looked at the role that the *fa'aSamoa* (Samoan tradition and culture) plays in the lives of Samoan youth, as well as the context of Samoan youth in Samoa and abroad (Ch2). We reviewed theories of CE and Youth Ministry used in the west, and suggested the applicability of these theories for the situation of Samoan youngsters (Ch3). We also reviewed the current CE and Youth Ministry administered by the Church (CCCS) upon its young people both in Samoa, as well as in its parishes overseas. Finally, we have heard valuable insights from a selected group of Samoan youth concerning their spirituality (Ch4). Based on all of the above, we are now in a position to put forth our recommendations to the Church (CCCS), in how it can improve its Youth Ministry and CE, for the betterment of the spiritual lives of its youth both in Samoa, and abroad. These recommendations will be divided between our suggestions for Youth Ministry, and likewise for Christian Education, and presented in the following Table 4.1.

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<sup>113</sup> The presumption, was that the young person's sexuality, and sex in general, are issues that are affecting youth in Samoa today, as well as Samoan youth abroad. However, it was difficult to draw any insights from the selected group of youngsters about these topics, due to their lack of response. The reluctance of the youngsters to respond in relation to sexuality/sex topics, merits further research, to explain the discrepancy between my presumption, and the lack of response by the youngsters.

Youth Ministry	Christian Education
<p><b>YM1.</b> In designing programs, considerations of the stages of emotional, moral, and faith developmental theories are crucial. The stages particular to youth are: Erikson’s stages five, the <i>Identity versus Identity Confusion</i> stage, and stage six, the <i>Intimacy versus Isolation</i> stage; Kohlberg’s second level, the <i>Conventional Level</i>; and Fowler’s stage three, the <i>Synthetic-Conventional Faith</i> stage.</p>	<p><b>CE1.</b> In designing curricula, considerations of the stages of emotional, moral, and faith developmental theories are crucial. The stages particular to youth are: Erikson’s stages five, the <i>Identity versus Identity Confusion</i> stage, and stage six, the <i>Intimacy versus Isolation</i> stage; Kohlberg’s second level, the <i>Conventional Level</i>; and Fowler’s stage three, the <i>Synthetic-Conventional Faith</i> stage.</p>
<p><b>YM2.</b> For the <i>Autalavou</i> (Youth groups), an age criteria must be enforced. The recommendation, is that the age criteria for those who will participate in the <i>Autalavou</i>, should be set for youth between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four years.<sup>114</sup></p>	<p><b>CE2.</b> Curriculum of CE needs to extend its focus from the cognitive (knowledge of the Bible), to include the emotional and affective dimensions of Samoan youth.</p>
<p><b>YM3.</b> Youth Ministry in Samoa, as well as in the parishes of the Church abroad, should incorporate the Four Dimensions of Samoan Youth – the heart, mind, soul and body – to bring out the full potentials of the Youth (see Ch3.4).</p>	<p><b>CE3.</b> Connecting the Gospel message more effectively, to the real life themes of Samoan youngsters. To achieve this, <i>Theologising with Young People</i> becomes important (see Ch3.2).</p>
<p><b>YM4.</b> More activities, like Youth trips, and Youth Camps for the Samoan Youth. (The CWM Youth Camp in Samoa is a positive start see Ch4.1.3). In addition, to have more open discussion groups for youngsters.</p>	<p><b>CE4.</b> The application of a <i>Participatory Learning Theory</i> into CE for Samoan youth, in particular, the conceptual frameworks of <i>scaffolding</i> and <i>appropriation</i> (see Ch3.3).</p>
<p><b>YM5.</b> For parishes of the Church (CCCS) abroad, a more bi-lingual approach to its ministry.</p>	<p><b>CE5.</b> For parishes of the Church (CCCS) abroad, a more bi-lingual approach to its CE.</p>
<p><b>YM6.</b> Ministers of the Church should be more open, and become better listeners, to the many concerns and issues of the Samoan youth.</p>	<p><b>CE6.</b> Ministers of the Church should be more open, to the many ideas that the Samoan youth have. Ministers must also allow more freedom for the young people to express their views and opinions, especially sharing and reflecting upon their faith.</p>

Table 4.1 The Twelve Recommendations for the Church (CCCS) to Improve its Youth Ministry and Christian Education

<sup>114</sup> To alleviate the confusion of who the *Autalavou* (Youth groups) should, and must cater for, in its programs, activities, and curriculum of CE, this recommendation has been made. This age criteria has been suggested, after the consideration of the stages and levels of human development, discussed in Ch1.3.

