

**Empowering the involvement of Young People in the EFKS Church
ministry with insights from EFKS Salani, Falealili as a Case Study**

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by

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my Dearest parents Fuimaono Pulemanufiu Faasopo Asafo and Lagafuaina Fuimaono Asafo, whom I dearly love, this is dedicated to you both for the continuous support throughout my entire life.

God bless.

ABSTRACT

The congregational worship should be a place where loss and brokenness of individuals and Christians of all ages should be healed and be given hope. What I have found in general when looking with youth is that they have many struggles and pressures on them and are looking for guidance. Not all youth are stubborn and rebellious. Often they just need someone they can look up to and point them in the right direction. One reason youth feel ignored is that local churches don't make the effort to give them something to do. Sure they will make mistakes, and yes, they sometimes go over the top. But those are perfect opportunities to gently guide and direct them so they can grow and learn. The main aim of this writing is to find ways to include young people in church ministry and worship. The intergenerational model that promotes inclusiveness among all generations in the church is identified by many scholars as the best model for such purpose. The intergenerational model is in line with the Samoan practical application of love and respect which upholds all as relational and communal beings. The discussion with the theological discussion will be cast in light of the case study in the Salani Falealili parish.

DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP OF THESIS/RESEARCH PAPER

I, Sega Asafo

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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“These are the things you must insist on and teach. Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.” (1 Timothy 4: 11-12)

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ABBREVIATION

CCCS	Congregational Christian Church Samoa
EFKS	Ekalesia Faalapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa
MWCD	Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development
IGM	Intergenerational Ministry
YFC	Youth For Christ
Rev	Reverend

GLOSSARY

Fa'aSamoa	Samoan way of living
Alofa	Love
Fa'aaloalo	Respect
A'oga Aso Sa	Sunday School
A'oga Faifeau	Pastor's School
Faifeau	Pastor, Reverend, Church minister
Autalavou	Youth group
Aigā	Family
Fonotele EFKS	CCCS Annual Assembly/Meeting

INTRODUCTION

It is widely agreed amongst Christians of different denominations that churches should be places where the pain and brokenness of peoples of all ages, including young people, should be healed - especially during worship. It is undeniable that worship is an essential part and common purpose of the Christian life. Martin Luther, according to James F. White, defines worship as a dialogue between the congregation and God through the reading of scriptures, praise and prayers (White 2000, 22).

However, in my own personal observations over the years at my parish, EFKS¹ Salani Falealili, there is a significant proportion of young people (usually referred to as the *autalavou*²) who do not consistently engage and participate in Sunday worship services and church ministries. Rather, they only appear to join in great numbers during the *autalavou* retreat, sports day, entertainment during White Sunday and Christmas, as well as *soo* or fellowship with *autalavou* from other parishes. In Samoa, youth groups in Christian churches, including EFKS, are also sometimes referred to as *malosi o le aulotu*, which literally translates to the ‘strength of the congregation’³.

¹ EFKS – Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa is the Samoa name for the CCCS – Congregational Christian Church of Samoa

² *Autalavou* is the next stage of church education following Aoga Aso Sa or Sunday School. It is a name usually given to the youth or young people of the church. These young people are usually between the age of 18 – 35 which is in line with Division for Youth in the Government definition according to its Senior Officer Tarita Sione (2019).

³ Author’s translation.

In Sunday services at our parish (Salani), these young people literally sit at the back of the church near the exit, if they even attend at all.⁴ When they do attend, their participation in Sunday worship services is mainly limited to singing in the church choir. Aside from this, these young people tend to sit at the back and leave immediately when the service is over, only choosing to chat and socialise with *autalavou* members and other young people who are also at the back. It seems that the young people are not fully involved in worship and other church ministry.

As a theological student⁵, this lack of engagement and participation by a significant proportion of young people in the village poses a real threat to the church ministry as a whole. This then raises the question, who is to blame for this problem? Is it the church, the pastor and his wife, youth or parents? This thesis aims to address these complex questions to see what can be done to include these young people into Sunday worship services and church ministry. I would like to take a holistic approach, rather than focusing only on young people. I would look at ways to include all generations of the church as a whole to participate and involve in worship and church ministry. Therefore, this thesis investigates the reasons for the lack of engagement and participation by a significant proportion of young people in the *autalavou*, Sunday worship and other church ministries.

Research Question and Significance

The overarching research question of this thesis is: How can we bring the generations of the church including young people together in

⁴ The majority of these young people are between 18 - 35 years old as mentioned above.

⁵ I am in my fourth year of the BD (Hons) Programme in Malua Theological College.

worship and ministry? The rationale behind this research question is to find strategies and ways for other generations in the church, to assist the young people serve and find their place in the church. Other generations especially the old ones must help find ways to transmit knowledge, and practices of faith across generations for the church to serve and worship God as one Body of Christ. Answering the abovementioned overarching research question will open up the discussion on the barriers and the reasons for the lack of engagement by young people in church ministry and worship. The aim of this paper is to make sure young people together with all generations of the church serve God together, which is in line with the ministry of the EFKS, that is “Betterment of life for all members of the church” (Komiti Faapitoa Iloiloina le Faavae EFKS 2006, 9).

Methodology

The methodology used in this research is qualitative approach. This project used materials from relevant scholar’s articles, journals, reports and books to support and provide evidence for this writing. Qualitative in depth information were from interviews that provide detailed quality arguments for this writing, especially in Chapter three (3) where the research outcome from key respondents are presented. All the questions were asked personally and directly to the respondent in their free time and their place of preference. Guiding questions (Appendix B & C) were formulated from the research question above to assist the interview and ensure relevancy of the discussion. However, interviews did not follow the order of the guiding questions as I did not want to interrupt the respondents from presenting his/her experience and knowledge of the issue at hand. Most respondents

when given the first question answered all questions due to their relevancy and ample knowledge of the issue surveyed.

Target Groups

This study focused on listening to the different voices within the congregation. It is through these voices of the local congregation where effective strategies and way forward are constructed in this study. The target groups were selected from key respondents of the issue from our parish in Salani Falealili, plus key stakeholders from key positions of the church (EFKS) and the Samoa Government agencies. The interviews in our parish were conducted with our Reverend and wife, (Rev. Kelekolio Sanele and Lupe Sanele, to get the pastoral perspective and leadership view of the reverend and his wife, who are the Spiritual leaders of both the Autalavou and our Parish. Six (6) Parents from our parish were also interviewed to get the parental view of the problem or issue, as they are the ones dealing with young people in homes and families. Ten (10) Youth members of our parish were interviewed as they are the key respondents of this study. I also interviewed Rev Faitoaga who is the Director of the Christian Education Department of the EFKS, who are responsible for youth development programs. Rev. Elder Tunumoso Iosia who is the current Chairman of the Fonotele⁶ and Elder of our District was interviewed to share his leadership perspective on the issue. Mr Tarita Sione a Senior Officer of the Division of Youth in the Ministry of Women Community and Social Development was interviewed to get the position of the Samoan Government ministry dealing with the young people of Samoa.

⁶ Fonotele is the EFKS General Assembly that is held annually. The Chairman of the Fonotele holds the highest position in the hierarchy of the EFKS.

Scope/Significance

As I was using the qualitative approach as the methodology, and interviews as the method, there was no sampling method utilised and no quantitative information. The number of respondents chosen as the target group was limited due to the time available for this research. The school break for Christmas from December to January was the main time used for my interviews, plus other available times. As this research is a pilot study, therefore this study is limited and applied to the time when the interviews and the analysis of literatures were conducted (2019), as changes do occur not only in our parish but also in the EFKS.

This study is the first congregational study done at my parish in Salani, Falealili, regarding the lack of engagement and participation of young people in worship services and other church ministries. As I have outlined above, young people are vital to the success of church's ministries, and they need to play an active role now as they are the future of the church. Identifying, understanding and addressing the reasons why a significant proportion of young people are not attending worship and other church ministries is important. Young people's needs are very significant in the church ministry, especially the nurturing of their spiritual development. However, it requires the participation of all generation not just the reverend, parents or only youth leaders.

Chapter Outlines

Chapter 1 presents a brief background information on the development of *Autalavou* or Youth in the EFKS, as well as their importance

and contribution to the church. The main part of this chapter is the literature review that presents models by scholars which uphold the inclusiveness of youth in church worship and ministry. The review promotes the Intergenerational Ministry approach / model (hereafter called IGM) as the inclusive model that promotes working together of generation, thus including young people. IGM is compared with other existing youth models to highlight the inclusiveness of the Intergenerational Ministry approach. The main aim of this chapter is to look at an inclusive approach IGM from the perspectives of scholars in pastoral theology, for the empowerment of youth involvement in church worship and ministry.

Chapter 2 looks at the *fa'aSamoa* or the Samoan way of living and identify elements that highlight an inclusive way of living. The chapter discusses how community and individuals were perceived in the Sāmoan indigenous society that was more communal, not individual. This Samoan communal living is guided by its traditional values of *fa'aaloalo* or respect and *alofa* or love, which binds the communal way of living for all. These Samoan communal values and way of living will be cast in light of the IGM approach to show how the IGM as a theoretical model go hand in hand with the practical communal living in the *fa'aSamoa*.

Chapter 3 focuses on the theological discussion and case study - research findings analysis from the Salani Falealili parish. The chapter presents the theological discussion of youth ministry and the importance of their roles in various affairs of the church specifically in worship. Included in this chapter are the biblical references to emphasize the need for different

generations to work together in a church as a whole. The research will present a qualitative analysis of the data based on interviews from selected participants or key respondents.

Chapter 4 is the Conclusion and Recommendation that highlight key outcomes and results of the research. The concluding chapter presents key findings and key strategies explored throughout the study, and how the study answered the research question. The chapter also presents the way forward and a contribution of this study to the young people of our parish, Salani Falealili, and the EFKS church.

