**THE CROWD, THE IMAGE OF GOD AND THE CRUCIFIED CHRIST:**

**A Theology of the Crowd in view of the Violence amongst Schools in Samoa**.

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# ABSTRACT

This thesis is an attempt to address the issue of violence amongst schools in Samoa. This problem is getting bigger and uglier as time goes on. Samoa is well known throughout the world for being a very religious country, and yet the kind of life the young people live is quite the opposite of a Christian way of living. This is where the Church needs to stand up to proclaim the message of love and peace, as central values in the image of God in which humans have been created by God in the beginning of time.

A theology of the crowd is developed as a meaningful way of understanding the nature of the Triune God in the Persons of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This is taken up in this work to highlight the meaning of the image of God and the crowd in God Himself as something that must be reflected in the nature of the human crowd. Jesus Christ as the eternal God incarnated and crucified for the salvation of all was always part of the crowd in its many faces.

It is only by being able to see and understand the deeper meaning of the image of God in the lives of the young people, .that they would look at other young people as brothers and sisters in God. It is with hope that the nature of the crowd of the Triune God be actually experienced and enjoyed by the human crowds as they come together to play and to celebrate instead of fighting and destroying friendship and love.

# DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this thesis, which is 18,866 words in length, excluding the bibliography, has been written by me, that it is the result of work carried out by me, and that it has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, in any previous written work for an academic award at this or any other academic institution.

I also declare that this thesis has not used any material, heard or read, without academically appropriate acknowledgment of the source.

Signed: _____

Date: 27/10/16.

This thesis is dedicated

with love

to

my wife

Kanona Leota

and

my children

Makena, Rumona, Tautava, and Periti

and

in loving memory of

my late father

Tuivaiti Tuiloma Tautava Leota

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# INTRODUCTION:

Violence amongst schools is becoming a major problem in Samoa today. The government is doing very little in solving the problem by leaving the schools involved to deal with the problem themselves. The Church is doing its part through the usual activities in the Sunday Schools, Pastor's Schools and Youths but all seems ineffective. There is a real need for the Church to address this issue emphatically or Samoa will be heading towards a future controlled by violent crowds consisting of violent people who are brought up by violent parents who live in violent communities. This cycle is real and it is very dangerous in the way it takes control of the lives of many young people today.

A view of the psycho-analytical approach is necessary in this effort to highlight the individual's attitude towards others when in a crowd. The individual who is stuck in a violent crowd loses control of himself/herself psychologically and very often ended up following others unaware of the consequences involved. However, Charles K. Bellinger supports the theory of humanity having a feeling of existential lack which guides them to seek for a model that seems to possess a greater fullness of being.[1] In account of that, as in intense situations, the individual who lacks, look to other persons to notify him/her of what he/she wants in order to obtain that being.

The two texts from Matthew (21:8-11 and 27: 20-26), highlight the different reactional behaviours from the crowd as Jesus entered Jerusalem, and as he stood before Pilate in trial. The difference in the reactions of the two crowds shows the fact that the individual's faith in God was lost in the crowd as he or she was taken over by

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[1] Charles K. Bellinger, "The Crowd is Untruth," in *Comparison of Kierkegaard and Girard* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press International, 1997), 104-105.

the power of doubt and fear, uncertainty and hopelessness. Violence became the only reaction to all that was happening.

This thesis seeks to develop a theology of the crowd as Jesus takes the sin of the world onto the cross, representing the crowd before God, to bring about the new creation of God, the true image of God, in true love and peace. The crowd as a gathering of people with diverse opinions and aims in life is a challenge for the Christian message of God's rule in love and peace in the lives of those who believe in Him. The love and peace found within the crowd of the Triune God who revealed Himself in the Crucified Christ, for the sake of the world.

**Thesis Statement:**

The individual is therefore lost in a violent crowd. The turning away of the human soul from God, is the root of violence in the life of an individual. All the upbringing of a Samoan child within the family, the nurturing within the Church, the cultural conditioning, and the well disciplined life within the school, is automatically lost in a crowd that is moved by anger and hatred actuating in violence. A theology of the crowd sees the community of the Triune God as a crowd, the nature of which is love and peace. This theology of the crowd would help in understanding the deeper meaning of being created in the image of God in His likeness and as seen in the sufferings of the crucified Christ. Violence therefore is seen as contradicting God's purpose in creating human beings in His own image.

**Methodology:**

The methodology employed in this endeavour is that of Contextualization. The meaning of crowd(s) and being created in the image of God will be looked at

contextually in view of the problem of violence amongst schools in Samoa. The problem is real and certainly affecting the lives of the young people in whom the future of the country is entrusted. Jesus' encounter with the crowds in Matthew's Gospel will also be discussed to see how God in Christ became part of the crowd and therefore died for the salvation of the crowd. Interviews will be conducted with the principals and students from Avele College and St. Joseph's College, the two schools that are always involved in fighting. Views of Charles K. Bellinger in his article, "The Crowd is Untruth," would help in identifying the factors involved that lead people within a crowd to follow others' footsteps. Other works, biblical and theological, would also be considered as resources in developing a theology of the crowd in the context of Samoa.