From our research, these are the twelve recommendations that we can put forth to the Church, suggesting methods that may help to meet the spiritual needs, and real life themes of Samoan youth today. It is envisaged that through the implementation of these suggestions, it shall improve the Youth Ministry and CE administered by the Church (CCCS), for the betterment of the spiritual lives of its youth both in Samoa, and abroad.

## CONCLUSION

In our efforts to formulate a theory of Christian Education and Youth Ministry, applicable for the Samoan youth in the Church (CCCS) today, our research into the various dimensions concerning the spirituality of Samoan youth, has developed such a theory. A theory that empowers the Samoan youngsters with the autonomy to think, learn, and to believe for themselves; a theory that brings forth the suppressed energies, passions, and gifts that these youngsters possess; and a theory that shares the Gospel message in comprehensible ways, relevant to the changing context(s) that these Samoan youngsters are located. Suggesting such a theory as our research has developed, is the first of many steps, in the process of working towards redeveloping the spirituality of Samoan youth, both in Samoa, as well as youngsters of the Samoan Church abroad. The next undertaking would involve the implementation of the re-contextualised theory of CE and recommendations for Youth Ministry that we have developed, into the various parishes of the Church (CCCS) worldwide.

To put our re-contextualised theory into action within the Youth Ministry and CE of the Church, the suggestion is that this process itself needs to be gradual, and over a period of time. Introducing anything new into the Church where already there are practises in place, may limit our theory from reaching its full potential, and re-vitalising the spiritual lives of Samoan youth. In addition, our investigations have disclosed the positive elements of the Church at present, in its attempt to address the spiritual needs of its young people. The process towards redeveloping the spirituality of Samoan youth, would therefore involve a gradually synthesis of our twelve recommendations, over time, with the positive practises of the Church at present.

The findings from this project should not be considered conclusive by any measure, but rather, indicative – in suggesting how we as the mentors for the Samoan youth, and as Ministers of the Church, can work towards offering the spiritual enrichment that the youth in the Church are yearning for. Furthermore, through the knowledge and insights gained throughout the research process, these will lead to transformative action on part of the Church, in successfully addressing the spiritual needs and real life themes of its young people. In turn, this will lead to transformative action on part of the Samoan youth themselves, when their needs to be spiritually connected to God, have been met.

Given the limitations of time, space, and resources in the present study, the possibility to employ a quantitative approach did not present itself. The selected methodology of qualitative interviews and literature review proved successful nonetheless, in gaining valuable information that has helped in the development of a re-contextualised theory of CE, and ministry for the Samoan youth today. For all pending and future research into this field, a quantitative and comprehensive study of Samoan youth in relation to their spirituality is recommended, given the availability of resources to carry out such a study.

All the recommendations presented in this study, have been made with the conviction, that these recommendations will benefit the youth of the Church, not just in the ever-changing context of the present day, but also for future generations of Samoan youth. It will entail a continuity of the positive elements of the Samoan tradition and culture, in its role of assisting the Church with the discipline of its young people, as well as maintaining family

values amongst Samoans. But this tradition must become accommodating, and flexible to the various contexts, and needs of Samoan youngsters today. Only then, will the theory of Christian education and Youth Ministry that our research has developed, become adaptable, and acceptable within the Church, to meet the spiritual needs and real life themes of its targeted audience.

The process towards redeveloping the spirituality of Samoan youth in the Church, both in Samoa and abroad, has began, through the development of a re-contextualised theory of CE and Youth Ministry. This process as well requires continuity across the various contexts of the Samoan youth, but more importantly, continuity into the future generations to follow. The result, will be that the Samoan youth in the Church today, as well as in the future generations, will actually participate in the affairs of the Church, for the experience, and the magnification of God working and transforming their lives.

