

“POSTCODE CHRISTOLOGY”

AN AUSTRALIAN-SAMOAN PERSPECTIVE

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By

Fagali’imaloafua. I. Pesaleli

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research paper is to identify Jesus Christ personhood and nature, from an Australian-Samoan perspective. In discerning the Australian-Samoan experience of identity and location, Jesus' identity and ministry would be conversed as means to help shape and construct the Australian-Samoan Christian identity. The research aims to negotiate both the Australian-Samoan experience in diaspora and the significance of Jesus' personhood and nature. In turn, providing the similarities in location as described through the postcode concept. A Postcode Christology therefore aims to define Jesus' location as an Australian-Samoan experiencing the diasporic journey.

DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP OF THESIS/RESEARCH PAPER

I, Fagali'imaloafua I. Pesaleli

hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at Malua Theological College or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in thesis. Any contribution made to the research by colleagues with whom I have worked at Malua Theological College or elsewhere during my candidature is fully acknowledged.

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Dedication

*In memory of my beloved grandparents, the Late. Aloiai Poufā and Elisapeta Pesaleli,
the Late. Tauiliili Reupena Tali,*

To my beloved grandmother, Vi'ieiaonamanaia for your endless support in prayers and
thoughts,

To my loving parents Rev. Iakopo and Lemafo'e Poufā Pesaleli,

To my siblings, Reupena, James, Truejoy and Poufasigifili, to all my families and
friends,

as well as my Church, *EFKS* Frankston, for their unconditional love and support.

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Introduction

The focus of this research is to identify Jesus' personhood and nature and how this speaks into understanding the Australian-Samoan migrant experience. This theological conversation speaks of the Samoan experience in diaspora, namely in the Australian context. The main issues confronted by this migrant experience deals with identity and location. The identity dilemma has been profound for theological conversations embarked by Oceanic theologians, who have commenced reflecting critically about their identities in foreign contexts. This diasporic conversation must intercept with the Christological conversation of Jesus' identity and location, and how this can be relevant in constructing an Australian-Samoan Christology.

The Australian concept of postcode therefore places importance on location, as a place where one can be identified by looking into their postcode. Postcode also illustrates the problems of social, economic and political structures which can be demanding in the Australian context. The aim of this research is to identify the Australian-Samoan migrant experiences by their postcodes, and in turn reflecting on Jesus' location with accounts referenced on his earthly location in the Bible. The existing problems of being marginalised because of social, economic and political structures of the Australian-Samoan postcode, is also evident in the marginalised communities which Jesus is cited as being his preferred location.

This paper will be divided into three chapters. The first chapter discusses the art of telling tales as a way of doing theology. This chapter looks at various conversations of diasporic theologians, both in Asia and in Oceania. The focus is to reveal that by employing this method of doing theology; one can understand the issues and struggles faced by migrants living cross-culturally. Telling tales also reveals the realities of human experiences, which forms a basis of theological reflection. Chapter two discusses Christology's conversations; this chapter looks at how Christology is applied within the Pacific and also in the experiences of diaspora, notably in the Oceanic context. In chapter three, the constructions of an Australian-Samoan Christology will be discussed, how this is defined by weaving together the Australian-Samoan migrant experience with Jesus' personhood/identity and nature.

The methodology that will be used in this research consist of materials from academic articles, journals, dissertations and books. The starting point is transcendental, where the authors experience is the theological source of reflection. In conclusion, the aim of this research is to construct an Australian-Samoan Christology, which will be based on the concept of postcode, as to converse who Jesus is and how he can help shape an Australian-Samoan Christian identity.

Chapter 1

Telling Tales – A Way of Doing Theology

Traditionally, our ‘conversations’ about God is also our critical reflections that emerge from understanding God theologically. Church Traditions and Scripture therefore have provided foundation for this critical reflection. This chapter aims to reflect on the new trend of theological conversations, notably in ‘the art of story-telling’. This expresses the relation of our human context as an equivalent source for our theological reflection. In relation to this ‘art of story-telling’, diasporic theologians in the Pacific and other contexts have already commenced this method. In response, it provides a legitimate pathway of telling my own journey with God as an Australian-Samoan.

1.1 The art of story-telling

The art of story-telling in the Samoan culture acts as a point of departure, when considering the sharing of oral traditions, history, spirituality, wisdom, knowledge and language. Ama’amalele Tofaeono mentions the importance of Samoan oral traditions as an on-going process, from the past to the present generations, the transmission of stories which generates cultural and religious values and identity (Tofaeono, 2000, pg. 24). Aiono Le Tagaloa Fanaafi is another who mentions the importance of the Samoan ritual of *fā’agogo* or story-telling, which engages the Samoan people with their culture and language, thus providing them with an informative perspective of their historical experiences to their present cultural formation (Aiono, 2005, pg. 163). This aspect of Samoan oral tradition is best highlighted in the *faaSamoa* (the Samoan way) concept of *talanoa* (meaning to speak, talk, chat or dialogue). *Talanoa* is a way of interacting, informing, sharing and reviving cultural and traditional principles, wisdom and knowledge (Kolone-Collins, 2010, pg. 17). This act of *talanoa* shares similarities with the Samoan cultural practice of *fofola le fala*, or, spreading the mat. Upolu Vaai states, that the spreading of the mat is a common act of respect, reception and sharing of stories in the *faaSamoa* (Vaai, 2006, pgs. 12-13). Vaai further mentions, the sharing element of this act of *fofola le fala* illustrates the

sharing of history and oral wisdom between families and *matai* or chiefs of villages in Samoa (Vaai, 2006, pg. 13). This concept of spreading the mat therefore can be assigned as a metaphor, in sharing one's experience by this notion of story-telling.

The concept of story-telling is vibrant in the traditions and cultures of Oceania¹; Jione Havea uses the concept of *talanoa* in a general perception of this art of expression to represent its use therein. Havea speaks of *talanoa* as having three 'interconnected events' – story, the act of telling and conversation (Havea, 2012, pg. 11). *Talanoa* also shares a similar meaning in the Samoan language, which literally means to chat, make conversation, and have a talk (Ma'ia'i, 2013, pg. 379).²

In western perspective, the art of story-telling has always been a way of expression, which on multiple levels has the rationale of making sense and to some degree provide an understanding of one's experience, journey and encounters throughout life. Sheelagh Strawbridge mentions that the art of story-telling has existed in and throughout human history and can be found in all 'known cultures' (Strawbridge in Corrie & Lane, 2010, pg. xxii).³

¹ The term 'Oceania' has been of some interest with academics emerging from this region. There has been a shift from the more common term 'Pacific Islands' to 'Oceania', brought about through a change of perspectives. Epelei Hau'ofa states that the term 'Pacific Islands' depicts an overseas perspective, a label by explorers who have pondered and set ashore in the Islands of the Pacific. This perspective, gives the notion that the term 'Pacific Islands' cannot be identified as independent countries, but have ties and dependency to foreign aid. He suggests that the change of name 'Oceania', gives a more meaningful aspect to the people of Oceania; from foreign superior influences of political, economic and social intentions. Oceania as proposed by Hau'ofa gives a more complete representation of the different cultural identities of each island in the Pacific region, and therefore the commonality and relation of each island is the sea Oceania. (Epelei Hau'ofa's article "Our Sea of Islands" in, *A New Oceania: Rediscovering Our Sea of Islands*, Suva: University of the South Pacific, edited by Eric Waddell *et al.* pgs. 2-16)

² This concept of *talanoa*, presides with the dialectic modes of expression, as noted by Havea, 'the content (story) and the act of telling, unpacking and unravelling (telling) that content, and to the event of engaging, sharing and interrogation (conversation) that content' (Havea, 2012, pg. 11). Therefore, the art of telling tales can assume these meanings, in that one's account of his/her story takes course in both expressing and revealing their experiences in order to appropriate an understanding that can be shared with others. Samantha Lichtenberg is another who notes that the functions of a people's native language influences and gives a 'direct pathway to their distinguished identities' (Lichtenberg, 2011, pg. 10).

