

PMB 1395/30

THESIS IN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

“UA SASA’A FA’AOTI LE UTU A LE FAIMEA”

**(Let the fisherman’s bamboo receptacle be completely
emptied out)**

AND

“THE KENOSIS OF GOD”

Project submitted

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Tautiaga Pepa Mamea.

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This is dedicated
to
all my families
especially
to
my wife Tina and children, Tinei, Ote, Tauina, Grace and Faith.

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the Samoan proverbial saying "*Ua sasa'a fa'aoti le utu a le Faimea*" (Let the fisherman's bamboo receptacle be completely emptied out). The purpose being to explain the significance of this proverbial saying and how it can theologically contribute to our understanding of the 'Kenosis of God.'

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May God bless you all. Thank you.

CHAPTER THREE: The Kingdom of God

Introduction

2.1 The Kingdom of God

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INTRODUCTION.

The main reason I have chosen this topic for critical and theological reflection stem from the pride I have in my own Samoan culture and the love I have for the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

I have treasured the wealth of wisdom my parents and extended families have shared and taught me about my Samoan culture. For Pacific people our culture defines where we come from, who we are today and our future hope. However, our culture must be seen in light of its interaction with the Good New's message which has at its core, God's "love" for all creation. I believe this love is also manifested in certain aspects of the Samoan culture.

This paper attempts to draw attention to and highlight the love of God through the Samoan ethos of *fefa'asoa'a'i* or sharing. The Samoan practice of *fefa'asoa'a'i* is epitomized by the proverbial saying "*Ua sasa'a fa'aoti le utu a le Faimea*" (Let the fisherman's bamboo receptacle be completely emptied out). This statement can be viewed as a contextual example of the "Kenosis of God", or God's unselfish and sacrificial love for God's creation.

I begin this theological journey within the context of my own Samoan culture. Chapter one discusses the importance and relevance of Samoan oral traditions. Chapter two focuses on the Samoan cultural concept and practice of sharing. Particular emphasis will be upon the above proverbial saying that forms the basis of this thesis. Chapter three discusses the Kenosis of God and Chapter four looks at God as the Ultimate *Faimea* (Fisherman).

The Research of this paper was carried out in Samoa, through informal discussions with students and staff members of Malua. Also personal interviews were conducted as well as consulting relevant and available literature. Furthermore, personal observations and experiences as a Samoan and a member of the Congregational

CHAPTER ONE

Samoan Oral Traditions (Myths, Legends, Proverbial sayings and Sacred Information)

INTRODUCTION

I was told by my grandparents that the traditional¹ events of the past were orally transmitted from one generation to another. This was seen as a reliable method that preserved the history and human experience of the Samoan people for a long period of time. This view was endorsed by Taveuveu Faletasi. He stated that Samoans are a gifted people because they can both recall and accurately transmit the knowledge of a historical event or a valuable skill or technique. For example, the skill of catching fish or planting crops is contained in Samoan oral tradition. He adds that Samoan '*Tala tu'u*' (Wisdom in the past) or oral traditions are viewed as treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of the past. Indeed, it is the fundamental basis of the Samoan culture.²

Tala tu'u can be divided into a number of categories, each highlighting wisdom or knowledge of the past. For example there are *tala o le vavau* or myths that pertain to oral narratives of long ago (e.g. creation stories of Samoa and stories of traditional Samoan religion and gods). Then there are *tala anamua* or legends that cover stories not too far in the past or prior to the arrival of Christianity to Samoa (e.g. stories of how the *ava* (kava) or *ie toga* (fine mat) came to Samoa). *Tala tu'u* also involves *alagaupu* or proverbial sayings that arise from some historical event from the *tala o le vavau* or *tala anamua*. Finally, *Tala tu'u* may also involve *measina* or that which is sacred to the *aiga* or family (e.g. family genealogy, or a secret family skill or talent

¹ Traditional, here means a historical period prior to the arrival of the London Missionary Society Missionaries to Samoa in 1830.

² Taveuveu Faletasi (69 years of age), interview with the author on the 27th of March 2005 at Satalo Falealili, Samoa.

like making fishhooks, weaving or tattooing). *Tala tu'u* therefore is a reference to guide and control every aspects of Samoan culture; in order to make sure that the knowledge and experiences of the past are not lost but make accessible for the present and later generations.

It is the intention of this paper to discuss the understanding and interpretation of Samoan *tala tu'u* and its various categories to highlight the theological significance of the proverbial saying "*Ua sasa'a fa'aoti le utu a le Faimea*" (Let the fisherman's bamboo receptacle be completely emptied out) .

1.1 *Tala o le vavau* (Myths).

There are a number of opinions on the way *tala o le vavau* (myths) are to be interpreted or understood. A popular view of myths tends to define myths as a make believe story similar to a fable or fairy tale. This is not the sense or understanding of this paper. The *tala o le vavau* is a "traditional story that usually concerns some superhuman being or some alleged person or event, which attempts to explain a natural phenomena. It is a traditional story about deities or demigods and the creation of the world and its inhabitants."³ Thus, the *tala o le vavau* is regarded as sacred and true.⁴

According to the Oxford Dictionary, a myth is "a traditional story concerning the early history of a people or explaining a natural or social fact."⁵ Indeed, a myth is "usually transmitted orally, that has as its main actors superhuman beings and that is typically set in an otherworldly time and space. Historians of religion agree that all

³ Arthur Delbridge and JRL Bernard. *The Macquarie Concise Dictionary*, (3rd Ed) (Sydney: The Macquarie Library, 1998), 758.

⁴ Antony Alpers. *The World of Polynesians* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 38.

⁵ Catherine Soanes. *The New Pocket Oxford Dictionary*, (9th Ed) (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), 595.

myths through the use of symbolic language, communicate transcendent meaning within a culture.”⁶

Mircea Eliade states that, “myth happens to be the very foundation of social life and culture.”⁷ Eliade further elaborates that, “a myth is a true history of what came to pass at the beginning of time, and one which provides the pattern for human behaviour.”⁸ Therefore, myths are real and considered a valuable part of the culture. Evidently, they concern the very origins of the culture. Therefore, we are able to reflect upon such events of life, in order to assure our identity.

For David Maclagan;

Every culture, no matter how simple, has left us some framework designed to account for the origin and nature of the world's life-structures (even if it is not explicitly titled a creation myth). Myths are not unlike our sciences as they seem to have to account, not only for the ‘laws of nature’, but for the law and customs of men. They describe the cosmos in human terms, and humanity in cosmic terms. In fact, they point back to the moment before such distinction existed: through words and images they point to a ‘past’ which is always present, a creative process, which is life itself.⁹

It is clear in Maclagan's statement that myths are very important sources for understanding the present. In fact, myths provide the guidelines and structure for people to follow. They are a valuable reference to justify the truth of all practices in ones culture. Another form of *tala tu'u* or oral traditions similar to *tala o le vavau* or myths are *tala anamua* or legends, which have their own specific focus.

1.2 Samoan *Tala anamua* (Legends).

*Tala anamua*¹⁰ or legends are understood as mysteries of the not so distant past that provide explanations and meaning for the present. Legends often involve the spiritual

⁶ Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan, *The Oxford Companion to the Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 539.

⁷ Mircea Eliade, *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries* (Great Britain: Harvill Press, 1960), 23.

⁸ Mircea Eliade, *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*, 23.

⁹ David Maclagan, *Creation Myths* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997), 97.

¹⁰ *Tala anamua* is a legend, it could be a fiction or non-fiction stories.

life where the living have access to the supernatural. It includes stories of famous families, and their encounters with gods and spirits. Legends can be accounts of the life of a very important person who is significant in a particular field of work like, fishing, carving and weaving. The Macquarie Concise Dictionary, defines legends as a "collection of stories of an admirable person handed down from earlier times and popularly accepted as historical."¹¹ Indeed, legends can also be part of the family or village history. Legends often explain some historical facts such as famous landmarks, important people or any important event that explain the present.

Legends are similar to myths in terms of enhancing and strengthening the traditional lifestyle. Legends bring the experience and knowledge of the past into the present world. Hence legends are an essential part of tradition and lifestyle within most islands of the Pacific.

1.3 *Alagaupu* (Proverbial sayings)

The word '*Alagaupu*' is made up of two root words: '*ala*' meaning way or path and '*upu*,' meaning word. So the word *alagaupu* means shown the way or path through words.¹² The English equivalent of '*Alagaupu*' is 'proverbial saying'. Arthur Delbridge and Bernard defines a proverbial saying as "a short, popular saying that has been in use for a long time expressing some familiar truth."¹³ Proverbial sayings are therefore, essential to express some familiar truth about a particular society or ethnic group. Like myths and legends, proverbial sayings "are fundamental components of the languages."¹⁴ It is through the languages that tradition and lifestyle are maintained.

¹¹ Arthur Delbridge and JRL Bernard. *The Macquarie Concise Dictionary* (Sydney: The Macquarie Library, 1998), 647.

¹² Vagatai Va'aelua. *Alagaupu and Preaching Ministry* (BD Dissertation, Malua: Malua Theological College, 1999), 1.

¹³ Arthur Delbridge and JRL Bernard. *The Macquarie Concise Dictionary, (3rd Ed)* (Sydney: The Macquarie Library, 1998), 929.

¹⁴ Vagatai Va'aelua. *Alagaupu and Preaching Ministry* (BD Dissertation, Malua: Malua Theological College, 1999), 4.

Today, many Samoan proverbial sayings are often used in Church preaching and Samoan formal speeches. It is one aspect of Samoan formal language which contains of colourful meanings and implications of words. However, every Samoan proverb is originated from either a traditional myth or legend. That is to say they have emerged from some historical event that occurred in Samoans tradition in the past. For example, activities like traditional Samoan sports (e.g catching pigeons) fishing, planting and building, have become sources of many famous and popular Samoan proverbial sayings.