APPENDIX I

A TRANSLATION OF THE C.C.C.S. BOOKLET FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION:  
CLASS OF YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 14-16 YRS

*Congregational Christian Church in Samoa*

Sunday School Teachers'  
Lesson Book



*To Live In and For Christ*

**Class of Young People**

**14-16 years**

2006-2008

**February – December**

Department of Christian Education

## LIST OF TOPICS / THEMES

## TERM ONE – February to May

February 2008

THEME: SALVATION BEGINS FROM GOD

1. Beginning of Classes for Sunday School and Youth Groups
2. The Salvation of God from Creation
3. The Salvation of God through Abraham's Calling
4. The Salvation of God through Jesus Christ

March 2008

THEME: SALVATION THAT MAY SEEM DEFEATED, BUT IS VICTORIOUS

1. Discussions about the Cross
2. Jesus prepares for Jerusalem
3. Hossana for All Things On High (PALM SUNDAY)

THEME: VICTORY THAT NEEDS TO BE PROCLAIMMED

4. Jesus Rose from the dead (Easter Sunday)
5. Jewish leaders try to disregard the event of the Resurrection

April 2008

THEME: SALVATION THROUGH GODLY MEANS

1. Saul performs a foolish act
2. The method Jesus chose
3. Jesus washes the feet of His disciples
4. The miracle on the path to Damascus

May 2008

THEME: THE HOLY SPIRIT USES THE UNLIKELY ONES

1. Mary meets Elizabeth
2. The Holy Spirit that makes prophets of sons and daughters (The Pentecost Sunday, Mother's Day)
3. [Break for the General Assembly of the CCCS]
4. [Break for the General Assembly of the CCCS]

## TERM TWO: June to September

June 2008

THEME: THE HOLY SPIRIT ENRICHES THE CHURCH

1. [Break for the Samoan Independence Day]
2. Mattias chosen to replace Judas
3. The first deacons are selected
4. Prophecy: the Coming of the Messiah

July 2008

THEME: THE HOLY SPIRIT ENRICHES THOSE WHO PROCLAIM GOD

1. Daniels interprets King Nebuchadnezzar's dream
2. Be courageous and speak the truth
3. The Holy Spirit reveals itself to Zerubbabel

4. Esther saves her people
5. The Greatness of Love

August 2008

THEME: THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES THE SOLUTIONS TO DIFFERENT PROBLEMS

1. Jesus' farewell with His disciples
2. God rectifies all our problems (Father's Day)
3. Ezekiel's calling to become a prophet
4. Jephthah becomes courageous, for the Holy Spirit is working in him.

September 2008

THEME: THE HOLY SPIRIT CHANGES THE HEARTS OF PEOPLE TO HAVE FAITH IN GOD

1. The works of the Holy Spirit are not limited to one particular region (Remembrance Sunday for when the Gospel arrived into Samoa)
2. Simon is converted to become a person of God
3. The behaviours and attitudes of someone who has been converted by the Holy Spirit
4. The Holy Spirit that has been sent; many have been converted to God

TERM THREE: October – December

October 2008

THEME: WHITE SUNDAY – IMPORTANCE IS PLACED ON THE FAMILY

1. [Preparations for White Sunday]
2. [White Sunday]
3. [Break for White Sunday]
4. King Saul is furious with Jonathan because of David
5. Hezekiah reveals all his treasures to people from Babylon

November 2008

THEME: FREE WILL OFFERINGS – THE IMPORTANCE OF GIVING FOR GOD

1. God provides the means to do His Will
2. King Melchizedek demonstrates blessings for Abraham
3. David purchases the threshing floor of Araunah
4. Actions and Behaviours must go hand in hand

December 2008

THEME: THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS – THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING PREPARED

1. God blesses David
2. King Josiah cleanses his kingdom
3. [Preparation for Christmas and the long break]

APPENDIX II

A TRANSLATION OF THE C.C.C.S. BOOKLET FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION:  
CLASS OF YOUNG PEOPLE / JUNIOR YOUTH AGED 17- 20 YRS

*Congregational Christian Church in Samoa*

Sunday School Teachers'  
Lesson Book



*To Live In and For Christ*

**Class of Young People / Junior Youth**

**17 – 20 years**

2006-2008

**February – November**

Department of Christian Education

## LIST OF TOPICS / THEMES

February 2008

THEME: THE TRIUNE GOD

1. Why does the Christian Church believe in the Trinity of God?
2. What is the meaning of the Church Doctrine – The Trinity?
3. How does the true Christian live this Doctrine of the Church regarding the Trinity?