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND LITERATURE REVIEW OF INCLUSIVE YOUTH MODELS

1.1 *Introduction*

This Chapter presents a brief background information on the development of *Autalavou* or Youth in the EFKS, as well as their importance and contribution to the church. The main part of this chapter is the literature review of models by scholars which uphold the inclusiveness of youth in church worship and ministry. For any discussion on inclusive youth ministry and faith formation, scholars such as Dudley Chancey and Ron Bruner suggest the concept of ‘Intergenerational Ministry’⁷ as the most popular model in the last thirty (30) years (Chancey 2017, p59). For the purposes of this chapter, a simple definition of Intergenerational Ministry from Holly Catterton Allen and Christine Lawton Ross is “...bringing the Whole Church Together in Ministry, Community and Worship (Allen and Ross 2012)”, thus including the youth.

The literature review starts with a brief look at the generation segregations/divisions and its risk for any church, thus raising the need for generation inclusiveness. The rest of the review outlines the Intergenerational Ministry approach / model (hereafter called IGM) as the inclusive model that promotes working together of generation including young people. IGM is compared with other existing youth models to highlight the inclusiveness of the Intergenerational Ministry approach. The main aim of this chapter is to present an inclusive approach IGM from the

⁷ More will be said on the Intergenerational ministry in the literature review.

perspectives of scholars in pastoral theology, for the empowerment of youth involvement in church worship and ministry.

1.2.1. Brief Background Information on Autalavou or Youth Development in EFKS (Samoa)

Autalavou in the EFKS is the next stage up from Sunday Schools. It is simply the group of young people or the youth. Not many writings contained the starting or initial stage of *Autalavou* in the EFKS⁸ in its infant stage as most records were destroyed by a fire long time ago according to Faitoaga Tolua⁹ (2019). Auatama Esera in his thesis refers to *Autalavou* as the Christian education for the young people completing Sunday Schools (1993). Reverend Elder Faigame Tagoilelagi is noted as one of the pioneer who became the first Director of Youth Programs for the EFKS, and was later replaced by Rev. Bruce J. Deverrel in 1964. However the *autalavou* works were initially started in 1958 in Utualii¹⁰ under the supervision of Misi Peretiso or Rev. J. Bradshaw, who was a lecturer and later became the principal of Malua Theological College (Esera 1993, 8).

The works and programs of the *Autalavou* were prepared by the Christian Education Department who were responsible for Sunday school and *Autalavou* curriculum. The Christian Education Department who dealt with youth in 1991 were transferred from the General Purposes Committee to the Elders Committee due to its importance, as they nurtured the spiritual life of young people who will become leaders of the future for the church. The early curriculum of the Christian Education Department (or *autalavou*)

⁸ It is good to note that EFKS was initially known as LMS or London Missionary Society until 1962 where the name of the church changes to EFKS or CCCS.

⁹ Rev Faitoaga Tolua was the Director of Youth for the EFKS at the time of this research.

¹⁰ Utualii is the neighboring village to the west of Malua Theological College.

focussed on just biblical studies and Samoan cultural practices. Later on in 1965, studies of other denominations and para-churches were added which focussed on the weaknesses of their doctrines to ensure youth would not join other denominations, but stay in the EFKS (Esera 1993, 6-9).

In the early stages of the *autalavou*, only young people who were well mannered and attend church regularly were allowed as members of the *autalavou*. The mentality grows that only good and righteous young people in the eyes of the church are the only ones worthy to take part or be members of the *Autalavou*. According to Esera, another perception of the *autalavou* erupted later on, they were seen as the ‘money making machine’ for the minister and church to fund church projects such as church buildings, reverend’s house and other needed financial obligations of the church (Esera 1993, 17-18). This is in line with the above mentioned reference to the *autalavou* as the strength of the church.

One of the main problem in the early times of the *autalavou* programs and curriculum, was that its biblical studies was more about knowing the bible as a book rather than understanding the bible as a message for the spiritual nurturing of the young people. Such problem is in line with what Chris Folmsbee argues in chapter two of his book, ‘*A New Kind of Youth Ministry*’, that the learning of information about God is meaningless if it cannot change students’ lives (Folmsbee 2007). The development of youth programs as mentioned above influenced the way youth are seen and used by the church and parishes today.

1.3 Importance of Youth Contribution in the EFKS Today

The brief history above shows the initial growth and some of the development of *autalavou* in the EFKS, which shows their importance in the life of the church. Nowadays, the youth are becoming very important in the ministry of the church. Meiolandre Tu'i Tagoilelagi Tima in her thesis '*Youth Participation: Does it have a Place in the Samoan Traditional Church*', she emphasized the importance of 'Youth Development' and participation in the EFKS; although she wrote her paper from the context of Samoan EFKS in New Zealand. She focused on youth development as developing the skills and attitudes the young people need to take part in society now and in the future. Youth development is about young people gaining the following:

- A sense of contributing something of value to society;
- A feeling of connectedness to others and to society;
- A belief that they have choices about their future; and
- A feeling of being positive and comfortable with their own identity (Tima 2013, 50).

As argued above, the youth must never cut off their contributions to the development of their community. The young people experiences and activities can help develop the social, ethical, emotional, physical, cognitive competencies and even the spiritual growth of their churches. Allowing the youth to voice their opinions is highly beneficial for them to involve and participate in whatever activities in the church. In the EFKS¹¹ during the

¹¹ EFKS stands for Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa (Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (CCCS)).

*Fono Tele*¹² there are five youth representatives (from different district) selected to attend the annual church conference since 2011. This means that the EFKS have started to put in place strategies to consider and appreciate the voices of youth.

Casting in light of my parish, EFKS Salani Falealili, there are little opportunities for youth to voice their opinions during meetings or *filifiliga* of the congregation¹³. Although all members of the congregation are allowed to take part in the meetings, the young people are usually not seen, and their voices are usually not heard. The old people are still in control and make decisions. Youth participation to listen to the way things are discussed as well as issues raised and discussed is important. Knowing what is going on in the church motivates people to participate and support. The moral is that young people's voice and ideas help the leaders and old people make decisions that include youth's point of view. It is not so that the youth make decisions, but for their interest and ideas to be heard and recognized by the decision makers.

Even though there are other branches of the EFKS that allow the involvement of some of the youth, such as *Aoga Aso Sa* (Sunday School), *Aufaipese* (Choir), *Faiaoga Aso Sa* (Sunday School Teachers), *Mafutaga Tina* (Women's Fellowship group). Yet, these gatherings are very much under the control and supervision of the *faiifeau* (pastor) and the *faletua* (Pastor's wife) that limits their creativity and ideas. There are existing youth programmes prepared by the *A'oa'oga Kerisiano* (Christian Education)

¹² *Fono Tele* means Annual General Meeting held in May every year.

¹³ *Filifiliga* of the *Ekalesia* mean the meetings of the congregation or parish.

Office for Bible Studies every Sunday. However, these youth programs do not help or facilitate the participation of young people in the wider church. Tima defined the meaning of ‘Youth participation’ as allowing young people to be involved in influencing, shaping, designing and contributing to policy and the development of services and programmes (Tima 2013). That requires all people and the church groups being able to make contribution to the development of young people in the church and the church as a whole.

1.4 Literature Review on Youth Inclusive Models

1.4.1 Why do we have Generational Segregations and Divisions in Churches?

We are familiar with the symbolic reference of the church to the Body of Christ. A theology that springs out of Paul’s many symbolic language as in Colossian 1:24 “Now I rejoice in my suffering for your sake.... In Christ’s affliction for the sake of His body, that is, the church”. The church is referred to as the body of Christ. It is why the church is the place where the people of God are nurtured and fed with God’s word, feel at home and have a sense of belonging. If this is so, the important question here is why is the body of Christ has contained an age-segregated approach and ministry in congregations. According to Allen and Ross’s research findings in “*Why Churches Tended to Separate the Generations*”, they advocate that,

“The easiest thing to do in the local church is to divide up the various ages and do separate ministry. It is not as messy [as cross-age ministry]. It takes more time, energy and effort to do intergenerational ministry.... Several diverse factors have contributed to the age segregation that characterizes many Christian faith communities in the twenty-first

century. When believers today gather for worship, service, ministry or simply for fellowship, they tend to gather in age- or stage-segregated silos (Allen and Ross 2013, p8).”

The above statement spells out one of the core reasons for age segregated worship and focused (on age groups) ministry. It is hard to carry out an IGM as it takes time and resources or in other words very costly according to the above research findings by Allen and Ross. It is much easier to have segregated age groups in order to provide specific task by specific expertise according to their age and assumed potential¹⁴. It is where the separation of duties and special fields and expertise sprung out. It highlights the important of putting people with the same age together as they have the same preferences, thinking, style, music and way of life.

This is also reflected in our modern context in *Samoa*, society is divided into three stages: firstly, children and youth are tasked with education (*aoga*), secondly, the adults are tasked with the workforce (*faigaluega*), and lastly, the elderly stay home and give advice (*tapuai*). This pattern also applies in the church setting¹⁵, its lifecycle, worship and ministry. The children join the Sunday school, the youth from the age of 18 upwards join the youth, while the old people are deacons and lay-preachers together with the elders of societies. This division is very important in the church operation, as different level of knowledge and different age group needs different approach and language. However, the above age segregation

¹⁴ Assumed potential here is referred to the pre-constructed division that our society separate age groups in and their expected capabilities. This will be emphasized more when it comes to the development theorist in this chapter.

¹⁵ From my own personal observations, this is the operational or organizational segregation of the generations in the EFKS churches, it follows the *FaaSamoa* or the Samoan way of Living, where the old people makes decision without the voice of the young ones. More will be said about the Samoan way of living in Chapter 2.

becomes the norm of how things are done. In decision making, it is usually the deacons, lay preachers, and old people who make decisions. Other age groups are not part of decision making, therefore their interest and thinking are not included in decisions. Yes the old make decisions, but at least they hear what the young people think when making decisions. There is a need to ensure that the relationship between different age groups is connected, not separated. More will be said about the EFKS and *fa'aSamoa* setting in Chapter Two.

