TOWARDS A SAMOAN THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE LIFE AND MISSION OF THE EFKS, FROM A *ULUULUMATAFOLAU* PERSPECTIVE.

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Faculty of the Malua Theological College

In Partial Fulfilment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Theology.

by

Hobert Sasa

September 2023.

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ABSTRACT

The way in which we understand God (whether religiously or culturally) powerfully moulds our identity and directs Christian spirituality in Samoa. The biblical and theological understanding of the Holy Spirit in Christian circles recognises the Holy Spirit as an Advocate[1], a Comforter[2], a Helper[3], a Counsellor[4], the Giver of Life[5], and a divine force that indwells and inspires people.[6] The conventional belief is that the Holy Spirit forges bonds of unity between believers, upon which the unity of the church ultimately depends.[7] This unity demonstrates that the inescapable love of God, is continuously present in all of God's creation, in and through the Holy Spirit. In Trinitarian terminology, "the love of the Father is revealed in Christ through the Spirit…"[8]

From a Samoan Christian perspective, a question can be asked: - How do we determine and have determined this Christian reality of the Holy Spirit within our own social and cultural identity? In other words: - How do we recognize and come to understand the existence and reality of the Holy Spirit as Samoans, based on our indigenous and cultural beliefs?

According to the Samoan indigenous beliefs, the Samoans have been long believed in *Tagaloa* or *Tagaloa-a-lagi*, a supreme god who was believed to be the origin of all that existed. He lived in a divine place which was known as the *Lagituaiva* (the Ninth Heaven). He was also

[1] (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7) → **N**ew **R**evised **S**tandard **V**ersion (NRSV) & **N**ew **I**nternational **V**ersion (NIV)

[2] (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7) → **K**ing **J**ames **V**ersion (KJV)

[3] (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7) → **G**ood **N**ews **T**ranslation (GNT) & **N**ew **A**merican **S**tandard **B**ible (NASB)

[4] (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7) → **R**evised **S**tandard **V**ersion (RSV)

[5] (John. 6:63; 1 Cor 15:45) → NRSV; *see also* Philip Schaff, NPNF2-14, *The Seven Ecumenical Councils* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: T&T Clark, 2005), 233.

[6] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 102

[7] Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology - an Introduction* (West Sussex, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2017), 285.

[8] McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 302.

known by numerous other names such as *Tagaloa Fa'atupunu'u* (the Creator), *Nimonimo* (the Immeasurable One), *Sau o le Ola* (the Giver of Life), and *Tupu'aga* (Progenitor).[9] He was said to be distant from the Samoan people, not in the sense that He was not living among them, but in the sense that His divinity and sacredness was far too greater for them to embrace. His divine spirit and knowledge can be seen and realised in all things of creation, culture, and their traditional ways of life. These indigenous Samoan beliefs underpins the common view that the physical and the spiritual realm are inseparable. That is, the spirit-world can be seen in terms of the relationship between the sacred and the secular in the ordinary events of life of the Samoan people.

Adhering to these specific beliefs, I propose that by incorporating the Christian/Bible views and the Samoan indigenous religion and cultural beliefs, we can be able to make sense of the existence and reality of the Holy Spirit within our cultural and social identity. This work therefore, seeks to construct a relevant theological interpretation of the Holy Spirit that is applicable to the Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa (EFKS), using the concept of *uluulumatafolau.*

[9] Augustine Krämer, *The Samoa Islands: Constitutions, Pedigrees and Traditions*, trans. Theodore Verhaaren, Vol. 1 (Auckland, New Zealand: Polynesian Press, 1994), 24.

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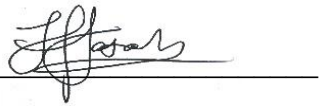
I declare that this work has not been used without due acknowledgment of any material that has been previously submitted for a degree or diploma in another institution. I also declare that the work has not used any material, heard or read, without proper acknowledgment of the source.

Signed: 

Date: 24th November, 2023

DEDICATION

This work is especially dedicated to the memories of loved ones who have passed:

Rev. Sasa & Nanavale Panapa (grandparents [father's side])

Rev. Fa'alili & Atanesi Le'aupepe

Rev. Elder. Kaleve Simona Leifi (and surviving wife Tausunū K. S. Leifi)

Tauiliili Samasoni Sasa Panapa (father).

We may be parted in flesh, but your spiritual presence gives me hope,

and courage to move on!

May you rest in Peace and Love!

To our mothers, Fa'asaveve Tauiliili Samasoni Sasa & Leaso Motusaga.

We are forever grateful for your hard work and support.

Your undivided love, patience and courage has never been faded…

Without your support and prayers, we would not have been able to come this far.

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This is for you!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Consent Form for the Retention and use of the Thesis ii

Declaration of Authorship of Thesis iii

ABSTRACT iv

DECLARATION vi

DEDICATION vii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS xi

List of Abbreviations xiii

THE STUDY 1

0.0 Preamble 1
0.1 Thesis Statement 1
0.2 Motivation & Purpose 1
0.3 Methodology/Approach 3
0.4 Focus Questions 3
0.5 Limitations of the Study 4
0.6 What is the Holy Spirit? 4
0.6.1 A Biblical/Theological Definition 5
0.6.2 A Philosophical Definition 11
0.6.3 A Physiological Definition 13
0.6.4 Spirituality 15
0.7 Where to from here? 16
0.8 Chapters Outline 17
0.9 Summary 18

CHAPTER 1 Methodology & Approach 20

1.0 Introduction 20
1.1 Contextual Theology Approach 20
1.2 Culture and Indigenous Beliefs as a Hermeneutical Lens 29

1.3 Intercultural Hermeneutic Approach 30
1.4 *Uluulumatāfolau* Theological and Inter-Cultural Hermeneutic 36
1.4.1 Etymological Study of Uluulumatafolau 36
1.4.2 Uluulumatafolau – Ia Malu i Fale (Being Sheltered at Home) 40
1.4.3 Uluulumatafolau – Ia saili i le Fale o le Tautai (Seek in the House of the Tautai) 42
1.5 *Uluulumatafolau* as an Interpretative Method 44
1.6 Summary 46
CHAPTER 2 The Indigenous Spirit-World 48
2.0 Introduction 48
2.1 The Self-Being 48
2.1.1 O le Tagata Ola 48
2.1.2 O le Tagata o Faiā 53
2.2 The Samoan Indigenous Spirit-World 59
2.2.1 Tagaloalagi and Creation Mythology 59
2.2.2 The gods (atua) and the spirits (agaga) 63
2.2.3 Nature spirits and objects of power 65
2.2.4 Ancestral and Family Spirits (tupua and aitu) 67
2.2.5 National and District Deities 70
2.3 Worship - Tapuaiga 72
2.3.1 Fire Votive (Tapua'iga Fa'amalama) 73
2.3.2 'Ava Ceremony (Alofisā) 76
2.3.3 E lē Sili le Ta'i na i lō le Tapua'i 77
2.3.4 Invoking the Spirits (Fono ma Aitu) 80
2.3.5 Burials and Reburials (Disinterment) – Maliu and Liutofaga 81
2.3.6 Forgiveness & Reconciliation (Ifoga) 82
2.4 Summary 84
CHAPTER 3 86
The Biblical Revelations of the Holy Spirit 86
3.0 Introduction 86
3.1 The Holy Spirit in Creation 86

3.2 The Holy Spirit in Jesus' Baptism (Matt 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:21ff).90
3.3 Jesus' Allusion to the Holy Spirit and the Church 94
3.4 The Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:1–13) 96
3.5 Paul's Ministry and the Holy Spirit 99
3.6 The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit and its Development 101
3.6.1. Early Developments 101
3.6.2 The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit 105
3.6.3 The Doctrine of the Trinity 110
3.6.4 The Filioque Controversy 112
3.7 Summary 115
CHAPTER 4 A *Uluulu-a-matafolau* Pneumatology 116
4.0 Introduction 116
4.1 *Uluulumatafolau* – The Indwelling Spirit 117
4.1.1 The Holy Spirit and the Church 117
4.1.2 The Spirit of Grace (O le Agaga o le Alofa Tunoa) 119
4.1.3 The Spirit of Unity/Connection (O le Agaga o So'otaga) 124
4.2 *Uluulumatafolau* – The Holy Spirit and Worship 129
4.2.1 Prayer of Invocation and Benediction – The Eternal Fellowship of the Spirit 132
4.2.2 Hymns and Prayers – the Presence of the Holy Spirit 133
4.2.3 The Holy Word – the Anointing of the Word 135
4.2.4 Baptism and Holy Communion – the Anointing and Celebration of the Spirit 138
4.3 Conclusion 141
CONCLUSION 144
Significances & Implications of the Study 144
Concluding Remarks 146
GLOSSARY 148
BIBLIOGRAPHY 153

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List of Abbreviations

BDAG	Bauer, Danker, Arndt, and Gingrich
BEM	Baptism Eucharist and Ministry
CCCS	Congregational Christian Church of Samoa
EFKS	Ekalesia Fa'apotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa
LMS	London Missionary Samoa
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version[10]

[10] All of the Biblical references (unless specifically stated) in this thesis used the NRSV translation.

THE STUDY

0.0 Preamble

This introductory chapter serves as a prologue, aiming to put things into perspective and act as guide to reading this thesis. It defines the thesis statement, the motivation and purpose, the focus questions, and a brief sketch of the methodology and approach. This chapter will also provide a brief introductory review of the Holy Spirit from a biblical and theological perspective, to the philosophical and physiological disciplines. Lastly, the chapter will provide summaries and the focus of each chapter, concluding with a brief summary to recapitulate the focus of the study, and therefore paving the way for the proceeding chapters.

0.1 Thesis Statement

This study revisits and focuses on discerning how we determine and have determined the reality of the Holy Spirit in and within our social and Samoan cultural identity, in order to make sense of our responses and acquaintance of the Holy Spirit in the life and mission of the EFKS.

0.2 Motivation & Purpose

The Greek word *paráklētos*, translated as "one who appears in another's behalf, mediator"[1] or "one who is called alongside"[2], gives the idea of someone who encourages, supports, and exhorts. This is the general understanding of Christianity in regard to the role and the nature of the Holy Spirit.

[1] Frederick William Danker, ed., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 4th ed. (BDAG) (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2021), 680-681.