**Structure:**

This work is in three chapters. The first chapter highlights the problem of violence amongst schools in Samoa and the stories from some schools involved. There is also a way of understanding the life of a Samoan child and the ideal view of how one should grow up in the family, the village community and the Church.

Chapter two sees the life and ministry of Jesus Christ as he comes face to face with the two crowds mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew. The point is to understand how Christ relates himself to these two crowds, and how He goes on to be crucified for the sake of all or both crowds.

And finally in chapter three, a theology of the Crowd is developed from the theological understanding of the Triune God – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. A deeper understanding of the meaning of the image of God as relationships – with

God and with others, will enable the young people of Samoa understand themselves much better and in a life affirming manner.

**Chapter One.**

**A SAMOAN CHILD AND THE CROWD**

## 1.1  An ideal view of a Samoan child

The first experience of any Samoan child is a family life shaped by religion and culture (*faa-Samoa*).  The parents are regarded as the head of the family, and are responsible for every happening within the family institution.  The family becomes the first available environment to nurture the foundational life of the child through the teaching of religious and cultural values.  It provides a strong foundation which must be instilled in the minds of all children within a community.

The family sets the path for the child to follow, and establishes a strong foundation for the child to learn how to live up to the good name of the parents and family.  The focus of family life is for the children to have good manners, as highlighted by *faaaloalo* (respect) towards other people, and living in Christian values.

The Sunday school and the Pastor's school are central in a child's upbringing in a family where going to church is a must.  Regardless of not understanding the church's protocol, everyone participates as he/she is a member of the church, the Body of Christ.  Teachings about the love of God begin within the family.  It starts from simple questions like: Who created you?  Who is your Saviour?  and so on.  This provides guidance in developing the whole being of a child as he/she learns to know and understand his/her relationship with God.  God's love towards human beings and the human response to that love of God through obedience and good works, is the aim and purpose of Christian living.

However, when the child goes to school, the focus is shifted away from the family setting to the environment of the school.  The child becomes part of a different

setting comprised of different people with different attitudes and behaviours and sometimes with different cultures and religious beliefs.  He/She now belongs to the school.  The transition from the family to the school setting is a healthy one, in the sense that both institutions have similar roles in developing children to be good and well educated.  The school children, therefore, cannot be regarded as a violent crowd within the school buildings and classrooms, where education and discipline dominate the programmes taking place.  However, the impact of other students upon a child's life is significant in how he/she behaves in relation to other students and those outside the school.  It is when students gather together in public places in town or at the play grounds, that the element of being part of a violent crowd starts to reveal itself.

Now, what the child has learnt from the family, the church and the school is somehow forgotten completely in the crowd.  There is no more parental guidance or pastoral caring and no more discipline from the teachers; they are on their own. Every student is now the boss of himself/herself.  Usually, the older or stronger students have a greater influence on the rest, as the crowd moves as a pack with a purpose of harming those from another school or those who are not part of their crowd.  Automatically, a child who is well disciplined and well educated has lost his/her true being in the crowd as he/she imitates or copies other students' behaviour in the crowd.

## 1.2  The Problem of Violence amongst Schools in Samoa.

Violence amongst schools is  real and it is becoming a major problem that needs an immediate solution.  Hence, the continuation of this problem has challenged this author to reflect theologically on this issue.  The question though is whether an individual child is strong enough to hold on to his principles within the collective

voice of a crowd.   Naturally, the crowd easily manoeuvres  the individual into confusion and therefore violence.

The principle of Avele College, Reupena Matafeo, shared his view as a principal on the issue of violence amongst schools.[2]  He said, "The principal can only control things that are right in front of him.   When students leave the school compound, then they make their own decisions."  Matafeo is  frustrated because of the students' behaviour that affects the games and becomes the cause of all the problems which destroy the friendship amongst schools in the country.   The principal also talked about the pride in the school, where teachers, parents, and also students got their way of doing things when they are together without his permission.   Most students are easily distracted by others within a crowd, whereby their good manners are overwhelmed by anger and hatred because they do not know where or who to turn to.

Matafeo said, "Even a well educated child who is raised well by her/his parents can also be squeezed into the crowd by the older students using their  models and routine when they come together for a game or a fight."  He also mentioned how he put in a lot of effort to stop this problem but failed all the time. He had expelt a lot of students involved in these fights.   However, the principal knows that  all of them are good students, who are well raised, but being part of a violent crowd leads them to do bad things.

Fetuli Tuivaiti, a student in year eleven and also a member of the First Fifteen rugby team, talks about his experiences as a student at Avele College.  He comes from Matautu Falelatai where he attends Sunday school and lives in a good family where his parents have been nurturing him from his young age till now.  He shares his story

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[2]  Reupena Matafeo, An interview with author, 12th February, 2016.

of being part of a crowd which goes out together and fights together.[3] Fetuli highlights the control of the loud voices of the people in the crowd during the first time when he was a part of it. He simply followed orders with an understanding that the result of every fight would affect the good name of his parents and family, as well as the reputation of his school. Fetuli said, "When a fight breaks out involving your school, you can't be the one who runs away from it. In order to avoid bullying and abuse from the older students, you have to be there for others. You turn around for help, but nobody else to give you advise, then the only option was to follow others' footsteps."