Alagaupu or proverbial sayings have the same function as that of the 'Proverbs' in the book of Proverbs (see Proverbs 8: 32-35) in the Old Testament of the Bible. However, it is clear that such teaching of the wise is relevant to everyone and has a universal meaning for people.

1.4 *Measina* (That which is Sacred).

The Samoan word *measina* or 'that which is sacred' refers to something that is extremely important to a particular group of people such as *aiga* (family) or *mu'u* (village). *Measina* expresses the wisdom and power a *aiga* may have concerning some form of 'sacred' knowledge they possess.

The New Pocket Oxford English Dictionary states that, the word 'sacred' has its origins in the Latin language.¹⁵ It comes from the word '*sacrare*' meaning consecrate. For Delbridge and Bernard, sacred means "appropriated or dedicated to a deity or to some religious purpose. It becomes venerated because of the association with divinity or divine things."¹⁶

Therefore, what is *measina* or sacred for a *aiga*, may also involve be its family

¹⁵ Cathrine Soanes, *The New Pocket Oxford Dictionary*, (9th Ed) (New York: Oxford University, 2001), 795.

¹⁶ Arthur Delbridge and JRL Bernard, *The Macquarie Concise Dictionary*, (3rd Ed) (Sydney: The Macquarie Library, 1998), 1023- 1024.

genealogy. The family genealogy not only links the family to the land and its environment, but it can be also traced back to their ancestral gods. Likewise, a knowledge of special techniques of fishing or methods of planting are considered *measina* to a *aiga* for it gives them 'divine' recognition and acknowledgement within their *mu'u* (village) and people.

1.5 The significances of the Samoan *Aganu'u* (Culture)

The particular culture of a society defines the set of meanings and values that informs the society's way of life. However, culture is not an easy concept to define. Each person, society or academic discipline tends to formulate their own definition of what culture means in accordance to their own context. This is no different for Samoans, for culture has its own specific meaning, which is very much entrenched in the people's daily lives. The Samoan word for culture is '*aganuu*' and it is made up of two words, '*aga*' which can pertain "to the moral and social or behavioral character of a *muu* (village or community)." ¹⁷ '*Aga*' can also mean '*spiritual*' and can also refer to the spiritual characteristics of the community. Therefore, "the *aganu'u* of Samoans is the amalgamation of both the spiritual and social behaviours of the community, which defines the way the society lives." ¹⁸

This interconnectedness of the spiritual and social lives of the community as expressed through its *tala tu'u* highlights two important factors. Firstly, culture has a divine origin that it is divinely given. Secondly, it reinforces the immanent nature of

¹⁷ Ama'amalele Tofaono, *Eco-Theology: Aiga- The Household of Life* (Erlandgen: Erlanger Verl. fur Mission und Okumene, 2000), 28.

¹⁸ Ama'amalele Tofaono, *Eco-Theology : Aiga -The Household of Life*, 28.

the divine Supreme Being¹⁹ as being present and interacting with the created world.²⁰

This may explain why Samoans have a great respect for the culture and ensure that it is passed from one generation to the next. They perceive culture as divinely given and divinely interacting with culture. This highlights the significance of myths, legends, proverbial sayings and *measina*. The people's culture identifies, defines, and connects them to their past. Furthermore culture gives direction and a basis to move towards the future. Therefore, Samoan culture is deeply entrenched with divine meaning that not only links humanity to its cosmos but also connects and directs creation to its divine Supreme Being.

It is clear that culture is not just a way of life but it can also be seen as a way of communicating with God. Indeed culture is where God reveals God's message to God's people in various aspects of life. As long as humans live on earth, they still live with the culture. Culture reminds us that God never leaves us alone. Hence in whatever people do in life, God participates with God's creation. This shows how much God cares for God's people and how much God loves them.

1.6 Conclusion.

We have seen the importance of *Tala tu'u* in the oral traditions of the Samoan people. They represent the wisdom of the past. *Tala tu'u* explains the reality of the people's existence and intercorrectedness with their surroundings. Whether it be a *tala o le vavau* or a *tala anamua* or *alagaupu*, they explain the truth of events that have shaped the culture and lives of the Samoan people.

In the next chapter we will focus on one aspect of Samoa culture, namely *fefa'asoa'i* or sharing. The pinnacle of this cultural concept and practice can be found in the Samoan proverbial saying "*Ua sasa'a fa'aoti le utu a le Faimea.*"

¹⁹ Supreme Being. Samoans had an understanding of a national god or diety in the form of Tagaloalagi. A supreme being that had a immanent presence in the context of the Samoan people.

CHAPTER TWO

The Samoan concept of sharing and the Samoan Proverbial saying “*Ua sasa’a fa’aoti le utu a le Faimea.*” (Let the fisherman’s bamboo receptacle be emptied out)

INTRODUCTION

For many of the Pacific nations, culture is vital to human existence. Culture is one’s identity of where a person has come from and who one is, in relation to the rest of the world. It explains the way people are brought up in their families and villages. According to C. G. McKay, Samoan culture expresses the idea of communal life where “people live very close to each other. Their traditional houses have no walls; there are no secrets, and no privacy.”²¹ This is a very important aspect of Samoan culture, its communal environment, where everything is open for the people to see, share with and to support one another. The aim of this Chapter is to highlight the importance of *fefa’asoa’a’i* or sharing in the Samoan culture, as expressed in the Samoan proverbial saying above.

2.1 Samoan Concept of *Fefa’asoa’a’i* (Sharing).

Fefa’asoa’a’i is the Samoan term that means sharing. It comes from the word *fa’asoa* meaning ‘to share.’ The addition of the prefix *fe*, means a deeper concern and effort to share with one another. According to Aumua Mataitusi Simanu, this idea of *fefa’asoa’a’i* or sharing is one aspect of Samoan culture that still survives today. Indeed, it is an effective method for teaching and learning as practiced in school. It is how Samoan children learn and develop their understanding of their own culture. This method of sharing not only occurs in the homes but also in the villages, churches, schools and all places where people live together and interact with one another.²²

²¹ C. G. McKay, *Samoa* (Auckland: A. H. & A. W. Reed, 1968), 10.

²² Aumua Mataitusi Simanu, *O si manu a Ali’i* (New Zealand: Pasifika Press, 2002), 70.

This chapter discusses three important aspects of *fefa'asoa'i* as practiced in the traditional Samoan sense before the arrival of the Christian Gospel to Samoa in 1830.

- (1) the sharing of food in the Samoan *aiga* or family
- (2) the sharing of fish caught by the *mu'u* or villagers
- (3) and, the sharing of land amongst the *aiga* or family.

These three characteristics will help explain the cultural significance of this practice within the Samoan culture.

The idea and practice of *fefa'asoa'i* begin in the life of a young Samoan child at home. There were no books to read or any formal institutionalised education to advise children on the importance of this cultural norm within Samoan society. Rather, one learnt the practice of *fefa'asoa'i* and its significance within the surroundings and events that occurred in the *aiga* or family, such as the *fa'asoa* or sharing of food.

(1). The *fa'asoa* (sharing) of food in the Samoan *aiga* (family).

Traditionally, all members of the *aiga* lived together and shared everything they possessed and produced. For instance, food was normally shared among the *matai* or chief and his relatives that is both in his nuclear and extended *aiga*. Within this setting, everything was to be shared according to the Samoan structure of the *aiga*. This structure placed the *matai*²³ as the head of the *aiga*, then the *tamaitai* (group of female)²⁴, *aumaga* (untitled men)²⁵ and finally the children.

Traditionally, the *matai*, or chief appointed by his *aiga potopoto* or extended family.

This choice of *matai* is not necessarily based on blood ties but rather on one

²³ *Matai*: The leader of his own brothers, sisters cousins and children. He was once himself an ordinary a working member of the *aiga*, as are his children. *Matai* titles have been split or shared between groups of holders, all in each group being addressed by the same *matai* name but distinguished by the addition of their last names.

²⁴ *Tamaitai*: It was only given to the daughters of the *matai*, but now uses to name the group of females in the village.

²⁵ *Aumaga*: The name that was given to those who chewed the *ava* during the special occasion like matais meeting. It is now used to call the untitled men in the village.

dedicated and faithful *tautua* or service to the extended *aiga*. It is the *matai* who distributes the products of crops from the *aiga* plantations and allocates the *aiga* land for usage. Therefore, the *matai* is responsible for the general welfare of the *aiga potopoto*.²⁶ Great respect is shown by the *aiga potopoto* towards their *matai* and one such way of honouring their *matai* is by sharing the best of their food with their *matai*.

The structure of the *aiga potopoto* meant that not everyone ate all at once nor did they eat together in the same venue. For example, when it came to mealtime, children were forbidden to eat together with the *matai*. The *matai* ate first by himself in a separate house, while his wife and children ate together with other members of the family. According to Tupua Tamasese Efi, this was not only to honour and show respect to the *matai*, but also to enable the *matai*'s children to be exposed to the spirit of sharing within the family environment. In this way the children can learn how to live in the community of people, enhancing the spirit of cooperation and fellowship.²⁷

I believe that the structure of the Samoan *aiga* enabled food sharing to run smoothly. The community knew what sort of food should be distributed out and who should receive it. For example, in the distribution of a cooked pig, the *tuala*²⁸ is the most important part to be given to the *matai taua*²⁹ while the *alaga*³⁰ and *o'o*³¹ is for other chiefs known as orators. The *ivimuliulu*,³² *nofoi*³³ and the head is distributed among the *aumaga* and the children. For the ladies, they ate the special part known as *alo*.³⁴

²⁶ R. Gerard Ward, *Islands of the South Pacific* (London: Ward Lock Educational Co. Limited, 1965), 21.

²⁷ Tupua Tamasese Efi, *Ia fa'agaganaina oe e le Atua Fetalai* (Western Samoa: Commercial Printers Ltd, 1989), 98.