As argued above, different age groups have different interests and way of living, as well as worshiping style. Such a conscious and notion of having age or generation segregations in worship is supported by Gilbert R. Rendle who observed that:

“...though different generations often enjoy being with one another, yet because of their differences there is a discomfort among them that makes the sharing worship, program planning, or decision making difficult across generations (Rendle 2008, p 56).”

According to Rendle, it seems that there are different preferences and attitudes between generations. Such tension creates a generation gap, which makes generational inclusivity hard to practise, resulting in generational segregation in church activities. Putting different generation together in worship and decision making to Rendle is unhealthy, and may cause more problem than benefits. However, McCrary in his book, *‘An Intergenerational Mission for God’s Church’* warns that:

“Churches with one dominant generation are at risk, no matter which generation claims that role. Without intergenerational relationships, churches

will become inward focused and ineffective. Intergenerational churches welcome all age groups as they participate in the life of the church (McCrary 2014, p1)”.

McCrary’s statement above outlines the danger of one generation dominating the planning, voice, implementation, monitoring and leadership in the congregation’s ministry and worship life. Generation segregations can result in other generations being regarded as inferior and one generation being dominant and superior. It is also ineffective in regards to decision making. It is ineffective to exclude those who perform tasks in the decision making. The young people as mentioned above are the strength of the church. If they (young people) are not involved in decision making; their voice and interest is not recognized. Let us look at the generation’s segregation history in the life of the church.

1.4.2 Moving from Inclusive to Segregated Generations

This section will now examine the history of generational segregation in the life of the church. Taking a look back at the history of church where generational relationship was inclusive and then returning to our current segregated church setting.¹⁶ Allen and Ross point out that the ‘house churches’ setting of the first century practiced cross-generational or an inclusive style (IGM) where all generations met together in homes. It is where some whole families and even extended families including household servants come together as believers to fellowship. They gathered together from the young to the old in a home setting to pray and sing together, share God’s love and grace with each other, break bread together and build each

¹⁶ This is more like the movie “Back to the future” that I use to watch, it was a 1985 American science fiction film directed by Robert Zemeckis starring Michael J Fox. The moral of the movie is traveling back in time then coming back again to our current time.

other's faith through encouragement and reassurance (Allen and Ross 2012, 35). There was no discrimination in age or generation segregation in the church gatherings and worship.

According to Allen and Ross, it is the context where children were able to learn faith instructions and guidance from not only their parents but also the adults and the whole house church community. Examples of the abovementioned house churches' practices are found in Acts 2:46-47, 4:32-35 and 16:31-34¹⁷. The generations within the realm of the church remained integrated throughout much of Christian history until fairly recently (Allen and Ross 2013, 14). The church was a tight family sort of community. The young learn from the old both in households' skills and also faith instructions.

Aside from house churches, there are Biblical references that indicate a need for respect in relationships between generations. For example, Jesus rebuked His disciples when they tried to stop the children from approaching Him or bothering Him while he was teaching them about faith. Jesus even use children as an example for the disciples who were adults as those (children) with humble hearts and people of the Kingdom of Heaven as in Matthew 19:13-14. Therefore, Jesus discouraged his disciples from thinking about Him as a person for the adults and disciples only (a particular generation), but He is also for children and for all generations.

Allan G. Harkness points to the history of age segregation and the decline of IGM practices back to the Protestant Reformation, especially in

¹⁷ More will be said on this in chapter 3 in the biblical and theological discussion.

its role in the “...development of modern public schooling (Allen and Ross 2012, 36)”. Preceding the Reformation, Harkness highlights that only the elite were schooled; the rest were involved in informal education such as learning through their fathers’ trade and learning informally through observations and experience including faith through home, church and community life. The Reformers’ focused on giving all the opportunity to be literate and to read Scriptures for themselves, which ultimately ushered in mandatory schooling for everyone of all classes. This resulted in the development of age-graded approach to education in congregations, thus imitating the secular schooling models. It then gave rise to age segregated bible reading classes that involved age separations in education (Allen and Ross 2012, 36-37). From the above sources it is clear that the schooling model introduced to the congregational setting took over the communal learning in the congregational setting. The communal education that was socially and informally done involved learning from observing community life and cross generational experiences was replaced by the age segregated system.

1.4.3 Other Factors Contributing to Age Segregation: Development theorist, Para-churches and the Rise of Individualism

Connected to the previous discussion in relation to IGM, it is also important to note in this discussion the importance of segregation in the history of the church. Such argument is voiced by Dudley Chancey and Ron Bruner who explain that the church leaders had a good intention in introducing age segregation, as an appropriate response to the challenges presented by different cultural trends and societal changes over time

(Chancey 2017, 59). The above said argument was discussed further by Holley Catterton Allen, in her work, *'Reshaping the Church into an Intergenerational Body'*, where she blames age segregation on the pressure from development theorist who strongly advocated for age segregation due to age and maturity. Furthermore, there was also the pressure from para-churches and specific generation ministries such as Youth for Christ commonly known as YFC, theories about life-span issues and the rise of individualism (Clark 2015, 95-96). Allen's argument was supported by Kara Powell, who pointed out that Post World War II triggered the rise of segregated ministry especially for youth (Allen and Ross 2012, 336-37). It gave rise to YFC, InterVarsity and Young Life ministries to name a few who answer the needs of the youth at the time.

Allen and Ross also blame individualism as the motive behind the rise of Para churches (Allen and Ross 2012, 40-45). Individualism creates generational tension as the world and globalization give rise to the different lifestyles. It results in different generation enjoying different music and ways of worship, which put pressure on church leaders to create specific ministries and different worship hours to cater the needs of the different age groups. It also gives rise to age segregation rather than communal worship and ministries, which is the essence of IGM.

Many scholars also point to development theorists such as Eric Erickson's psychological development theory, Jean Piaget's cognitive development theories and James Fowler stages of faith theory as being some of the key theories that argued for age segregations (Allen and Ross 2012,

39)¹⁸. These theorists, in different ways, all argue that there are different human stages of development that need to be recognized in education.

Due to the limited scope of this thesis, the focus will be restricted to Piaget's work and its effect on the worship and ministry life of the church. According to Allen and Ross, the cognitive works of Piaget effectively outline the way people think in different age stages, and thus organized the worship and Christian education of the church at the time accordingly,

...[Piaget] revolutionized preschool and elementary education in public schools in the 1960s and 1970s, and eventually Sunday schools as well. Christian educators began to implement teaching learning approaches that were more age appropriate for children, such as the use of the five senses, body movement, visual aids, active involvement— all excellent ideas. Eventually develop mentalist concerns were applied to the worship hour, especially since churches at this time were moving toward the understanding of the worship gathering as a primary teaching service for adults, according to Glassford, and some faith communities began to offer “children’s church” options in the late 1960s and early 1970 (2012, 39).

Various initiatives were advanced in line with more recent mindsets. For example, during worship time, children were released from the worship during the sermon, as it is irrelevant to their cognitive capabilities. Children used this time to sing songs and play with each other as this were the appropriate development activities for their age and learning. In the opinion of Allen and Ross, the church seems to employ an educational approach in its worship, and moving children away from the worship as an irrelevant

¹⁸ Due to the scope of this paper, I will not go into details of the Development models developed by the theorists. But for more information on the above theorist work on development models please refer to *Human Development: Family, Place and Culture* by Lise Bird Claiborne and Wendy Drewery, 2010.

nurturing place to where Piaget's model points to as the relevant nurturing place for them (Allen and Ross 2012, 40-41).

1.4.4 The concept of Intergenerational Ministry – Including Young people and Other Generations in the Church

As argued above, it is healthy to build a good relationship between young people and other generations in the church. Most pastoral theological scholars as mentioned above support the IGM model as an inclusive approach/formation for youth and the whole church..

The concept of IGM has been defined and applied in various ways by field experts and scholars. The discussion above outlines the development of the IGM, its history and various dimensions. Presented below, are some of the key definitions given by some well-recognised scholars in the field of youth ministry and Christian education. IGM is defined as:

Two or more different age groups of people in a religious community together learning/growing/living in faith through in-common-experiences, parallel-learning, contributive-occasions, and interactive-sharing (White 1988, 18).

A congregation focused on intergeneration ministry (IM) will enable the various generations to communicate in meaningful ways, to interact on a regular basis, and to minister and serve together regularly...Intergenerational ministry occurs when a congregation intentionally combines the generations together in mutual serving, sharing, or learning within the core activities of the church in order to live out being the body of Christ to each other and the greater community (Ross 2007, 26-27).

Intentional intergenerational strategies are those in which an integral part of the process of faith communities encourages interpersonal interactions across generational boundaries, and in which a

sense of mutuality and equality is encouraged between participants. (Harkness 2000, 52)

The common features and underlying assumptions of the above-mentioned definitions is that it encourages cross-generational interaction; and considers the congregation as a whole to be a family of God. As defined, the term intergenerational has been applied in congregational ministry in various ways. All generations interact and dialogue with each other. That means two or more different age groups of people in a religious community learning, growing, and living in faith through in-common experiences, parallel learning and interactive sharing (Oliveira 2013, 134). The elderly and experienced believers in the church have a vast wealth of knowledge to share with the youth.

Allen and Ross (2012) recommend for churches to consider every element or activity of worship as an opportunity for intergenerationality. The best way to implement IGM depends on the specific needs and activities of the congregation. Some examples of ways to create such opportunities include:

- recruiting both older and younger greeters to welcome and usher everyone;
- verbally welcome specific generational cohorts on a regular basis;
- encouraging father/son-led prayers or mother/daughter and other cross-generationally led prayers;
- looking for ways the older generation in particular can share stories of their faith journey;
- seeking recent versions of older hymns or do some rearrangements.
- incorporating children's messages into the worship services;
- providing church fellowship events that all ages will enjoy doing

together

- encouraging children and youth to participate in church music programs
- sponsoring intergenerational outreach or service activities.

In addition, congregational members must be taught about the importance of the generations living as the body of Christ through sermons, committee meetings, newsletter, one-on-one conversations with people, and through the church leadership modelling an intergeneration ministry mindset to people. This modelling could include church leaders interacting with different age groups on Sunday schools and worship, or at various church events, modelling positive intergenerational relationships, or intentionally creating intergenerational committees. When ministry leaders began to implement IGM into their respective ministries, such integration provided additional opportunities for teaching and learning, fostering an intergeneration environment in the church. (Ross 2007).