Brother David Lavis, principal of St. Joseph's College, also shared his views on the problem of violence amongst schools. Lavis indicated that all the students involved in fights are well behaved students when in families and schools. They are well taught by their parents and pastors as well as teachers when they come to school. However, it's all about timing, when one gets caught in the wrong place at the wrong time. One has to be sure of how to fit in the group that he/she is about to join.[4] The principal clearly explained the kind of life these students enjoy inside the classrooms; it is like a family as they share jokes and laughter, and also when they play together. Therefore, when they go outside the school and into public areas and to the games, they go out as a family. They would also fight together as a family regardless of what would happen to them. Thus, the one who is highly educated and well raised by parents would be stuck together with the others as one and therefore could not escape from such a situation. There is no one to turn to, other than running together, and following the voice of the crowd.

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[3] Fetuli Tuivaiti, An interview with author, 12th February, 2016.
[4] Brother David Lavis, An interview with author, 12th February, 2016.

Brother Lavis believes that the principal suffers the blame because of this, without people knowing that the principal can only control what happens in the school yard.  Furthermore, the principal does not encourage the students to go out and fight. It is entirely the decision of the students themselves.  The principal also highlighted, the importance of knowing the decisions one makes, and knowing  the commitments one takes.

The Director of the Catholic Education in Samoa, Ae'au Chris Hazelman[5] believes that "the use of  cell phones and social media by a student to incite violence as a new dilemma, it is something that is beyond the schools' control."  He urges all the parents to keep watching their children and make sure they use the technology wisely. Father Christopher J. Ford, the principal of  Saint Don Bosco, said that " violence never brings happiness; violence brings more bad than good; violence brings more troubles than it solves; violence and fighting make people sad."  Moreover, Father Christopher  argues that evil flourishes when good people don't act, when good people don't do the right thing.[6]

The element in the interviews conducted that needs to be highlighted is decision making.  Whatever discipline and education a child received, it is the decisions he/she makes that counts.  Masoe agrees, that the students are highly educated and well behave children in their homes and classrooms, and nothing is better than that.  However, there is no guarantee of the survival and affections of such qualities when one is drawn into the violent crowd.

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[5]  Pai Mulitalo Ale, "Director sorry, highlights new element in Violence," *Samoa Observer,* 20th March, 2016, 5.
[6]  Vatapula Maiava, "Fighting schools reconcile," *Samoa Observer,* 23rd March, 2016, 10.

## 1.3 Crowd Psychology and Manipulation

The field of psychology looks into the behaviour and thinking processes of both the individual within a crowd and the crowd as a whole. Crowd behaviour is caused mainly by the loss of responsibility of the individual and the feeling of universality of behaviour, both of which increase with the size of the crowd. By saying that, it is believed that crowd behaviour is not a product of the crowd, but rather the crowd is a product of the coming together of like-minded individuals. However, psychological characteristics are concerned with the psychology of the crowd as a group and the psychology of those who allow their will and emotion to be informed by the crowd.

According to Charles K. Bellinger, " Human beings have a basic feeling of existential lack that leads them to look to a model who seems to possess a greater fullness of being." [7] The reason being that the human desire sometimes lacks himself/herself, so the other option available is to seek what another person seems to possess. Bellinger highlighted that, when human beings are looking to each other as models of being, the pathway of life is a treadmill or squirrel cage rather than an actual road. Bellinger focused on Girard's theory of *"Mimetic Desire"* about personality and culture, whereas human beings have a basic feeling of existential lack that leads them to look to a model, who seems to possess a greater fullness of being.

One sociologist, Herbert Blumer, believes that there are four types of crowds: casual, conventional, expressive, and acting. These schemes are vibrant in nature. That is, a crowd changes its level of expressive force over time, and therefore, can be classed in any one of the four types. In normal circumstances, crowd psychology have always focused on the negative aspects of crowds, but not all crowds are violent

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[7] Charles K. Bellinger, "The Crowd is Untruth," *Mimetic Desire* (1997), 104.

or negative in nature.[8] Crowd can reflect and challenge the principles and cultural environment, whereby this action creates a temporary community. Crowd can be active (mob) or passive (audiences). It can be further alienated into violent and apparently focused crowd. An expressive mob is any other large group of people gathering for an active purpose.

## 1.4 Crowd in the Samoan Cultural Context.

Life in the Samoan cultural context begins with an individual who builds his/her life in the family environment, the *aiga*. From that setting, the *aiga* manages and enhances the confidence of an individual through his/her own cultural identity (*faasinomaga*). It is clear that a crowd in the Samoan context refers to a gathering of people starting from within the family and into the village context for different purposes. Sometimes a crowd is formed by people coming together to celebrate a joyous occasion happening in the village. But sometimes a crowd is formed when a dispute occurs between families or even between villages. Thus, crowds are common in the context of the village community in Samoa. For whatever activity taking place, people always come together for different reasons.