[2] Bible Works: Software for Biblical Exegesis & Research (version 7.0). Windows. Virginia: Bible Works LLC, 2006.

In other words, Jesus gave the Holy Spirit as a "compensation" for his absence, to perform the functions towards us that He would have done if he had remained personally with us.

Moreover, the conventional belief insists that the Holy Spirit nurtures unity between believers, upon which the unity of the church ultimately depends on.[3] Hence, having this unity demonstrates the inevitable love of God, continuously present in all of His creation, in and through the Holy Spirit. Such biblical and theological reputations, has been the focus of Western theology, particularly the perception that the church is the *sole* repository of all truth and the *only* location in which the Holy Spirit is operative.[4] In other words the experience of the Holy Spirit seems to be confined within the boundaries of liturgy and Church traditions. This begs the questions, "How do we articulate that reality of the Holy Spirit to those who did not know the language or church traditions?" Or again, "how to avoid setting "religious experience" in a category all of its own, cut off from everyday human experience?"

Again, from a Samoan Christian perspective, we ask, "How do we determine and have determined this Christian reality of the Holy Spirit within our own social and cultural identity? In other words, "How do we recognize and come to understand the existence and reality of the Holy Spirit as Samoans, based on our indigenous and cultural beliefs? In answering these important questions, this study aims to revisit the theology of the Holy Spirit. Its main purpose is to inspire an interpretation of the Holy Spirit from an indigenous Samoan religious and cultural perspective. By drawing upon the cultural experience and rediscovering the Divine in the indigenous spirit-world, the study anticipates to develop a positive reception and transformation of the Holy Spirit in the life and mission of the EFKS.

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[3] Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology - an Introduction* (West Sussex, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2017), 285.

[4] Stanley J. Grenz, "Culture and Spirit: The Role of Cultural Context in Theological Reflection," in *The Asbury Theological Journal* 55, No. 2 (2000), 45.

0.3 Methodology/Approach

Given the Samoan context of this undertaking, a contextual Samoan theological method with a systematic perception is therefore employed. It utilises an inter-cultural hermeneutic to construct an interpretation of the Holy Spirit, based on the religious and cultural experience. I enter into dialogue from the perspective and world view as a Samoan. The theoretical framework of this study will be fully discussed in chapter 1. Chapter 1, will draw upon the Samoan indigenous beliefs and wisdom traditions. Such information can be found embedded in *myths* as well as rituals and cultural protocols. The *muagagana* (Samoan proverbial expression) of *Uluulumatafolau* will be used as an intercultural hermeneutic ("an interpretative construction"). I seek to use *uluulumatafolau* to draw out a theological connection between the Christian aspects of the Holy Spirit and the Samoan indigenous beliefs. This process involves the integration of cultures, hence the intercultural approach.

0.4 Focus Questions

In conducting this study, I will use the following questions as a guideline:

1. How do we explain and interpret the aspect of 'spiritual divine' in relation to the worship rituals of Samoa (*tapuaiga*)?
2. What are the world-views of the Samoan indigenous spirit-world?
3. What are some examples in our traditions and culture that reflect the significance of the manifestation of a Divine Spirit?
4. What are the roles and perceptions of the Holy Spirit in the worship and sacraments of the EFKS?

5. How can the hermeneutic of *Uluulumatafolau* interpret the manifestation and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in the mission and the life of the Church?
6. How can the hermeneutic of *Uluulumatafolau* inspire our attitudes as Christians in our faith journeys as individuals, families, and as a community of faith?

0.5 Limitations of the Study

Due to its limited scope, this study is unable to provide an exhaustive search in the indigenous spirit-world in the Samoan context. Also, this undertaking will not present a comprehensive biblical study of the Holy Spirit. Hence why limitations have been placed by focusing on the unification and harmonisation of the Christian understanding of the Holy Spirit and the Samoan spiritual experiences, as discovered in the cultural practices and the indigenous religion and wisdom traditions.

0.6 What is the Holy Spirit?

When studying the 'Spirit', or more specifically the 'Holy Spirit' or the 'Spirit of God', we tend to be more vigilant and discerning. Perhaps the reasons why we must be more cautious have to do with our impressions – that the Holy Spirit is of divine, mystical, invisible, transcendence, and mysterious in nature. It is hard for us to describe, or understanding of the Holy Spirit, as evident in these questions: "What does the Holy Spirit look like?" "How does one know and realise that he/she has the Holy Spirit?" Furthermore, in comparison to *Christology*, there has not been much scholarly interest in the past few decades ago (until recently) on the subject of *Pneumatology*, a

term given specifically to the study of the Holy Spirit.[5] Hence the aim of this section is to provide a brief biblical and theological background. Then at Chapter 3 we explore the subject of the Holy Spirit.

0.6.1 A Biblical/Theological Definition

One of the fundamental tasks of Christian theology is to integrate the various strands of the biblical witness, integrating them into a coherent and systematic account of the Christian vision of reality. Such tasks include the woven together of biblical images, themes, and statements to yield a definitive statement of Christian theological doctrines. For example, the EFKS Constitution Doctrines of Faith state that:

> The Congregational Christian Church of Samoa accepts that the Holy Bible of the Old and New Testaments is the greatest fountain of the Christian life, and contains all that is necessary for salvation. The Church must be always prepared to direct and to correct its life so that it is in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Bible as revealed to us by the Holy Spirit...We believe in the Holy Spirit, Who has sanctified us so that we may develop in Christ through fellowship of His Body…In that faith, we worship the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Holy Trinity.[6]

Adhering to such a constitutional statement, the EFKS acknowledges through their proclamation of faith, a communal declaration recognising the biblical Scriptures as the basis of their doctrines of faith. The doctrine is a result of continuous engagement with the Biblical Scriptures. Therefore, a Christian doctrine can be considered as "a communal, authoritative interpretation of the totality

[5] McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 280; *See also* Gary D. Badcock, *Light of Truth & Fire of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapid: Eerdmans, 1997); Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*: A Universal Affirmation (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 1.

[6] EFKS/CCCS, *The Constitution of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa* (Apia: Malua Printing Press, 2022), 12-13.

of the biblical witness."[7] It is to be distinguished from theological opinion by the fact that it is accepted within the church as an authoritative, normative statement of Christian beliefs.

On similar terms, the Christian theology of the Holy Spirit also takes its bearings from the wide-ranging witness of Scripture from the work of the Spirit of God in creation, to the history of Israel, the ministry of Jesus, and the life of the church. Therefore, theological reflection on the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church is rooted in both the Old and the New Testament Scriptures, where it uses terms such as "spirit", "Spirit" or "Holy spirit" to designate the presence and activity of God in the world and in the human experience, and in the Church.

The Hebrew term *rûah* is often translated as "spirit", but it is also the same word that denotes "wind", or "breath".[8] In the New Testament, "spirit" is translated to the Greek noun *pneûma*, which derives from the verb *pneuo* and denotes air in movement, experienced as wind, or breath.[9] The impression of *breathing* implies the inherent power that brings forth life. [10]

According to James Dunn, within the Judeo-Christian tradition, the 'Spirit' denotes the numinous power of the "wind", the "breath" of life, and the miraculous enhancement of "inspiration."[11] Alister McGrath stated that "to speak of God as Spirit is to call to mind the surging energy of the "Lord of Hosts" and to remind Israel of the power and vitality of the God who led Israel out of Egypt through a powerful wind which divides the Red Sea (Exod 14: 21)."[12] Here,

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[7] Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Dictionary for the Theological Interpretation of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2005), 177.

[8] Frances Brown, Samuel R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951/2000), 2247.

[9] Frederick William Danker, ed., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 4th ed. (BDAG) (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2021), 738.

[10] David Noel Freedman, ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: DOUBLEDAY, 1992), 3663.

[11] James D. G. Dunn, *The Christ & the Spirit, Pneumatology*, Vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 3.

[12] McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 280.

McGrath points out the idea of *rûah*, to convey both the ultimate authority and the redemptive purpose of God.

McGrath also underlines the idea of the Spirit as the "breath" of life, "When God created Adam, God breathed into him the breath of life, as a result of which he became a living being (Gen 2:7)."[13] Jürgen Moltmann[14] also points out that because people saw the "livingness of life" in the inhaling and exhaling of air, *rûah* was also the breath of life and the power to live enjoyed by human beings and animals (Eccl 12:7; 3:21). In support of this idea Moltmann mentions the concept of "life" by stating that, "since life was seen too in the movement of the blood, a distinction was also made between 'the blood soul' (*nepesh*) and 'the personal soul' (*rûah*)."[15] In Psalms 51:10, the psalmist prays for 'a new, steadfast *rûah*'. In Psalms 31.5, the psalmist commits his *rûah* into God's hands (cf. Luke 23.46). When Yahweh's *rûah* is mentioned in this context, a distinction is often made between God's own creative power to give life, and the created ability to live enjoyed by all the living. For example:

> When you hide your face, they are dismayed; When you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. When thou send forth your spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the ground. (Ps 104:29–30)

The vision of the valley of the dry bones witnessed by the prophet Ezekiel also exemplifies this point: the bones only come to life when God's breath of life enters into them (Ezek. 37: 9–10). The model of God as Spirit thus conveys the fundamental insight that God is the one who gives life.

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[13] McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 280.

[14] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*: A Universal Affirmation (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 41.

[15] Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 41.

Furthermore, McGrath highlighted the idea of the Spirit as "charism"[16] which is a technical term that refers to the "gift-in-grace" or "gifts of inspiration", deriving from the Greek word *charis* which means, "grace".[17] It refers to "an individual's encountering with the Spirit of God", by which the person in question is enabled to perform tasks which would otherwise be impossible. On the other hand, the gift of wisdom is often portrayed as a consequence of the endowment of the Spirit ((Gen 41:38–39 (Joseph); Exod 28:3 (makers of the Aaron's vestments); Exod 35:30–31 (Bezalel and Oholiab); Deut 34:9 (Joshua)). Similarly, the calling of a prophet also rests on upon a benefaction with the Spirit ((Isa 61:1; Ezek 2:1–2; Mic 3:8; Zech 7:12)), which authenticates the prophet's message – a message which is usually described as "the word (*dabhar*) of the Lord.[18] Furthermore, the Old Testament attributes gifts of leadership or military prowess to the influence of the Spirit ((Judg 3:1 (Othiniel), 6:34 (Gideon), 14:19 & 15:14 (Samson); 1 Sam 10:10 (Saul); 1 Sam 16:13 (David)).[19]

Since we are dealing primarily with the Holy Spirit, however, (the divine emphasis of *rûah* when it is combined with YHWH, or 'Elohim or when the context clearly connects the word with God's Spirit), indicates a powerful, divine action of God upon the cosmos, upon an individual, or upon a group of people (such as the nation of Israel, or the Church – the Body of Christ).