³ Furthermore, Strawbridge has identified that the logic of this art of expression, initiates and forms an instinctive way of shaping communities around the world, by their creative way of sharing and communicating (Strawbridge in Corrie & Lane, 2010, pg. xxii).

Jerome Bruner also highlights the importance of story-telling in valuing and understanding human experience (Bruner in Corrie & Lane, 2010, pg. xxiv). Bruner identifies two constructive ways of story-telling, which in hindsight are distinctive in formation, but are complementary in function, meaning they both work together in a collective order. The 'paradigmatic knowing and the narrative knowing'⁴ as mention by Bruner, both work hand in hand in digesting the order of understanding human experience and to make known human realities (Bruner in Corrie & Lane, 2010, pg. xxii). The latter meaning of constructing ways of story-telling (i.e. narrative knowing) will be my choice for this research; reason being that my experience through a cultural and religious perspective will help digest meaning through this art of telling tales.

1.2 Telling Tales a Way of Doing Contextual Theology

In the area of theology, the art of telling tales has fast become a new way of doing contextual theology, in particular diasporic theology. Clive Pearson, a notable advocate of this diasporic movement within theology, has promoted this theological method within the contexts of New Zealand and Australia (Pearson, 2006, pg. ix). Pearson reveals the concern of diasporic subjects, which is a consequence of migration, moving from one country to another. The problem is often experienced with this action of migration, where a new start would indicate a new beginning. The host country or context offers the migrant with new problems, with the exclamation point in crossing cultures. In other words, their received memory, status, history and identity are confronted by the social and political expectation of the new host context. It gives the alteration that one may lose their pervious received identity in translation, with the fold of a new life (Pearson, 2006, pgs. 6-7). Therefore, diasporic theology raises the concern of these experiences, with the purpose of binding these realities to give a theological meaning. Thus, the art of telling tales is a necessity to weave these experiences together theologically (Pearson, 2006, pg. 7). This methodology of telling tales is

⁴ Jerome Burner defines these two terms, as *two distinctive modes of thought, 'paradigmatic knowing', concerned with logical argument and the search for universal truth conditions, and 'narrative knowing', concerned with how we come to endow experience with meaning* (Bruner in Corrie & Lane, 2010, pg. xxiv).

promoted by various diasporic theologians, to discern their applied theologies in understanding their personal and religious experiences in light of the upheavals of migration. In effect, challenging the new migrants to search for a new identity amidst the parameters of the cross-cultural boundaries of the host country.

In her article 'Telling tales', Sisilia Tupou-Thomas speaks of her experience in diaspora and how her theological journey has shaped her understanding of some pivotal questions about constructing a new identity as a Tongan migrant in Australia (Tupou-Thomas in Pearson, 2006, pg. 1). She uses the metaphor of a 'drifting seed' (Tupou-Thomas in Pearson, 2006, pg. 1) in an attempt to tell her story as a diasporic subject, living exclusively within the multi-culturalism of the Australian context. The drifting seed is symbolic of her situation, at the perils of the waves of change in her new host country, attempting to find some solid location where she can attach her roots to and grow.

In addition, Tupou-Thomas method of telling tales has given light to this approach of doing diasporic theology from a Pacific person's perspective. She mentions the historical importance of her origins and how it has revitalised her quest of finding answers to her current identity crisis (Tupou-Thomas in Pearson, 2006, pgs. 1-2). For Tupou-Thomas her identity is shaped by the form of her surname. The hyphen (-) between her last names represents her identity, being in between context or more the less between two different cultural identities (Tupou-Thomas in Pearson, 2006, pg. 2).⁵ The hyphen (-) symbolises where she believes she stands as being in-between two cultural contexts, her Tongan and New Zealand, neither fully belonging to both.⁶

⁵ The hyphen is an intimate description of her historical and present experience. The Tongan name Tupou represents her Tongan identity; the Thomas connects her to her marriage to a New Zealand man.

⁶ Now residing in Australia, Tupou-Thomas uses her method of telling tales, as a prescription in consensus with both her Tongan origins and her new contemporary Australian context (Tupou-Thomas in Pearson, 2006, pg. 3). As she discusses throughout the duration of her journey, she identifies herself as in between cultures (Tongan and Australian) and the need for telling tales, is an avenue proposed to understand these issues of identity (Pearson, 2006, pg. 4).

Tupou-Thomas describes this method of telling tales with an autobiographical purpose (Tupou-Thomas in Pearson, 2006, pg. 4); meaning the relation between the person's life experience and an account of that person's life narrated by that person (Collins English Dictionary, 2009, pg. 37). American-Korean theologian Jung Young Lee is another who speaks of this autobiographical concept. He uses this concept to tell his life story as a Korean born American living in North America. For Lee the migrant experience is a story which reflects a life journey with God (Phan & Lee, 1999, pg. 23).⁷

However, when narrowing the examination between both accounts, Lee's story emerges with a more detailed and dramatic drift. This enriching experience details, as Lee states a 'radical change' (Phan & Lee, 1999, pg. 23) in perspective, in that the pressures of being isolated, feeling alienated, or becoming a stranger in a new location. This requires the urgent need for finding an identity in this cross-cultural reality (Phan & Lee, 1999, pgs. 31, 32, 39).⁸

Risatisone Ete is another, who in his article '*Ugly Duckling, Quacking Swan*' (Ete in Pearson, 2006, pg. 43) demonstrates how this methodology of telling tales has been instrumental in doing contextual theology. Ete, being similar to Tupou-Thomas and Lee also speaks from the location of a migrant. The identity dilemma is also confronted by Ete in Aotearoa – New Zealand. However, Ete is different from the other two in that he arrived to his new host country not as an adult but rather a very young child.

Ete uses the popular children story 'The Ugly Duckling' as a canvas in defining his experience as a New Zealand-Samoan. Ete's traumatic experience of

⁷ Like Tupou-Thomas, Lee's autobiographical account defines the reality of being in between cultures, with the similarities in the challenges of encountering cultural, social, economic and political differences. The obvious challenges presented by both theologians, is the need to redefine their identity amongst these foreign forces.

⁸ Lee's present situation has shifted his perspective as a migrant, living in North America which to him was no longer the Promised Land. Instead, he felt as if it was a place of exile. Despite the many problems and challenges migration creates, Lee attempts to call this land home by vying this methodology of doing theology (Phan and Lee, 1999, pg. 39). The comparison of his story with the journey of Israel in the wilderness and their being in exile creates this relation of theology in an autobiographical perspective (Phan and Lee, 1999, pg. 39).

living between the margins, in both his received Samoan culture and the culture of his host country is the basis for theological conversations. Ete draws from the 'Ugly Duck' story by comparing himself as the ugly duckling – a form of name calling he was often subjected to growing up in a Westernised Education system due to his different skin colour. Yet, as Ete alludes to, unlike the ugly duck story which has a happy ending, with the duck realising that he is actually a beautiful swan and fly's away with its own kind. But in Ete's case this is not so. Within his own ethnic community he is still ridiculed, although they see him as a swan but accuse him as quaking like a duck – a reference to his gibberish attempt at the *faa*Samoa for instance the Samoan language. As a New Zealand-Samoan Ete stands in a liminal space of living in-between two or more cultural contexts. His identity is so what confused and fractured, feeling as if he belongs neither to his received culture nor the host country (Ete in Pearson, 2006, pgs. 43-45). Ete's theological articulation is both narrative and subjective in form and content. It is a particular method that falls within the different range of Contextual models alluded to by Stephen Bevans.

1.3 Stephen Bevans :Transcendental Model

Catholic Theologian Stephen Bevans constructs a range of Contextual models that takes into account the traditional sources of articulating theology, Scripture and Church Tradition. But he also acknowledges the importance of the human context as equally important in doing theology together with the traditional sources. For Bevans the inclusion of the human context in articulating ones Christian faith is termed as Contextualisation of theology. It is a theological imperative, meaning contextualizing theology in one way or another is part of the nature of theology itself (Bevans, 2004, pg. 1). The movement of theology has taken much attention into the dynamics and proposition of social change since the 1970's (Bevans, 2004, pg. ix). The emergences of contextualizing theology since, has extended the parameter of constructing theology in a traditional manner, and in turn focusing on the multiple positions of cultures and contexts in understanding the gospel (Bevans, 2004, pg. 1).