Samoan culture is always about people gathering for a reason – a funeral, a wedding, a birthday, etc. In these gatherings, the crowds are always well controlled as they move about in relation to the occasion taking place. Culture seems to have a deep influence in the behaviour of the crowd. Central in the Samoan culture is the respect that holds the community together, starting from one's family. However, even in the context of the family, hatred and anger always resulted in violent crowds fighting amongst themselves. Within the family and also the village context, culture

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[8] Herbert Blumer, "Approach to Classifying Crowd,"(1995), 13.

through the *Matai* (chiefs and orators) comes to the rescue and usually resolved the problem automatically.  Every child in the family and the village settings experiences all the good as well as the bad things taking place within the different crowds existing in the village context.

### 1.5 Summary

After looking at an ideal view of a Samoan child, it becomes difficult to understand the existence of violence amongst schools in Samoa.  However, the impact of changes in all aspects of life has negative influences in the development of a child psychologically and sociologically.  There is also an important part played by culture in the way a child finds his or her life in the context of a crowd very challenging. In the next chapter, an attempt to find out how Jesus encountered the different crowds as told by Matthew would lead to a deeper understanding of Jesus' role as Lord and Saviour of the crowds.

**Chapter Two**

**JESUS AND THE CROWD IN MATTHEW'S GOSPEL**

The aim of this chapter is to see the different natures of the two crowds within Matthew's gospel and how Jesus maintained His calling as the One to suffer for the crowds. The purpose is to understand Jesus in the individuality, role and function of the two crowds in the gospel.[9]

The word crowd comes from the Greek word ὁχλος, a noun meaning: *a throng mass* usually translated *multitude.* It also can be a verb, ὁχλοποιεω meaning*, to make a crowd,* however, the addition of the word "*poieo*" (to make) is translated*, gather a crowd*. The word ὁχλος itself transpires more often in Matthew than in either Mark or Luke.[10]

Matthew classifies the crowds as "the Jews". In fact, the people of Israel can be divided into two camps*, "the leaders of the people"* and *"the crowds."*[11] The word λαος properly refers to Israel, whereas other instances of the same word simply refers to the people in general. The presence of the word λαός in Matthew 26:3 may refer to the people in general, therefore, refers to the *"people of Israel."*[12]Matthew makes use of the crowd to signify the people of Israel at other places as well,[13] mainly when the crowd has influence on Jesus and his ministry. Jesus recognised the crowd, whereas he did not seek them out, but they sought him.[14]Much of Jesus' relation to the crowds in Matthew's story revolves around the response of the crowds. It is questionable whether all the various references to "the crowds", the crowd or a large crowd should be treated as images of the one character group.[15]

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[9] J. R. C. Cousland, *The Crowd in the Gospel of Matthew: The Identity of the Crowds* (Leiden: Brill,200), 301.
[10] Ibid*,* 31.
[11] Ibid*,* 76.
[12] David R. Bauer, *The major characters of Matthew's story: Their Function and Significance* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2001), 76.
[13] Warren. Carter, *Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist* (Peabody: Hendrickson ,1996), 52.
[14] Paul S. Minear, "The Disciples and Crowds in the Gospel of Matthew" *Angligan Theological Review 3* (1974) 56.
[15] Ian Boxall, *Characters and Places in Matthew's Story : The crowds and minor characters* (London: SCM Press, 2007), 55.

The importance of Jesus' relation to the crowds in Matthew's Gospel is seeing Christ as part of both crowds and taking up His role as the Christ who died for all.

## 2.1   Jesus and the Crowd in Matthew 21:8-11.

The story of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem began with the pilgrim crowd going along with Jesus to Jerusalem praising him, even though the same crowd left him on his own when he was actually alone.[16]  In regards of both these cases Matthew speaks of a hostile reaction of the crowd, which was also the response of whole city of Jerusalem.

The crowd in Jerusalem did not understand who Jesus was when they greeted Him as the Son of David and as a prophet. God declared Jesus as His *"beloved son"*, and the disciples confessed that Jesus was the Son of God.  The crowd clearly misunderstood the character of Jesus.  The lack of understanding of the crowd in Jerusalem, highlighted the fact that the audience felt that the titles *"Son of David"* and the *"prophet"* were not enough.[17]  However, the reply of the crowd in Jerusalem was, again, more constructive than that of the religious leaders, and even though they continued not to appreciate Jesus' true identity on this occasion.

In 20:29 Jesus and his disciples were not going by themselves to Jerusalem. However*, "the large crowd"* of 20:29 had become a *"huge crowd"*, and 21:1-9 indicates that this pilgrim crowd moved towards the city from mount Olives, which overlooked it on the east.  Note that Jesus did not enter Jerusalem until vs.10. Therefore, the entrance of Jesus pursued the royal approval in which people of Jerusalem were not yet concerned.[18]  It was outside the city walls that the people who

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[16]  R T. France, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Michigan
          Cambridge, 2007), 770.
[17]  Carter Warren, "*The Crowd in Matthew's Gospel": Catholic Biblical Quarterly 55 (1993),  63.*
[18]  Cousland, *The Crowds in the Gospel of Matthew,* 168.

called Jesus as the Son of David are particularly explained as Jesus' travelling companions, *"the crowds,"* both those who were going ahead of him and those who were following him. The introduction of the people of the city in v.10 and their reaction is specifically contrasted in vss.10-11, with that of the excited, mainly Galilean crowd.[19] Many readers usually miss the distinction between the Galilean crowd and the Jerusalem crowd. They often fail to observe the central aspect of the story as they go on to talk about the uncertainty of the crowd which could shout *"Hosanna"* one day and *"Crucify Him"* a few days later.