In his systematic theology book entitled "Life and the Spirit, History and the Kingdom of God", Paul Tillich clearly identified the core principle of the relationship between the human spirit and the divine Spirit.

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[16] McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 281.

[17] Freedman, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 3183.

[18] McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 281.

[19] William B. Eerdmans, *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, Vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 578.

> The question of the relation between Spirit and spirit is usually answered by the metaphorical statement that the divine Spirit dwells and works *in* the human spirit. In this context, the word "in" implies all the problems of the relation of the divine to the human, of the unconditional to the conditioned, and of the creative ground to creaturely existence. If the divine Spirit breaks into the human spirit, this does not mean that it rests there, but that it drives the human spirit out of itself. The "in" of the divine Spirit is an "out" for the human spirit. The spirit, a dimension of finite life, is driven into a successful self-transcendence; it is grasped by something ultimate and unconditional. It is still the human spirit; it remains what it is, but at the same time, it goes out of itself under the impact of the divine Spirit.[20]

This immediate outward experience of man makes it possible to speak symbolically of God as "Spirit," or the "Divine Spirit". These terms, like all other statements about God, are symbols. In them, empirical material is appropriated and transcended. Without this experience of spirit as the unity of power and meaning in himself, man would not have been able to express the revelatory experience of "God present" in the term "Spirit" or "Spiritual Presence". For Tillich, this shows that no doctrine of the divine Spirit is possible without an understanding of spirit as a dimension of life."

Spirituality on the other hand can be defined as the "sense of relating to the spirit-world". From a Christian point of view, McGrath describes spirituality as "the way in which the Christian life is understood and the explicitly devotional practices which have been developed to foster and sustain that relationship with Christ."[21] In other words, Christian spirituality may be thus understood as the way in which Christian individuals or groups aim to deepen their experience and their intimate connection with God.

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[20] Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*. *Life and the Spirit, History and the Kingdom of God*. Vol. III (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), 119-220.

[21] Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Spirituality - an Introduction* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 1999), 3.

The word "holy" is etymologically connected with 'whole', 'hale', 'healthy', etc.[22] It is probable that the sense-development is either from hailo, i.e., inviolate, inviolable, that which must be preserved whole; or from hail in the sense of health, wellbeing.[23] In Rabbinic Judaism, holiness became 'synonymous with purity of life, purity of action, and purity of thought'.[24] Moltmann described holiness as an 'ideal state of perfection attained by God; but man's growth in holiness the more aspires to the divine will, rising above the essential.'[25] For Moltmann, man can never attain perfection or 'whole', hence the term *holy* can only be accredited to the Spirit of God – the Holy Spirit.

At one end of the spirit's continuum of meaning, it denotes 'the human spirit', or perhaps better, "the human being as so far as he or she belongs to the spiritual realm and interacts with the spiritual realm."[26] Thus the spirit of a person according to Moltmann, is that aspect "through which God most immediately encounters him or her."[27] In this sense, Moltmann sees the human spirit as the dimension of the whole person wherein and whereby he or she is most immediately open and responsive to God. It is that area of human awareness most sensitive to matters of the spiritual realm.

From these definitions, one can observe that the Holy Spirit is the unifying force within the Church, bringing together people from various cultural backgrounds and uniting them in their

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[22] Joel B Green, Jeannine K. Brown, and Nicholas Perrin, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, Second ed. (Nottingham, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2013), 728.

[23] Green, Brown and Perrin, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, 728.

[24] Green, Brown and Perrin, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, 729.

[25] James D. G. Dunn, *The Christ & the Spirit*, vol. 2, Pneumatology (Grand Rapids, Michigan / Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 3.

[26] Dunn, *The Christ & the Spirit*, 3.

[27] Dunn, *The Christ & the Spirit*, 3.

shared faith in Jesus Christ. The biblical narratives of Pentecost (Acts 2) and the Tower of Babel (Gen 11) provide essential insights into the theology of the Holy Spirit and culture. At Babel, humanity's pride led to linguistic and cultural divisions, while at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit's outpouring enabled people of different languages and cultures to understand one another and receive the message of the Gospel. This highlights the Holy Spirit's role in overcoming cultural barriers and fostering understanding and unity.

Adhering to these biblical and theological definitions of the Holy Spirit culminates an acknowledgement of theological reflection, that should consider the specific cultural, social, economic, and historical contexts of a particular community. Moltmann calls this 'the spirit of life', he uses this term in order to bring out the unity between the experience of God and the experience of life. As believers seek to understand the Holy Spirit's work in their lives and the world, they must engage with the unique cultural contexts in which they find themselves.

0.6.2 A Philosophical Definition

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the English word "spirit" derives from the Latin word *spīritus,* which means "breath, life, soul or mind".[28] The term "spirit" was loaned into the Middle English in the thirteenth century *via* the Old French word, *esprit,* which means "liveliness or animated".[29] This is related to the idea of describing things in terms of spirited responses; for example, "having or showing willpower, courage, vigour, liveliness, dynamic, etc." In philosophy

[28] The Oxford English Dictionary (OED), "*spirit*", Oxford University Press, accessed April 14, 2023, https://www.oed.com/.

[29] Anthony Preus, *Historical Dictionary of Ancient Greek Philosophy* (Lanham, Mary Land / Plymouth, UK: The ScaredCrow Press, Inc, 2007): 212.

and science, a spirit is identified as an "*incorporeal or intangible energy force that is present in all living things…but distinct from the soul.*[30] This notion of the spirit was based on Plato's division of existing beings into two substances: form and matter, and Descartes' idea of dualism[31]. Plato defined matter as "continuous material 'stuff' of the being, and form is the intangible and non-material idea or pattern of the being."[32]

In human beings, Plato equates form with mind and soul, and this equation led to the early western Christian philosophy of dualism → the material body and the immaterial mind-spirit.[33] Aristotle maintained this idea in his work on the *First Philosophy* of metaphysics, in which he referenced the spirit in relation to the notion of being or existence, which is closely tied to the study of a supreme Being[34]. Isaac Newton on the other hand, has an inclusive and universal conception of the 'spirit'. I refer to Wolfgang Vondey according to Newton's work on *Principia,* Vondey recognized the spirit as a "*divine force or vital principle operating in the natural world, functions within a universal framework of absolute time and space.*"[35] More exactly, Newton's cosmological idea proposed the existence of an internal force dwelling within bodies and of a dense, external force on the outside.[36]

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[30] David Burton, "What Is the Spirit? Some Physics of Spiritual Existence," *Journal of Unification Studies,* Vol III (2007), 107.

[31] Burton, *What is the Spirit?*, 107.

[32] Burton, *What is the Spirit?*, 107.

[33] Burton, *What is the Spirit?*, 107.

[34] Michael Proudfoot and A. R. Lacey, *The Routledge Dictionary of Philosophy*, fourth ed. (London/New York: Routledge, 2010), 248; → Aristotle's central part of metaphysics is 'ontology', which is concerned with explaining the nature of the most fundamental aspects of life, and addresses issues concerning being or existence of such entities such as the soul, values, numbers, time, space, etc. There is the question of whether these all 'are' in the same sense and to the same degree, and how notions like BEING, existence and subsistence are related together.

[35] Wolfgang Vondey, "Holy Spirit and the Physical Universe: The Impact of Scientific Paradigm Shifts on Contemporary Pneumatology," *Theological Studies* 70 (2009): 18.

[36] Vondey, "Holy Spirit and the Physical World," 20.

This ontological status given to forces effectively established the roots of modern science. At the same time, the spiritual status attributed to such forces provide a uniform framework for the modern Protestant and Catholic theology.[37] According to Vondey, "the main tension in this application consisted of the fact that the spiritual connotations of forces could not be translated into pure mechanical philosophy of nature."[38] And as a result, Newton's idea of spirit was conceived as a 'quasi-material' or the grey area between the complete incorporeality of God and the full solidity of the body. For Newton, although God is seen as the ultimate cause of all things, the idea of a universally present, vital spirit, offered the opportunity to show a more immediate cause for natural phenomena while maintaining the transcendence of God. The challenge for Newton, was whether this intermediate spirit was itself a divine or a created agent. Whereas Newton hesitated to draw the theological implications of his own view, the influence of his thought on the theological schools of the 18th and the 19th centuries was well attested.

0.6.3 A Physiological Definition

In modern physiology and biology, the concept of the soul and the spirit within the human body have not been scientifically supported or proved. The general conscience which usually arises in the areas of psychology, sociology, and religion, presumes that the human being is made up or comprised of three distinct realms that are interrelated: the *body*, the *soul* (mind and emotions), and the *spirit*. The body is the physical, tangible part of the human being that interacts with the

[37] Vondey, "Holy Spirit and the Physical World," 21. → The impact of Newton's ideas can be observed in the thought of such influential thinkers as Karl Barth, Karl Rahner, Wolfhart Pannenberg, and Jürgen Moltmann.

[38] Vondey, "Holy Spirit and the Physical World," 21.

material world through the five senses: *touch*, *sight*, *sound*, *smell*, and *taste*.[39] Through our senses, the body relates our inner-self to the outside world, and sends signals to our brains for cognition and interpretation. The soul is the realm of decision, and it constitutes of the mind, will, and emotions.[40] The mind thinks, remembers, reasons, and imagines, while the will determines what a person wants or willing.

Emotions create the impact of what a person thinks and what a person wants or willing to do. In other words, emotions impact what people think, what people do as well as their intentions. Hence the soul can be defined as the seat of consciousness, the place where freewill is exercised. The soul determines our personality and acts as the "neutral ground between the body and the spirit".

The spirit on the other hand is "the vital animating essence or vigorous principle held to give life to a person".[41] It is the innermost part of the human being, the centre of who she is and it is the realm of the person that interacts with the *divine*, and the spirit-world. These interrelated tripartite nature of the human being can be summarised in **Figure 1** below:

[39] Alina Bradford, and Alisa Harvey, "LiveScience," *Future US Inc* (February 2023), accessed June 26, 2023, https://www.livescience.com/60752-human-senses.html

[40] Metaphysics Research Lab, "The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy," Department of Philosophy, Stanford University (April 2009), accessed June 26, 2023, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ancient-soul/

[41] Robert Edward Allen, ed., *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 1173.