March 2008

THEME: THE IMAGE OF GOD IN HUMANKIND

1. The meaning of the Image of God
2. The response of humankind as made in the Image of God
3. The response of humankind for the world today that we live in

April 2008

THEME: THE GREATNESS OF A GODLY LOVE

1. God demands love for all
2. Love is not fearful
3. God's Grace is abundant for us to live by, and also for our salvation
4. Eternal Life

May 2008

THEME: A KILLER VIRUS – HIV/AIDS AND THE GOSPEL

1. HIV/AIDS: Definition, Implications and its effects
2. HIV/AIDS: A Christian Perspective
3. [Break for the General Assembly of the CCCS]

June 2008

THEME: MAINTAINING AND ENRICHING LIVING AS A TRUE CHRISTIAN

1. [Break for the Samoan Independence Day]
2. Enriching Christian Ideologies I: Recommendations by the Apostle Paul
3. Enriching Christian Ideologies II: Jesus as the prime example
4. Enriching Christian Behaviours: The Apostle Paul and the Early Christians

July 2008

THEME: GOD CALLS FOR PEACE, NOT A LIFE OF DISORDER

1. A life of disorder, as a result of disobedience to God
2. A life of disorder, as a result of not following the example of Jesus
3. A life of disorder, as a result of arrogance and selfishness
4. A life of disorder, as a result of dissatisfaction with the life you have

August 2008

THEME: GOD – THE TRUE FOUNDATION FOR THE SALVATION OF HUMANKIND

1. Salvation through Jesus Christ
2. Salvation through the Holy Spirit
3. Salvation through the Law

September 2008

THEME: LEADING THE GOOD EXAMPLE OF BEING GODLY

1. Modern day Joseph: Tools to overcome all temptations
2. Modern day Esther: Tools for salvation of others
3. Modern day Ruth: Love does not end with death

October 2008

THEME: TO LIVE AS A TRUE CHRISTIAN

1. [Preparations for White Sunday]
2. [White Sunday]
3. [Break for White Sunday]
4. To become *the Salt of the world*
5. To become *the Light of the world*

November 2008

THEME: BASE YOUR LIFE ON TRUE DOCTRINES

1. Preparing for a prosperous future
2. The struggle with difficulties in life
3. The spirit of a Generous Person
4. Truth: Revealed and Realised through Christ

APPENDIX III

A TRANSLATION OF THE C.C.C.S. BOOKLET FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION:  
LESSON BOOK FOR YOUTH GROUPS (*Autalavou*)

*Congregational Christian Church in Samoa*

Lesson Book For  
YOUTH GROUPS  
(*Autalavou*)



*To Live In and For Christ*

2008

**February – December**

Department of Christian Education

## LIST OF TOPICS / THEMES

February 2008

THEME: THE TRUE GOD REVEALED IN THE TEACHINGS OF THE BIBLE

1. YHWH: The name of God in the Old Testament
2. YHWH and the TRIUNE GOD: One and the same, as revealed through Jesus Christ in the New Testament
3. Examples of the Triune God as the core and crux of the Gospel Message as found in the New Testament

March and April 2008

THEME: BIBLICAL TEACHINGS ABOUT THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

1. Suffering of Christ
2. The meaning of Jesus' death in the New Testament
3. The meaning of Jesus' death in the book of Revelations
4. Resurrection in the Old Testament
5. General Gospel Teachings about the Resurrection as found in the New Testament
6. The witness of the Apostle Paul to the Resurrection
7. [Open discussions by the local Youth groups]

May 2008

THEME: BIBLE STUDY – Genesis 1-4: EMPHASIS ON THE FAMILY

1. God founded the first family: Genesis 1:26-31; 2:18-25
2. The Hope of God for the family: Genesis 1:28-31; 2:18-25
3. Family and sin: Genesis 3:1-24
4. The implications upon the family because of sin: Genesis 4:1-26
5. [Overall Summation of this month's theme]

June 2008

THEME: BIBLE STUDY – Ezekiel 37:1-14: THE SPIRIT OF GOD

1. Definitions and Reflections on this month's theme: Ezekiel 37:1-14
2. Preaching to the Dead
3. Spirit of the Lord
4. Resurrection through the Spirit

July 2008

THEME: BIBLE STUDY – Proverbs 8:22-31: THE WISDOM OF GOD

1. Wisdom for Living
2. God and Wisdom
3. Christ and Wisdom
4. [Open discussions/activities demonstrating the positives of Wisdom in our everyday lives]