Bevans methods of doing contextual theology is proposed in six ideal models, namely the *Translational Model*, *Anthropological Model*, *Praxis Model*,

Synthetic Model, *CounterCultural Model* and lastly the *Transcendental Model* (Bevans, 2004, pg. 27)⁹. Due to the constraint on the length of this paper, a summary of Bevans models are provided in the footnote. The transcendental model will be discussed separately as it is the most appropriated is describing the methodology of a postcode Christology.¹⁰

For the purpose of this research paper, the Transcendental model is used as the most appropriate methodology in constructing a postcode Christology. It is acknowledged that the other models of Bevans can also be relevant to a postcode Christology for an Australian-Samoan, but that is beyond the scope of this paper due to the limitation in content.

⁹ I have attempted to summarise below five of these contextual theological models as presented by Bevans. The transcendental model would be discussed in the research paper. Firstly, the translational model focuses on the 'unchanging message' of the gospel, which is translated into culture, bringing forth meaning as to 'capture the spirit of the text'. However it isn't the literal translation that is seen as a word for word process, but rather translating the gospel to the world of cultural context (Bevans, 2004, pgs. 31-32). This thread of interpretation leads to the anthropological model, which emphasis the study of the human person and their social, cultural structures, their human relationships through the observation of human experience. Therefore, this search leads to the revelation of God through these human experiences (Bevans, 2004, pgs. 47-48). Thirdly, the Praxis Model deals with the activity of human experience in expression of the Christian faith, where the unified 'knowledge of activity and the knowledge of context' is the content of theology (Bevans, 2004, pgs. 65-66). In addition, according to Bevans the Synthetic Model is compromised between the essence of the gospel message and the traditional doctrinal emphasis, with the periphery acknowledgement of culture and how it works in theology. In appreciating the function of this model, the conversations with other cultural religious reflection are important in shaping one's theology (creative dialogue) (Bevans, 2004, pg. 82). Furthermore another purposed model surfaced by Bevans is the CounterCultural model, Bevan emphasis of the counter-cultural model is based in the history and human experience, which leads to commitment to social change; it adapts a hermeneutic of suspicion towards the function of the context within itself. It broadens and deepens contextual theology with the emphasis placed on scripture and tradition (Bevans, 2004, pg. 118). He argues that the existence of culture is by no means vital in understanding the Gospel. Bevan concurs that the gospel/scripture is the fuel injection that functions this model. However, he also affirms that culture and gospel go hand in hand because the importance of the context is essential in understanding the gospel (2004, pg. 119). The central focus at the same time is the existence of the Gospel; which is realised on a personal level and within the conversation within the community of believers. The revelation of Christ therefore can be profoundly established within any context and culture (Bevans, 2004, pg. 120).

¹⁰ Bevans admits that although his models are abstract constructions, they represent different ways in understanding the interaction between the Christian Gospel message and the cultural context - these models all have instinctive values and in one way or the other, they are relational in doing contextual theology (Bevans, 2004, pg. 28). Bevans himself does not explicitly state which model he prefers, although he does suggest that in doing Contextual theology, one particular model or a range of models can be used in this process.

Bevans Transcendental Model places emphasis on the experience or reality of the theologian, not so much in the traditional concert of theology, such as Scripture or Church Tradition. Instead, the theological focus is the on-going search for the authenticity of the persons understanding, of the fusion of his or her context and culture via the adaptive nature of theology when reflecting on their religious experiences (Bevans, 2004, pg. 98). As Bevans rightfully puts it;

The transcendental model points to a new way of doing theology. With its emphasis on theology as activity and process, rather than theology as a particular content, it rightly insists that theology is not about finding out the right answers that exist in some transcultural realm...but passionate search for authenticity of expressions of one's religious experience and cultural identity. (Bevans, 2004, pg. 101).

The theological context is not something out there to be studied and investigated. Rather, the transcendental approach identifies the subjective life experience of the theologian as the source of theological articulation. In the case here, it's the migrant experience of a second generation Australian-Samoan that becomes the point of departure in shaping a postcode Christology.¹¹

The aim of this research is an attempt to tell my tale of living between contexts, so that others like me (second generation Australian-Samoans) can share this theological journey. Therefore the interaction between theology and these human experiences, pronounces one's own story or tale in light of their theological quest in finding their identity in both a cultural and religious standpoint. Therefore in relation to the dilemmas of finding one's identity, the concept of telling tales provides a starting point for theological conversations.

¹¹ Bevan's preference in the cases of 'multicultural diversity' is the transcendental model because it captures the success of finding the similarities and differences amongst cultures (Bevans, 2004, pg. 112). This can be an appropriate motive in discerning theology on both a social and personal level. In other words, it may be individualistic in a primary sense, that the experience is intrinsically valued by an individual. However, on the other hand, this individualistic experience can be perceived on a communal stance, meaning that others can relate to the realities of living cross-culturally.

1.4 The tale of an Australian-Samoan and the Identity Dilemma

The invitation to *talanoa* is obviously a reception to speak, talk or share in the Samoan oral tradition. It marks the importance of exchanging history, religiosity, stories, wisdom and reviving experiences in the past and the present. The intention is therefore practiced as an on-going process, handed down from generation to generation. This act of hospitality and sharing tales as mentioned previously can be seen in the Samoan act of *fofola le fala*, the spreading of the mat. For me this is an invitation and opportunity to tell my tale, my history and experience in diaspora, living cross-culturally as an Australian-Samoan¹². It falls in the corpus of what Bevans identifies as the transcendental approach to Contextual theology.

The reason for our coming to Australia was not to seek a better life in employment and education. It was for the Church; my parents serve the Congregation Christian Church of Samoa (CCCS), they were called to serve one of the parishes in Victoria, Australia. Therefore, our coming to Australia on December 1997 was for the Church; any thought of me opposing was not an option, for I was just a child then.

The freedom to exploit the Australian culture and education system by second-generation Australian-Samoans has created tensions between themselves and their parents (Va'a, 2001, pg. 219). The contradiction can be drawn from the different perspectives, of *faa*Samoa and the westernised culture of Australia. As Felise Va'a mentions, Samoan parents often apply this strict 'authoritarian system' in raising their children, whilst on the other hand, being exposed to the liberties of the Westernised Australian culture and educational system (Va'a, 2001, pg. 219). This issue has been much of a concern for me as a Samoan born Australian; having to be complacent with dealing with these cultural encounters.¹³

¹² The expression Australian-Samoan is used to highlight the complexity of migrant identity. The first noun is treated as an adjective – describing the type of Samoan a person is i.e. An Australian-Samoan as opposed to a New Zealand-Samoan, or an American-Samoan.

¹³ There is a saying that my parents often use, when trying to amplify the value of life and opportunities living in Australia; *amuia oe i le tele o ia avanoa ua e maua* – which translates *praise you for the many opportunities you've got*. It may seem as a valid point of encouragement, but I have often questioned their awareness of its cultural complications.

The beginning of my cross-cultural experience, the most obvious challenge I had to deal with was the difference in culture and language. I felt ashamed of being Samoan when attending school because I couldn't speak any proper English, I felt isolated and was being left behind in the expected pressures of belonging in this westernised culture. The dramatic change of perspectives, from the traditional orientated *faa*Samoa had been confronted by this new culture. Ete identifies such problems in education, by the constraining aspects of *faa*Samoa, where parents and those in authority suggests to the young Samoans on what to do and what not to do, '*filemu, ma aua le pisa*' (sit still and be quite) (Ete, 1996, pg. 6). On the contrary, growing up in Australia I have come to learn that the need to speak is often encouraged by the interaction between students and teachers, in order for students to be creative in learning.¹⁴

As the years have gone by, I have become conditioned to this concept of innovating learning; to stand up and be heard. However, being around my family and church members the echoes of *faa*Samoa was always being loudly heard. The challenge therefore was juggling between these two aspects of my existence in living in between cultures.