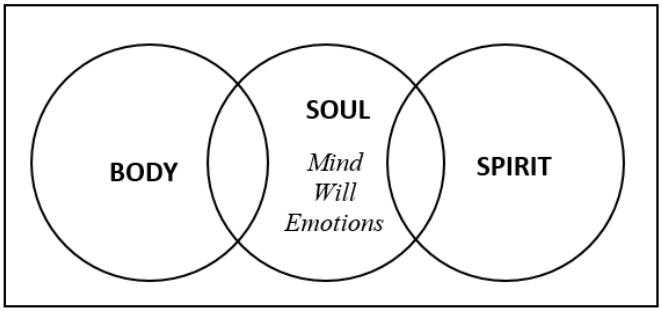

Figure 1: The Tripartite View of the Human Being

0.6.4 Spirituality

Our interaction or interconnectedness with the divine or things pertaining to the spirit-world defines our "spirituality". Spirituality "concerned with sacred or religious aspects; holy; divine; inspired."[42].

According to Roger Haight, the term *spirituality* refers to the way "human beings, individuals and groups, lead their lives considered from the point of view of union with God."[43] In this sense, the subject matter of spirituality may be thought of in terms of action, where action is understood in a comprehensive way to include the whole human existence.

Maya Spencer on the other hand recognized spirituality as "the recognition of a feeling or sense or belief that there is something greater than myself, something more to being human than sensory experience, and that the greater whole of which we are part is cosmic or divine in nature."[44] Just as a candle cannot burn without fire, men cannot live without a spiritual life. In other words,

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[42] Allen, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, 1174.

[43] Francis Schüssler Fiorenza and John P. Galvin, eds., *Systematic Theology*, 2nd ed., Roman Catholic Perspectives (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 425.

[44] Maya Spencer, "What Is Spirituality? A Personal Exploration," in *RCPSYCH - Publications Archive*, London: Royal College of Psychiartrists (2012), 1, accessed June 26, 2023, https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk

"spirituality is knowing that our lives have significance in a context beyond our ordinary everyday existence, and knowing that we are a significant part of a purposeful unfolding of life in our universe."[45] As Christina Puchalski puts it:

> Spirituality is the aspect of humanity that refers to the way individuals seek and express meaning and purpose, and the way they experience their connectedness to the moment, to self, to others, to nature, and to the significant or sacred.[46]

This interconnectedness symbolizes our deep sense of aliveness. In other words, it is the self-transcending character of all human persons, and everything that pertains to it, including most importantly, the ways in which the spiritual divine is realized concretely in our social culture and in our everyday life situations.

0.7 Where to from here?

In the previous section I have presented a very *brief* definition of the Holy Spirit from the biblical, philosophical and physiological perspectives. Although these definitions brought into the study various ideas and purposes, I propose to combine all of these meanings into two statements that can act as my hypothetical statements.

First, "the Spirit inspires and transforms the individual". The individual in this case can refer to the human person, or to the church as a cohesive unit. Inspiration occurs when the individuals go out of their way in responding to the divine calling through faith, by doing the will

[45] Spencer, 'What is Spirituality?", 1.

[46] Christina M. Puchalski et al., "Improving the Spiritual Dimension of Whole Person Care: Reaching National and International Consensus," *Journal of Palliative Medicine* 17, no. 6 (2014), 643, accessed July 15, 2023, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4038982

of God, with the purpose of giving him the ultimate honour through obedience, love, worship and reverence.

Second, "the Spirit fosters unity between the believers, and in turn, enables the unity of the Church". In other words, the ultimate unity of the church depends on the individuals, whom are themselves inspired and transformed by the Spirit through the Word. The Word is Christ, in Whom the ultimate Wisdom and Grace of God are manifested.

Therefore, this thesis argues that it is only through the power of the 'Holy Spirit' that the Church exists and continue to exist. In arguing this thesis, I will have to contend it from my point of presence, my place of existence, my point of identity as a Samoan. My point of identity is not just as a Samoan, but as a Christian Samoan. Therefore, I take into consideration my own Samoan cultural and Christian experiences.

0.8 Chapters Outline

The study is divided into four (4) chapters.

Chapter One focuses on the Methodology and the Hermeneutical Approach that this study will undertake. The first step is to underline some of the contextual theology elements and a critical review of these approaches. Secondly, a description of the intercultural hermeneutic approaches and reviews of some of the intercultural studies by scholars in Samoa. This is followed by the presentation of the *uluulumatafolau* intercultural hermeneutic. Interpretations of the hermeneutic in relation to the work of the (Holy) Spirit in the life and mission of the EFKS is the function of Chapter 4.

Chapter Two deals with the Samoan culture and the indigenous spirit-world, highlighting the traditional and Christian world-views herein we may begin to understand the 'spirit-world'.

The chapter begins by defining the spiritual foundation of the self-being or the *tagata ola*, and the relational-being or the *tagata o faiā*. Secondly, the indigenous spirit-world is explored, along with the wisdom traditions and cultural practices.

Chapter Three focuses on the biblical reference and revelations of the Holy Spirit. Selected Scriptures specifically in the accounts of *creation, Jesus' baptism, the Holy Spirit and the Church, Pentecost,* and *Paul's Ministry* will be discussed in relation to the Holy Spirit. The chapter concludes with a presentation of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and in relation to the doctrine of God, the doctrine of the Trinity, and Christological developments.

Chapter Four offers an interpretation of the Holy Spirit, incorporating the biblical aspects and cultural beliefs from the *uluulumatafolau* hermeneutical lens. It highlights how the fundamental roles of the Holy Spirit in the Church can be articulated from a cultural perspective. Such interpretations aim to bring aspiration and motivation for a transformation, renewal, and sanctification of the Church, which starts from the spiritual life of the individuals.

Lastly, the **Conclusion** presents the theological significance and implications of this study, with possible areas for further research.

0.9 Summary

In this introductory chapter the purpose and objectives, as well as the expectations of the study have been underscored. A brief biblical/theological review offers a brief description and foundational concepts pertaining to the Holy Spirit, which will be elaborated on in Chapter 3. In addition, the philosophical and physiological descriptions of the 'spirit', offers a universal background from the perspective of science and philosophy. This chapter also outlined some of

the key questions that will be used to guide the development of the study, as well as its the scope and limitation. The methodology and the contextual approach that the study will undertake are briefly underlined, but these will be further explained in details, in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 1
Methodology & Approach

1.0 Introduction

This chapter aims to clarify the methodology and the theological framework of the study. The study will undertake a contextual theological approach but at the same time mindfulness of the systematic theological aspects. In other words, it examines the systematic concepts of the Holy Spirit from a contextual perspective.

The first step is to underline some of the contextual theological elements and a critical review of these approaches. Secondly, a description of the intercultural hermeneutic approaches and some of the intercultural studies by various Samoan scholars will be reviewed. This is followed by the presentation of the *Ululumatafolau* intercultural hermeneutic. Interpretations of the hermeneutic in relation to the work of the (Holy) Spirit in the life and mission of the EFKS is the function of Chapter 4.

1.1 Contextual Theology Approach

This study employs a contextual-theological approach with a systematic perception of the Holy Spirit. It is contextual in a sense that it utilises an intercultural hermeneutic based on the Samoan religious and cultural experience, to construct an interpretation of the Holy Spirit in the life of the EFKS. Figure 2 shows a graphical representation of the approach.

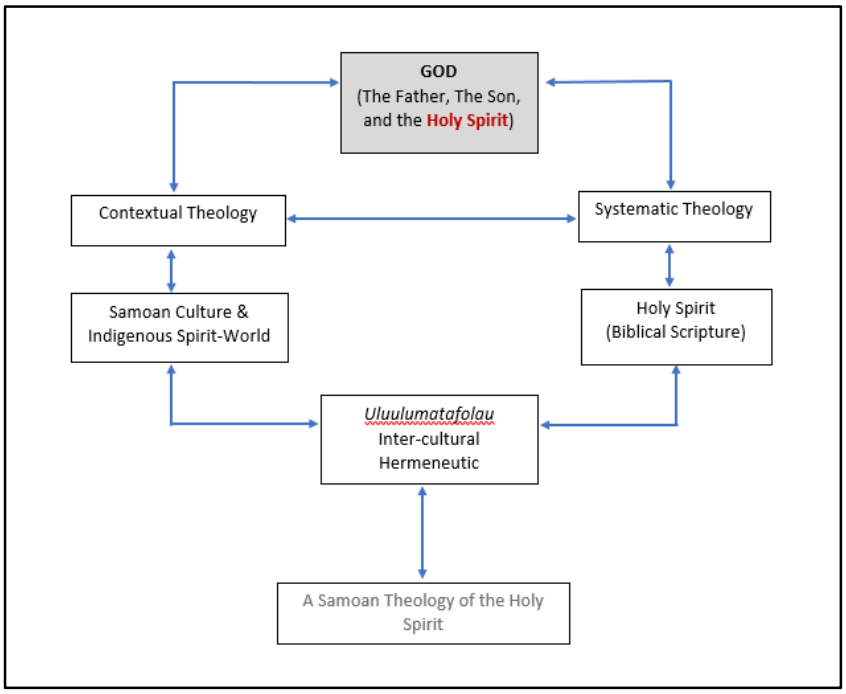

Figure 2: The Methodological Approach

Stephen Bevans defines contextual theology as:

> a way of doing theology in which one takes into account the spirit of the gospel; the tradition of the Church; the culture in which one is theologising; and social change within that culture, whether brought about by western technological process or the grass-roots struggle for equality, justice and liberation.[1]

Bevans here goes beyond classical or traditional theology by postulating three main sources for contextual theology, namely, the *Scripture*, *church tradition* and *socio-cultural context* in which one is theologizing. In other words, it is conceivable that contextual theology was inspired with the very origins of the faith through socio-cultural experience. This means that contextual theology is rooted in the human's desire and yearning to learn and to understand more about God, and to

[1] Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll/New York: Orbis Books, 1992), 1.

make sense of his presence within a specific spatial location. It is equally the case that the Bible is a product of contextual underpinnings.