²⁸ The prime portion from the back of a pig.

²⁹ The very important chief of the family or village.

³⁰ The legs and shoulders of an animal.

³¹ A saddle of pork.

³² The back of the head.

³³ The hind part or bottom.

³⁴ The belly or under side of a pig.

However, the sharing of food was not limited or restricted to within one *aiga potopoto* in the village. The *aiga* also shared food amongst their neighbours. The sharing of the best food for the *matai* would also be shared to those *aiga* living next door. This sharing of food was reciprocal, that is, as one family gives to their neighbour a basket of *taro* and fish, in return the receiving family also give them some chicken and breadfruit.

Aumua Mataitusi Simanu writes that "this is why the *fa'aSamoa*³⁵ is different from other cultures, because they have more concern for other people rather than themselves."³⁶ For McKay, "the underlying motivation is pride. That is a pride of self, of family, and of race. It is an easy sitting pride, which look unselfconsciously at other people. Inherently, a proud people see value in dignity, and they expect recognition, both from strangers and among themselves."³⁷

This nature of the Samoan culture continually grows in the hearts of its people. It is hard for anyone to change and ignore the value of Samoan traditions in their lives. For Simanu, "this is why selfishness is unacceptable in the *fa'aSamoa*, or Samoan way because there is a desire of unity and love amongst the people of the family. It is a good example of communal living wherever the idea of sharing is existed. That is through respect and sociability."³⁸

According to Samoata Tulaga, this practice of sharing was based upon the *aiga's* hope for the blessings from their *matai*. So, the idea of sharing in the past was not only practiced as a sign of respect, but it was also used to receive blessings, from the *matai*. The *matai* was perceived as the lord of blessings.³⁹

³⁵ Fa'asamoa is a traditional way of doing things the Samoan way.

³⁶ Aumua Mataitusi Simanu, *O si manu a Ali'i* (New Zealand: Pasifika Press, 2002), 70.

³⁷ C. G. R. Mc Kay, *Samoaana* (Auckland: A. H. & A. W. Reed, 1968), 7.

³⁸ Aumua Mataitusi Simanu, *O si manu a Ali'i* (New Zealand: Pasifika Press, 2002), 70.

³⁹ Interview with the author on the 22 April, 2005.

(2). The *fa'asoa* or the sharing of the fish caught by the villagers.

The sharing of fish from a fishing expedition within a village is very similar to the sharing of cooked food in the *aiga potopoto*, where by the *matai* is always the first to receive his portion, before the other members of the *aiga*. However, some villages do have a special way of sharing their fish. For example, the village of *Pu'apu'a* in the island of *Savai'i* is closely associated with the legend of *I'aevea*.⁴⁰

Based on an interview with some *matai*⁴¹ of the village, the legend of *I'aevea* is believed to be founded on a historical event. *Lemalu Minute*⁴² recalls what his father told him about the story of *I'aevea*;

Once upon a time, a Fijian lady crossed the shore of Pu'apu'a as she swam from the vast ocean of the Pacific. When she felt tired, she had a break at the beach and there she met a man named Ta'ala. She asked him for something to eat but he refused her request. Therefore she took a walk to the other side of the village and met another man named Lemalu. Again, she cried for food and Lemalu invited her to his place. Lemalu had a daughter named Lele. Since Lemalu had shown respect to the stranger, he could not find anything else, to make food for the lady. Therefore, he killed his daughter to make a meal for the lady.

*When the meal was served, the Fijian lady cried and was moved by the show of respect that she was given. Before she left, she opened her little basket and took out the only fish that she had. This was the *I'aevea*. She gave it as a gift to Lemalu and appointed him as a master who can lead the fishing expedition to catch the *I'aevea*. She declared that the fish would be the sign of thanksgiving and gratitude for what had been done to her. Even though the gift was for Lemalu and his family, the Fijian lady ordered him to share it for everyone in the village as well.*

*From this covenant, she reminded him too to share all the fish that they can catch to all members of each family. From the *matai* to the little babies. They can share them to whom they want, but never sell the fish for money or profit. No one was allowed to hide even one fish from the fishing expedition..*

Lemalu believes, this is why the legend is still alive today in their village. They continue to observe and uphold the conditions expressed in the oral narrative. For

⁴⁰ The *I'aevea* – a red lips mullet.

⁴¹ Ta'ala Talione (72 years), Lemalu Minute (70 years), Ugapo Sagato (68 years), Ugapo Teleaga (75 years), Samoata Tulaga (62 years), Ta'ala Komiti (65 years).

⁴² Lemalu Minute is the grandchild of Lemalu Vaipae who original accepted this gift of *I'aevea* (fish) from the Fijian lady. He currently takeover the role of his ancestors to keep this living legend alive.

example, on returning with a huge catch from a fishing expedition, the villager's would sit on the rocks observing, as the *matai* with the help of the *taulele 'a* distributes all the fish equally to all the numbers of the families in the village.

Samoans were taught and grew up with the idea of sharing. This oral tradition from their ancestors continue to be transplanted to the later generations. Hence, it is the way they promote unity and harmony within the village or community. The *fa'asoa* enhances love and sociability amongst the people of the community.

(3) The *fa'asoa* or sharing of land.

Our final example of this notion of *fefa'asoa'i* is shown by the way the *matai* and his *aiga potopoto* share their land. As alluded to previously, there are two main structures of a Samoan *aiga*. The first one is a nuclear family, consisting of the *matai*, his wife and their children. Then there is the *aiga potopoto* or the extended family, a cluster of *matai* and their *aiga* related along bloodlines. These two *aiga* structures have different ways of doing things, depending on the *matais*. "They are the ones who are chosen by the family as fit to lead them. Their authority depends on their continuing consent."⁴³ Within the *aiga potopoto* or extended family, there is a *matai* called the *sa'o*.⁴⁴ He is the leader of all the cluster of *matais* within the *aiga potopoto*. Although each nuclear *aiga* group has a *matai*, the *sa'o* has the power to control and conduct everything in the whole family. Eveline Taupa'u⁴⁵ explained that traditionally, the *sa'o* of the *aiga* was the decision maker. He has the final say in all things. Taupa'u added, this was why the *fa'aSamoa* in the past was very strong, because everyone listened to the word of the *sa'o* without a complaint. It doesn't matter whether he was right or wrong, the

⁴³ C. G. R. McKay, *Samoaana* (Auckland: A. H. & A. W. Reed, 1968), 9.

⁴⁴ *Sa'o* means the high chief of the family and /or village.

⁴⁵ The senior lecturer of the Samoan Culture at the Samoa National University: Interview with the author at the University centre on 11th May, 2005.

sa'o had the authority to rule his family. For he or she is the one who makes a final say for the family.

One of the major roles of the *sa'o* in the *aiga* is to allocate the *aiga* land to all its members. It is not an easy task because he had to keep the peace among everyone.

Tupua Tamasese Efi states, "this is one of the unforgettable attitudes of the *sa'o*. He was humble and never tried to impose his *pule*⁴⁶ or rule over his role. Although he has that power to control his family, he still speaks with respect, knowing that he is well supported by his relatives."⁴⁷ His family supports tries to present a good image of the *sa'o*, because he shares everything with love and fairness to them.

This attitude of the *sa'o* is highlighted by MacKay when he stated that "the *sa'o* allows all members of the family to live and produce on the land. They contribute lightly to his support and share in the entertainment of his and their guests. Indeed, the *sa'o* or *matai* must see justice done between members of the family, and in particular the succeeding generations in continuing occupation remain secure."⁴⁸ McKay also explains that, "the Samoan family land is not chattel to be traded, or to be partitioned into shares for individuals. It is perpetual trust, in joint family ownership, administered by the *matai*. If anyone goes away, that person may not dispose of the land; nor may that person receive any proceeds from it while he does not work on it; he must leave it for the others; it will be there if he returns."⁴⁹

The sharing of *aiga* land in the past had restrictions or boundaries, in order that a harmonious relationship existed amongst all the *aiga* members. It was also to ensure that the land was worked well and produced crops for the consumption of all the family members.

⁴⁶ Pule: the power to authorise and to rule everyone in the society.

⁴⁷ Tupua Tamasese Efi. *Ia fa'agaganaina oe e le Atua Fetalai* (Apia: Commercial Printers Ltd. 1968), 99.

⁴⁸ C. G. R. McKay, *Samoana* (Auckland: A. H. & A. W. Reed, 1968), 10.

⁴⁹ C. G. R. McKay, *Samoana*, 10

Having discussed and highlighted the importance of the Samoan concept of *fefa'asoa'i* or sharing within ones family and community. This paper turns to a discussion of the proverbial saying that exemplifies, and captures the true essence of Samoan sharing. A type of sharing that goes far beyond what has previously been discussed.

2.2 The Samoan proverbial saying “*Ua sasa'a fa'aoti le utu a le Faimea.*” (Let the fisherman's bamboo receptacle be completely emptied out).

This is a well-known and popular proverbial saying of Samoa that is often used by today's orators in their speeches and prayers. The pastors in their sermons as well as in their teaching have also used this proverbial expression, to describe the unconditional love of God in the world. It therefore implies many aspects of life that highlight the relationship of one person to another, like the *matai* and his *aiga potopoto* in the village.

Although it was originated from a special experience and context in the past, speakers have adapted this phrase to highlight or express an outstanding effort, which involves sharing among individuals or within a community of people. Therefore, it is important we turn to discussing the origin of this proverbial saying. This will give us more understanding of its meanings, and how it relates to the ultimate act of sacrifice by God for the world.

2.3 The origin of “*Ua sasa'a fa'aoti le utu a le Faimea.*” (Let the fisherman's bamboo receptacle be completely emptied out).