The renowned Samoan author Albert Wendt speaks of a similar experience in his novel *Sons for the Return*.¹⁵ There are two elements of this fiction story, which speaks to me as a diasporic Australian-Samoan. The first is the struggle of Samoan migrants in confronting the differences between the two cultures, notably their *faa*Samoa and the cultures of their host context. The other aspect is upholding their authorial and strict *faa*Samoa within the dominant cultures of their host context. The feeling of having two reflections when looking in this diasporic mirror has always indicated my difficulty in finding a parallel image of who I am.

¹⁴ Va'a also finds that this causes friction between Samoan parents and their children, which causes them to 'rebel as means of getting even with their parents' (Va'a, 2001, pg. 219).

¹⁵ Wendt's novel depicts a story of a young Samoan male migrating to New Zealand in the seventies. In summary, the story illustrates this young man's journey into a new and foreign country (New Zealand). It narrates the struggles he encountered while confronting the reality of the differences between the *faa*Samoa and the westernised culture of New Zealand. In confronting these realities he also carried the hopes and dreams of his family in Samoa; to attain a good education and level of employment (Wendt, 1973).

In speaking of images, stigmatizing has always found its place in this journey of diaspora. The marks of shame by social expectation are by no means an outcry for justice. Australian-Samoans have been in this commotion of injustice; being labelled as ‘goons, brownies, niggers, FOB’s (fresh of the boat), naked coconuts and often being categorised as immigrants’ captures this sense of inferiority. The notion of this inferior position, gives the immigrants like the Australian-Samoans the lack of being able to exercise their innovative potentials (Crocombe, 1989, pg.26). The importance of names in the oral traditions of Samoa carries with them the symbol of belonging, it represents as Ete mentions, ‘honour and shame’ (Ete, 2001, pg. 7).¹⁶ This inheritance is an integral part of Samoan culture; the stigmatization of Australian-Samoans can indicate the incompetence of their surroundings in accepting these values.¹⁷

In addition, this two-fold reflection also represents the inter-relationship of Australian-Samoans within their own culture and social formalities (Samoan). The second-generation Australian-Samoans, either been born or raised in Australia have been subject of this discrimination from their own Samoan culture. They are classed as being lost in translation, being too westernised or what Samoans call *fia palagi*. The strains of not fully being accepted as being pure Samoan or being a Samoan *mao’io’i* creates this tension between first and second-generation Australian-Samoans.¹⁸ The dilemma therefore for me as a Samoan born, Australian raised migrant is finding my location in this discretion.

The focus therefore in this research is how Jesus Christ is presented to an Australia-Samoan living between cultural contexts, therefore constructing a

¹⁶ Ete draws from Peter Bourdieu definition of *Honour and Shame*, which defines an integral part of one’s existence in a communal social structure; in that, the honour is a symbol, which one defines him/herself through the perceptions of others. Thus, implying that one’s existence depends on others, and the loss of this honour means they no longer exists (Bourdieu, 1974, pgs. 211-212).

¹⁷ Ete also mentions that this is also relevant to the Samoan culture, and names can be a symbol of one’s family and to certain extent their culture (Ete, 2001, pg. 7).

¹⁸ In the New Zealand context, Edwin Hendrikse also addresses this issue; he identifies this tension between the foreign raised New Zealand-Samoans and Samoan born New Zealanders. He finds in his research, that the New Zealand born Samoans are subject of being in between the *faaSamoa* culture and the westernised culture of their host context (Hendrikse, 1995, pg. 87).

Christology that speaks a fluent, a sound theology appropriate enough for this cross-cultural experience.

Chapter 2

Christology's Conversations

Talking about the personhood and nature of Jesus Christ has been instrumental for critical theological reflection. In understanding who Jesus is and how he can help us, theologians in diaspora and also in the Pacific have proposed that through their cultural and human contexts, Jesus speaks to them in an intrinsic manner. This chapter will engage in these Christological conversations. It will highlight some Christological reflections from the Samoan context and also from the context of diaspora. In perspective, it will be valued in constructing an Australian-Samoan Christology.

2.1 Christology – The Personhood and Nature of Jesus Christ

The importance of Jesus' personhood and nature within the scope of Christian theology has been stressed with utter importance; it is at the heart of Christian theology. In fact there can be no Christian theology without Christology. Therefore, Christology is critically surfaced as a vocal point for Christians and the church alike (Wells, 2004, pg. 117). Christology can be arguably at large a broad topic, with the intention of identifying who Jesus is. The departure point in constructing Christology is to consider the source which accounts the life and ministry of Jesus. The New Testament therefore has been referenced to be of profound importance, however it does not provide a single Christology, but many (Rausch, 2003, pg. 3).¹⁹

¹⁹ For an example, each Gospel writer has their own particular emphasis on their interpretation of Jesus Christ, his personhood, ministry and message. Mark presents more of a 'Spirit Christology' – Jesus as an ordinary man who God had implanted is divine Spirit upon (Macquarrie, 1990, pg. 80); Mathew perceives Jesus as God's presence on earth who fulfils the Old Testament prophecies; Luke places emphasis upon the human Jesus who cares for and aids the vulnerable of society, the sick, women and children; John depicts a very divine Jesus as he stresses, his account is to prove that Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of God (John 20:30). The apostle Paul has more of a Post-Easter Christological emphasis than the Gospel writers. The many interpretations conveyed by various theologians, both men and women around the world have continued thereto, in defining the 'significance and meaning of Jesus Christ for our times in light of the biblical and historical developments' (Kärkkäinen, 2003, pg. 9). The centrality therefore places the personhood of Jesus Christ between the Christian faith and theology. William Barr

In perspective, the identification of Christology has been essential in seeking understanding on why the cause for such an approach is needed in theology and for the Christian faith. The question of ‘who Jesus Christ is?’ remains a ‘fundamental question for Christology’ (Rausch, 2003, pg. 1). Daniel Migliore argues in fact, the Christological question is divided into two; ‘who is Jesus Christ?’ and ‘how does he help us? The former deals with Jesus identity, while the latter focuses on soteriological benefits. Although Migliore does not speak about the contextual Christology from a diasporic perspective, such as an Australian-Samoan, he however mentions why such questions has become critical in this contextual approach of Christology. He states that;

Confession of Jesus Christ takes place in particular historical and cultural contexts. Our response to the questions of who we say Jesus Christ is and how he helps us will be shaped in important ways by particular contexts in which these questions arise. (Migliore, 2004, pg. 197)

In drawing from Migliore’s thoughts, the necessity for such an approach would justify the purpose of this research, constructing a Christology for an Australian-Samoan. He defines the essential modes and principles of contextuality. The questions can be asked also to an Australian-Samoan, who is Jesus to us and how he can help us in the realities of living cross-culturally.²⁰

Christology therefore implies that in understanding a particular culture, contextual situation and human experience theologically, can be collective with relation to the life and works of Christ. However, the significance of this contextual approach strings together questions that are essential to one’s identity, as an Australian-Samoan

asserts that, “while no theology can confine itself exclusively to Christology, no Christian theology would be complete without serious reflection on Jesus Christ” (Barr, 1997, pg. 287).

²⁰ On this note, the setting of Christology amongst cultural context has been profound, as doing Christology contextually in this intrinsic manner (Kärkkäinen, 2003, pg. 187). Robert Schreiter signifies this integral promotion of Christology amongst world cultures; *If any single area of theology is especially poised to raise questions about the nature and practice of inculturation (the influence of culture on theology and vice versa), it is surely Christology. The fact of the Incarnation itself places us already on a series of boundaries: between the divine and the human, between the particular and the universal, between eternity and time. The questions raised for culture span the entire range of Christological discourse, from what significance Jesus’ having been born in a specific time and place might have, to the cultural and linguistic differences that plagued the Christological controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries* (Schreiter in Küster, 2001, pg. xi).