The Old Testament relays a story and the experience of Israel which describes their relationship with their God, depicting a life full of sorrow, suffering, sin, disobedience, joy, blessings, and so much more. Through their long-life experience, they were able to witness the existence of God, and hence bring forth solid theological beliefs about their God and how they are to live accordingly. Likewise, much of the New Testament narrative depicts an account of intercultural negotiation and the formation of distinct communities, resulted in significant theological developments. One could argue that such negotiation across cultural differences, is the very ground of theological discourse precisely because it aimed to form communities based on the person of Jesus Christ. This understanding of the role of socio-cultural experience in theology may have led Bevans to declare that "There is no such thing as "theology"; there is only contextual theology."[2]

It is equally the case that all theology is contextual theology, both in its formal pronunciation, in its embodiment or structure, and in its informal material forms or representations. Despite the kinds of philosophical assumptions that may describe the essential nature of theology as somehow transcending context, there are legitimate theological reasons for asserting the contextuality of all theology. As Robert McAfee Brown observes:

> There is no way in which a historical faith (one that has received embodiment in specific times and places) could be expressed other than through the cultural norms

[2] Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 3.

> and patterns in which it is located. If it did not do so, it would fail to communicate. If it did not do so, it would not be historical.[3]

For Brown, in order to seek an understanding of Christian theology and concepts, one can never undermine his or her own cultural roots. Contextual theology therefore emphasizes the importance of considering the cultural, social, political, and historical contexts in which theological ideas are developed and applied.

Alister McGrath identified such experience as "an accumulated body of knowledge, arising through first-hand encounter with life".[4] For McGrath, human experience provides a foundational framework for Christian theology, and in turn, Christian theology is able to relate to human experience and to the "ultimate questions" that arise from it. John Hayes and Carl Holladay underline this perspective from a theoretical and practical standpoint when they say that, "theologians construct ways of thinking and talking about God's presence and activity within the world, but they also take into account the "lived lives" of believing communities."[5] This means that theologians must give attention to both the cognitive and experiential dimensions of faith when doing theology.

Bevans[6] on the other hand, provides such framework in his six models for practicing contextual theology: "translation", "anthropological", "praxis", "synthetic", "transcendental", and "countercultural". Bevans uses the term "contextualisation", in which he describes the theology that takes human experience, social location, culture, and cultural change seriously. The

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[3] Robert McAfee Brown, "The Rootness of All Theology: Context Affects Content," *Christianity and Crisis* 37, no. 12 (1977), 170-74.

[4] Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology - an Introduction* (West Sussex, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2017), 130.

[5] John H. Hayes and Carl R. Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook* (Louisville · London: Westminster John Knox 2007), 284.

[6] Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, Revised and Expanded ed., Faith and Cultures Series (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002), 35-127.

translation model starts with the '*text'*. Bevans describes the *translation* model in terms of translating the 'experience of the past' to the 'experience of the present'; 'the Scripture' to the 'Human experience' (individual/communal), and the 'Tradition' to one's 'social location and social change'.[7] This particular model focuses on identifying a Christian concept that transcends culture and figuring out how to express or make it meaningful in local culture terms. Bevans on the other hand asserted that "in many ways, every model of contextual theology is a model of translation." [8] In other words, there is always a context to be adapted or accommodated to a particular culture and situation.

The praxis model on the other hand emphasizes the importance of practical action and reflection. It sees theology as emerging from the concrete experiences and practices of a particular community or context. Bevans asserts that "the praxis model focuses on the identity of Christians within a context particularly as that context is understood in terms of social change."[9] In this sense, the praxis model plays the roles of adapting and adopting, and searching for alternative and appropriate approaches by which the core message of the Gospel can penetrate the ever-changing expanse of modern culture.

The anthropological model starts with the '*context'*. It mainly focuses on the identity of Christians within a particular context and seeks to develop their unique way of articulating faith. It realizes theology as "the establishment or preservation of cultural identity by a person of Christian faith…"[10] What is important in this model is the understanding that Christianity is about the human person and his or her fulfilment. It puts an emphasis on valuing a particular cultural

[7] Stephen Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 42.

[8] Stephen Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 37.

[9] Stephen Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 70.

[10] Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 54.

identity as divinely delineated and seeking ways to develop people's spirituality by drawing predominantly on local terms and context.

According to Bevans, the anthropological model is "anthropological" in two senses.[11] In the first place, it is focused on the value and goodness of the *Anthropos*, the human being. Bevans insisted that God manifests the divine presence within every person, every society, and every culture. Therefore, theology is not just a matter of relating an external message that is "culturally and contextually incompatible to a particular situation"; rather, theology primarily involves attending and listening to that situation so that "God's hidden presence can be manifested in the ordinary structures of the situation, often in surprising ways."

In the second place, the model is anthropological in the sense that it makes use of the insights of the social science of anthropology.[12] In this sense, Bevans pronounces that the main emphasis of this approach to contextual theology is on culture.

> By means of this particular discipline, the practitioner of the anthropological model tries to understand more clearly the web of human relationships and meanings that make up human culture and in which God is present, offering life, healing, and wholeness.[13]

In this sense, the human situation is the focus of divine revelation as much as scripture and tradition have been the foci of divine revelation in the past. Thus, one needs to listen to God's presence in the present context. On the other hand, because contextual theologians do not consider theology simply as a study of God, but as a study of what God says and does in a context, contextual theology actualizes a theological method which considers culture, history contemporary thought

[11] Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 55.

[12] Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 55.

[13] Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 55.

forms along with Scripture and tradition, as valid sources for theological expression.[14] In a similar vein, Sigurd Bergmann holds rightly that the interpretation of God today or the hermeneutic of the Christian faith "occurs in connection and in dialogue with people, phenomena and traditions in our age and the surrounding world."[15] For Bergmann, contextual theology strives not only to gather the experiences that emerge in specific situations or contexts, but also strives to actively change the context, and making theology part of the process of cultural renewal.

While contextual approaches can be beneficial in many ways, like any other approach to theological reflection, it has its weaknesses and challenges.

One such challenge is to do with its subjectivity and relativism nature. Contextual theology can lead to a subjective interpretation of religious teachings since it places a strong emphasis on a particular cultural context. This subjectivity may result in varying interpretations of theological concepts, potentially leading to relativism, where there is no objective truth, but everything is relative to a particular context.

On the other hand, contextual approaches that are depending heavily on the cultural context might introduce a cultural bias into theological understanding. According to David Tracy, "…the Gospel as expressed in Scripture and transmitted by the living tradition of the Church must be considered as the primary source of theology since it is the objective Word of God." [16] In this sense, given priority or emphasizing the context can sometimes lead to a departure from established religious traditions and biblical/historical interpretations. This can also lead to

[14] Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 4.

[15] Sigurd Bergmann, *God in Context: A Survey of Contextual Theology* (Hants: Ashgate, 2003), 4.

[16] David Tracy, "Theological Method," in *Christian Theology*. *An Introduction to Its Traditions and Tasks*, eds. Peter. C. Hodgson & Robert H. King (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1994), 13.

possibilities of diluting or compromising the core doctrinal tenets of a religion and result in the loss of theological coherence and orthodoxy. In other words, overemphasis on context might result in misinterpretation or misapplication of religious teachings, leading to unintended consequences or misrepresentations of the faith.

Furthermore, contextual theology tends to focus primarily on the immanence of God (God's presence within the world and its affairs). It might not adequately address the aspect of transcendence (God's existence and actions beyond the material world), which is essential in many religious traditions. To address these challenges, theologians often seek a balanced approach, acknowledging the importance of context while maintaining a connection to the broader theological tradition and overarching principles of their respective faiths.

Within the Pacific communities, the quest for a "Pacific Christ" and a "Pacific Theology" may have been just wishful thinking and a forgone illusion three decades ago when being labelled an "immense challenge," and confronting all sorts of "hurdles, problems and risks" as Paulo Koria[17] reflects upon. However, the fact that the subject continues to attract the interest and voice of the Pacific people today, shows it cannot be ignored in hindsight or looked upon simply in passing, any longer.

In context, the appropriate cultural resources for theology are certainly available in the Pacific and more particularly in the Samoan locality. These resources, which essentially include ancient customs and traditions, according to Koria,[18] "form a system of meaning by which life in the Pacific is lived." and, "Because theology has to do with the totality of human life, all these

[17] Paulo Koria, "Moving toward a Pacific Theology: Theologising with Concepts," in *Pacific Journal of Theology* Series II, no. 22 (1999), 3.

[18] Koria, "Moving toward a Pacific," *Theology,* 4.

resources are important for the expression and articulation of the Christian faith." Culture, with all its diversity and inclusiveness is well and alive in the Pacific. In Samoa, indigenous traditions play their part just as much as the rest of the modern ingredients, local and foreign, that interact in forming the cultural norms of the day, this cultural setting provides the resources that are considered relevant to "expressing the message of the gospel."[19]

As a child born and raised in a rural place in the island of Savaii, I was exposed to two dominant worlds: a devoted Christian life, and a genuine Samoan culture. The early dawn of the new day before the sun rises is greeted by the morning *lotu* (devotion/worship). With clumsy bodies and sleepy eyes, we children reacted and blended in spontaneously to the blissful rhythm and harmonic tune of the hymn, followed by the prayer, which is usually led by my parents. The same scene is of course recurring just after the sun is slowly disappearing beyond the mountains. Most prominently in my upbringing was the role that my parents played (or should I say "they are still playing" such roles). They were hard working, committed in everything that they do, and they taught us the meaning of love, respect, humility and perseverance.

Watching and observing the cultural processes of daily life is normalcy for a Samoan child. The occasional ceremonial ritual births, marriages, dancing and singing, village meeting, the acts of generosity and hospitality for guests, dispute and resolution of dispute, as well as the solemnity of death, exposes a child to some of the basic customary lessons of a Samoan family or village community classroom. Discipline and wisdom were actuated and comprehended through Christian ethical values and cultural protocols taught through oral traditions, language, myths and storytelling, service, observation, practice and doing. The resultant cultural environment forms

[19] Koria, "Moving toward a Pacific," *Theology*, 4.

the cradle of life and wisdom in which a Samoan child at birth must be baptised, nurtured and raised.