As members engage in these intergenerational activities, they understand more of the benefits of IGM, which in turn will make it more likely that IGM will become part of the church vision. As this process moves along, congregations may find themselves building new facilities to better facilitate IGM, such as the creation of preschool and adult day-care facilities or adding space to the fellowship hall so that all ages can gather at one time. Inevitable, these ideas and activities may be challenging for the adult's mind-set. However, one of the key reasons of these IGM approach are for the young people to be seen and heard. Therefore, the leaders and adults must prioritise the need to enable young people to be a full part of the church

life for the future of the church to overcome their own desires to maintain age-segregated traditions and activities (Ragira 2017, 51).

Similarly, Urie Bronfenbrenner who studied children development according to Ross argued that IGM helps bridge the “generation gap”. Bronfenbrenner believes that the IGM approach helps bring understanding and unity within a congregation. Parents need to be supported in raising children, and that children and young people need opportunities to serve the community (Ross 2007, 6). In addition, Ross believes that church leaders should teach members of their congregation about generational characteristics in order to help members understand what people of each generation need from the church. There is also the need to understand the unique gifts each generation brings to the church, and why the different generations may not always agree on the needs of the church. This is useful in encouraging mutual understanding between leaders and members of the congregation, and to see that other people may have different feelings and needs. Furthermore, the leaders of the congregation should feel that members are becoming more accepting of each other’s strengths and weaknesses, thus becoming more willing to alter some of their preferences in order to better meet the needs of the whole community and respect each other.

1.4.5 Other Generational models: Multigenerational and Transgenerational Ministry

‘Multigenerational ministry’ means that the church honours all generations and has programs for generations (Ross 2012, 18-20). In this ministry, each age group has its own curriculum to follow where the church

provides ministries for children, youth, young adults and older adults and few opportunities for cross-generational contact. One concern that could arise from this model is the lack of communication with other generation. Each generation is given a particular way to do their ministry depending on how the leaders assume their interests and potentials. The model separates generation rather than integrating them together (Rendle 2002, 33). As argued above, such a model results with one generation being dominant and other generations inferior. 'Transgenerational ministry' is no different from multigenerational ministry, as they also offers special programs for each age group but provide little or limited interactions among the different generations. Therefore, these systems may not reflect and include intentional and planned cross-age or cross-generational experiences in ministry (Ross 2012, 18-20).

1.5 So what is wrong / problem?

When we say that youth are the future, we fail to provide any reference as to when this will become a present reality. Young people are left wondering what their present purpose in the church is and may walk away believing that they will be able to suddenly step into Christian maturity when the future finally arrives. We all have our preferences with music, clothes, hobbies and activities and it is not unfair to say that it is often a struggle for the older generations to accept the preferences of youth. However, people and churches that have been able to put their generational differences aside and find common ground to work on have been able to see tremendous growth. The older people must acknowledge the cultural beliefs and values of younger people. This is vital because the youth have many

talents and new ideas to build up and develop the church, and could also be a motivating factor in attracting them to church

The youth are not realising that they have a special place within the church community. Every believer has a spiritual gift they have been given to use within the church. That also includes the youth. The church is where that spiritual gift is to be exercised and developed. If the adults do not encourage the young people to use the gifts they have been given then how are they to develop them? The Lord gave every individual a spiritual gift, not just the adults for service but everyone in the family of God.¹⁹

Consequently, if we, as adults and parents do not stand firm and fulfil our responsibilities to give advice to our youth, and ensure they are involved in church ministry and worship, then there is a problem with the church's mission (Senter 2001, x). One of the gaps is the misunderstanding by adults of the youth and their interests. However, forcing youth to follow the church without their say, can make the youth feel distressed, disconnected and less likely to become involved or participate in the church activities (Senter 2001, x).

Such a problem is explained by Malan Nel (Nel 2000) in his writing *'The Inclusive Congregational Approach to Youth Ministry'*, states that the problem is not our youth ministry, but the church. Churches, namely the leaders and adults have treated the young people like foster care, not as family members who are a part of the family. The reality is that young

¹⁹ More will be said on this in the theological discussion in Chapter Three.

people do not respond like babies because they have a will of their own and also because they want to be more independent (Oliveira 2013, 17).

1.6 Summary

In conclusion, I have discussed the many problems faced by the EFKS *autalavou* from its infant stage to now. Youth were seen as money making machine for the church financial needs. Their voices were not heard in congregation decision making and planning, thus making them confused of the church's implementation programs. The majority of the chapter highlights the IGM approach / model as the inclusive model that promotes working together of generations including young people. Early stages of the church as discussed was more inclusive across generation as the Body of Christ. However, generation segregations was the result of the influence of secular systems in the Reformation, the rise of individualism and other models/theories that favour the grouping of people with the same interest and age in ministry, meetings and worship. However the risk of such division is that the youth are usually left in the dark, feel out of place, and their talents and gifts not utilized for God's work. IGM promotes the generations working together in mutual serving, sharing, or learning within the core activities of the church in order to live out being the body of Christ. It is now important to look at the Samoan traditional way of living, to see how generations could work together and live harmoniously in the church environment.

CHAPTER 2

COMMUNAL AND RELATIONAL LIVING IN THE SAMOAN WAY OF LIFE (*FA'ASAMOA*) AND MINISTRY OF THE EFKS

2.1 *Introduction*

The previous chapter looked at the scholarly views on IGM as an inclusive approach that portrays faith formation as a community's responsibility. IGM is inclusive as it promotes all generations in a communal and relational manner in faith formation. This chapter looks at the *fa'aSamoa* or the Samoan way of living and identify elements that highlight an inclusive way of living. The chapter discusses how community and individuals were perceived in the Sāmoan indigenous society and way of living that was more communal and about working together.

It will also highlight the importance of the Samoan relational way of living and its traditional values of *fa'aaloalo* or respect and *alofa* or love that supports the Samoan unique way of living which promotes harmony. These Samoan communal values and way of living will be casted in light of the IGM approach to show how the IGM as a theoretical model go hand in hand with the practical communal living in the Samoan traditional life. The last part of this chapter discusses the inclusive element of the EFKS ministry in light of the IGM approach. The aim of this chapter is to see how all generations are inclusive in the *fa'aSamoa*, and the traditional values that promotes such a mutual relationship. Samoans live their communal lives in the *fa'aSamoa*, which have integrated with Christian values. Therefore, it is also important to look at the inclusive elements of the EFKS ministry.

2.2 *Living together (all generations) and honouring one another in the Fa'aSamoa*

A Samoan person is known as a *tagata*. The *tagata* is given to both an individual and community²⁰. The relationship between *tagata* (two or more individuals with same or different generations) as individuals and the community in the *fa'aSamoa* is known as the *so'otaga*²¹. As discussed in Chapter One, the IGM portrays the need for a connection and interaction between the generations. Therefore, in ways similar to the IGM approach, aspects of *fa'aSamoa* also honour these relationships or *so'otaga* between *tagata* in its communal social way of living. Samoans honour and complement the space between one person or *tagata* and the other, as all *tagata* are important in the Samoan way of living.

The *tagata-so'otaga* relationship according to Amaama Tofaeono's dissertation, '*Eco-Theology: Aiga – The Household of Life a Perspective from Living Myths and Traditions of Sāmoa*', is the overarching connections and relationships where Tofaeono notes:

‘The human being found his/her true identity, not in the essence of one's own being, but in association with other selves, including the natural environment and the Gods’ (Tofaeono 2000, 171).

Tofaeono's statement points to the importance of community over individualism, which is one of the reasons that gave rise to age segregated ministries, as discussed in Chapter One. A Samoan cannot live for one self

²⁰ *Tagata* is used for both an individual and people of the community. It points to singular and plural usage. It can also be used to refer to generation.

²¹ *Sootaga* means connection between people. It refers to genealogy, relationship and interconnectedness. Other Samoan writers refer to *sootaga* as *va*(space/gap), *faiā*(relationship).

as an individual, as a Samoan *tagata* belongs to a family, a member of a village and is a communal being.

In addition Tuiatua Tupua Tamasese Taisi Efi²² referred the term *va* in pointing to the *so'otaga* or 'relationship' between a Sāmoan person and their indigenous god *Tagaloa*²³, plus everything in the cosmos (Tuiatua Tupua Tamasese Efi 2009, 175). *Va* however is generally applied to a space or gap. G. B. Milner defines *va* as the “distance, space (between two places, things or people)” (Milner 1993, 307). Therefore, *so'otaga* or *va* refer to ‘the traditional relationships between a *tagata* or Samoan individual and community - the divine - and the environment (cosmos) that is not only relationship as identity, but comes with responsibilities for the well-being of all. In simple terms, *so'otaga* is relationship that binds one to take care of one another, community becomes the identity of the *tagata* and the *tagata* as the reflection of the community. As mentioned, the individual is part of the family and village; thus family and village are responsible for the individual. This is in line with the IGM as discussed in Chapter One, where the youth are part of the church and the church should be responsible for the youth. All generations of the church should honour each other's *so'otaga* or relationship.

As discussed, communal life and relational being is essence in the Samoan traditional way of living. It is in line with the IGM approach as it upholds all generations together in the congregation and faith formation. Efi

²² Tuiatua Tupua Tamasese Taisi Efi is a former Head of State and former Prime Minister of Samoa.

²³ Tagaloa is Sāmoa's indigenous god that Sāmoans believe created everything including the *tagata* or Sāmoan people. The Sāmoan creation story and more discussion on Tagaloa will be elaborated in Chapter 2.

examined the communal being of the *Sāmoan* as a ‘collective’ effort that involves understanding the space between one *tagata* and the other as well as families and the village as a community (Efi 2009, 109). Efi’s point is supported by Emile Durkheim’s idea according to Hamilton that the community is made up of individuals living for one another, but not individuals living for themselves and their interests (2001, 113).