As stated in the first chapter, Samoan proverbial sayings are rooted in a particular myth or legend. This is no different with the above proverbial saying, which has emerged out of the cultural environment of a fisherman. Agafili Tuitolova'a has briefly explained the story where this living tradition is rooted in. He states;

Once upon a time there was a boy named Aloalolela. His father was La or Sun. He married the daughter of the Tuifiti.⁵⁰ Aloaloela was not favoured in the eyes of the Tuifiti because he was not a fisherman. Aloaloela found no way to please the Tuifiti therefore he left his wife to seek help. He returned to Samoa and meet his mother Magamagafatua at the village of Falealupo. He was told to go and meet his father La at Manu'a. When he met his father his father told him to go to his sister named Pomao in Uea for he will get exactly what he wanted.

When he met his sister, she gave him a choice of two fishhooks. One was *auauomani*⁵¹ and the other was *auauomala*.⁵² Aloalolela decided to take the *auauomala* and he was told by his sister to make it strong enough so he can get as much fish as he wanted.

When the boy returned to Fiji to his wife, he began to make the fishhook. He brought three fishermen from the village of Falealupo, Savai'i in Samoa to help him prepare the fishhook for the expedition. They were Pa'upa'u, Lauulu and Faumea. Along with them was their sister named Sina. When the fishhook was ready, Aloalolela went out to test it. The Tuifiti was very surprised because of the huge catch of fish. The catch was enough for the family and even amongst the whole village.

The fishhook was so popular in the village, many fishermen wanted to see it. They went to Aloalolela every day and asked for it, but he never forgot his sister's advised. He realised that the fishhook carried the spirit of his family and his people. The fishhook meant that he had the spirit as the maker and creator of the fishhook. Due to the abundance of the catch, the fishermen called him Faimea. This meant he is the master and creator of the fishhook. They knew that the fishhooks they had could never be compared to the fishhook of Faimeas. It was far greater than any fishhook made by anyone.

When Aloalolela had enough blessings from the Tuifiti he gave the fishhook as a gift for the Samoan fishermen, Lauulu, Pa'upa'u, and Faumea to take home to his people. Pa'upa'u carried it first but then he gave it to Lauulu. Lauulu passed it to Faumea when he also failed to reach the shores of Samoa. Faumea and his sister Sina continued to swim, but when Faumea reached the lagoon, he was unable to continue the journey. He therefore gave the fishhook to Sina and reminded her that the fishhook must reach the land and be given to their people, in order to receive its blessings.

Sina reached the shores of Falealupo with the fishhook in the *ta'afi*.⁵³ There she met a man named Afia of Falealupo. Afia took her home and Sina became the wife of Afia and they had a son named Tautunu.⁵⁴ When the boy grew up, Sina gave him the fishhook as a gift to feed his family and his people.

⁵⁰ Tuifiti- A term given to a chief with kingly status in Fiji.

⁵¹ This is a very beautiful and attractive fishhook in colours and in shape.

⁵² This is very ugly and unwanted for anyone to take.

⁵³ Ta'afi- a piece of tapa cloth.

⁵⁴ This to remember the hard work of Afia to cook bananas for Sina when she was pregnant.

Tautunu received the mana⁵⁵ of his ancestor, passed down from one generation to another. The fishhook brought him wisdom, knowledge and fortune. Tautunu received the same blessings as received by Aloalolela. He was also known as a Faimea because he received wisdom to make and create fishhooks. He also received the experience to make use of it, and to carry on the process of making fishhooks. Indeed, he took the responsibility of sustaining and caring for the fishhooks.

Word soon spread of Tautunu's success as a fisherman and many other fishermen went to his place to visit him. Tautunu was like a godfather of all the fishermen. He lived in a small house where all his work was done and fishing tools were stored. He was the most faithful person in the family and even the community. He fed them with fish but also with the skills and knowledge of making fishhooks. Every time they went to Tautunu's house, they urged him to tell them how he could make such a huge catch. Tautunu told them everything, but people became suspicious and they never trust him. He also showed them everything in his house but still people did not trust him. The last thing he did was to show them his utu (basket) where the fishhook had been kept. Tautunu then took his utu and emptied it completely. Nothing was left unrevealed for Tautunu, gave everything by pouring out the contents of his utu, for the other fishermen to observe and to also take for themselves.

According to Agafili Tuitolova'a,⁵⁶ this is where the Samoan proverb, *Ua sasa'a fa'aoti le utu a le Faimea* originated from. Here, Tautunu as the *Faimea* completely emptied his *utu* (bamboo receptacle) with his special fishhook for all to see.

According to Taupa'u,⁵⁷ this proverbial saying expresses the relationship between a master fisherman and other fishermen. In particular, it refers to the sharing of fishhooks between its maker and those who are looking for one. Taupa'u stated that, the *alofaga*⁵⁸ was a popular technique of fishing performed in the west side of the island of Savai'i especially at the village of *Falealupo*, *Tufutafoe* and *Falelima*. The type of fishhook used was especially made to ensure the catch was both successful and plentiful.

⁵⁵ It means spirit.

⁵⁶ Co-ordinator of the Samoan language, interview with the author at Education Centre, Malifa on 17th June, 2005.

⁵⁷ Interview with the author at the University centre on 11th May, 2005.

⁵⁸ Alofaga is a type of fishing expedition where fishhooks are required. It was done in the open sea beyond the lagoon.

According to the legend of "The fisherman,"⁵⁹ a fishhook was known as the gift of life for the Samoan man who was in trouble in the foreign land. It brings hope to the hopeless one and life to the poor. Sina gave a fishhook to her only son Tautunu when he grew up. When he used it in the sea, the catch would never be too little, and it was always shared by the whole village, and even nearby villages.

Vaelua stated, "it was not long before the tales of the fishhook of Tautunu had spread across the land, fishermen from all over the land came to see for themselves this grand fishhook that was reported to overflow with bonito or tuna fish."⁶⁰ Here Tautunu shared his skills, knowledge, experiences as well as the fish that he had caught for the day.

The making of traditional fishhooks involves a lot of skills and only a few fishermen possessed the specific experience in this trade. Therefore, a skilled fishhook maker is referred to as the *Faimea*.

The *Faimea* was considered a generous person and therefore other fishermen would always seek help and advice by visiting the *Faimea*'s house. The fishermen knew that every *Faimea* has an *utu* to keep all his fishhooks. So, there is no reason to go anywhere other than *Faimea* for help.

According to Taupa'u, there were times when a fisherman would request the *Faimea* for a fishhook but he would not believe the *Faimea*'s answer. Therefore the fishermen would ask the *Faimea*'s to empty his *utu*. The *Faimea* would respond by taking his *utu*, and open it by way of pouring everything out in front of the fishermen to see and choose from. It is an act of giving everything, not withholding anything back by the *Faimea*. It is up to a fisherman whether he wants to take one or all of the fishhooks

⁵⁹ Fa'atonu, Liumaunu Vaelua., The Ministry for Youth Sports and Cultural Affairs. "Samoa, Lest We Forget." (Western Samoa: Apia, 1997), 25-36. Vol. 4.

⁶⁰ Fa'atonu Liumanu Vaelua. *The Ministry for Youth Sports & Cultural Affairs*, "Samoa, Lest We Forget." (Western Samoa: Apia, 1997), 23.

laid out in front of him. Amosa argues that "the fisherman never left the *Faimea's* house unless he looks at the *utu*."⁶¹

2.4 The interpretation of the Samoan saying "*Ua sasa'a fa'aoti le utu a le Faimea.*" (Let the fisherman's bamboo receptacle be completely emptied out).

The proverbial saying "*Ua sasa'a fa'aoti le utu a le Faimea*" has been translated in English to mean "Let the fisherman's bamboo receptacle be completely emptied out."⁶² Schultz states that the name,⁶³ *Faimea* is given to those *tautai* or fishermen who are clever and specialised at making fishhooks. *Utu* is the bamboo receptacle in which the fishhooks are kept in. The *utu* is filled with fishhooks that were made by the *Faimea* with all his knowledge, wisdom and skill. The *Faimea* and his family are dependent on the contents of the *utu* not only for providing food, their source of livelihood, but it also symbolises their status in the community.

The term *fa'aoti* is a figure of speech, meaning to completely reveal everything; absolutely nothing is to be held or to be hidden. It reflects the true nature of sacrificial giving when the *Faimea* opens the *utu* and offers everything that he depends on for his and his families' livelihood. Once the contents of the *utu* has been emptied out it is left to be displayed for others to observe and benefit from.

The word *sasa'a* literally means to pour out or to empty out completely. That is to disclose everything, leaving nothing to hide. It tells how the *Faimea* gives out everything without requesting or expecting anything in return.

This form of sharing and giving exists in other skills such as "tattooing, handicrafts, carving, weaving, and canoe building."⁶⁴ However, the saying "*Ua sasa'a fa'aoti le utu a le Faimea*" clearly refers to a special and unique kind of sharing. The complete

⁶¹ Maulolo Leaula Amosa, *Samoan Oratory*, (Samoa: Malua Press, 2001), 39.

⁶² E. Schultz, *Proverbial Expressions of the Samoans* (Auckland: Polynesian Press, 1994), 11.

⁶³ Schultz, *Proverbial Expressions of the Samoans*, 11.

⁶⁴ Vagatai Vaelua, *Alagaupu and Preaching Ministry* (B. D. Thesis, Malua Theological College, 1999), 4.

offering of skills, knowledge from one party to another can occur in the case of normal family ties. For example a father passing on the *aiga* trade of tattooing or canoe building, where all is revealed and told. But this is completely unheard of culturally, a father informing a complete stranger of what is sacred to their *aiga* (*mea sina*). In the proverbial saying "*Ua sasa'a fa'aoti le utu a le Faimea*", the *Faimea* empties his *utu* to a fisherman who has no family connection, and is a complete stranger. The *Faimea*'s finest fishhooks, the secret to his trade and success as a master fisherman are openly offered to those seeking it.