1.2 Culture and Indigenous Beliefs as a Hermeneutical Lens

The word *culture* (or *aganuu* in Samoan) is derived from the Latin *cultivare* ("to till the soil").[20] This etymological connection lent itself to the original meaning of *culture*, namely, "the care and tending of crops or animals," especially as this activity is aimed at improving or perfecting its object. The idea of a specifically *human* culture was likely a metaphorical extension of the "tending" process to the human person, so that culture came to be connected with the "development" or "refinement" of the person, especially through teaching and learning. The Samoan word *aganu'u* refers to the customs, traditions, behaviour and social protocols (*aga*) of a village or a social community (*nuu*). According to Malama Meleisea, *aganuu* defines unity; it "speaks of nature and nurture in the same breath; for *aga* is the essence of the nature of things, while *nuu* represents the sum of man's learned experience."[21]. Culture, as employed in the context of this study, epitomizes the holistic nature and nurturing of the traditional learning experience of the Samoan community, based on its traditions and social protocols, indigenous wisdom and rituals.

Correspondingly, the term "indigenous" in the context of this study designates the aboriginal, native, ancient, and the primitive state. It designates a world that most of the time described in 'myths' or legends, that passes down to us in the form of oral traditions. Like the rest of the islands in the Oceania, these myths and legends serve as vehicles of belief-systems and are held and valued

[20] Douglas Harper, "*cultivare*", Online Etymology Dictionary, accessed April 14, 2023, https://www.etymonline.com

[21] Malama Meleisea, *Lalaga: A Short History of Western Samoa* (Suva: University of the South Pacific, 1987), 177.

within the Samoan tradition. Although mythological traditions have been recognized pagan by early Christian missionaries, contemporary studies reveal that they are a systematic foundation that describes worldviews and realities of indigenous people.

Amaamalele Tofaeono points out that although the myths and legends are considered to be folk tales, we can still say that they are "narratives that relates truth/s (or meanings) which are the foundation to an existential reality."[22] Hence, they inform and shape our Samoan worldview. They are considered as "life-justification proof – the life sources of a particular statement or opinion" called *lagisoifua.*[23] These life sources do not intend to invalidate the Western scientific understanding of evidence; rather, myths and legends, as life sources, are living texts in the cycle of our daily lives that continue to speak to us in the reshaping of our modern existence. This means that myth is a sacred narrative that conjoins the *vā* (distance, space, gap) between eternity and ordinary, divine spirit and matter, past and present, time and place, and so forth.

1.3 Intercultural Hermeneutic Approach

In Christian theological circles, we take *hermeneutics* as a point of reference within biblical and theological interpretations. The term hermeneutic is derived from the Greek word *hermēneúō* which means "to explain" or "to interpret"[24]. The term is thought to have been originated from

[22] Amaamalele Tofaeono, *Eco-Theology: Aiga - the Household of Life; a Perspective from the Living Myths and Traditions of Samoa* (Erlanger Verl. für Mission und Ökumene: Erlangen, 2000), 22.

[23] Aiono Fanaafi Le Tagaloa, *O Motugaafa* (Apia: Le Lamepa Press, 1996), 2. → *Lagisoifua: lagi* (sky or heaven) and *soifua* (life). According to Aiono, *lagisoifua* is a Samoan lifeworld referring to people, land, sea, traditional belief and so forth.

[24] Frederick William Danker, ed., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 4th ed. (BDAG) (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2021), 346.

the Greek god *Hermes*, who served as a messenger interpreting between the gods and mortals.[25] In its general use, hermeneutic refers to the study of theories of interpretation and can be considered another approach of reading the biblical text. By adding the word "intercultural," we specify the interpretive context to be an integration of two or more cultures. Hence, intercultural theology finds its basis in contextual biblical readings. In familiar terms, it is "an art of understanding"[26] or the "the fusion of horizons."[27]

The process of intercultural theology is presented as a dynamic notion that broadens the concepts of contextualisation due to its emphasis on mutual reciprocity. Mutual reciprocity can be described as the common ground in which the gospel and culture communicate, hence beneficial for both. Bill Ashcroft explained this integration of cultures as "cultural transformation" [28] – whereby cultures appropriate elements from other cultures in beneficial ways.

Contextual biblical reading approaches were made possible by putting emphasis on the reader and their location in the interpretive process. In his article on "Mythopoetic Language and Discipleship in Revelation", Vaitusi Nofoaiga[29] according to Schüssler Fiorenza, asserts that a biblical text such as Revelation, is a compilation of different sources, that appeal to the author, who put together the text "according to the theological interests and in order to make theological arguments." Nofoaiga pays special attention to the use of mythopoetic sources as part of defining

[25] David Jasper, *A Short Introduction to Hermeneutics* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 7.

[26] Anthony C. Thiselton, *Hermeneutics: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 149.

[27] Thiselton, *Hermeneutics*, 226.

[28] Bill Ashcroft, *Post-Colonial Transformation* (London/New York: Routledge, 2001), 14-17.

[29] Vaitusi Nofoaiga, "Earth Came to Help a Woman: mythopoeic language and discipleship in Revelation 12: 1–17," in *Bible Blindspots: dispersion and othering*, eds. Jione Havea and Monica Jyotsna Melanchthon (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2021), 171-184.

Christian existence because this "relates to Samoan *Tala o le Vavau* (Samoan myths)."[30] In this sense, the shift to the reader-oriented approach allows biblical scholars to bring the local contexts into engagement with biblical texts. This approach is very compatible to the approach that this study undertakes.

Such interpretive approach is taken up by Pacific Island biblical scholars including Samoan biblical scholars. This approach enables the reader to employ aspects of Samoan island life such as experiences, cultural and religious beliefs, and indigenous worldviews within their biblical interpretation. This mode of theological and biblical interpretation has been given prominence by Pacific Island including Samoan biblical scholars, such as Otele Perelini, Vaitusi Nofoaiga, Peniamina Leota, Arthur Wulf, Fatilua Fatilua, and Frank Smith, to name a few.

In his work on "*A Comparison of Jesus' Healing with Healing in Traditional and Christian Samoa*",[31] Perelini offers an extensive outlook into Jesus' healings and the Samoan spiritual world from a pure traditional healing context, using the historical sources available. Bringing the Jesus' healing domains side-by-side with the Samoan healing milieu, Perelini was able to extract specific motifs that help to re-enforce the reality of holistic healing, which includes not only physical cure but also other significant healing dimensions as well. Such work shows the advantageous of contextual approaches in cultural transformation not only for the benefit of the community, but also the individual.

[30] Nofoaiga, "Earth Came to Help a Woman," 172.

[31] Otele Sili Perelini, "A Comparison of Jesus' Healing with Healing in Traditional and Christian Samoa" (PhD Thesis, Edinburgh University, 1992).

A similar approach was undertaken by Nofoaiga in his work on "*A Samoan Reading of Discipleship in Matthew*"[32]. In this study, Nofoaiga uses a hermeneutic known as the Tautua-ile-va (service in-between spaces). Tautua-ile-va refers to service carried out in-between spaces, as well as to a servant who stands in-between spaces. One of the aspects of Nofoaiga's approach was his localization of *tautua* (service) within a particular place. It expresses the expectation that service in a family or community is reciprocal and the needs and rights of everyone are important.[33] On the other hand, it shows his hybrid location as third space, at which *tautua-ile-va* is a dynamic location where he moves, as a *tautua,* to and from places and act in accordance with the reality of life in everyday life as a Samoan.

In a similar vein, Wulf, in his study "*Reappraising Earth in Genesis 1:1–2:4a from a Samoan Gafataulima Perspective"*[34], utilizes a Samoan hermeneutic called "Tala-mamanu". Wulf's definition of *tala-mamanu* methodology is a "fusion of Samoan *tala* (narrative) and *mamanu* (concepts/patterns/motifs) reading strategies which not only focus on texts as tala, but also analyzes the mamanu or concepts in the text."[35] The 'tala' reading reconvenes narrative criticism, concentrating on narrative devices such as the narrator, setting, characters, and plot in deciphering the meaning of the text.[36] The *mamanu* reading strategy is derived from the *mamanu* of a siapo (tapa-cloth) or *tatau* (traditional tattoo). Wulf attempts to interpret these *mamanu* of a siapo or tatau, because of the consideration that they relay and communicate a story. Hence, this reading

[32] Vaitusi Nofoaiga, *A Samoan Reading of Discipleship in Matthew*, International Voices in Biblical Studies (Atlanta, Georgia: SBL, 2017).

[33] Nofoaiga, *A Samoan Reading of Discipleship,* 40.

[34] Arthur John Wulf, "Was Earth Created Good? - Reappraising Earth in Genesis 1:1-2:4a from a Samoan Gafataulima Perspective" (PhD Thesis, The University of Auckland, 2016).

[35] Wulf, "Was Earth Created Good?", 3.

[36] Wulf, "Was Earth Created Good?", 3.

perceives *mamanu* as words of a special language that communicate meanings comparable to grammatical criticism being attentive to individual words, vocabulary choices, and linguistic features in the narrative in order to unravel the text's meanings.

Furthermore, Peniamina Leota uses an analogical approach in his engagement with the biblical text in his study on "*Ethnic Tensions in Persian-Period Yehud*"[37]. Leota investigates the issues between ethnic groups in Persian-Period Yehud in light of the existing issues relating to land tenure and human rights in Samoan society. He explores the analogies between contemporary Samoa and Persian Yehud. In doing so, Leota uses a contextual reading of Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles using elements of historical criticism as an interpretative tool to lead meanings out of the biblical text. In such a process, Leota allows the biblical world to inform current concerns of culture and rights in Samoa and vice versa. Leota, concludes his study by proposing recommendations for a Samoan hermeneutic and the responsible use of the Bible in the Samoan context.[38]

With a similar lens, Smith[39] in his study of the Gospel of John, analyses the Gospel's characterization of Jesus from a Samoan perspective. In particular Smith attempts to resolve the interpretive problem of 'distanciation' (distance between the world of the text, world encoded in the text, and world of the reader) faced by readers in interpreting biblical texts. To bridge this distance, Smith draws on his experience and understanding of the Samoan social and cultural world and develops an analogical approach to reading biblical texts.

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[37] Peniamina Leota, "Ethnic Tensions in Persian-Period Yehud: A Samoan Postcolonial Hermeneutics" (PhD Thesis, Melbourne College of Divinity, 2005).

[38] Leota, "Ethnic Tensions," 1.