However, it is common in the *fa’asamoa*,²⁴ for young people to have no voice in the *faiganuu* or even the *aiga potopoto* (extended family), but it does not exclude them. It is very important for a Samoan to know his/her *fa’asinomaga*²⁵. Le Tagaloa outlines the ‘Sāmoan worldview’ as how the Sāmoans see their context’s and their identity through the way they live and honour one another; which is the Samoan way of living. To Le Tagaloa, it answers questions like, “...Where do I come from? Why am I here? Who am I?” (Le Tagaloa 2003, 7). These questions give a picture of a Samoan person’s inheritance, thus highlighting the importance of the *So’otaga* of a Samoan *tagata* to his or her community. It shows the complementary life the *FaaSamoa* weaves for the Samoans to live as people who recognised and uphold one another in all aspects of living.

So’otaga shapes the way of living starting from within the most important and sacred component in society that is *āiga* or family. David Lui in his article looks at the *āiga* as the “...unit of society...not the individual”,

²⁴ *Faasamoa* simply means The Samoan way of life.

²⁵ *Fa’asinomaga* is a Samoan personal identity. It is who you are as a Sāmoan. It includes your parents, family, village, district, land, chief title, your parent’s families and their (parents) villages plus other elements that determine who a *tagata* is as a Sāmoan. It is the Sāmoan traditional identity that illustrates and shows who an individual is, where they belong and all her/his *sootaga*.

which further takes away individualistic from the Samoan way of living as argued from the start of this chapter (Lui 2003, 3). The basic form of *āiga* is the nuclear family that includes parents and children, with the father being a *matai* or chief. Societal life in *Sāmoa* as outlined above is communal and the most common form of family is the extended family known as the *āiga-potopoto*. As explained throughout, *so'otaga* points to the space between two or more people, and that space needs harmonizing through the consideration of Samoan traditional values.

2.3 Guiding Values to Inclusiveness in the Fa'aSamoa

2.3.1 Respecting one another or Fa'aaloalo

As introduced earlier in this chapter, in order to maintain and sustain the *so'otaga*, there are traditional principles and values that are in place to maintain the relationship intact. At the center of the Sāmoan culture and way of living is the *fa'aaloalo* or respect. The word *fa'aaloalo* is from the root word *alo'alo*, which are two words *alo* and *alo*. Faafetai Aiavā in discussing *fa'aaloalo* explains that “... *fa'aaloalo* can only take place when there is a face-to-face or *alo-to-alo* acknowledgement of the other (Aiava 2013, 11). According to Tofaeono, *alo* is the front of the face or someone facing another person. *Aloalo* therefore is basically the ‘front of the face and front of the other’s face’ (Tofaeono 2000, 295). The prefix *fa'a* simply means to action something or implement an action. Therefore, *fa'aaloalo* would mean to implement respect through honouring the face of the other *tagata*. The above definitions of the Samoan respect illustrates an integrate and inclusive way of living.

Practical *Fa'aaloalo* therefore involves two respective faces or *tagata* encountering one another with love. These two faces however are not two individual faces but is more communal in the *fa'aSamoa*. Efi believes that the face of the Sāmoan individual is not his/hers but is rooted to the community where the *tagata's* belongs. The face of a *tagata* represents the "...collective face of family, village and ancestors" (Efi 2009, 72). An individual is the responsibility of the community, as everyone is important. This is in line with the idea of the IGM in Chapter One where all generations must be upheld by the whole church. All generations including young people is the responsibility of the church. Upolu Vaai named the *so'otaga* behind the *tagata* as '*tuātagata*' that when translated means 'behind the person' (Vaai 2014, 105). Therefore, it is vital for the *tagata* to carry his face or identity with honour and dignity, and also respect the other face as it's also a communal face despite their differences in age.

By focusing on the social relationships between an individual and community, one is never separated from the other. Inclusiveness as argued above is core to the relational being of a Sāmoan. The face of the individual is the face of the *āiga*, paramount chief, village council as well as the whole village. That is why the face of the individual is very important, it is never held to be an independent or individual face, and thus there is no place for individualism in the *fa'aSamoa*. This is where the concept of *fa'aaloalo* and IGM intersects with each other.

So'otaga is upheld by *fa'aaloalo* as it points to a lot of responsibilities and the identity of the *āiga* and the community. Therefore,

each individual needs to uphold and exercise *fa'aaloalo* or respect in facing other faces as he/she represents the community. Negative behaviour by an individual gives a negative image and reputation of the *āiga potopoto* and the village. Positive attitudes, on the other hand, give the community a good name. It is never an individual reflection by itself. Casting in light of the IGM model, the old people are responsible for the young people and vice versa. Any exclusion and distress of the youth in the church also reflects the leadership and recognition by the church of its young people.

Fa'aaloalo recognized the needs of the other face as explained. Respect in the Samoan way of living prioritizes others. Others are seen as the subject of *fa'aaloalo*, and such practice continues to maintain healthy relationship where one supports and ensure the other is well looked after. It is why *fa'aaloalo* is seen as an outward practice, where the needs of the other is put first before the *tagata* looks at himself/herself. Therefore, with regards to the Samoan way of living, IGM approach is practically *fa'aaloalo* or honouring the face of the other generation with respect. One generation could not *fa'aaloalo* to their own selves according to the Samoan linguistic connotation of *fa'aaloalo*. This is in line with McCrary's argument as mentioned in Chapter One that it is very risky for one generation to dominate the congregation, as it will create inward focus. *Fa'aaloalo* however is an outward process where respect is given as an honour to the face of the other or the other generation, which is promoted by the IGM.

However, it is important to understand that *fa'aaloalo* is not a one way approach that serves people of status and abuse the lower class such as

young people. *Fa'aaloalo* is honouring who you are and where you belong, as raised by Le Tagaloa above as the Samoan worldview or *fa'asinomaga*. It is a way of harmonizing relationships and/or *so'otaga* whose history shapes who we are as Sāmoan and how we live communally and as relational beings (Vaai 2006, 161 – 179). *Fa'aaloalo* is a service that “...upholds the family unit, endorses its cultural values, acknowledge its spiritual faith, providing pathways for customs, beliefs, and identity to be supported, elevated and preserved” (Seiuli 2013, 52). *Fa'aaloalo* does not discriminate or put one in an inferior position, but rather embrace one another to be a productive member of the community. It is dealing with the face of the other with love and humility as suggested by the IGM approaches.

2.3.2 *Alofa or Love*

Alofa or love is another value that promotes *so'otaga*. *Alo* as discussed above is also the root word for *alofa*, *Alofa* is made up of two words, *alo* which means face as explained above and *fa* is number 4. Practically, *alofa* or love is commonly applied to wherever the *tagata* faces in the community, which symbolizes the four directions of north or *matū*, south or *toga*, east or *sasa'e* and west or *sisifo*. The common symbolic of number four is the structuring of the Sāmoan meeting house or *fale-fono*, big house or *fale-tele* and guest house or *fale-talimālo* (Crawley 2017). The houses are usually build in the front part of the family land to accept guest. These houses are structured in a circular and rectangular shape, but still there are four sides of the house when the Samoan meets and do traditional gatherings. The four sides represent the whole community.

Therefore, it can be viewed as an interrelated principle that is shared by all in the house through *fa'aaloalo* and honouring one another. *Alofa* is a holistic term that requires the consensus and the oneness of the whole *fale*. *Alofa* is a relational and communal principle that is for all of the community. It shows the flow of love or *alofa* from the front to the back and vice versa and from one side to the other; the flow of love is communal (Crawley 2017). Love is serving others and it requires loving people from different directions and generations. It is simply about being flexible and be able to relate, integrate and grow together with people from other generations that is promoted by the IGM approach.

2.4 EFKS Ministry

The CCCS Constitution clearly outline that the EFKS or CCCS still respects the Samoan culture and its practices, but needs minor alterations and improvements are needed to suit the teaching of the Bible and church's principles and doctrines (CCCS 2016). The EFKS or CCCS has its own mission and that mission is the foundation of its ministry. The ministry of the EFKS Church according to its Constitution follows that:

“All members of the Church are equally free to approach God, and everyone is called to continue this work of Christ in the World... There are two aspects of this important work of the Church in the world: (1) The Church represents God to humanity in its testimony and loving service to people, and all its words and actions should be a way to draw God's Holy Love to people. (2) The Church also represents the world before God through its prayers of confession, intercession and thanksgiving (CCCS 2016, 9).”

The Constitution of the CCCS also mentions that, ‘All classes of persons should be involved in the ministry of the Church’ (CCCS 2016, 10).

During this modern era of questioning and searching for ones faith, all generations need to bring back together the *so'otaga* and share the word of God. The constitution of the EFKS speaks of all people or in other words all generations. The Constitution aligns well with the language and communal elements of the IGM.

The constitution acts as the mandate for the EFKS or CCCS to ensure that God's love is reflected in the roles and mission of the church. It is akin to the relational love that God shares with the *tagata* and the church and vice versa. It is also the *alofa* that binds the *so'otaga* within the community. It is *alofa* that does not discriminate regardless of age, gender, ethnicity and race. It reflects the community representing the individual, and the individual carrying the image of the community before God that highlights the relational *tagata* and *so'otaga* in harmony.

The first part of the EFKS or CCCS's work is about "service to the people" and may its "words and actions" reflect God's love. Therefore, it is the role of EFKS or CCCS to ensure that service is provided to ensure everyone is able to attend, enter and worship God without barriers that include age or generation. These can give the youth a sense of belonging or identity as a *tagata* as as discussed above. That's why the IGM approach is very important. It benefits all generations and give all a sense of belonging, gives support for troubled families, better use of resources, character growth and sharing each other's spiritual journeys, gift and faith (Ross 2012). It is simply communal living and the relational being that is also promoted in the *fa'aSamoa*.