2.5 Conclusion.

On reflecting upon some of the features of sharing practiced in the traditional Samoan society, the sharing of food, fish as well as distribution of land, were totally dependant on the hierarchical status of the Samoan *aiga* and village structure. Everything was shared and distributed according to the power and the authority within the village community. The higher up the hierarchical ladder one was positioned, the better the food or more fertile the land one would receive. The *matai* or chief of the *aiga* would get the best of everything.

In the Samoan proverbial saying that we discussed above, we see the *Faimea* as a creator and the sustainer of life, for his family as well as the community. On the other hand, he was also a provider and a source of life for those who sought help and required support. He is the rescuer in times of trouble and uncertainty for other fisherman, and also for their families and villages. The act of sharing of the *Faimea* has no boundaries for he gives out freely not based on family ties or hierarchical status but rather on need.

It is the way to enrich many lives in resources and material wealth and status. It also provides the users of the fishhooks with skills, knowledge and experience, to create and justify their actions in every day life.

As this paper looks at the features of sharing as been discussed throughout this chapter, this paper believes that there is Gospel in Samoan culture. The aspect of the proverbial saying "*Ua sasa'a fa'aoti le utu a le Faimea*," highlight the notion of sharing in both a physical and spirit sense. It is the discourse of giving with respect and without limits. This paper believes that this cultural concept can contribute to explaining and understanding "The Kenosis of God." Therefore, the next chapter helps us to confirm that this particular saying is a great example of what God has done for all creation through Gods Son, Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER THREE.

The Kenosis of God.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses some of the primary features of the Kenosis of God as highlighted in Scripture. This paper also considers some other biblical studies that discuss the Kenosis of God. This will give us a better understanding of how culture and Gospel can be related to one another.

3.1 The Term Kenosis

The term "Kenosis" is translated from the Greek verb '*kenoo*', meaning to "empty or hollow."⁶⁵ Its most popular usage and theological significance is found in "the Greek text of Philippians 2:7, which refers to the fact that the One eternally in the form of God (or equal with God) emptied Godself to become a man. In general, "kenoticism" interprets the incarnation as the transformation of God into man, or the exchange of divinity for humanity."⁶⁶ The Kenosis of God is revealed through the idea of Incarnation as will be discussed later on in this paper.

Paul also mentions the term kenosis in his letter to the Colossian church. This is where Paul enhances them with a clear interpretation of the fullness of God. He is the One who pours everything out to enrich the human life with many gifts, and finally offers His Son Jesus Christ, to save His people's lives and to give them eternal life. Here, Paul announces that "the gospel message is a call to life, to apply truth to all that people do and say (Col. 3:16, 17)."⁶⁷ Kenosis also relates to John's gospel about Jesus as the *logos* of God who was in the beginning with God during creation.

⁶⁵ Spiros Zodhiates, et.al, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary* (U.S.A.: AMG Publishers, 1992), 856.

⁶⁶ Gordon R. Lewis and Bruce A. Demarest, *Integrative Theology* (Michigan, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 252.

⁶⁷ R. Daniel Shaw, *Transculturation* (Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 1988), 17.

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⁶⁷ R. Daniel Shaw, *Transculturation* (Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 1988), 17.

He came to the world as a human being and rendered his life to save his people. Yet, we understand that Jesus is from God and Jesus is God.

However, not only is the concept of Kenosis evident in the writings of the New Testament, but it is also manifested in the writings of the Old Testament with particular reference to the Book of the prophet Isaiah. Here, Isaiah 53:1-10 speaks about the sacrificial act obtained by one person for others. It is the service where the prophet declares the true nature of a servant. So, from this particular reference, we need to discuss it first in order to bring forth more knowledge about the idea of Kenosis.

3.2 Kenosis in the Old Testament - The Book of the Prophet Isaiah.

The book of Genesis chapter 1 and 2 highlights the whole story of creation where God is the Creator of all things in heavens and on earth. God has the power and authority to rule all nations. Hence, within such relationship of God and God's creation we have seen the self-giving love of God to care for and save God's people. God revealed all such things through human agents like kings, priests and the prophets.

Above all such things that God had done for Gods people, the prophet Isaiah indicates a clear message about God's self-giving sacrifice. This is where God totally intervened with divine spirit and humanity. Thus, this is a revelation of true love and concern for the life of others.

Such actions of God were done for the endurance of his people as they were exiled in Babylon. As they prepared to return to their homeland in Jerusalem, the prophet Isaiah gave them a clear message of hope. Isaiah remind them that the greatest work of salvation done by God is their return from exile. It is a life saving act not only to return them to Jerusalem, but also to return them in to fellowship with God. Clearly in this passage, Isaiah speaks about the presence of God in terms of salvation, not only

to save life but also to offer God's life. It is a way of God emptying Godself as a sacrifice for God's people.

Isaiah (53:1- 10) is a witness to the unbelievable act of Gods' love. God declares that God as the creator opens out and pours out everything to share life to the created world. The prophet Isaiah insisted that the Messiah⁶⁸ also appeared as a servant, to act and fulfil the will of His master. Isaiah emphasises God as the servant, who carries the burden of others. It is believed that "the servant is not acting alone. The servant is serving God's purpose, and obedience to the Lord motivates the servant to place no limits on self-giving love."⁶⁹ Here, we find the prophet Isaiah (3:12) speaking about the Lord⁷⁰ as the servant who poured out himself to death, and "let himself be numbered with transgressors."⁷¹ It is a clear interpretation of his total obedience to his Father, and a revelation of his genuine love to all humanity.

We have seen certain aspects of the kenosis in the witness of Isaiah in particular Chapter 53:1-10 but, it is a feature more common in the New Testament writings. This paper will look at some of the prominent writings in the New Testament like the epistles of the apostle Paul to the Philippians and Colossians, as well as the Gospel of John.

3.3 The Philippian's Hymn (Philippians 2: 5-11)

Paul's letter to the Philippian Christians is one of seven epistles that are thought to have been written from prison. This included the letter to the Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus. However, according to some of the New

⁶⁸ 'Messiah' : The annointed one of God, the Jewish belief of a Kingly, governor type of saviour, who's identity and presence will usher in a new world and rule for the Jewish people.

⁶⁹ Paul D. Handson, *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for teaching and preaching* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1995), 157.

⁷⁰ *The Holy Bible (New Revised Standard Version)* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1989), 597.

⁷¹ Paul D. Handson, *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for teaching and preaching* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1995), 160.

Testament scholars, Philippians stands apart from the other epistles of captivity.⁷² Though the place of writing is still debatable among scholars, the most probable place is Rome. According to Buttrick, et al., it is certain that Paul endured a long imprisonment term as he waited for his trial before the emperor's court, and was distracted for several years between hope and fear.⁷³ Evidently, this epistle to the Philippians is Paul's expression of gratitude for the money the Philippians had sent him through their messenger Epaphroditus. Apart from his acknowledgment for money received, he indeed praised them for all their effort and love.

Buttrick states, "yet we can see, as we look more closely, that he was prepared for the worst. His faith was not in human probabilities but in Christ, whose passion he felt himself to be sharing. He seeks to inspire the Philippians, who are sorely troubled on his behalf, with the same faith."⁷⁴ Buttrick added, Paul writes with fullness of heart, putting down ideas as they come to him. Such as personal notices, an out-burst of tenderness and thanksgiving, warnings, profound reflections, all mingled together. Thus, several of his greatest religious utterances are to be found in this epistle, most notably the passage on the self-humiliation of Christ.⁷⁵

According to some biblical scholars, this part of the epistle of Paul to the Philippians (2:5-11), is most likely to be part of a Christian hymn.⁷⁶ That is in form, as in substance, the passage has all the characteristics of a hymn or poem. Therefore, it has been argued that Paul has inserted a Christian hymn with which, his readers would be familiar with, and which expressed his own ideas more forcefully and beautifully than he could do himself.

⁷² George Arthur Buttrick, et. al., *New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 3-13.

⁷³ George Arthur Buttrick, et. al., *New Interpreter's Bible*, 6.

⁷⁴ George Arthur Buttrick, et. al., *New Interpreter's Bible*, 10.

⁷⁵ George Arthur Buttrick, et. al., *New Interpreter's Bible*, 12.

⁷⁶ F. F. Bruce, *New International Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 1444.

Paul begins the narrative about Christ with His pre-existence, indicating that Christ's being God was not for him a matter of selfish ambition. Thus, Paul goes from Christ being equal with God to his having taken the role of a slave defined in terms of his incarnation. Therefore, following this descending progression, Paul also calls the Philippian Christians to a similar self-sacrifice for the sake of one another (v.4).⁷⁷

Within this hymn (Philippians 2:5-11), Paul insists, Christ alone emptied himself by taking the form of a slave, to sacrifice all for the salvation of his people. In human form, Jesus Christ humbled himself and went through everything, to give life for all. Paul, since a slave had no rights of his own, so Christ's attitude towards God was one of absolute submission. Buttrick et, al., argues that in Jesus' life, he not only became a man but a poor man, laboring with his own hands. He put aside entirely all the privileges which were rightly his and he carried his humiliation to the Cross. This means that he gave up all personal ambitions, all self seeking impulses, and surrendered himself without reserve to the will of God. In other words, he abandoned everything which he rightly possessed and exchanged the form of God for that of a man. He also suppressed himself so utterly that he died at last on the Cross.⁷⁸

Here we found that Christ took the pain of the world on his shoulders, offering everything even his own life. This is an indication of how much God loves us, a sign of true love that has been shared for humanity and the created world. It is a complete love of God that has no boundaries and no limitation. For Paul, this is the reality of Christ as seen in a twofold sense, in the form of God and also as true human.