[39] Frank Smith, "The Johannine Jesus from a Samoan Perspective: Toward an Intercultural Reading of the Fourth Gospel" (PhD Thesis, University of Auckland, 2010).

Lastly, Fatilua,[40] in his study on "*Fāiā Analysis of Romans 13:1–7*", integrates a Samoan perspective with social-rhetorical criticism. Using a formative Samoan mode of reading called *fāiā-i-upu-ma-fatua'iupu* (connections in words/word constructions), Fatilua engages the text, in light of the relationship between Church and State in Samoa. Using such mode of reading, he looks for connections embedded within the various textures of the text, exploring how these connections challenge existing views of Christian political responses. Fatilua's hope was to bring a Samoan indigenous perspective into the mix of biblical scholarship. He also shares the hope that biblical scholars of Oceania would be able to incorporate Pacific indigenous concepts and ideas, to read and interpret biblical texts within our island contexts, to make sense of the text.

In summation, these studies illustrate how our readings of biblical texts can inform our perceptions of the issues surrounding us in contemporary society and vice versa. These studies also manifest the fact that our Samoan culture and way of living is rich with concepts, stories, wisdom traditions, worldviews and rituals that can be used as hermeneutical keys to read biblical texts. The use of these local premises as hermeneutics can enrich our understanding of biblical texts and make their messages sensible for us.

Taking on the same pathway, the *uluulumatafolau* intercultural hermeneutic seeks to construct a most fitting interpretation of the Holy Spirit for the EFKS, by drawing upon the Samoan cultural practices and indigenous religion.

[40] Fatilua Fatilua, "Fāiā Analysis of Romans 13:1-7: Integrating a Samoan Perspective with Socio-Rhetorical Criticism" (MTh Thesis, Pacific Theological College, 2018).

1.4 *Uluulumatāfolau* Theological and Inter-Cultural Hermeneutic

The Samoan *muāgagana* (proverbial expression or saying) of *Uluulumatafolau* (or *uluulu-a-matafolau*) is originated from two Samoan traditions. Before I provide descriptions of these two traditions, first I will present an etymological study of the expression.

1.4.1 Etymological Study of Uluulumatafolau

The term *uluulumatafolau* (or *uluulu-a-matafolau*) is a combination of many words: *ulu, uluulu, mata, folau,* and *lau*.

Ulu – (i) *Ulu* is the Samoan word for 'head' (men and animals).[41] (ii) The word *ulu* is also used to describe something of highest status or denotes a highest point. For example: *ulu matua* (the eldest of children), *ulu a'oga* (principle or the head of a school), *ulu o le aiga* (the leader or the head of a family). (iii) When the word *ulu* is preceded with an apostrophe, (*'ulu*), it means "breadfruit tree". (iv) When *ulu* is used as a verb, it means "to enter". This verbal use of *ulu* generates other connotations such as *ulufale* (to enter into a house), *ulufafo* (to exit), and *ulufia* or *uluitinoina* (being possessed or inspired - as in "being possessed by the Holy Spirit or an evil spirit"). (v) Ulu can also mean "to re-thatch or mending the broken thatches of a Samoan *fale* (house)."[42] Ulu in this case has the same meaning as the word *taulu.*

Uluulu – (i) The term *uluulu* as a verb reiterates the act of *ulu* – "re-thatching or mending the broken thatches or *lau* as mentioned above (ii) As an adverb, the term *uluulu* describes an intensive affection or very strong emotions. The recurring of the word *ulu* bespeaks of the intensity of a situation or being strongly influenced or extremely infatuated. For example: "*ua uluulu le alofa*"

[41] George Pratt, *Grammar and Dictionary of the Samoan Language* (London: The London Missionary Society, 1893), 100.

[42] Pratt, *Samoan-Dictionary & Grammar*, 100.

-signifies the intensity of "being deeply in-love" (iii) Uluulu also means "to be umbrageous, of trees" or to be bushy such as a foliage or a dense mangrove or a big tree. The thickness and the close entwinedness of leaves and branches can offer shelter and protection for birds and animals. This close entwinedness of leaves and branches can also be described as *feuluuluta'i* (interpenetrated or interconnected).

Mata – (i) *Mata* is the Samoan word for "eyes". [43] (ii) It also means raw or unripe".[44] (ii) In its use in the expression *uluulumatafolau*, it refers to the *matālau* or a pattern/row or simply a patch of *lau* or thatches (c.f. *ina'ilau*[45]) (iii) Mata also refers to "holes" in the *lau*, or *matātutulu* or simply *tutulu*.

Folau – (i) The term *folau* in the Samoa language means "to sail". It is also the name given to a special Samoan house (*fale*) that is specifically built to house a Samoan sailing boat (*va'a*) – the name of this *fale* is *fale-a-folau*. The name indicates the purpose of the house - "the house built for the boat that is about to sail (*va'a o le a folau*)".[46] Another connotation of the *faleafolau*

[43] Pratt, *Samoan-Dictionary & Grammar*, 212.

[44] Pratt, *Samoan-Dictionary & Grammar*, 212.

[45] There is an old Samoan proverbial expression that derives from a well-known story in which two parties (a party of men and a party of women) who were engaged in building a stone roof of a house carved out of a rock. The story goes that the side of the roof (*ina'ilau*) in which the women built was completed first before the men did. Hence the expression "*E au le ina'ilau a tamaita'i*" generally signifies the consistency of women in general comparing to men.

[46] A very popular Samoan proverbial expression that is used by orators in speeches when welcoming guests reflects this connotation: "*Ua sau le vaa na tiu, tau mai i le vaa na tau, ae o lo o mamau pea lago o le vaa na faō a folau*). Meaning, "The travelling boat has been safely arrived, greeted by the one that is anchored, while the one that is about to sail is silently sleeping." This expression signifies the intimate relationship of the people of Samoa to the ocean; La Perouse first named the islands of Samoa the "Navigator Islands" due to their proficiency in the way they maneuver their canoes. The ocean is a highway for them, "a connection", a dangerous playground, a medium that they use to seek new lands, and just as the land is important for them for surviving, so is the ocean.

refers to the house that is covered with thatches (*lau*); hence the alternative name *fale-ato-i-lau* (a house covered by thatches). The word *ato* in the *fale-ato-i-lau* means "to thatch".[47]

Lau – Lau is a Samoan word that means "leaf" or "leaves"[48] in English. In the Samoan culture, leaves hold cultural and practical significance and are used in various ways.

i. Traditional Clothing - Leaves are used to make traditional garments. These garments or wraparound skirts worn by both men and women are often made from the leaves of the "*laufala*" (*Pandanus tectorius*), which are woven together to create intricate design. In the old days, men and women used to wear leaves woven together known as *titi* made from the leaves of the *ti* plant. This are informal skirts which can be worn when doing everyday chores.

ii. Decorative Purposes - Leaves are also used for decoration purposes in the Samoan culture. They are often woven into decorative mats, wall hangings, or baskets. These items can be found in homes, churches, and community gathering places, adding a touch of natural beauty to the surroundings.

iii. Culinary Uses - Leaves are also use for cooking purposes. Certain leaves such as the *lau ti* (ti leaves) and *lau fa'i* (banana leaves) are used to wrap and cook traditional dishes like "*palusami*" (taro leaves stuffed with coconut cream and cooked in an umu, an earth oven). The leaves infuse a distinct flavor into the food and help to retain moisture.

[47] Pratt, *Samoan-Dictionary & Grammar*, 79.

[48] Pratt, *Samoan-Dictionary & Grammar*, 174.

iv. Medicinal and Healing Purposes - Some Samoans believe in the healing properties of certain leaves and plants. Traditional healers, known as *taulasea*, may use specific leaves in their remedies and treatments for various ailments.

v. Rituals and Ceremonies – Leaves often used in Samoan rituals and ceremonies. They may be used to create garlands or wreaths, which are worn during special occasions or presented as gifts. Leaves may also be used in religious ceremonies and offerings as a symbol of respect and gratitude. In funerals, when the deceased is finally lowered into his/her final place, family members and friends and mourners throw flowers and leaves into the grave. This custom not only symbolises respect, but also to signify the continuous presence of their loved ones in the spirit, symbolises by the "leaf", an emblem of life.

vi. Building and Construction – The Samoan word *lau* also means "a thatch", an artefact that is used as a covering canvas for the roof of a Samoan *fale*. The *lau* or thatch is made from all things natural. It is made from the long dry leaves of the sugarcane (*tolo*) plant. Alternatively, in the modern days the leaves of the *niutuma* (a type of coconut) are commonly used.

Uluulumatafolau - Adhering to the etymology given above, it shows that *uluulumatafolau* is a multifaceted expression that illuminates and integrates multiple meanings. When these meanings are unified, it reveals that *uluulumatafolau* has an intrinsic motivation, not only it inter-dwells and has an intensive bonding, influence, and inner affection, but also has a purpose of eternal endurance and continuity. These meanings will be further explained in the next sections.

1.4.2 Uluulumatafolau – Ia Malu i Fale (Being Sheltered at Home)

The first meaning of the expression *uluulumatafolau* is associated with the art of "traditional building architecture". It refers to "the fixing or mending of the broken thatches of a Samoan *fale*." One of the most important stage in the construction of a Samoan traditional *fale*, is the installation of the roof, which is normally the final touch of the construction. The house is of course no use at all, if there is no covering or roofing. All of the Samoan traditional houses, whether a *faletele* (meeting house), *faleo'o* (common house), or *faleafolau* (boat house) are all covered or concealed by a special traditional thatch called the *lau*.

The *lau* or thatch (as previously described) is a natural roofing artefact that is made from all things natural. It is made from the long dry leaves of the sugar-cane (*tolo*) plant. Alternatively, in the modern days the leaves of the *niutuma* (a type of coconut) are commonly used. The construction of the *lau* must be laid on and crafted with great attention and taste. The collection of the leaves and the task of stitching (*su'i*) them on to the reeds is normally the work of the women. The long dry leaves of *tolo* are closely strung on to a hard piece of straight reed. This hard thin piece of reed can be made from the branches of the *lafo* plant which is found in the forest, or from the *ūgapēpē,* a plant that is wildly growing in coastal areas. The *tolo* leaves are made fast to the reed by overlapping the one end of the leaf, and pinning it with a short wodden rib (*sa'ato*), run through firmly from leaf to leaf horizontally, using '*afa* (cinnet made from coconut fibre) or the *fau* (made from the inner part of the bark of the *fau* plant).