The confusion of the text and of the historical situation shows that there is no evidence that confirms or proves that the people of the Jerusalem crowd of 27:15-26 were not the same people as the pilgrims who had escorted Jesus into the city. However, among the companions of Jesus' entry, there were also people of the same crowd that without mentioning their return because of the Passover, they might be staying there for a few days. [20]

During the Passover, people came from all over the Mediterranean world where Jews settled.[21] Jesus took the opportunity to become part of this mixed crowd as he entered Jerusalem. Meaning that the messiah of God has come to save His people not only in Jerusalem but the whole Mediterranean world, and beyond. It has been noted already that the large crowd which accompanied Jesus to the city were most likely mainly Galileans, and no doubt others were there to stay for a few days.

## 2.2 Jesus and the Crowd in Matthew 27: 20-26.

Within days, these same people who shouted Hosanna (which means 'save us now'), would become part of a rabble uproar, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" They

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[19] Tilborg Sjef. Van, *The Jewish Leaders in Matthew* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 78.
[20] Cousland, *The Crowds in the Gospel of Matthew,* 295.
[21] France, *The New International Commentary of the New Testament,* 771.

turned their backs on Jesus when He needed them the most.  This changeable crowd denounced the King of kings and Lord of lords - the One who had come to offer them salvation, which is  eternal life in Him forever.

The crowd that heard Jesus' teachings in the temple appeared to have been positively fearful (21:15, 46; 22:33, 46), so that in chapter 23 Jesus was capable to demand of the crowd not to be in favour of the Scribes and Pharisees.[22]  However, the crowd is now on the side of the Jewish leaders.  This is of course a diverse image of the crowd appearing, those who assembled around the governor's place early in the morning would more likely be the mixed crowd of people who entered with Jesus into Jerusalem and attending the Passover,[23] and so as the local people.  For whatever motive, a crowd assembled, and Pilate gave them the choice of freeing Jesus or not.[24]

There were always people who attempted to influence public judgment, and in this case were the chief priests and the elders, the Jewish leaders who brought the accusation against Jesus.  There was no uncertainty on which answer they wanted.  Therefore, Matthew gives no suggestion as to the techniques used to sway the crowd.  The crowd was persuaded by the chief priests and the elders.  They were left with the clear perspective that they were not only to request freedom for Barabbas but death for Jesus.  Pilate's words spelled it out using the technical term *innocent* which demonstrated that he would not bear the responsibility,  someone else must, and he passed it on to the crowd who shouted for Jesus to be crucified.

The response of the  crowd was a direct acceptance of responsibility rather than a wish.[25]  However, this innocent crowd was forced to make the decision, whereas somebody who had the power should have done it for them.   Not

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[22]  Carter, *The Crowd in Matthew's Gospel: Catholic Biblical Quarterly 55,* 58-67.
[23]  France, *The Gospel of Matthew,* 105.
[24]  Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew: The Pillar New Testament Commentary*  (Grand Rapids: Michigan, 1992), 773.
[25]  France, *The Gospel of Matthew,* 1056.

surprisingly, the reality of the crowd that says yes now, and tomorrow will say no is depicted in the story of Matthew. There is no doubt that there were some individuals in the crowd who concealed their love for Jesus and also their passion for what He had done for them, but they simply followed others' footsteps. Through the influence of the leaders on the crowd, this progression became an invitation for the crowd to shout even louder for Jesus to be crucified.[26]

Hearing the crowd's answer and especially the way it sounded, gave the individuals in the crowd the opportunity to decide which side he/she would support. One might think, may be only a few people at the front of the crowd shouted out first, then the whole crowd joined in. It's all about the psychological impact and manipulation of the crowd. Even those who might have heard his teachings and seen his miraculous deeds were drawn into the crowd as a spur of the moment experience and ended up shouting with the crowd to crucify Jesus.

## 2.3 Jesus as Part of the Crowd

Jesus is always understood by Matthew as a Jew. This is seen in the genealogy of Jesus presented by Matthew, revealing Him as a descendant of Abraham and therefore of David. Jesus, therefore, is part of the community and the people of Israel. The whole story of Jesus is told by Matthew in relation to the whole history of Israel as the people of God. At the same time, Matthew believes that the coming of God in Christ was the beginning of His kingly rule in the lives of those who believed in Him. Thus, the fact that Jesus was born of a woman and lived among the people of Nazareth and of Israel, portrayed Jesus as part of the crowds in Matthew's story. The

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26 David L. Turner, *Matthew: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* ( Grand Rapids : Baker Publishing Group, 2008), 654.

crowds formed by those who were following him from Galilee to Jerusalem, plus those who were gathering into Jerusalem for the Passover festival.[27]

As God Himself, Jesus was always part of the crowd of God in the crowd of His own people who went on to become the one who sacrificed His life on the cross for their freedom from sin and death.  This was the act of God to reconcile humanity to Himself and bringing peace, whereby it was not the absence of war but at least the full restoration of friendship.[28]  The crowd that was there with Jesus all the time revealed their purpose and aims through Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, and also their uncertainty when they shouted out to crucify Him.