According to such characteristics of Christ, (i.e. "being in the form of God" and "being human,") Paul explained to the Philippians that there is nothing new about Christ

⁷⁷ Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians* (Michigan, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 198.

⁷⁸ George Arthur Buttrick, et, al., *New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984), 50.

that they already knew. Christ who "emptied himself" and "took the role of the slave" mean that Christ suffered and was rejected by his people. Christ lives under the authority of others and was always willingly to serve others. Therefore, Paul states "Have this mind among yourselves,"⁷⁹ meaning that they should live and absorb this kind of life. In other words, Christians at Philippi need to practice this humble sacrificial life. For Paul, this is an encouragement for them to live and share in the life of Christ. The Philippians must have that kind of spirit in them. The spirit of an openness and willingness to serve others. The spirit of sharing and loving one another as shown and taught by Jesus Christ throughout his ministry on earth, his life and death.

The Gospel of Matthew, Mark and Luke provide great examples of how Jesus loved to share the power of the message of salvation for all to hear. For instance, he healed the sick people like a man with leprosy (Matt. 8:2-4, Mark 1:40-42), a paralyzed man (Matt. 9:2-7), a Canaanite woman's daughter (Mark 7:24-30), the blind man at Bethsaida (Mark 8:22-26), the sick man at pool of Beth-zatha (John 5:1-9) and so many others who were struggling in life. Jesus also performed miracles and taught people to share with one another. For example the feeding of the 5000 (Matt. 14:15-21, Mark 6:35-44, Luke 9:12-17, John 6:5-13). Indeed, he uses many parables to enhance the spirit of love and sharing among his followers. For example, the story of the good Samaritan (John 10:30-37), the friend in need (John 11:5-8), the rich man and Lazarus (John 16:19-31), and many other stories reflect such actions.

Paul clearly states that Jesus never regarded equality with God. Although he is God, he humbled himself to engage and maintain a closed relationship with people. This is a clear picture of the self-emptying of God. Taking the form of slave through choice is

⁷⁹ Fred B. Craddock, *Philippians Interpretation* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985), 37.

most unlikely to be done by any human being, but it seems that it is nothing to God. In other words, it never reduced the superiority of God, because God is God.

The death on the cross is a shameful act according to the view of the Jewish people. It is a special death penalty for those who have committed a serious offence, but Jesus despite being innocent did not refuse the Cross because of his true love for God's people. This is the revelation of God's own purpose to save his people. In Jesus Christ, God indicates his fullness by giving all for the salvation of the sinful person.

3.4 The Epistle of Paul to the Colossians (Col. 1: 15 – 2: 13)

Specifically, "the Epistle to the Colossians was called forth by the necessity of guarding the truth of the gospel against an insidiously attractive perversion of its fundamental principles - a syncretism of Judaic and pagan doctrines and practices which tended to obscure and diminish the glory of Christ while professing to set forth a higher knowledge and a more severely ascetic morality."⁸⁰

The Church in Colossae faced the challenge of heresy, they were troubled with the new interpretations of the gospel offered by different teachers. Their lack of knowledge in Christian faith had caused them to be easily lead astray. It seems that the gospel of Jesus Christ was a colorful message to their ears, and they thought that there were many Christ according to such interpretations.

When Paul heard of this sad news, he immediately sent this letter to address the issue and to uphold the truth of the living gospel in their lives. Paul gave support and encouragement to his faithful brothers and sisters in Colossae, by urging them to be aware of false teachings and human actions that forced them into death. For Paul, they must bear in mind that there is no other way to save them from the bondage of sin. He reminds them about the humanity of Christ in terms of his Incarnation, to confront

⁸⁰ George Arthur Buttrick, et. al., *New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984), 134.

and condemn every challenge against Christian beliefs. Here Paul speaks of Incarnation as the way God reveals Godself through the humanity of Christ. In other words, God came to being through Christ and therefore lived as a human person. Paul also talks about the supremacy of Christ as the image of the invisible God. But, with true love and grace, Christ offered his life to serve the will of his Father.

Paul emphasizes Christ's life not only in the supreme order, but also as a humble servant assuring the fullness of God in his humanity. For Paul, "He himself is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Him God was pleased to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of His Cross"

(Col.1:17, 19 – 20).⁸¹ A message confirming the perfection and reality of Gods' revelation in Jesus Christ.

In Colossians 2: 8-3: 4, Paul implies the fullness of Christ as the safeguard for all Christians.⁸² This is to uphold their beliefs and to strengthen their lives in faith, so that they are not misleading by the false teachings or heresies. He acknowledges the incarnate person of Christ as the discourse of true love and union with God. It is a principle that they must practice to endure faith and enrich their lives in God's mind. Paul advised the Colossians to remain and believe only in what they already know about Christ. According to Bruce, "For in Him resides all the fullness of deity and such He must be the source and meaning of truth."⁸³ This is how Paul initiated his teaching of Christ. Paul's words were rooted in the Christ who suffered and emptied himself for his people.

⁸¹ *The Holy Bible (New Revised Standard Version)* (Michigan, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1989), 956.

⁸² F. F. Bruce, *New International Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 1456.

⁸³ F. F. Bruce, *New International Bible Commentary*, 1456.

Indeed, Paul sees the bodily form of Christ (Col. 2:9) as a complete embodiment of God in a lower stage. It is the way God chooses to destroy the sinful nature of human kind, in order to save and bring them back in union with Godself.

Furthermore, this is not only to give life but also to sustain and save life. Paul stresses the point that there is no need for the Jew's rite of circumcision as the way to eternal life. Instead he argues that, as believers they are spiritually alive, sharing Christ's life and complete forgiveness. Clearly in Paul's mind, Christ's victory on the cross is known as "God in Christ was acting."⁸⁴ In the fullness of God, he emptied himself by taking the form of a prisoner to be stripped of life on the Cross. Therefore, Paul reminded the Colossian Christians that they were consciously saved in Christ.

Paul confirmed to the Colossians that only Christ would bring the fullness of life. He urges them too to submit their lives to the life revealed by Christ. That is to let their thoughts and aspirations rise to the same level, their aims must end in Christ, even their conduct must be characterized by heavenly wisdom. He urges that "sharing in His death, you also share in His resurrection with a new life."⁸⁵ This is an affirmation of their lives that is bound up with Christ. So, there is nothing to worry about if they remain in Christ.

As in the letter to the Philippians, Paul also continues to emphasize the humanity of Christ and what he did for the salvation of all in his letter to the Colossians, a concept termed as the '*Kenosis of God*.' This paper directs its discussion to other biblical views to the '*Kenosis of God*' to enhance our understanding and importance of this concept.

⁸⁴ F. F. Bruce, *New International Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 1457.

⁸⁵ F. Bruce, *New International Bible Commentary*, 1457.

3.5 Biblical Scholarly views on the Kenosis of God.

By looking at some of the biblical scholarly views, we will gain a better understanding of what kenosis is about and how does it relate to Christian life.

Sinclair B. Ferguson and David F. Wright describe the concept of 'kenosis' as the (self) 'emptying' in relation to the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.⁸⁶ For Spiros Zodhiates, he refers to Jesus Christ as emptying Himself at the time of His incarnation.⁸⁷ According to Richard A. Muller, kenosis is the self-emptying of Christ who was in the form of God and took on himself the form of a servant in the accomplishment of the mediatorial office, or *munus triplex* as stated in Phil. 2:5-11. In Latin, kenosis is rendered as *exinanitio* or *evacuatio*.⁸⁸ This means the state of humiliation or the state of self-emptying. Hence, kenosis is "sometimes called a state of exaltation, belonging to the Christological concept known as the two states of Christ, based on Phil. 2:5-11 and used as a basic structural features in the Lutheran and the Reformed Christologies."⁸⁹ But, Paul wrote concerning Christ, "though he was rich yet for your sakes he became poor" (2 Cor. 8:9).⁹⁰

This aspect of God's nature is acceptable in some theological studies like the "Kenotic Theory"⁹¹ of Rev. Francis J. Hall, D.D. He states that it is all about the attributes of God as the result of Incarnation. That is "the Hypostatic Union of two

⁸⁶ Sinclair B. Ferguson, David F. Wright, et. al, *New Dictionary of Theology* (USA: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 364.

⁸⁷ Spiros Zodhiates, et. al, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary* (U.S.A.: AMG Publishers, 1992), 857.

⁸⁸ Richard A. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms* (Michigan, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), 169.

⁸⁹ Richard A. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms: drawn principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books House, 1985), 288.

⁹⁰ Charles R. Swindoll and Roy B. Zuck, *Understanding Christian Theology* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2003), 337.

⁹¹ The Kenotic Theory may be briefly described as maintaining the Divine Logos, in order to take our nature upon Him and submit to its earthly conditions and limitations, abandoned somewhat at least of what was His before He became incarnate. In particular, it is alleged most commonly, that He abandoned what Kenotic's call His metaphysical attributes, of omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience, so as to be dependent upon the aid of the Spirit, wholly circumscribed by space, and deprived of knowledge.

natures, one truly Divine, the other perfectly human, inseparably and unconfusedly united in one Divine Person. Christ is whole in both natures.”⁹²

The kenosis of God can also describe and explain through the Christian concept of Incarnation. Therefore, from such theological views, this paper reflects upon the idea of Incarnation as one of the major concerns, in the discussion of the revelation of God in the person of Jesus Christ. We will address some of these issues highlighted by the apostle Paul in his epistles to the Philippians and Colossians. This will make clear certain features of the Kenosis of God as explained in the gospel of John.