Christian. As mentioned in the previous chapter, experiencing the identity dilemma has been the initial step taken, in following this Christological absorption.

The Christological question asked by Jesus to his earliest followers, “who do they say I am?” (Mark 8:29) is also relevant for Australian-Samoan’s to address. Hans Schwarz identifies that this quest of finding the answers to who Jesus is, has been difficult for various reasons. However, the continuity can be asserted when the search is considerate of both the ‘history of Jesus and its presuppositions’, which has already been explored (Schwarz, 1998, pg. 2-3). In considering this interpretation, Christology also deals with the various titles presented by the Gospels in reference to Jesus, which is termed as the ‘Christological titles’²¹ (McGrath, 2006, pg. 29).

The historical development of Christology during the fourth and fifth century was characterised by Christological controversies. The Patristic period saw the attempt made by the early Church Fathers to define the identity of Jesus, both his divine and human nature and how they relate to God. This was against a background of heretical movements such as Gnosticism and Arianism, both challenging the divinity and humanity of Jesus. The classical Christology formulated the creeds of Nicea in the 4th century and Chalcedon²² in the 5th century, as means of combating heretical views (Kärkkäinen, 2003, pgs. 72, 77). The quest can be an extensive discussion which is beyond the scope of this paper. Rather, specific focus will be on the Christological

²¹ The knowledge of these titles has been vocal in grasping an understanding of Jesus from the New Testament (Christology). The focus therefore can be aligned with the theology of the New Testament, of Jesus being the Messiah, Lord, Saviour, Son of God, Son of Man and God to name a few (McGrath, 2006, pgs. 29-35). In all, these Christological titles deals with the identity of Jesus as ascribed by the four Gospels, however as mentioned before it does not present just a single Christology, but various Christological interpretations.

²² The ‘Council of Nicea’ (325 A.D) formulated discussion on Jesus being truly divine and how this nature is related to God. This was the thoughts of the Eastern Church, predominately associated with theologians from the Alexandrian School, where the focus was aimed in answering the soteriology questions. Therefore the articulation of the divine nature of Christ preceded Jesus humanity. On the other side of the coin, the Western Church, especially within the Antioch school placed its conviction more on the humanity of Jesus, but also accepting that Jesus was also fully divine. The emphasis was focused on the ‘moral aspects of the Christian life’, more so than on soteriology. The western theologians argued that human beings are deemed to sin, and salvation cannot be acted out by humans themselves. Therefore it is in Gods favour that the redeemer was sent to the world, for salvation to be realised. The Antioch school unites the two natures with God, as entities existing at the same time. The Alexandrian school opposed to this view as being rationale. In 451 A.D. discussion exchanged during the Council of Chalcedon were aimed at unifying the thoughts of the two schools (Alexandrian and Antioch), however it never concluded to reach this goal. On the positive side, they were able to construct some solid arguments in combating other issues questioning Jesus identity (Kärkkäinen, 2003, pgs. 72-78)

context where the quest for Jesus identity has been essential, for the setting of contextual Pacific Christology.

2.2 Christology in the Pacific Context – cultural symbols and concepts

The contextual approaches in doing Christology have emerged since the 1960s and have continued to the present date. The debate of defining the personhood and soteriological benefits of Jesus has produced a colourful spectrum of interpretation. In turn, verifying and addressing some issues concerning local theologies, consisting of communities and local requests (Kärkkäinen, 2003, pgs. 10-11). The rise of Liberation forms of theology in mostly the third world (e.g. Latin American) and amongst minority groups (e.g. Black Afro-American and the Feminist movement in North America) has seen the emergence of different interpretations of Jesus Christ. This is not surprising as the social, economic, cultural and political situations of nations and its people differ. In Latin America where, economic, social inequality and extreme levels of poverty is experienced among the majority of the population, the image of a ‘Liberating Christ’ emerges from its context.²³

It is important for Contextual forms of Christology, that the different expressions of Jesus Christ that are constructed comply with Richard Griggs 3 criteria’s; it clearly resembles the Jesus of the New Testament; that it follows the tradition, Christ is God, and finally, Christ provides redemption (Griggs, 2000, pg. 44).

In turning to discussing Pacific theologians in answering this Christological question unlike the Liberation theologies that focus on the social, gender, economic and political context, Pacific Christology interprets cultural symbols and concepts, in relating the identity of Jesus to be understood within their context and to their contemporaries. This approach binds ‘their space, place or gap’ through the attempt to re-interpret this Christological question (Limā, 2012, pgs. 152-153). The question of Jesus identity on these terms of re-interpretation has been vocal for conversations in

²³ For example, Black Afro-Americans who face racial inequality, a ‘Black Jesus’ speaks into their particular situation. This different images and metaphors that emerge from the various contexts are expressions of not only ‘who Jesus Christ is, for them?’ but also addresses, ‘How does Jesus help them?’

constructing Samoan Christologies. In using Samoan cultural-symbols and concepts in defying their hermeneutical view of who Jesus is to them, therefore placing emphasis on their context and experiences in constructing means for their theology (Limā, 2012, pg. 157). Samoan theology would be best understood with some examples of this creation and re-interpretation of the significance of Jesus personhood/identity. To do justice for the cause of this research, I will discuss only a few theologians who would help construct an Australian-Samoan Christology.

Samoan theologian Si'u Vaifale uses a Samoan cultural concept in shaping his Christology – his interpretation is based on the Samoan metaphor of *taualuga*. The term *taualuga* has various meanings in the Samoan language; however Vaifale uses its literal meaning which refers to the upper roof of a traditional Samoan house or *fale*. Vaifale clarifies that *taualuga* is the final act of constructing a Samoan *fale*; it is the final act which symbolises that the work is completed and it is only placed when every part of the *fale* is in positioned correctly (Vaifale, 1999, pgs. 88-89). In addition, Vaifale takes this meaning of *taualuga* to broaden his interpretation of Jesus personhood, Jesus being the *taualuga* or pinnacle of Christianity.²⁴ For Vaifale, there can be no completion of a *fale* without the *taualuga*, nor the proper conclusion of a ceremony without the *taualuga* – therefore, Christian theology is incomplete without the Person and Nature of Jesus Christ (Vaifale, 1999, pgs. 87-93).²⁵

Furthermore, Michiko Ete-Limā is a New Zealand-Samoan theologian writing from within the Samoan context, who seeks this quest of identity through a Christological lens. In dealing with the question of 'who Jesus Christ?', Ete-Limā speaks from a *tama'ita'i* or young female/girl perspective. Ete-Lima applies the metaphor of a Samoan *tamaita'i* through her experience as a Samoan woman. This *tamaita'i* Christology discerns both the humanity and divinity of Jesus through the roles played out by the *tamaita'i* Samoa. In her Christology, Ete-Limā gives two definitions of

²⁴ Vaifale elaborates furthermore when discussing the meaning of *taualuga* in the circle of the Samoan life. *Taualuga* in this respect attributes to the final or concluding act in any formal Samoan occasions. Vaifale's *taualuga* Christology therefore performs Jesus position as being the finale, the completion of the Christian faith; Jesus is the *taualuga* for Christians, suggesting that Jesus Christ is at the core, the most significant component to understanding Christian theology.

²⁵ The cultural aspects in providing an understanding is therefore important in application of Christology in context; Vaifale's *taualuga* provides a cultural understanding in relation to the Samoan people, where meanings of Jesus personhood/identity can be intrinsically received in the Samoan context.

Samoan aspects of *tamaita'i*; in the *feagaiga* (covenant) and the *nofo-tane* or married woman. The aspects of this cultural content are compared to the Christological points as mentioned previously (human and divine)²⁶.

Like Vaifale, Ete-Limā has also used her Samoan cultural context in defining her *tamaita'i* Christology, providing a way of identifying who Jesus is to her a Samoan woman. However, her Christological construction is distinguished from Vaifale's *taualuga*, in that she has attempted to balance out, both the humanity and divinity aspects of Jesus. Although Vaifale and Ete-Limā provide valuable hermeneutical interpretation of the Samoan context, their Christologies are not from the context of living in diaspora.