Jesus was fully associated with the crowd in Matthew's story, but he also intervened on God's behalf to act as humanity's representative and substitute.  He alone was without sin, to the extent that he could win the full effects of God's sentence for others' sin on Himself.[29]  In account of Jesus as part of the crowd, the journey to the cross was possible for one righteous man to stand for the unity of the uncertain world.  Jesus modelled faithfulness in the midst of suffering in His refusal to retaliate and on account of the undeserved character of his suffering.[30]  Jesus was folly to the wise, a scandal to the devout and a disturber of the peace in the eyes of the mighty.  That is why he was crucified.  If anyone identifies with him, this world is "crucified" to him.[31]

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[27] Warren Carter, *Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist*  (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996),163-174.
[28] Mark Meynell, *Cross-examined: The life changing power of the death of Jesus*  (Nottingham: Inter-varsity Press, 2005),108.
[29] Ibid, 84.
[30] Mark D. Baker, Joel B. Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament and Contemporary Contexts 2nd edition*  (Downers Grove : Inter Varsity Press, 2011), 106.
[31] Jurgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God*  (Munich: Kaiser Verlag, 2001), 13.

## 2.4 Summary

The discussion of Matthew's account of the two crowds encountered by Jesus before and during his trial has highlighted the true nature of Jesus as part of the crowd of God in the context of the human crowds. Jesus as the representative of the crowd of God amongst the human crowds in Matthew's account reflects how important human beings are in God's dealings with sin and its consequences in human crowds. The following chapter would develop a theology of the crowd based on a deeper understanding of the Triune God. This would be a better way of understanding the seriousness of the problem of violence amongst human crowds.

**Chapter Three**

**A THEOLOGY OF THE CROWD**.

This theology of the crowd is an attempt to understand the theological questions of who God is and what God can do for Samoa and the problem of violence amongst its schools. It is clearly seen from the beginning of this work the central concern of this author, that a theology of the crowd would enable the Church to take up the problem of the young people, enabling them to know who they really are in relation to God and to others. What God had done in Jesus Christ is central in any theology of the crowd. The God who created the crowd is a crowd in Himself. He decided to live amongst His people, the crowd, in and through the life of Jesus Christ.

## 3.1 Created in the Image of the Triune God.

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness" (Genesis 1:26). As Trinity, God is a crowd in Himself. The image of God or His likeness is, therefore, understood in this work as a crowd. The Trinity is in essence the community of the God-Head, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the three persons of the One God. God's self-revelation, in attendance of God as the Father who relates to us in the course of the Son in the Spirit, and we to God the Father in the Spirit through and with the Son. There is one God, but this one God involves a threeness, a Trinity. This God is a Triune God.[32] Therefore, in respect of the Trinity's inner life, the three Persons themselves shape their crowd (unity), by asset of their relation to one another.[33] Furthermore, the doctrine of the Trinity can consequently be seen as an effort to illustrate faithfully God who, while residual

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[32] Thomas Marsh, *The Triune God: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Study* (Dublin: Ireland, 1994), 11.
[33] Jurgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God: The Doctrine Of God* (Munich: Kaiser Verlag, 1980), 177.

inspiring, also became incarnate in Christ and, more than that, now indwells all believers through the Holy Spirit.[34]

The unity of the crowd of the Trinity is, therefore, the image of God that must be reflected in the lives of the human crowd. The writer in Genesis 1:27 says, "So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." This clearly indicates another important meaning of the image of God in which humankind is created. It is a community, a crowd, a relationship between and among people – male and female.

The nature of the crowd of God is central in understanding the true nature of the human crowd as God has created it to be. The unity and oneness, the interrelatedness, the warmth in the intimate sharing of love and peace, and even being holy and pure. In other words, humans have been created for unity within and amongst themselves, and for holiness and purity, just as in the triune God. The question then is why the world and its affairs are not more noticeable by the divine character that they are?[35]

The human person is clearly portrayed as an important part of God's original creation. Moreover, the creation story asserts the human persons' unique identity and supreme form as being created in the image and likeness of God Himself.[36] When the Bible affirms that humankind is created by God, it entails a purpose. The human person has a meaningful origin and therefore a purpose in life, without which, it is impossible to discover any sense or meaning for his present existence. In order to accomplish God's purpose for them, human beings must seek to fulfil their being created in the image and likeness of God.[37] The will of God is always firm,

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[34] Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction Fifth Edition* (Chichester: Malden, 2011), 236.
[35] Dennis F. Kinlaw, *Let's Start with Jesus: The new way of Doing Theology* (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 2005), 107.
[36] James R. Beck, Bruce Demarest, *The Human Person in Theology and Psychology: A Biblical Anthropology for the twenty-first Century* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publication, 2005), 39-43.
[37] Linleigh J Roberts, *Let Us Make Man* (Carlisle: Pennsylvania, 1988) 13.