3.6 The Incarnation of Jesus Christ

The term Incarnation in the Macquarie Dictionary simply means an incarnate being or form. It is the assumption of the human form or nature, by a Divine being: the Incarnation of God in Christ.⁹³

Hall, stated that, “incarnation is an entrance upon human conditions and the taking of human nature by a Divine Person. This involve the humiliation of the Son, described in Scripture under the figures of self-sacrifice, impoverishment, and kenosis.”⁹⁴

According to Hall;

The Son became incarnate to offer Himself a Sacrifice for sin. This Sacrifice demands a Divine Victim having infinite power and wisdom at the time of the Sacrifice. Also a voluntary submission to death and a resurrection achieved by the Victim Himself. This requires an assumption of our nature – self-mutilation, but humiliation and self-surrender.

Our Lord’s self-impoverishment was an assumption of a nature which was poor that it might be enriched.⁹⁵

These appropriate meanings of the concept, incarnation, highlights the relationship of God and man in one person. This refers to Jesus Christ as the true Son of God.

⁹² Rev. Francis J. Hall, D. D., *The Kenotic Theory* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1898), 8.

⁹³ A Delbridge and JRL Bernard, *The Macquarie Concise Dictionary* (3rd ed) (Sydney: The Macquarie Library Pty Ltd, 1998), 569.

⁹⁴ Rev. Francis J. Hall, D.D., *The Kenotic Theory* (New York: Longmans, Green, AND CO., 1898), 7-8.

⁹⁵ Rev. Francis Hall, *The Kenotic Theory*, 8.

According to Swindoll and Zuck, "the Scripture makes it clear that Jesus is the full union of full deity and perfect, complete humanity. Jesus is the God-Man. Jesus is the theanthropic person who feels and thinks and acts as one person. He is not a split personality with His divine and human natures in conflict. Jesus never spoke of either His deity or His Humanity as separate from Himself. He always spoke and acted as one person."⁹⁶

Here we find that the incarnation of God through Jesus Christ is not just an extraordinary event to acknowledge His union with the Father as the Son reveals to us that He has the power of God to do everything. It is a mystical action that only belongs to God alone. For God is the Creator who can make anything happen according to God's will.

Yet we know that Jesus is not just born as a Divine-Man, but was purposely created to reveal the reality of God in humanity. All such things are proven in Scripture. Swindoll and Zuck believe that Jesus lived a normal life. "His human nature was also complete in that it included a soul and spirit and well a body. As a result Jesus could feel the range of normal human emotions."⁹⁷

Nevertheless, "Jesus is the carpenter's son" (Matt. 13:55). "He became hungry" (Matt. 4:2) and thirsty (John 4:7; 19:28). He became tired (John 4:6) like any human being. "He was tempted by the devil" (Matt:1-11, Mark 1:13 and Luke 4:1-12). According to the letter to the Hebrew 2:18, He himself suffered when he was tempted. Above all, "Jesus truly lived as a Man among men."⁹⁸ This is how the incarnate God

⁹⁶ Charles R. Swindoll and Roy B. Zuck, *Understanding Christian Theology* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2003), 339.

⁹⁷ Charles Swindoll and Roy Zuck, *Understanding Christian Theology*, 339.

⁹⁸ Charles. Swindoll and Roy. Zuck, *Undestanding Christian Theology*, 339.

showed him as a perfect human being. It is the way to assure that God is with us. Even though he was in the form of a person, it is in faith we trust that he is in union with God.

Furthermore, we might say that Incarnation is not just the embodiment of God through Jesus, but this is also the embodiment of the Word as alluded to by the author of the gospel of John. In other words, Jesus is the Word who was with God in the beginning. He is the Word who was in union with God to create the world as written in the Book of Genesis chapter 1 and 2. We turn to the gospel of John to discuss how he uses the idea of kenosis.

3.7 The Word became flesh

According to the prologue of John's gospel (John 1:1-18), he declares that "in the beginning there was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being, in him was life, and the life was the light of all people (John 1:1-4)."⁹⁹ The apostle John interprets the creation story as in the book of Genesis, where God created everything in union with the Word and the Spirit.¹⁰⁰

This Word is believed to be the Word of God. It was at the beginning as the Creator in the form of an instrument. The Greek word for word is "*ho logos*." Yet, it is not just a word as it used to be, but now it became flesh. This means, it is the imminence of God. He has the power to create and generate every human action. In John's gospel, the Word became flesh and lived among us. It refers to Jesus Christ who came into

⁹⁹ *The Holy Bible (New Revised Standard Version)* (Michigan, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1989), 862.

¹⁰⁰ F. F. Bruce, *New International Bible Commentary* (Michigan, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1929), 1232.

the world as the manifestation of God's love. He is full of grace and truth. From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace (John 1: 16).¹⁰¹

According to Bruce, "the fullness of the Godhead and the Word are identified. The active Word immanent in the world is no less God than the transcendent God beyond all time and space."¹⁰² Therefore, we could see no way to separate the Word from God because John explained that, "there was never part of His pre-existence which found Him to be separated in any sense from the Godhead."¹⁰³

For Barton, et. al., John wrote about Jesus as "fully human and fully God. As the Word, the Son of God fully conveys and communicates God. In both the Jewish and Greek conceptions, *logos* conveyed the idea of beginnings."¹⁰⁴ Here John believes that Jesus was as the beginning as the Creator of the universe. He is the ultimate revelation of God and also the living picture of God's holiness. In other words, Jesus as the *logos* reveals God's mind to us.

The apostle John stated that the Word was life, again it refers to creation where God spoke and all things immediately responded. This is a sign of a living Word, it has the power to form and provide what is required for life. Jesus as the Word is the one who totally shared his life in order to save many lives. Although he was innocent and yet he was to be killed, Jesus did not worry about his own life, rather he poured it out to show how much he loved the world. Here Jesus the incarnate Word of God emptied himself in order to grant Salvation for all creation.

3.8 Conclusion

As discussed in this chapter, the idea of Kenosis generally implies an act of self-emptying and complete sacrifice. It shows the depth and reality of God's love for all

¹⁰¹ *The Holy Bible (New Revised Standard Version)*, 862.

¹⁰² F. F. Bruce, *New International Bible Commentary* (Michigan, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 1232.

¹⁰³ F. F. Bruce, *New International Bible Commentary*, 1232.

¹⁰⁴ F. F. Bruce, *New international Bible Commentary*, 1232.

human beings, and it keeps the closeness between God as the creator and his creation.

In this concept of the kenosis, we see God in action, as from the first day of creation until God finally sent Jesus Christ as the embodiment and the affirmation of God's true love and grace.

Therefore the kenosis is the discourse of sharing one self for others or to care for one another. This is a movement of action rather than just words alone. God sent Jesus Christ to live amongst the people and show them the proper way to live. The performing of the servant's role by Christ is a very humbly experience in every society. Generally, servanthood is lowly and with little honour within society, for normally they may have no rights.

The pre-existence of Christ and even his whole life has been described by the apostle Paul, as a life of self sacrifice. Christ offered his whole life as a sacrifice for the sake of others. In other words, he submitted to God's will even to the point of death.

The idea of the kenosis tells us that God in Jesus Christ poured out everything even his life, to enrich us with his grace and love.

As we have seen in this chapter, the term kenosis indicates the knowledge of unconditional love and self-sacrifice a fellowship between one another. Therefore, we will relate it to the Samoan proverbial saying in order to identify and discuss some of the theological themes that have been highlighted. Our next chapter brings together the Samoan proverbial expression "*Ua sasa'a fa'aoti le utu a le Faimea*" and the theological themes of the Kenosis of God.

CHAPTER FOUR

God as the *Faimea* of life.

INTRODUCTION

This final chapter will reflect on the proverbial saying "*Ua Sasa'a faaoti le utu a le Faimea*" and examine its theological significance by appropriating it to some of the theological themes of the "Kenosis of God." This process will begin by firstly, articulating God as the *Faimea*, the creator of life. Then finally emphasizing Gods' unselfish act of self-emptying as related to the *Faimea's* act of *sasa'a fa'aoti*. This affirms the appropriateness of this particular saying, to express and observe the reality of the gospel in ones own Samoan context.

4.1 God as *Faimea* - The Creator of Life

Samoa, being surrounded by a vast Pacific Ocean relied heavily both in the past and also in the present on the sea for much of its food provisions. As stated, the art of fishing was viewed as being a very prestigious role amongst the Samoan people and their culture. It was more than just a trade or an occupation, for the knowledge and skills of a mastery fisherman was greatly admired by the Samoan people therefore also providing status in the community. But more importantly fishing provided a means of sustaining life for the people due to the limitations of land and what crops could be cultivated on it.

The name *Faimea* has been explained as a very special name within the Samoan culture which is only given to a fisherman who has the unique knowledge and skill, in not only creating but also using certain types of fishhooks. These highly prized tools of the trade in the hands of the *Faimea* can bring in both quality and quantity of fish sustain by the family and/or whole community as well. Therefore, many people (e.g. families, villages and districts) relied on and placed their faith and trust upon the

Faimea to continuously provide provisions for their daily survival. The *Faimea* in this sense can be interpreted as being a person who by creating his fishhooks maintains and sustains life for his family and for his people.

As the Creator and thus the owner of the fishhooks, he therefore has the right to share his products with others. He also has the right to withhold his knowledge and skill of making fishhooks as well as his property from being used and to be learnt by others and thus depriving them of life.

This image and understanding of the *Faimea* can be compared to the picture of God as described in the creation story in the book of Genesis 1 and 2. God is referred to as the Creator of all things on earth and in heaven. With God's wisdom and knowledge God created both male and female by breathing life into them. God is the source of all life and without God there can be no life. Indeed, "God as the sovereign lord of all creation has provided everything for the needs of human beings."¹⁰⁵

The Samoan story in chapter two indicates that *Faimea* is the maker and the provider of fishhooks. He serves those in need in times when they require help. In other words, the *Faimea* also provides help and support for those people in need. It reflects how God reveals and interacts with people in various aspects of life, especially in the context that we live in. It could be argued that this is where Jurgen Moltmann promotes God as the Creator of the universe. This inevitably points to the sovereignty of God overall. Indeed, God is the sustainer of life who dwells in God's creation.¹⁰⁶ For J. M. Bates, "God does not dwell apart from human in remote majesty. He is actively concerned with them, and His holiness does not prevent contact with them."¹⁰⁷

Furthermore, God as the *Faimea* maintains the closeness between the family

¹⁰⁵ Vagatai Va'aclua, *Alagaupu and Preaching Ministry* (B. D. thesis, Malua Theological College, 1999), 33.