In finding a similar perspective of the Australian-Samoan experience, Seforosa Carroll a Rotuman theologian who is an Australian migrant; seeks to express her Christological views using the concept of location. Carroll opts to discuss her diasporic journey by using these concepts of 'places', 'spaces' and 'home', rather than cultural symbols and concepts (Carroll, 2004, pg. 81). Her Christology speaks of her journey as a migrant, from her origins in Fiji to Australia, by valuing the concept of 'hospitality'. Her journey is compared to the frangipani plant, which not only grows in Fiji but also in Australia. The ideal is that this plant is replanted in Australia, thus the response is to illustrate her as this frangipani plant moving from Fiji to Australia. The hope for survival is therefore assimilated within a foreign land, with changes of climate and environment (Carroll, 2004, pgs. 156-157).

²⁶ The *feagaiga* is expressed through the brother-sister relationship, where she is raised to a higher status in her *aiga* or family. The *feagaiga* is preserved as being valued with sacredness, or what Ete-Limā defines as a *tamasā* (sacred child). The *tamaita'i* is cared for by her brothers, and their duties are extensive in order to preserve and protect her well-being within the *aiga*. She is held in high regards and through the provision of her brothers, she given the respect and the honour (Ete-Limā, 2001, pg. 14). This aspect of the *tamaita'i* is referred to the divine aspect of Jesus, where this understanding of sacredness is elevated within the New Testament Christology of Jesus divinity. On the other hand, the role played by the *nofo tane* is referenced to the representation of Jesus humanity. The literal meaning of the word *nofo* means sit and the word *tane* means male. The implication therefore is that once married, the *tamaita'i* takes on the role of the *nofo tane*, which denotes that her status is one of service to her husband and his family at all times, but also being obliged to her own *aiga*. This humanity aspect of Jesus therefore is symbolised by this cultural aspect of *tamaita'i*, being of service in order to fulfil her duties as a *nofo tane*. In comparison, Ete-Limā, mentions that the humanity side of Jesus, was in accordance to his ministry on earth, 'Jesus Christ in his suffering was acutely aware that it was for world that he suffered, and any resistance to his suffering would have a detrimental effect on the whole of humanity' (Ete-Limā, 2001, pg. 153).

Furthermore this frangipani plant as discussed by Carroll, has the emerging concept of ‘hospitality’; for the flowers of the frangipani plant are put together to make a *lei* or garland. In the Fijian culture this *lei* is presented as gesture of welcoming strangers to their land. The stranger as Carroll indicates is Christ, which is the thread holding all the flowers which makes the *lei*; the flowers are a representation of the different experiences encountered by this diasporic journey, which are being weaved together to the thread.²⁷

In addition, this can be asserted as being of a similar experience to the Australian-Samoan journey, the act of hospitality can be evident as Australia exists with forms of diversity and different cultural aspects. As for an Australian-Samoan, the need for such a concept can bring out the values and perspective of the Australian-Samoan reflection of who Jesus is. The Australian-Samoan flower can also attribute to this mutual experience of weaving of the *lei*. This allows the sharing of this marginalised, alienated, stranger and diasporic experience of living between cultures. The focus in constructing an Australian-Samoan Christology is performed to express this concern, which will ultimately lead to the revelation of Jesus in the most liable language available in weaving this Australian-Samoan experience.

²⁷ Carroll does not only refer to the usage of frangipani flowers, but she encourages other ethnicities to locate and bring their own flowers to make this *lei*. The concept of hospitality which Carroll emphasises is that it takes both the roles of ‘guest’ and ‘host’, welcoming others and also being welcomed by others in this act of exchange and mutuality. Carroll’s Christology encourages this concept of hospitality, as a symbol of sharing diverse experiences of diaspora, which we can relate amidst the different ways we encounter Christ within a multi-cultural context (Carroll, 2004, pg. 156).

CHAPTER 3

CONSTRUCTING A POSTCODE CHRISTOLOGY

The aim of this chapter is to construct and define a Postcode Christology from an Australian-Samoan perspective. Therefore definition of the concept of postcode from the Australian context would be discussed, and how it relates to the personhood and nature of Jesus Christ (Christology). It is therefore relevant that some Biblical references, namely in the Gospels, would be done in constructing this Christological articulation. This would highlight the ideal postcode of Jesus' ministry and how it can help shape the Australian-Samoan Christian identity through this understanding of postcode.

3.1 Defining the concept of Postcode

The concept of 'postcode' has been revealed by Pearson in recent discussions, which is to some point drawn from a social-political viewpoint. In this respect, Pearson being an advocate of this diasporic phenomenon cites the use of the concept (postcode) from an Australian politician (Pearson in Hamilton, 2008, pg. 12). This idea has been vocal for Wayne Swan, a former treasurer of the Australian government, in his publication *Postcode: The Splintering of a Nation*. The concept for Swan surfaces the imbalance in the economic situation of Australia, by analysing this concept of 'postcode', and how they have identified the economic situation of the advantages and disadvantages of geographical locations in Australia. In other words, there are postcodes that reveal to be well off than others, where the vulnerability in areas such as unemployment, housing affordability and education (Swan, 2005, pg. 25). Pearson therefore reiterates this concept of postcode in theological reflection, as location for pastoral ministry. The need for local postcodes to engage with global formations in Christian mission is therefore initiated, as means to address their particular situations. The need to reveal their postcodes for Christian ministry is therefore prompted to be dealt with. He states that, 'it locates and situates us' (Pearson in Burns and Pearson eds, 2013, pgs. 1-2).

The term 'postcode' in Collin's dictionary is defined as a 'series of letters and numbers used to aid for the sorting of mail' (Collins, 2009, pg. 451). In other words, postcode also represents a place where someone can be found, it is an address where someone lives. On this note the incorporation of postcode for this construction, revolves around the concept of location as mentioned before. In addition, these discussions of 'postcodes' leads one to find the particular Australian-Samoan experience; in that their location is identified by their postcodes in the dominant multi-cultural context of Australia. For Australian-Samoans postcodes are locations of their home, place and space. It is where their social and cultural identities and status are reflected on their location.

3.2 Australian-Samoan Postcode

In constructing an Australian-Samoan postcode Christology, the literal meaning of postcode refers to a geographical area that is represented by digits or numerical forms. On this note, the Australian context provides multiple postcodes and has been a preferable place of residence for many reasons. For Australian-Samoans they seem to opt for areas which reflect postcodes that have 'lower-priced accommodations and public housing, availability of employment and close to Samoan places of worship' (Va'a, 2001, pg. 90). Many Australian-Samoan migrants in Melbourne have either lived in New Zealand or have migrated straight from Samoa. In areas such as Dandenong, Cranbourne, Reservoir and Broadmeadows Samoan migrant families have opted to reside therein, because of cheap accommodation and its close proximity to manufacturing places for employment. The common trend in my experience is that these areas have employments that require unskilled workers, but stresses hand-labouring work. The indication therefore, is that these manufacturing stress more on labour, rather than competence and intellectual values.

However, from a social viewpoint these postcodes have been surfaced to be vulnerable to many social problems, such as unsustainable economic growth, poverty, education, high crime and political issues of inequality in the distribution of government wealth (Swan, 2005, pgs. 42-43). There has been a criminology study of youth violence in the Melbourne city, influenced from these disadvantaged postcodes, such as Broadmeadows and Reservoir (Millar, "*Postcode link to city violence*" in *The Age*,

2009). In the case here, such postcodes can express a negative stereotype image, unpleasant comments and at times racial jokes towards the less popular postcodes and the various communities located there. In my experience, the generalisation of Australian-Samoans being labelled as factory workers, with a minimum income, living on the dole (welfare), attributes to these stereotype postcodes. Australian-Samoans are generalised of living in these postcodes, because of its social and economic locations.