Such a journey starts from the infant stage of the *tagata*. The *tagata* from its infant stage in the CCCS is also supported by its baptism sacrament. It is where the infant enters the family or God. It is where the congregation makes a vow before God that they will train, look after and have full responsibility of the church's children as their own. It is a dialogical process where the church becomes the identity of the infant *tagata*, and the infant *tagata* becomes the reflection of the church. It shows that there is a sense of looking after each other regardless of the different in generation. The responsibility is communal which goes beyond the parents of the infant *tagata*. The congregation's vow according to the EFKS or CCCS worship book is as follows:

...ua ou folafola atu, ona o le fesoasoani o le Atua, o le a matou tatalo mo lenei tamaititi ma ona matua, o le a matou tauave foi lo matou tiute o le aoao atu ma fesoasoani atu I lenei fanau, ina ia tupu ae o ia e fai ma kerisiano ma tagata o le ekalesia (Congregation Christian Church of Samoa 1975, 54)²⁶.

...we proclaim that through the guidance of God, we will pray for this child and his/her parent, we will also perform our duties of teaching and assisting this child so that he/she may grow and become a Christian and member of the church' (Congregation Christian Church of Samoa 1975, 54).²⁷

Accordingly, the above vow spells out the responsibility of the church to nurture and ensure that all of the church's baptised children become active members of the church as they grow up even when they become youth and as adults. The congregation commits itself to ensuring that the child is involved and included in the church community, in all initiatives and stages of faith become committed and faithful Christians. The

²⁶ Tusi Failotu – Ia viia lou Suafa – Worship Book

²⁷ Authors own translation.

vow highlights the church and parishes' responsibilities in fulfilling their vow before God, to ensure the church and parishes show a continual commitment to bringing caring for everyone in the church regardless of their generations. Thus, the church is mandated to ensure that they attend to the different needs of members of the church, to ensure that all people are embraced by the love of God, guided by His Spirit, and renewed by His Grace to experience the fullness of their vocation as members of God's church. Not only attending, but the word of God should be inclusive for all to experience the good news socially, physically, politically and spiritually as proposed by the IGM approach. The intention is ensuring that all have access to worship without barriers, and that the church ensures that all worship God freely regardless of any differences.

2.5 Summary

This chapter looked at the *fa'aSamoa* where communal living and the relational being of the *tagata* is upheld. Such a communal living is upheld by *fa'aaloalo* or respect and *alofa* or love. These two guiding values honours the face of the other person and the community which is the identity of the *tagata*. The *tagata* becomes the responsibility of the community and vice versa. *Faaaloalo* and *alofa* ensure that there is mutual and healthy relationships within the community. Cast in light of the IGM approach, it also promotes inclusive worship and ministry and uphold the importance of all generations by one taking care, nurtured, encourage and developing each other (generations) in the church which is the body of Christ. This is also reflected in the EFKS ministry, which highlights the importance of all, and the working together in the family of God. Baptism outline the oath by the

community in front of God that they will be responsible in looking after the infant onwards. We will now move to Chapter Three where the IGM approach (as outlined in Chapter One), and the Communal and Relational being/living of the *tagata* will be applied to the biblical and theological discussion and the EFKS Salani Falealili Parish as a case study.

CHAPTER 3

THEOLOGICAL DISCUSSION AND INSIGHTS FROM A CASE STUDY OF THE EFKS SALANI FALEALILI PARISH

3.1 *Introduction*

This chapter focuses on the theological discussion and case study - research findings analysis from the Salani Falealili parish. The chapter presents the theological discussion of youth ministry and the importance of their roles in various affairs of the church specifically in worship. Included in this chapter are the biblical references to emphasize the need for different generations to work together in a church as a whole. The research will present a qualitative analysis of the data based on interviews from the selected participants or key respondents.

3.2 *Theological Discussion*

3.2.1 *Oneness of all generations in serving and worshiping God*

As mentioned in Chapter One, Allen and Ross have noted that in the first century, children were able to learn faith instructions and guidance from not only their parents but also the adults and the whole house church community. In the book of Act 2:44-47, 4:32-35 and 16:31-34, the house churches of the first century gathered all generations, as if they were one family, to share the bread and their possessions. People of all ages and different backgrounds, can participate actively in prayer and worship, as well as sharing their experiences and stories with one another. The generation met together in home and observe the faith commitment of other generations (Ross 2012, 83). That is why the *so'otaga* is very important,

where one generation is responsible for the wellbeing of other generations. The sharing of the adults' experiences and their understanding about the gospel of Jesus Christ enable the young people to have the confidence and knowledge with the help of the Holy Spirit and the Wisdom of God to make good decisions of their own as they grow older.

The expectation of the church for the youth is to participate in the worship and live according to the Word God. As the book of Psalms 148:12-13 says, “¹² young men and women alike, old and young together. ¹³ Let them praise the name of the Lord...” Worshiping God should be for all, and all should participate and take part as we are worshipping God our creator. This is also the command regarding the law to be read for every seventh year to the Israelites. God commanded them in Deuteronomy 31:12 in the time of the festival, when the law will be read, the priest and Levites must “Assemble the people – men, women, and children as well as the aliens residing in your town – so that they may hear and learn...”.

3.2.2 *Trinitarian Harmonious Relationship*

The oneness of the church tracks back to the creation story where God in Trinitarian relationship shows the perfect and harmonious communion model (Allen and Ross 2012, 111). In Genesis 1:26, It is God who started it all, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness...”. According to Allen and Ross (2012, 111), “One aspect of the image of God is that God exists in community, that is, in Trinitarian relationship. Therefore, since we are made in His image, we are to reflect this communal nature”. God in Three Persons works in harmonious fashion

in the creation story. Although each Persons of God is distinct, they work in perfect relationship and gives glory to each other through love, honour and connectedness (Allen and Ross 2012, 111-112). This is parallel to Aiava's definition of *faaaloalo*²⁸ as discussed where he points to the face of the other facing to the other face in harmonious fashion, although the two face are distinct.

The above Trinitarian communion is solidified by Jesus in the New Testament in the Gospel of John 17:21 where Jesus involved the community in His communion with the Father – “As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe...”. The Trinitarian relationship is the perfect example for the church and its different generation to work together in its ministry and mission. Where there is harmonious communion like that of the Trinitarian, Jesus believes that those who believe and have faith in Him is part of that harmonious communion. Ross and Allen argues that the church should be built on God's relational nature where man was created in His image; community/church therefore “...are meant to live in relationship with a deep sense of togetherness and belonging” (Allen and Ross 2012,111).

3.2.3 Church as the Body of Christ

The intergenerational worship and ministry is the gathering of all the body of Christ to praise and honour God, to hear from God's word and to encourage one another. This is clearly expressed by Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 12:12-27). Paul talks about One Body with

²⁸ *Faaaloalo* means face of the other facing to the other face. In simple terms, two faces encountering each other with dignity and reverence.

many members. The unity and diversity in the church are both important. The body symbolises the Church, as the parts of the body play different functions, yet, they work together for the common good of the body.

The above argument is in line with the Constitution of the EFKS or CCCS discussed in Chapter Two where it defines the Church as the body of Christ, with Christ as the Head and the Church as His Body, made up of different members. Paul expressed in 1 Corinthians 12:12 “For Just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ”. A body cannot work by itself. When one part of the body does not function or suffers, other parts of the body are affected. In other words, all parts of the body are important. So as the church which is the body of Christ, all generations should be important as promoted by the IGM, and all generations should be shown *alofa* (love) and *fa’aaloalo* (respect).

Arland J. Hultgren explains that the ‘Body of Christ’ is the engaging image of the church in the New Testament especially in Paul’s letters which illustrates a difficult but not impossible task (2002, 124 – 131). To Hultgren, members of the local church should live responsibly, with one ensuring the security and wellbeing of one another in the body, mind and especially the Spirit. Gifts of the congregational members should be utilized for the benefit of the congregation. Being responsible is in line with the Samoan traditional values of *alofa* and *fa’aaloalo* as discussed in Chapter 2.

As theologically discussed above, the church as the Body of Christ must strive to ensure youth’s gifts are used in a position of being the people

of God today and the promise of God for tomorrow. Youth ministry according to Bob Taylor is an “enabling and mobilizing the gifts of many persons to touch, with the truths of the gospel, the lives of youth in every realm of their being” (Black 1991, 29). As argued the Trinitarian model and the Body of Christ image of the church upholds everybody in the church as important members, despite of their age and generation.

3.3 CASE STUDY FINDINGS: EFKS Salani Falealili Parish

3.3.1 Research Analysis

This study focused on listening to the different voices within the congregation. The target groups as mentioned were selected from key respondents of the issue from our parish in Salani Falealili, plus key stakeholders from key positions of the church (EFKS) and the Samoa Government agencies. The interviews in our parish were conducted with our Reverend and wife, (Rev. Kelekolio Sanele and Lupe Sanele), to get the pastoral perspective and leadership view of the reverend and his wife, who are the Spiritual leaders of both the *Autalavou* and our Parish. Six (6) Parents from our parish were also interviewed to get the parental view of the problem or issue, as they are the ones dealings with young people in homes and families. Ten (10) Youth members of our parish were interviewed, as they are the key respondents of this study. The parents and youth did not want their names acknowledge, therefore are numbered from Parent 1 to 6 and Youth 1 to 10.

I also interviewed Rev Faitoaga who is the Director of the Christian Education Department of the EFKS, who are responsible for youth

development programs. Rev. Elder Tunumoso Iosia who is the current Chairman of the Fonotele²⁹ and Elder of our District was interviewed to share his leadership perspective on the issue. Mrs Tarita Sione a Senior Officer of the Division of Youth in the Ministry of Women Community and Social Development was interviewed to get the position of the Samoan Government ministry dealing with the young people of Samoa. I have analysed the responses from respondents into common themes according to their feedbacks.