¹⁰⁶ Jurgen Moltmann, *Jesus Christ for today's world* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 23.

relationship and enhances the spirit of love amongst the people. He ignores the pain and the hardship of the created works, but makes everything possible and accessible for the good fortune of his people. The *Faimea* is seen as the godfather of all fishermen who look to him for help and advice. Likewise God is the Godfather of all human beings, to whom we ask and pray for help in times of uncertainty.

Metaphorically speaking, God can be referred to as a *Faimea* because of the works and responsibilities that God shows towards God's people. The knowledge and skill of the *Faimea* is passed on from one generation to another, and becomes a living source to guide and construct their lives. Therefore, the *Faimea's* role is a complete action that comes from the heart. It reveals the deep nature of God as the source and creator of life.

4.2 Gods' unselfish act of "*Sasa'a fa'aoti*" – "Self emptying"

The *Faimea's* action of "*sasa'a fa'aoti*" complete (self emptying) or completely pouring out of his prized possessions leaving nothing hidden, is understood as the ultimate act of Samoan sharing and giving. An unselfish love and concern for his fellow human being in that he too and his family and community may share in the *Faimea's* skills and blessings.

The self-emptying of the *Faimea's utu* to others illustrates the willingness to share in order to promote a communal life. Although the *utu* is valuable and costly for the *Faimea*, nevertheless he opens and reveals all to those who are seeking help. Therefore, the *Faimea* and his actions are inclusive for everyone to share in his material and skills rather than being exclusive only for the use and benefit of the *Faimea* and/or his family.

¹⁰⁷ J. M. Bates, *A Manual of Doctrine* (Christchurch: Presbyterian Bookroom, 1960), 81.

This is a prevalent character of God, one who never hides anything from creation but reveals and gives all. God as the *Faimea* unselfishly sent Godself in the human person of Jesus Christ like a fishhook into the sinful world of human kind.

Clearly, it is the act of reconciliation as stated by John Knox (i.e. In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself).¹⁰⁸ God as the *Faimea* let Jesus suffer in the hands of the sinful world. Due to his unconditional love, his suffering reveals the purpose of salvation as elaborated in the gospel of John 3:16-17

...For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.¹⁰⁹

In this unselfish act of sharing God through Christ, Paul believes that this is where Christ alone shares his own life for all but never for one. It is an example of Jesus Christ also emptying Himself on the cross, to hook or bring us back into his kingdom and in fellowship with God. Therefore, in describing the self-emptying act of the *Faimea* from a theological sense, it can be compared to the self-emptying act of God in Jesus Christ as stated in Philippians 2: 7, and the book of the prophet Isaiah 53: 1-10. Here, Paul declares that Christ acted in the form of God. In other words, Christ emptied himself to enrich one's life. Christ intended to share his Fullness with his people. This included his Body, Spirit and Mind. The pouring out of the *Faimea's utu* is not just a sharing of wealth, but also the sharing of knowledge and wisdom.

At the center of the Christian faith, we have seen Christ as the self-revelation of God's passionate love. It is the Cross that we find "God surrendered Christ for us."¹¹⁰ In

¹⁰⁸ John Knox, *The Humanity and Divinity of Christ* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 97.

¹⁰⁹ *The Holy Bible* (New Revised Standard Version) (Michigan, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1989).

¹¹⁰ Jurgen Moltmann, *Jesus Christ for today's world* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 37.

supporting Moltmann's view, he states that "in the self-giving of the Son we discern the self-giving of God."¹¹¹ This is also support in Pannenberg's¹¹² view of the self-emptying of the Logos, especially when he reflects on the earthly life of Jesus Christ as described in the Bible.

The *Faimea's* action of pouring out his *utu* is like God's Salvation through Christ. It is a way of giving all unselfishly and not expecting any reciprocal returns. It is like the free Grace of God, God's gift in Jesus Christ. According to Havea, "God's love is so full, so rich, so free, that it has the ability to bring a rebel sinner, such as me, nigh unto God."¹¹³ It explains the significance of Christ's life when He completely poured out his innocent blood, to save one's life. Moreover, we see this as an idea of showing emphatic motion to the whole world. This is revealed when Jesus came into the world to fulfil his Father's will. Although he is God, he took the pain of suffering and humbled himself to show the true nature of love.

Reflecting to Havea's comment on God's love as stated above, we might say that the *Faimea's utu* is so rich, so full, and so free for those in need. This means that the *Faimea's utu* is rich in love, full of hope and it's free for everyone to get life. So, the emptying of the *Faimea's utu* as been described in the myths and legend of Samoa, is a good picture of the kenosis of God as proclaimed by Paul in Philippians 2: 7.

¹¹¹ Jurgen Moltmann, *Jesus Christ for today's world*, 38.

¹¹² Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Jesus- God and Man* (Great Britain: SCM Press Ltd, 1968), 307-323.

¹¹³ Sione Amanaki Havea, The Theology of Giving (*Pacific Journal of Theology* 11), no. 3, 1990.

CONCLUSION

Despite the changes that have occurred in the practise of the Samoan culture since the Gospel officially arrived in 1830, the significance of its oral tradition still exists and has been incorporated into religious and daily practices as well as government institutions today.

This confirms that Culture and Gospel in the Samoan society are closely related. Culture and Gospel is interacting and intertwining with one another constantly. This is revealed in the Church as the body of Christ continuously engaging in the world the message and will of God. A message that can only have any real meaning and significance for the Samoan people, when it is communicated in their own cultural norms and method's of communication.

Although we can never totally capture and compare the perfection of God to anything above or under the earth, this paper believes an essence of the nature of God (e.g. God's sacrificial love) can be realized and witness to in one's own culture.

The author of this paper has highlighted that 'Culture' is a God given gift and as the Gospel of John Chapter 3 verse 16 testifies to "For God so loved the world..", a witness to the spiritual importance and relevance of ones culture, divinely ordained.

Despite the Gospel message of Jesus Christ not arrived to the shores of Samoa until 1830, the author believes that God's 'Spirit' hovers over God's created world leaving raw deposits of God's divine nature in the various cultures of the world. The proverbial saying "*Ua sasa'a fa'aoti le utu a le faimea*" is a testimony of this act of God. A proverbial saying that epitomizes the ultimate and complete form of sharing within the Samoan culture. A type of sharing that goes far beyond normal cultural boundaries, having no limits to what the *Faimea* the mastery Fisherman gives or offers to those seeking assistance. This act by the *Faimea*, a person of status, full of wisdom and knowledge to completely empty out his bamboo receptacle or container

to be revealed to an unknown stranger certainly shows characteristics of a type of unique love that can be best interpreted and expressed in the Kenosis of God.

God's unconditional and complete love for God's created world. A creating and concerning love that the Bible testifies to through the 'Word' that was in the beginning of time. A humbling love, a sacrificial love, and an acting love, putting aside status and being 'Incarnate' through and in the person of Jesus Christ to be given as God's totality, God's completeness for the salvation of the world.

This paper has synthesizes the cultural view of *fefaasoa'i* or sharing, the pinnacle of this practice expressed in the proverbial saying, "*Ua sasa'a faaoti le utu o le faimea*", with that of the Gospel message, as articulated in the Kenosis of God. The author believes it has provided an imagery of God as the *Faimea* or Mastery Fisherman, who out of 'Love' has completely emptied out his *utu* or God giving Godself to the world, provides an extensive knowledge of the theological message. An alternative cultural view of understanding God that enhances rather than waters down the Bible and its liberating message of God's Love and Salvation for the Samoan Church and all God's created world.

GLOSSARY

<i>aiga</i>	- family
<i>aiga potopoto</i>	- extended family
<i>alaga</i>	- the shoulders and legs of an animal (pig)
<i>alagaupu</i>	- proverbial saying
<i>alo</i>	- the belly of a pig or the under side
<i>alofaga</i>	- the Samoan traditional way of fishing
<i>auauomala</i>	- the fishhook that reflects a bad luck
<i>auauomamu</i>	- the fishhook that reflects a good luck
<i>'ava</i>	- kava
<i>fa'aoti</i>	- completely emptying
<i>fa'a-Samoa</i>	- the Samoan way of doing things. It is everything that makes up the identity of a Samoan, such as culture, traditional customs, and so forth.
<i>fa'asoa</i>	- to share or to give out
<i>faimea</i>	- the Creator or maker
<i>fagogo</i>	- legends
<i>fefa'asoa'i</i>	- to share one another
<i>I'aeua</i>	- a red lipped mullet
<i>ie toga</i>	- fine mat
<i>ivimuliulu</i>	- the back of the head of a pig
<i>la</i>	- sun
<i>matai</i>	- chief
<i>matai taua</i>	- the high chief of the family or village
<i>measina</i>	- sacred
<i>nofoi</i>	- the hind part or bottom of a pig
<i>mu'u</i>	- village

- o'o - a saddle of pork
- pule - authority
- sasa'a - to pour out things
- sa'o - the most high chief in the family or village
- Savai'i - the biggest island of Samoa
- ta'afi - a piece of tapa clothe
- tala anamua - traditional stories of the past
- tala o le vavau - myths
- tala tu'u - oral tradition
- tamaitai - lady or girl
- tautua - servant
- tautai - fisherman
- tuala - the prime portion from the back of a pig
- upu - word
- utu - the basket or receptacle of a *Faimea* to keep the fishhook

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