In contrast, there are postcodes that boast of wealth, it is areas where the rich live. These wealthy areas are a striking opposite from where most Australian-Samoans live, because of real estate prices, which also reflects their social structures. Areas such as Toorak and Portsea are amongst Australia's richest postcodes (Mes, *"Australia's richest and poorest postcodes named"* in The Australian, 2010) . In addition, postcodes that are close to the city area are also regarded amongst the wealthiest postcodes in Melbourne. Such postcodes project a positive, proud and exclusive image for its community.

The issue therefore in this sense is the equality in communal living, as echoed by Swan is the need to respect the poor in considering their location amongst the multi-cultural context of Australia. It is within these particular congested and less favourable contexts that there is a need to find the meaning of a Christian identity (Hamilton, 2008, pg. 13). Therefore, an Australian-Samoan postcode rallies with other migrant identities, who have been pressured to areas where economic, political and social structures have pushed them to the margins. It is within this postcode that highlights the Australian-Samoan experience. It is a postcode that not only addresses the issues of lost in translation (language and culture), but also having to deal with the reality of living in this liminal space, place and home. The liminal reality is therefore acquired to surface the Australian-Samoan postcode.

In revealing the Australian-Samoan postcode, the need for a social analysis would be appropriate. Keith Hamilton suggests that it is an aspect of being contextual that in naming ones postcode is to consider their social environment. He proposes such questions in this descriptive manner to ask, 'who is my neighbour, what are they like, what is my neighbourhood like?' (Hamilton, 2008, pg. 13). These questions are also

relevant for the Australian-Samoan postcode. In describing my postcode 3175²⁸, namely my suburb of Bangholme, it reveals a very multi-cultural neighbourhood. The neighbourhood is a mixture of different people with different ethnic backgrounds, with the majority of them being recent migrants. The ethnicity of the postcode consists of Greek, Indian, and Russian families; in addition there is a centre for a Slovenian community. To add more to this multi-cultural community, our Church is also located within this postcode, where most of our church gatherings take place.

The Australian-Samoan postcode is therefore coupled with this openness to engage to a new form of social structure, needs and ideas of changes in human relationships. This is often confronted with living in this liminal space. In periphery, Australian-Samoans are also required to be trusted in performing their *faa*Samoan culture; an issue mentioned in the first chapter. The complexity therefore for an Australian-Samoan is to negotiate, not only their cultural and Christian identity, but also having to face the challenges fostered by their complex, often multi-cultural environment. The naming of the Australian-Samoan postcode mirrors both aspects of *faa*Samoa and the openness to a new social-political location. It is more often than not, a question of their location in a new and foreign place; where their postcode is regulated to the margins of a multi-cultural and a dominant social-political context²⁹.

²⁸ The postcode 3175 represents the Greater Dandenong region, in Melbourne, Australia. Cited from <http://www.postcodes-australia.com/postcodes/3175>, Malua, Apia, Samoa (accessed: 20th of July 2013). It includes suburbs that has a strong representation of Samoans in the State of Victoria.

²⁹ However, in revering this liminal postcode, of living in between space one can adjust and produce a new way of life, in some aspects revealing an identity to this particular location. Sang Hyun Lee in a familiar position mentions how the alternatives of living in this liminal space, creates an avenue that 'challenge and transform the existing society by prophetic and subversive knowledge and criticism, envisioning and enacting new ideals and models' (S.H.Lee, 2010, pgs. 7-11). The crux therefore is to find means to voice the reality of living in the gap, of experiencing the locations on the margins. Jung Young Lee also speaks in similar tone; however his view is more magnified through the lens of Gods participation or divine presence in the life of the migrant. Lee uses the term 'in-beyond' as to suggest that the marginalised experience, this liminal reality finds location in balance, of both the migrants' origins and their host context. Lee refers to the centre as being God, whilst both worlds of the migrant are presented as 'in' and 'beyond' (origin and host). God therefore is not to be replaced, but is the centre, which helps guide, nurture and balance this fusion (J.Y.Lee, 1995, pgs. 60, 62). In other words, living in this liminal location attributes both aspects of the migrants' journey, from their origins to the host context. Fumitaka Matsuoka also speaks of this divine presence amongst the migrants; however she points to a more Christological understanding. The soteriological quest for Matsuoka encourages the migrant living in this liminal reality to be in a state of 'holy insecurity'. The term as defined by Matsuoka means the enthusiasm of the migrants to be active in appealing their marginalised location. This insecurity requires them to speak out, even if this leads to being unappreciated, rebellious or putting themselves in danger of losing their autobiographical alignments amongst a multi-cultural society. It is for a holy purpose because they are doing it for Christ sake. However, similar to Lee's 'in-beyond' concept, Matsuoka encourages the migrants not to totally neglect their cultural origins, when negotiating to the changes of their

3.3 Defining a Postcode for the Samoan Context

Samoa has no official postcode as compared to the Australian and New Zealand context; although there are postal addresses for mailing purposes, a postcode for districts and suburbs in Samoa do not exist. However, in an attempt to define the concept of postcode in the Samoan context, aspects of its meaning as defined in the Australian context would be drawn for comparison. The meaning of location of space, place and home would therefore reveal such a comparison in the Samoan context. This would be in conjunction with the meaning of the Samoan term *aiga* or family. Metaphorically, Tofaeono states that *aiga* has ‘biospheric overtones’, he defines this by the deconstruction of the word *aiga*. He states that;

...when the word is pronounced with an emphasis on the first syllable *a’i* and the vowel *â* at the end *a’igâ*, the term recalls geographical meanings such as being settled, inhabited, or being at home in a definite space and place. (Tofaeono, 2000, pg. 31)

Tofaeono further contends that this meaning of *aiga* also presents a ‘community of living beings’. Their home is a location, a place of identification within the modes of ‘relations, communication’ and interaction within their society. He further explains that *aiga* and *fanua* (land) makes up their *nu’u* or village³⁰.

In addition, if we are to consider the social issues mentioned in defining ones postcode; we can say that one’s *aiga* is not particularly the same, as compared to another’s *aiga*. In turn, the locations of an *aiga* also represent their village, social and economic issues between villages and districts are also not the same³¹.

superseding culture of their host context (Matsuoka, 1995). In fetching water from the same well; the need for Australian-Samoans to speak out and be heard is utterly important in revealing Jesus Christs presence amongst their liminal location. Like Sung Hung Lee, Young Lee and Matsuoka, Australian-Samoans also needs to define their postcode as ‘in-beyond’, and the willingness of this postcode to be ‘holy insecurity’.

³⁰ A group of villages represents a district, and the ‘confederation’ of these districts make up the *atunu’u* or country (Tofaeono, 2000, pg. 31). The concept of postcode therefore can be defined from these aspects of *aiga*; for it is place of location, where a group of people or an individual can be identified from their *aiga*.

³¹ For example, those villages located in the Apia town area face issues of high levels of crime, such as theft and assault due to the vibrant and active social life of night clubs and bars in the city area. There is also the problem of regular flooding during the rainy season. Those districts located in the agriculture areas face high levels of unemployment and high costs of transportation in reaching the city with their agricultural products for sale.

The issues of one's location can be abbreviated in a social perspective, where the postcode of an *aiga* in particular their village is challenged with the expectation and demands of their government or even within their own social domain and relationships between village districts.

3.4 Shaping a Postcode Christology

If the postcode concept represents 'location of where we reside, our place, space, identity and home' then in relation to Jesus Christ life ministry we compose an interesting postcode. The Synoptic Gospels record Jesus earthly birth in Bethlehem the city of the Old Testament King David, "In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem," Mathew 2:1 (also Luke 2:4-6). Yet despite this location of his birth, this is not where Jesus was known to come from, his postcode is different. The Synoptic Gospels tells us Jesus resided and grew up in Nazareth, "When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read..." Luke 4:16 (also Matthew 2:23; Mark 1:9, 26).