3.3.2 Current Status of Youth Involvement in the Church

As I mentioned in the introductory part of this thesis, there is a significant proportion of young people who do not consistently engage and participate in Sunday worship services and church ministries in our parish. Rather, they only appear to join in great numbers during the *autalavou* retreat, sports day, entertainment during White Sunday and Christmas, as well as *soo* or fellowship with *autalavou* from other parishes. This trend has also been identified by most of the parents particularly the church minister and his wife. According to Reverend Kelekolio Sanele,

Most of the youth who are not coming to the Church and Youth programs anymore, were those who were committed to the Aoga Faife'au³⁰ and Sunday Schools while at their young age. However, when they finished Sunday school and secular schools, they don't come to Church and Youth programs anymore. Some youth have jobs in the town area (Apia³¹), and as a result are committed to their jobs and have no time for youth. The sad thing is that parents are coming to church but not their

²⁹ Fonotele is the EFKS General Assembly that is held annually. The Chairman of the Fonotele holds the highest position in the hierarchy of the EFKS.

³⁰ This is known as the Pastor's School which is different from Sunday School. It teaches the students the basic literacy and numeracy as well as basic bible theological concepts.

³¹ Apia is the capital city of Samoa.

sons/daughters (interviewed by author on the 15th April 2019).

Reverend Sanele who is the spiritual leader of the youth and the Salani Falealili Parish sees the transition from Sunday School and *autalavou* as one of the problem. Together with the youth committed to their jobs rather than youth programs. Interestingly, Reverend Sanele however says that parents of these young people do attend parish programs and worship. It seems that there is a gap or disconnection between parents and young people, as well as the transition from Sunday School to *autalavou*.

When asking the Youth about their current involvement in the church, these were some of the responses³² from the 10 youth:

“...we the youth attend church like other Christians, we participate in our choir, but sometimes when we have a lot of work at home, we tend to miss out”.

“I think, some youth are involved in the *aufaipese* (choir) but not interested in the *autalavou*. The *autalavou* programs is just too demanding and coincide with other commitments of the youth such as sports, and work at home...”

“We the youth are called up by the Reverend when he needs help with work at his place or with the church. We are still members of the church even if we are not part of the *autalavou*”.

“..we support youth programs, especially sports and fellowship with other parishes youth as it showcase our talents and is a way to meet other youth from other villages”.

The above were some of the common responses from the youth, on their current contribution to the church. Most of the youth respondents points to choir as their contribution. One youth as mentioned above says that the Reverend call them for needed work at the pastor’s house and church tasks. It shows that the youth are seen as the strength of the church as

³² Due to the scope of this paper, I have selected only some of the common responses, and some of the key responses for the purpose of this writing.

argued. One youth respondent above mentioned that they like sports and fellowship to showcase their talents and make friends. It shows some of the needs of the young people that could be turned into a strength by the church as potential gifts to benefit the church.

When the parents were asked about the contribution of the young people in the church, here are some of the common responses:

“The youth are the strength of the parish. They do the hard work needed by the Reverend and the old people of the church. They are responsible for many things, they should serve the Reverend in order to get blessings.”

“All the youth should be in the parish choir, as in the old days. The youth should also join the youth and serve as Sunday school teachers. These were done in our days”

“Youth at the moment must observe and listen well, as they are the future of the church”

Responses from parents were mainly about the youth as people who serve the church. Parents look at the youth as those who should be in the choir, Sunday school teachers, labour and observe how things are done. It seems to parents that there is a certain place for youth in the church. The parents and youth respondents both look at the choir and *autalavou* as the place for young people during worship. Then comes the question, what is the problem?

3.3.3 Problems Faced by the Youth

Although this question was too general, the parents were able to express their opinions and experiences on the issue, although it was emotional to some of the parents. Five (5) out of six (6) of the parents' participants stated that the main problems that influence youth include

alcohol, marijuana and cigarette smoking. To parents, youth nowadays are heavily influenced by the above mentioned substances. It is the reason why most of the youth are not part of the choir, *autalavou* and other church ministries. One parent respondents said that some of the youth from their *autalavou* were imprisoned due to marijuana. To some of the parents, there is also a lot of violence caused by alcohol and marijuana in the village as well. Two parental respondents point to the many fundraising and money making activities of the *autalavou* as one problem for their young people to attend youth programs.

According to the Youth respondents, seven (7) out of ten (10) youth feel that it style and way their youth is run is boring and out of dated. It is one of the core reason they believe other youth members choose not to attend *autalavou* programs. Three (3) youth respondents point to the leader being in the role too long or simply just a leader that has been placed there by the Reverend but is not capable of leading the *autalavou*.

Interestingly, four (4) youth respondents stated that there is a lot of money contributions to various youth activities such as uniforms, which really put most of the youth discouraged to attend the various youth and Church activities.

Four (4) youth respondents raised that the programs that the *autalavou* do are not helping the majority of the young people. Some see it as a way for the young people to just hang out and have fun but there is no real spiritual connection evident in what they are doing. They believe that the programs does not translate well with the young people to get the full

spiritual life enjoyment within the church. The youth respondents feel that they are attracted to good and exciting things that happen in youth, for instance *pulega* games and fellowship with other youth. They see it every year, they come and play *Kirikiti*³³ or volleyball, but as soon as *pulega* games finish, they disappear, never to be seen again until something exciting pops up in the program for the year. For most of the youth respondents, the youth programs are just there to organise the youth to do church works, have a youth like other parish, collect money to help the church and do bible studies.

When Reverend Kelekoli was asked about the problem from his perspective as the spiritual leader of the autalavou, he responded,

“The pastor cannot force the hearts of youth to attend church or youth. The work is left to individual and their parents. However, the minister's cooperation with the parents makes the work easier. The pastor relies on parents, as well as the authority of the Village Council for encouraging youth to attend church and its programs. Most teens don't come to church.”

According to the Reverend Kelekolio, the problem seems to be bigger than it seems. It starts from the youth as an individual, parents and the village council which is the parish as a whole. To Reverend Kelekolio, there is nothing much he could do, if the support of the other parties mentioned above is lacking. It brings back our discussion to the church as the Body of Christ as discussed. Rev. Elder Tunumoso Iosia who is also the Elder of Falealili District, believes that it is up to the Reverend to find relevant strategies to attract youth to worship and ministries. Elder Iosia pointed out

³³ Kirikiti means cricket

that the Reverend must encourage the spiritual life of the youth through bible studies.

Another point asked during interviews, was about decision making. In terms of decision and policy making within the Church, all youth revealed that there is no or very little opportunity for them to voice their concerns. Often, decisions and revisions of the Church policies are done at a higher level where only the Church Minister, lay preachers, deacons, and other senior members of the church are involved. To six youth respondents, not involved in decision making is not a problem, as it is part of the Samoan culture. The other four youth respondents believe that this is the time of human rights. They too as members of the congregation must take part in decision making. It is good to have the thinking of the youth in order to ensure that what the youth need are involved in decisions. Although the majority of youth supports the non-participation of youth in decision making, the four respondents favouring the involvement of youth is worth noting. According to the current Reverend Kelekolio, the Church Youth president (chairman) is invited to the congregational meetings from time to time. It is anticipated that he represents the voice of the youth in the meetings.

3.3.4 Resources and Programs for Youth.

According to the participants, there are no proper programs scheduled for youth. The main argument that seems to come across from all those youth interviewed is that there are no regular or proper programs set in place on a regular basis for them to attend. They understand that there are

some programs in place that are set to the Christian calendar, like Easter and Mother and Father's Day and White Sunday. However outside of these major events in the Christian Calendar there is not much to do. The youth sometimes meet for a Bible study session but most complain that it is irregular and unless the leaders of the youth are passionate about it, they hardly ever meet.

In the interview with Rev. Faitoaga Tolua the Director of Christian Education in the EFKS, regarding the available materials for spiritual encourage for the youth in societies. Rev. Tolua Commented:

“...there are available books prepared by the Christian Education Department. These books guide those who will be responsible for making youth education. But it is at the discretion of the *Taitai o le Autalavou* or the Leader of the *Autalavou*, to elaborate some common issues as needed. Also there are programs already plan throughout the whole year for youth fellowships. The focus of these programs is to ensure the spiritual development of the young people in their social and spiritual lives.”

Here, Rev. Tolua comments that, the youth still have opportunities for their own programs to improve and develop their youths. The minister himself has the right to take some governmental organizations, and some to help the lives of the youth or the church. Rev. Elders Iosia supports Rev Tolua's statement above in our interview, the EFKS had emphasized that there is a department of Christian Education for youth programs. Also during this year Fono Tele, it started with the Annual General Meeting of the *autalavou*. This demonstrates that the EFKS are taking steps to prioritize the views of the youth. Therefore, it is a must to have a youth or *autalavou* in all

parishes, because it is important to tackle the problems faced by the youth, as they are the future of Samoa and our churches.³⁴

3.3.5 Alternative methods identified for Youth participation

The participants were also asked about their opinion regarding some of the ways or methods that the church can follow and adopt to encourage the participation of the youth in the Church. The majority of parents responses indicated that the Church should be focused on initiating various programs such as small businesses involving vegetable gardens both for commercial and subsistence use. Although there are other similar programs that are already established within the village, the Church is strongly encouraged to establish such initiatives to cater for those youth who may be interested in these practices.

In an interview with Tarita Sione from the Division for Youth under the MWCD³⁵, she commented the following in regards to community projects:

“The ministry is offering a lot of assistance to the public of our country. Most of the project was shared with youth, Sunday School, Tina ma Tamaitai o Nu'u, based on their requests. But there has been a change over five years ago. It does not provide direct assistance to organizations, such as youth, Sunday schools etc, but directly to families to try to develop their wealth, reducing children's lives traveling around the city and selling their goods. That is one of the goals of the government, which is working with other overseas organizations. The families will get benefit from those projects, because families are raising the lives of children. Because of the good home economies, it is easy to meet everyday needs, and the cost of youth's education will be affordable, and support the village and the church financially.”³⁶

³⁴ Interviewed by author 17th April, 2019.

³⁵ MWCD stands for Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development.