rewarding, and gratifying because that is the purpose humans were created for. Genesis 1:31 states that "God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good." The description "very good," denotes that the entire creation, including human persons, perfectly conforms to the divine will and is ideally suited to the purpose for which God created it. God's creation of humanity as male and female is an order of perfect innocence.[38]

One could imagine human beings without the supernatural existence. God, however, has generously chosen to make human beings the object of His own self-communication in Word and Spirit. Moreover, God created the human will in a state of freedom. In general sense, freedom of will involves the ability to make choices and to act reliably with one's nature. Free will involves the gift to do what one desires (1 Cor. 7:37). Because they are created with freedom to determine, humans are accountable to God for their assessments and actions. God said to Israel, "I have set before you life and death, blessings and curse. Now choose life" (Deut 30:19).[39]

However, the "very good" of the human beings, the model for life, now seems unachievable, and the wickedness which does not reflect the purpose of God at all becomes dominant. The place of God in human persons' lives had been occupied by selfishness and arrogance of the human persons themselves. In spite of the fact that God the Creator is the heart of creation, the creatures make themselves the core of their own individualistic attitude. If humans were created in the image of God and according to God's likeness, then how can God's image and likeness be restored? Is it by simply trying to live as Christ did? No! Christians ought to actively pursue

[38] Ibid 21..
[39] Ranald Macaulay, Jerram Barrs, *Being Human: The Nature of Spiritual Experience* (Illinois: Carlisle Paternoster Publishing, 1978), 13.

Christ's example even though the human trouble remains.   As Luther said, we are justified and at the same time sinners.[40]

God shaped this world in order for people to live and enjoy life in its fullness (Gen 1-2; Ps 8).[41]  The history of salvation, as a matter of fact, is a history  of God constantly struggling to free people from the forces of evil and death in order to enjoy eternal life in God.  It is in this light that the Christ as made known in and throughout Jesus' life and message, should be alleged and understood.


## 3.2   Love and Peace (Shalom) in the Crowd of God.

The love and peace of God are found only in God Himself.  They are the true nature of the crowd of the Triune God.  The *agape* love of God is the unconditional and the everlasting love that is seen in the history of Israel in the Old Testament testimony.  The kind of love that kept the covenantal relationship between God and Israel intact despite the failure of Israel on her part.  This is the love fully shown in the life and death of Jesus Christ on the Cross.  God in His love dealt with the fact of human guilt and sin in the death and resurrection of His Son.[42]

Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the love of God is being restored as the image and likeness of God in humankinds.  The love of God, therefore, must be reflected in the human crowds instead of hatred and violence. In fact, the love of God forgives and cares for the wellbeing of others in the crowd instead of condemnation and aggression.  It is through the love of God that humans find the deeper meaning of relationships.  The love that penetrates the man-made barriers of societal life enabling God's image in faithful humans to shine in the dark corners of

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[40] Macaulay and Barrs,  *Being Human: The Nature of Spiritual Experience,* 62.
[41] Yeow Choo Lak, *Theology and Politics: Doing Theology with Asian Resources Vol One* ( Alesea: published by Viva, 1993), 140.
[42] Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Grace: An Exposition of God's Marvellous Gift* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publication, 1995), 21.

society, renewing and strengthening relationships between humankinds and God and others.

Love and peace always co-exist.  Where love is peace prevails.  So is the true nature of the crowd of God, and therefore the image of God in humankinds.  Oneness and interrelatedness seem lacking in the human crowds as individualism and selfishness dominate the human nature. Individuals become imitators of others who end up desiring the similar things as their rivals in life; *"mimetic desire"* frequently leads to violence between individuals and groups.  This violence can destroy the whole society.  Sometimes, collective violence is directed at one particular victim, the scapegoat, usually an individual with an odd trait or weakness.[43]  Love and peace in reconciliation are seriously needed for the elimination of hatred and violence.

Peace in God is not the elimination of anyone who is different from others, but being able to live together as one in love and reconciliation.  The peace or *shalom* of God is understood by the Jews based in their understanding of the heavens.  They believe that the heavens consists of fire and water existing together in peace without destroying one another as should naturally happen.  That is why the Jews sometimes refer to God as Heaven as found in Matthew's Kingdom of Heaven instead of God.  So shalom is living together in true peace in love and respect or mutual recognition of one another.

The groundwork of the entire Christian life is the conviction that human life relies totally in the relationships with God and others in true love and peace of God.  Therefore, Christian life or the true image of God in humankind comes only from the God of peace and of love.  Such peace and love are missing or disappearing from the lives of young people in villages and schools.  Peace and love normally create

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[43] Veli-Matti Karkkainen, *Christ and Reconciliation : A Constructive Christian Theology for the Pluralistic World* (Grand Rapids: Cambridge, 2013), 316-317.

friendship among people. They are supposed to be reflected in the everyday life of every Christian, not only in the family settings, but also in wherever one goes. God frees the world to live in peace and love, despite its weaknesses.


## 3.3 The Crowd in the Crucified Christ.

In a Christian theology of the crowd, the crowd is seen in the crucified Christ in the sense that Jesus took upon himself the sins of the crowd and therefore died for the sake of the crowd. On the other hand, the crowd of God himself is crucified in Jesus Christ for God's purpose of salvation. It is clearly portrayed in the New Testament the meaning of God's incarnation and the purpose of the ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul in his letter to the Colossians highlights the true nature of Jesus Christ and speaks of reconciliation between God and sinners being achieved in and through Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:15-20). The crowd is transformed into a new being in the image of the crowd of God Himself. The crucified Christ is God Himself being crucified.