Nazareth is not at all mentioned in the Old Testament; but its first biblical reference is cited by the Gospels and the book of Acts. In the contemporary time of Jesus, Nazareth was a small village in Galilee, under Roman rule. The Gospel of Luke portrays Nazareth as being part of a 'larger gentile world' (Devries, 2009, pgs. 240-241). Nathanael question to Phillip stated in the Gospel of John, '...can anything good come out of Nazareth?' (John 1:46), seem to reflect its unpopularity and sense of negativity in Jesus' time. Mark Chancey speaks politically about the history of Galilee being a region of political unrest. He asserts that it 'shifted hands from power to power'; therefore in the times of Jesus it was a basis for 'external' and 'un-indigenous' aspects of settlement (Chancey, 2002, pg. 28). In considering that Nazareth was part of the Galilean region and being dominated by political conquests, this small village with a population of 400 to 500 people, with a multi-cultural background, it seemed unimportant in early Jewish

writings (Devries, 2009, pg. 240). It is however a postcode which Jesus resided and grew up in. Despite the postcodes of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem and his early upbringings in Nazareth, yet, neither of these two postcodes defines where Jesus conducted his ministry.

The preferred postcode which Jesus located much of his ministry and where he is identified in the Gospels; can be said to be a postcode where the marginalised, disenfranchised, alienated and excluded from the rest of society. Jesus ministry appeals to those being pushed to the margins, because of their social, political and religious status. The Gospel of Mathew details large crowds of people following Jesus, as a consequence of this dislocation within their societies. The common indicator is that they are a people living in the margins.

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people (verse 23). So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought to him all the sick, those who were afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics, and he cured them (verse 24) (Mathew 4:23-24).

Diseases and sickness can also be identified as having aspects of 'non-physical cause'. It is also attributed to social and economic structures. According to Warren Carter, 'in harsh contexts of social tensions, economic exploitation, and political control, sickness can be psychosomatic' (Carter, 2004, pg. 124). Jesus therefore attended not only the physical concern of the people, but also to an extent their mental and spiritual side. Diseases can be seen as impurity, this symbolises a person's partial inclusiveness in society; in other words, people with diseases are regarded as a threat to the rest of society. Metaphorically, impurity or diseases promotes the fear of polluting social structures, both religiously and politically (Pilch, 2009, pg. 138). This can be argued as the designation given to the people living on the margins of society

Moreover Jesus' location amongst the marginalised is profound; his 'fame' elevates his place and location amongst the postcodes of the margins. The plural term 'all' and the mentions of various diseases, in addition with the terms 'demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics' attest the popular location of Jesus amongst his marginalised followers. The designation of each word suggests 'personal, social, and economic

misery for each victim' (Carter, 2004, pg. 126). In verse 23, Jesus is narrated as preaching and teaching in the synagogues, a place common for Jewish religious and social activities. However, the word 'their' separates Jesus from them, indicating that he rallied with the outcasts and the marginalised community in Jewish society (Carter, 2004, pg. 23). The pressure of imperial Roman rule and also Jewish iniquity suggests that these crowds of people belonged to an involuntary marginality, because of their location within this context. Jesus popularity amongst these people, suggest that he resided within this postcode. Jesus was part of this group of marginality; where their inclusion to participate in 'normative social statues, roles, and offices' were limited, they also 'fail to share in both material and nonmaterial resources' existed (Duling, 1995, pg. 370).

Although, this postcode indicates various negative connotations, Jesus however does not only locate himself amongst the marginalised, but he attends and responses to their cries. Jesus heals and cures their inequalities, alienation and marginalised lives. Jesus becomes their voice in addressing their social, economic, political and religious issues. He becomes their home, place and space in bringing spiritual change and a positive stance from their marginalised postcode. His ministry surfaces and brings out their identities as being his followers, amidst their social, political and religious expectations. Jesus ministry commissions change, and shows compassion for the 'harassed and helpless', for the lost sheep without a leader (Mathew 9:36). He resides and identifies the need to be with those pushed to the margins of society. He commissions the need to proclaim the Gospel not just for a particular group, but many who are experiencing the challenges of being marginalised, "Let us go on to the neighbouring towns that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do." (Mark 1:38). The postcode of Jesus therefore assimilates the message of salvation within the marginalised, alienated, and subdued postcode, because of social, political and religious expectations. He resides in the liminal spaces of those in need to be heard.

For an Australian-Samoan postcode Christology, it is therapeutic to know that Jesus Christ is also located in our postcode area. Despite the negative connotations and connections to our postcode that is exactly where Jesus Christ resides, spiritually working amongst the diasporic migrants to bring healing, meaning and identity to those

living in a marginalised and liminal space. Jesus stands alongside and lives with us, to help bring about change, hope and liberation from our social, political and cultural realities. As Jesus was popular amongst his marginalised community, he is also a prominent figure in our postcode; as a consequence he hears our cries and finds healing for our diseases of disorientation, cross-cultural and location in our liminal gap. Jesus challenged not only his own cultural reference but also the political and social expectation of his postcode.

This venture brings the Australian-Samoans to find our home, space and place as a postcode, a location of the healed. Like Jesus living in a liminal space, he creates opportunity to reveal the inquiries and concerns of our postcode. We too are like the crowds of people eager to find Jesus, but to know that he resides, lives and stands with us, encourages us on our spiritual journey into the vast openness in the realities of life. In locating our Australian-Samoan postcode we find who Jesus is and how he can help us in shaping our Christian identity.

In a multicultural area and country, locating Jesus Christ in our postcode, not only reshapes who we are through Jesus' soteriological message, but it must also have a horizontal response in transforming the type of community we live in. As Jesus' parable of the 'good Samaritan' (Luke 10:25-37) teaches us to care for and address the needs of the less fortunate in our community, despite their ethnicity or religion.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the attempt to construct a Postcode Christology from an Australian-Samoan perspective highlights the importance of identity and location. As an Australian-Samoan migrant, location also mirrors the identity dilemma, between their *faa*Samoa and the social, economic and political expectation of their Australian context. The importance of location in this liminal space, home and place therefore reveals the issues encountered through this diasporic journey. The need therefore to address these issues of identity and location is to consider describing the Australian-Samoan experience.

The theological conversations in this sense is describing this diasporic journey, as an Australian-Samoan tale is told it leads one to identify their location, and in turn help them shape their Christian identity. In this quest of identification, the soteriology questions on who Jesus is and how he can help us, consolidates the Australian-Samoan experience into this Christological perspective. The Australian-Samoan postcode therefore negotiates their location, in revealing their answers to these foundational questions in Christology.

The articulation of this Postcode Christology is constructed on the parameters of finding the Australian-Samoan location. This understanding reveals that amidst the multi-culturalism of the Australian society, coupled with its economic and political structures, it therefore surfaces that the majority of Australian-Samoans live in a postcode that are on the fringes of society. This marginal location adds more complications to their struggles of identifying themselves, as individuals and as a community living in the hitches of this diasporic migrant life.

The conversation about Jesus' identity and his spiritual and earthly ministry therefore assimilates his location, as also being in a similar place, space and home to the Australian-Samoans. In contention, Biblical reference as noted by this research, suggests that Jesus resided with a marginalised, alienated, disenfranchised and disorientated community. Jesus is also amongst those who are pushed to the margins because of their social, economic and political structures. Jesus therefore, as revealed by the Australian-Samoan postcode, resides in a postcode which forces them to seek for his healing, so

that they could be in contempt with being identified as his followers, and as a community of equals in the multi-complicated life on the margins.

The quest in finding this Postcode Christology is important for the Australian-Samoans, in order to locate their space, place and home with Jesus. The Australian-Samoan postcode therefore locates Jesus in their homes, their neighbourhood and their society. Jesus in turn helps them through their diasporic struggles, by hearing their tales of living in liminal spaces, of being lost in translation and of being dislocated from the rest of society. Like Ete, Tupou-Thomas and Carroll, the need to find our Christian identity is ultimately a quest in finding who Jesus is and how he can help us through our spiritual journey. A Postcode Christology aims to provide such initiatives for conversations about the realities of life in diaspora.

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