³⁶ Interviewed by the author 20th May, 2019

Therefore, there are funds and projects available for youth to get help in setting up such a development for the youth. All parents responses raised the need for the Reverend to create more programs in the church and invite government and other agencies who can help with youth and their involvement with alcohol and marijuana. Parents' respondents strongly believe that there is a great work needed to be done in regards to alcohol and marijuana as it is hindering the lives of young people

3.4 *Summary*

In summary, the first part of this chapter engaged in a theological discussion regarding what the Bible says about the importance of bringing all the people together in worship. It shows the oneness of all in serving and worshipping God. The Trinitarian harmonious relationship is the perfect model for the church to live in oneness. The oneness of the church is portrayed by Paul as the Body of Christ that works and be responsible for one another.

The Second part, focused on the Case Study findings from key respondents. It starts from the contribution of youth in the church to the many problems faced by youth from the different perspectives of respondents. Respondents also have different feeling about the youth involvement in decision and policy making. The last part shows that there is a great need to encourage the spiritual development of young people. There is also a great need to create initiatives to cater the gifts of the young people. The reverend rightly voiced that the problem is complex, and required the effort and support of all from the village council to the youth themselves.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 *Conclusion*

In conclusion, I have discussed the many problems faced by the EFKS *autalavou* from its infant stage to now. Youth were seen as money making machine for the church financial needs. Their voices were not heard in congregation decision making and planning, thus making them confused of the church's implementation programs. As highlighted, the Intergenerational Ministry approach / model (IGM) is promoted as the inclusive model that upholds working together of generation including young people. Early stages of the church as discussed was more inclusive across generation as the Body of Christ. However, generation segregations was the result of the influence of secular systems in the Reformation, the rise of individualism and other models/theories that favour the grouping of people with the same interest and age in ministry, meetings and worship. However the risk of such division is that the youth are usually left in the dark, feel out of place, and their talents and gifts not utilized for God's work. IGM promotes the generations working together in mutual serving, sharing, or learning within the core activities of the church in order to live out being the body of Christ.

EFKS operates in the Samoan way of living or the *fa'aSamoa* where communal living and the relational being of the *tagata* is upheld. Such a communal living is upheld by *fa'aaloalo* or respect and *alofa* or love. These

two guiding values honours the face of the other person and the community which is the identity of the *tagata*. The *tagata* becomes the responsibility of the community and vice versa. *Faaaloalo* and *alofa* ensure that there is mutual and healthy relationships or *sootaga* within the community. That clearly reveals the essence of the *so'otaga* between the youth and adults. Our *so'otaga* can easily merge and accept the importance of the IGM approach. The IGM approach brings all generations together to share and know the weaknesses and strengths of other generations and learned from it. Cast in light of the IGM approach, it also promotes inclusive worship and ministry and uphold the importance of all generations by one taking care, nurtured, encourage and developing each other (generations) in the church which is the body of Christ. This is also reflected in the EFKS ministry, which highlights the importance of all, and the working together in the family of God. Baptism outline the oath by the community in front of God that they will be responsible in looking after the infant onwards.

The last part of the thesis engaged in a theological discussion regarding what the Bible says about the importance of bringing all the people together in worship. It shows the oneness of all in serving and worshipping God. The Trinitarian harmonious relationship is the perfect model for the church to live in oneness. The oneness of the church is portrayed by Paul as the Body of Christ that works and be responsible for one another. This in light of the IGM promotes the spirit of togetherness and belonging together. The *faaaloalo* and *alofa* as discussed in the *FaaSamoa* also promotes that love that is never ending and non-discriminatory.

The Case Study findings from key respondents outlines the contribution of youth in the church to the many problems faced by youth from the different perspectives of respondents. Youth see job commitments, programs, leadership and the many fundraising and financial contribution as problems. Parents blamed alcohol, smoking and marijuana. Reverend Kelekolio blamed everybody, from the village council to the youth as individuals. Respondents also have different feeling about the youth involvement in decision and policy making. To the youth interviewed, more support their non-involvement due to cultural reasons. While the minority voiced their will to be involved for their concerns and interests to be heard. The last part shows that there is a great need to encourage the spiritual development of young people. There is also a great need to create initiatives to cater the gifts of the young people. The reverend rightly voiced that the problem is complex, and required the effort and support of all who are part of the Body of Christ.

4.2 Recommendations and Way Forward

With the conclusion of the paper stated above, it has revealed that there are changes that need to be considered for the future of the youth in the EFKS ministry throughout the world. The church is the center of the life of any Samoan. Every Samoan, has his or her own identity. It means that he has his/her village, family, and religion. The changes and perspectives of the present world, we cannot avoid. These changes and perspectives we must understand and accept, because we have no power to resist or combat. This is an important lesson for the church, as all these changes that affect the lives of teenagers. However, working together, and recognizing the voices of

teenagers within a church, is good and vibrant. There are ways to use the talents and abilities of the youth to participate in worship, especially Sundays, such as overseeing the PA system of the Church, collecting donations, and participating in some aspects of the services. Some other things the church should look at are the use of new technology during religious services. For instance, the use of the overhead projector, to show the wording of songs for church members. Also it is useful for the *fai feau* for his sermons, to show the main theme, and also the essential points of his *lauga* or speech. These are some important things, not to get young people into weaknesses of being bore during the services.

Youth are the future of our villages, families and congregation. To nurture them well and for them to be able to be successful in life, they have to be encouraged and taught well of the Word of God. The aim of this thesis was to empower the involvement of youth in the Church ministry. Youth in this thesis are the ages between 18 to 35 years old. They have a role to present their youthful vision and energy in the activities of the church since they have a great deal to offer as youth Christians to the church. In the church, the youth must play the same role as adults as the gospel mission calls all believers to glorify and spread the good news of God. That clearly reveals the essence of the *so'otaga* between the youth and adults. Our *so'otaga* can easily merge and accept the importance of the IGM approach. The IGM approach brings all generations together to share and know the weaknesses and strengths of other generations and learned from it.

The involvement of youth in the church ministry is crucial in order to know and observe the most importance services of the church, such as baptism and the Holy Communion. Therefore, the churches must be friendly to youths in fostering their growth spiritually. When the youths are welcomed and allowed to serve alongside adults in the church community, they develop a full-fledged member feeling and can be easily identified as a community. Through meaningful roles, the youths can express their faith hence develop a commitment spirit to the church as a community. The church therefore must tap the talents from youths and be friendly to them through valuing the adolescents through adequate response to their needs and carefully giving the audience. The using of youth talents can help and challenge other youths to stand up and have courage to speak out what they have thoughts. The church must facilitate the youth activities through providing them with money and facilities that enable them to grow as disciplines. As the youth commit to the church, the church must also give back to the youths by committing to their development.

The youths must be taught and hence teach other on solid Biblical theology and not to get entertained to their last breath. The young Christians must help others see that their faith is beyond the surface level and not just entertaining crowds. Through solid theology, they must develop disciples and help the church grow. Focused on God's word, the youths must unite the church and get engaged in the process of sanctification besides showing each other *agape* love as a church. Through closely working with parents, the place of youths in the church is to lay the foundation for solid theology and bring together the church.

The church must therefore offer church theology and be willing to implement it through giving the youth full access to many church life areas as possible so as to integrate them into the church community or family. This is where and how they can build a foundation and harness spiritual growth opportunities. The youths must be provided opportunities to impact other young people with the word of God as a way of expressing their calling and passion. This way, the church and the community will be able to benefit from the influence in development and Christianity through a stronger theology church with leaders who are more effective in mentoring and who do not rely much on youth work professionalizing. This will by greater impact trigger the energy in young people to positively work for the church in harvesting souls into the eternal kingdom and as the wider body of Christ in the Christian ministry.

The Samoan culture also has a contribution in the developing of lives of youth in the village. The village has its own rules and punishments to guide the lives of all people. Those rules are applicable to the church also, because it helps to encourage people to attend the church services. The core values of the Samoan culture can easily harmonize the space between *matais* and all the people of the village. These values, *faaaloalo* and *alofa*, are also the values that we as Christians can give to the church today is to take care of the youth and value them as this will reward the youth, church and the whole global community now and in the coming future.

APPENDIX A

LETTER OF CONSENT FOR INTERVIEW

***PAPER: Empowering the involvement of Young People in the Church ministry
with insights from EFKS Salani, Falealili as a Case Study.***

I, Sega Asafo, am currently writing a thesis paper on the above mentioned topic in the Bachelor of Divinity level at Malua Theological College. It is with all due respect that this consensus ensured that all information from this interview will be strictly confidential, and will not be used in any other purpose(s) rather than this task as requested. It is the objective of this writing through the aid of your valuable experience to contribute something for the empowerment of young people in the EFKS to involve in the church ministry.

I would like to acknowledge with utmost gratitude your time and valuable experience shared for this undertaking. May God bless your good self, *ma ia togo pea malama aua le feagai ai ma le soifua vala'auina.*

Ma le faaaloalo,

Mr/Ms/Mrs/Rev

Signature

Date

Venue

Interviewed by Sega Asafo

APPENDIX B

**Interview Questions for youth members and parents at
Congregational Christian Church of Samoa Church in Salani
Falealili parish.**

1. What do you think about the current status of the youth in terms of youth involvement in the Church?
2. According to the church constitution, do you think there is space for youth to voice their opinion within the church meetings (Filifiliga)?
3. What are some of the weaknesses currently faced by the youth in general within the church today?
4. What are some of the strengths and contribution of the youth in the church?
5. Do you think the culture is influencing the participation of youth in the church?
6. Can you identify some of the ways or methods that the church can do to encourage the participation and contribution of youth in the Church activities such as worship, meetings (*filifiliga*), and other activities?

Thank You Very Much. God Bless.

APPENDIX C

Interview Questions Pastor (faifeau) and his wife (faletua) in the EFKS Salani Falealili parish.

1. Who are eligible to be members of the autalavou?
2. What do you feel about the *tusi Autalavou* (curriculum)? Is it effective or not?
3. What are some of the problems you face in your *autalavou*?
4. What are some of the *autalavou* activities you see the young people enjoying the most?
5. How do you see the youth contributing in the ministry and mission of the church?
6. What are some of the key barriers that prevent you from accomplishing your work for the *autalavou*?

Thank You Very Much. God Bless.

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