August 2008

THEME: THE SABBATH

1. Teachings from the Old Testament regarding the Sabbath
2. Teachings from the Old AND New Testaments accepted by Christianity regarding the Sabbath
3. Teachings from the Bible to reaffirm the first day of the week as the Sabbath

4. Open Discussions for the Youth group about the Sabbath
5. Singing the Samoan Traditional Hymn No. 207

September 2008

THEME: THEOLOGICAL DISCUSSIONS

1. Divine Council
2. Angels
3. The Image of God in Humanity
4. [Overall Summation of this month's theme by the Youth themselves]

October 2008

THEME: YOUTH AND THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

1. Youth and the Gospel Message: Mark 1:16-20; Luke 6:12-16
2. What does the Gospel demand of the Youth? Ps 144:12; 148:10-13; Micah 19:20; Daniel 1:1-21; Matt 4:17-22
3. What gifts can the Youth offer the Gospel? Ps 148:11-13; Matt 28:16-20; Gal 5:16-20
4. *"Youth are needed by the Church for Mission"*: A Paper by Rev. Peteru Tone (from Vaivase Tai Parish)

November 2008

THEME: BIBLE STUDY – TO LIVE IN CHRIST

1. Living Holy for God is Holy: The Everlasting Commandment – Leviticus 16:34
2. Living Holy against all temptations: Mtt 4:1-11
3. Living Holy against temptations of the flesh, but living by the Gifts of the Spirit: Gal 5:16-24
4. Living Holy amidst the unholy ones: Gen 39:1-13

December 2008

THEME: [SELECTED THEMES BY THE CHRISIAN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT]

1. Friedrich Nietzsche and the Parable of the Madman
2. [Open Discussions about the Theme for the Fellowship of Youth at the General Assembly 2009]

“What could the Church do for its Young People?”

“What could the Young People do for the Church?”

## APPENDIX IV

CONGREGATIONAL SENIOR COLLEGE,  
APIA, SAMOA.

RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE YEAR PLAN 2008  
CSC Yr 12 & 13  
Prepared by the Head of Department

The RK schedule prescribed for the year 12 & 13 emphasises LIVING VALUES namely LOVE, RESPONSIBILITY, HONESTY, HUMILITY, TOLERANCE, PEACE, and ENDURANCE. It also stresses the importance of Prayer and Worship.

### AIM

1. The respective living values should be delivered as daily or weekly guidance for the students. These values also have very wide meanings and designations. We will have to narrow the implications to contain the status quo that is, the students in this very important age. With this in mind, we can then zero in onto the usual weakness that we know constituted to failures and defeat. I feel that this is the time to raise the awareness, and encourage students to focus on these issues. We teach them to be courageous enough to be able to do something about it.
2. We let the students realise and believe that their future will be decided by the affairs of today. The prescribed living values therefore are excellent essentials that are absolutely necessary to build a solid foundation for a good future. There is so much to lose if we should do without them. Ignorance is no excuse.

CLASS ACTIVITIES: We do class discussions in the hope that the students can contribute by nominating the targeted weaknesses and most important of all, we let them think aloud and decide for themselves, while the teacher gives guidance and advise.

### PLAN FOR TERM ONE

FEBRUARY	Introduction & Orientation PEACE LOVE
MARCH	RESPONSIBILITY FREEDOM
APRIL	ENDURANCE

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## GLOSSARY

<i>afafine</i>	daughter to a father
<i>Āiga</i>	family
<i>Aoga Aso Sā</i>	Sunday School
<i>Aoga Faifeau</i>	Pastor School
<i>atali'i</i>	son to a father
<i>Autalavou</i>	Youth Groups
<i>Autalavou Laiti</i>	Junior Youth
<i>fa'aSamoa</i>	Samoaan tradition, culture
<i>Faifeau</i>	Minister
<i>Ia manuia le lua malaga</i>	May you both enjoy a safe journey
<i>Matai</i>	Chief
<i>Siva Samoa</i>	Samoaan Traditional Dance
<i>tama-tama</i>	son to a mother
<i>tama-teine</i>	daughter to a mother
<i>taupo</i>	Samoaan village princess
<i>tofā</i>	farewell
<i>tuafafine</i>	sister to her brother
<i>tuagane</i>	brother to his sister
<i>uso</i>	same gender siblings