The image of God, therefore, is seen as the nature of the community or the crowd of the Triune God revealed in the life of the crucified Christ. This understanding of the image of God in the crucified Christ discovers the true, eternal being in the *logos*.[44] In the crucified Christ, the law is regarded as being fulfilled. Jesus was in fact sentenced to death by the Jews who believed that the work of the law brings salvation but not through this man whom the people said was the messiah.

The awareness that God is the Christ Himself points to the truth that the crucified Christ is the image of the invisible God. In account of that, this theology is itself crucified theology, and in so doing liberating theology.[45]

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[44] Jurgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God* (Munich: Kaiser Verlag, 2001), 65.
[45] Ibid, 67.

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The crowd in the crucified Christ portrays the fact that Jesus takes the sin of the crowd onto the cross where he turns out to be the one who represents the crowd. He was an infinite person, consisting of a divine and human nature: the union of the one gave value to the suffering of the other. Jesus then puts Himself into the place of the world, to free the world from the consequences of sin.[46] He was made sin that the world might be counted without sin, that as he represented the world and bore its penalty, the human crowd might likewise receive the advantages of God's righteousness in freeing its debts. Christian faith is therefore the acceptance of the crucified Christ and the crowd of God in Himself.

The crowd that followed Jesus consisted of those who were there to listen to His teachings and witnessed His miracles, and also those who were there to find ways to manipulate Him for their own advantages. Regardless of their purpose and aims of partaking as Jesus followers, they were still called the crowd. Interestingly, those who were with him on[47] His side, became obstacles of His mission. That picture indicates the same image of the crowd which is oppressed by others and turning them into enemies of Jesus.

God is revealed in the heart of the Christ on the cross. He had shown His identity through those who had lost their identity, and Jesus was recognized as the Son of Man amongst those who had been deprived of their humanity.[48] God Himself by the sacrifice in the self-offering of Christ had reconciled the sinful crowd to himself. God had to become part of the sinful crowd in order to save them. So Jesus Christ was born into the crowd, and became the ransom for the sinful crowd. Furthermore, the crucified Christ who was part of the crowd, was Himself the crowd

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[46] Stephen Charnock, *Christ Crucified: A Puritan's View of Atonement* (Geanies House: Christian Heritage imprint, 1996), 24.
[47] Thomas H. West, *Jesus and the Quest for Meaning* ( Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2001), 98.
[48] Moltmann, *The Crucified God,* 22-26,

in the Triune God which turned out to be the redeemer not only of the crowd but of the world as a whole.

## 3.4  Summary.

The purpose of the attempt to develop this theology of the crowd is to address the problem of violence amongst schools in Samoa. It is therefore important that such a theology would help in establishing a deeper understanding of who God is, and the meaning of the image of God in which human beings are created. The nature of the Triune God as love and peace must be reflected in the lives of human beings themselves.  All have been revealed and fulfilled in the crucified Christ, through whom the whole of creation has experienced the true meaning of God's love.

# CONCLUSION

Through this theology of the crowd, the Church can contribute in solving the problem of violence amongst schools in Samoa. In understanding the meaning of the crowd in the Trinity Himself, the image and likeness of God in humankind becomes clear. Perhaps, finding a deeper understanding of love and peace in the nature of God Himself would enrich the interrelatedness of those in the crowd, enabling them to know who they really are and what they were meant to be as images and likeness of God.

Knowing God who revealed Himself in the crucified Christ, is also knowing how the Church must live as the crucified Christ in the midst of the crowd, dying in the death of Christ while participating in the struggles of the young people to find their true identities as images of God. In knowing who they really are, one should live for the sake and wellbeing of another, even of one's enemies.

With the testimonies from the different Principals of the respected Colleges within Samoa, most of the students involved in these school fights, are good students. They come from good families that have raised them well, within the village and their respected Churches. Yet, most times, those students, even though have been brought up good and well, cannot survive in the Crowd. The actions and mentality of the Crowd, can overwhelm the individual to follow just as the Crowd moves.

God in the crucified Christ carries the sin of hatred and selfishness onto the cross and into the grave, to bring into being new life of forgiveness and reconciliation. In the crucified Christ, the crowd is cleansed and purified and therefore set apart for God. The meaning of the new life in God is one of total repentance and self-sacrifice in which the renewed person is a restored image of God reflecting the likeness of the crowd of the Triune God.

This work is only a step in the Church's journey in finding answers for the problem of violence amongst schools. It must be a communal effort in every community in the country, and in every congregation of every Church, to educate the young ones as well as all the people of Samoa, about how to live in relationships with God and with one another in love and in peace.

The problem of violence is always deeper than what the eye can see, for it is a cycle of life that needs to be changed from within. However, only the power of the crucified Christ, who has conquered all evil and death in His death and resurrection, would bring newness into the lives of those who have accepted Him into their hearts as their Lord and Savior.

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