To fasten the *lau* on to the roof of the house is the work of the men. These reeds fringed with the sugar-cane leaves hanging down three or four feet, are laid on in a straight pattern. The fastening begins at the eaves and running up the ridge pole, each one overlapping its fellow an

inch or so, and made fast one by one with cinnet to the inside rods or rafters. Each row or a complete set or pattern of *lau* is called a *matālau* or *ina'ilau*.

Working upwards, a number of *lau* will be required for a single row running from the eaves to the ridge pole; then they do another row, and so on all round the house, until the whole roof is completely covered. This thatching, if well done, will last for seven to ten years. Corrugated iron, shingles, and other contraptions were introduced by European residents; but, for coolness and ventilation, nothing beats the traditional *lau*.

As previously mentioned, another meaning of the verb '*ulu'* is 'to insert'; similar to the word *taulu*, an action of 're-thatching' or reinserting new *lau* to replace the broken ones. In this process, instead of mending the whole line of thatches (*matālau*), only the broken ones will be restored. From time to time, maintenance need to be done to make sure that the roofing is well fixed so that the heat of the sun or rain does not pour into the house. At times, due to strong winds and gales, some part of the roofing maybe damaged, leaving holes (*matā tutulu*) in some of the *lau*. Hence the term *uluulumatafolau* by definition can be expressed as *uluulu-matā-tutulu* - *"*to mend (*uluulu*) only the *lau* or the *matālau* that are broken (*tutulu*). The word *mata* means eye, in this sense it refers to the eyes or the holes seeing through the broken *lau*. When the letter *a* in the word *mata* is stressed (*matā*), it extends the meaning to the whole row of *lau,* that is, *matālau*. In the case of severe damage, the whole roofing may need to be completely changed, this process is known as *atofuli*.

The whole purpose of fixing or mending the broken thatches is to provide protection, to shelter or stops the rain or the sun rays from getting in to the house. The Samoan word for "being sheltered" is *malu*. And this is metaphorically used in various Samoan expressions to signify a sense of protection, or a place of refuge, where one finds shelter and sanctuary. For example, there

is a well-known expression called: "*Malu-a-Papa*", which means, "Rock of Refuge" or "Sheltered Rock." It makes up of two words: *papa* (rock) and *malu* (being sheltered or being protected). As is well known, the name Malua Theological College is generally held to be a contraction of *Maluapapa* or "sheltering rock," a name that was associated with a cave and freshwater springs, but also with a biblical idea that "God was their refuge in danger."[49]

1.4.3 Uluulumatafolau – Ia saili i le Fale o le Tautai

(Seek in the House of the Tautai)

The second meaning of the expression *uluulumatafolau* is associated with the art of "fishing". Fishing is one of the most vibrant and important activity among other traditional arts and skills such as sailing, canoe building, architecture, planting, weaving, to name a few. These everyday activities are the emblems of a *tautua*, for they embody the spirit of living, surviving, and serving for the welfare and the prosperity of families and communities.

In the Samoan social-culture, the way people live was and still is a very community-oriented society, so that the notion of personality is understood in terms of relationship to the family and society generally. In the special community of the fishermen or those who are known as *tautai*, they have their own special codes, and specific protocols. For example, when one lacks or needs something like a fish-hook (*pa fagota*) or other fishing artefacts, more often he would pay a visit to his fellow *tautai*. When he cannot find what he needs in the first house he approached, he would move on to the next *tautai*, and so on. This practice of a fishermen who seeks from house to house, is known as *uluulumatafolau* or *uluulu-a-matafolau*, meaning, "going from house to house".

[49] *See* Mark G. Brett, "Humans and other Creatures: Renewing 'Animist' Shalom" (Paper presented at the OBSA Conference, Malua Theological College, 2016).

Hence it is often when a *tautai* lacks something or needs help, they would say, *Ia uluulu a matafolau,* meaning, "it is better to seek help in the houses of his fellow *tautai*," because that would be the most promising places where one will find help.

According to Su'a Fale,[50] a high chief in our village and a *tautai* himself, his father (the renowned *tautai* and *tufuga ta-va'a* (canoe-carver) of *Amoa,* Tofa Ae'au Tovea), used to have a *fale-a-folau* (boat house); this was also his workshop and basically where he lived. Every day he would spent most of his time carving canoes, and making all sorts of fishing artefacts ranging from fish-hooks (*pa fagota*), spears (*tao*), nets (*upega*), cinnets (*'afa*), baskets (*ola*), fishing rods made from bamboos (*'ofe*), and so forth. The most unique of these creations was the *pa fagota*. The pearl-shell fish-hook or the *pa* (in short) is a traditional fishing article long in use, and in the manufacture of which the Samoans show some creativity.[51] The construction of the *pa fagota* is a work of art, only the professional *tautai* would produce the best ones. Su'a recalled that almost every day, other *tautai* from our village and the nearby villages, even those from other districts would drop by looking for fishhooks and/or other artefacts. His father, out of old habits and kindness, would always offered his help willingly, and always gave freely without expecting charges from the begging party (c.f., Eric Schultz[52]).

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[50] Su'a Fale, interviewed by author, July 21, 2023, Saipipi, Savai'i.

[51] According to Su'a Fale, in constructing the *pa fagota,* the fisherman would first of all cuts a strip off a shell, from six to ten centimetres long. The next step is to rub the strip until it is smooth on a stone, so as to resemble a small fish. When it is ready, the next step is to secure a hook made of turtle shell on the under-side or the belly of the little mock fish. Alongside of the hook, covering its point, and in imitation of the fins of a little fish, the fisherman fastens two small white feathers (the feathers are usually of the *tava'e* (*Phaethen lepturus*) tropic bird. Without any bait, this pearl-shell contraption is cast adrift at the stern of a canoe or tied to a fishing rod with a line of various length.

[52] Dr. Erich. Schultz, "Proverbial Expressions of the Samoans," in *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*. Vol 58, No. 4 (1906). → "According to the communistic system of the Samoans, a travelling party is allowed to beg fish-hooks at the houses where they call. A wider interpretation is often given to this custom, known as *malagafaga,* and the begging may be extended to other objects. To get good hooks one has to ask in the houses of the *tautai* (*afolau*); elsewhere only inferior hooks will be offered."

This remarkable tradition of the *tautai* community is often echoed in the Samoan expression: "*Ua sasa'a fa'aoti le utu a le tautai*" (lit. Let the fisherman's bamboo receptacle be completely emptied out). The *utu* is a small vessel or a container usually made from the bamboo, in which the *tautai* stores all his *pa fagota* and other important items. The word *sasa'a* means "to pour out", and the word *fa'aoti* means "sacrifice to death". Hence when the *tautai* emptied his utu, it means completely, like death. The action of the *tautai* shows that he is showcasing everything that he has, and at the same time he is willing to offer whatever the begging party would like to take. They believe that the reciprocity of the love they offer, will come in another form, one way or the other. It is an action of generosity and kindness, freely giving, an act of sacrifice.

An important point that Su'a Fale mentioned that I would like to comment on was the fact that his father was actually living in the *afolau*. This close association of the *tautai* to his place of calling signifies his serious commitment to his obligations as a *tautua* or servant for his family and the community. As a *tautai* and a *tautua*, he prepares his fishing apparatuses well and in advance to meet the ends of his profession as well as for the needs of his family and especially his community.

1.5 *Uluulumatafolau* as an Interpretative Method

Section 1.4.1 to 1.4.3 above outlined how the hermeneutic of *uluulumatafolau* came about, including an etymological study and its originalities. *Uluulumatafolau* as a hermeneutical method is symbolic of the Samoan worldview positioning. Drawing upon the descriptions given above, the emphasis of *uluulumatafolau* rests upon the concept of "life-giving". As an interpretative method, *uluulumatafolau* seeks to scrutinize the indwelling (*uluulu*) and the life-giving natures of the Holy Spirit not only in the individual, community, but the church in particular. This conception

of life-giving encompasses many ideas. These ideas are extracted from the tasks of a *tufuga* (carpenter) and a *tautai* (fisherman), patterning the reality of life of the society as a whole. In other words, all the actions, reactions, interactions, metaphors, purposes, motivations, and meanings that are embedded and inter-dwelled in the hermeneutic, are all contributed to the ultimate purpose of love and unity within the inner-self, the family, the community, and the church. From the context of *uluulumatafolau*, the sense of life-giving can be recognised in the spirit of respect, mutual-reciprocity, honour, unity, sacrifice, mending, protection, shelter, and love. It shows that the *uluulumatafolau* is a multifaceted expression that weaves together unity and harmony in order to give, to sustain, and in turn, transforms life. It culminates in the act of seeking in the spirit, giving in the spirit, sacrificing through the spirit, and sheltered by the spirit. This is shown in the *Uluulumatafolau* model as illustrated below in Figure 3.

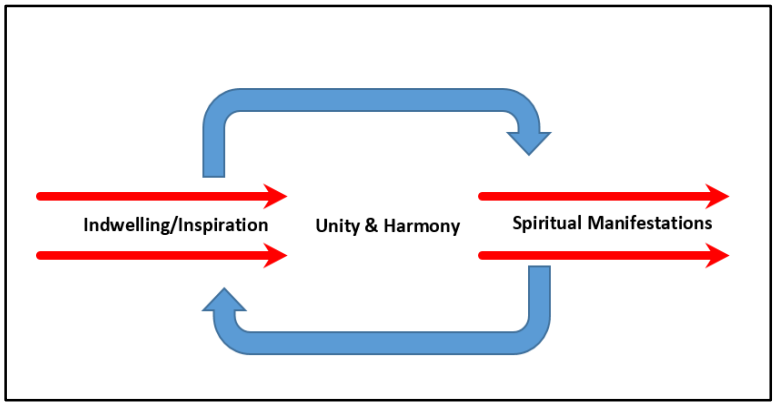

Figure 3: The *Uluulumatafolau* Model

The *Uluulumatafolau* model here is applied to an individual and the Church as a whole. The model shows the ultimate function of the Spirit as the One who indwells (*uluulu*) and inspires or transforms an individual, community and/or the Church. The model also proposes that it is only through the power of God through the Spirit that ignites unity and harmony in and within the

Church. The arrows are significant in the model, because they visualise the indwelling and the inter-dwelling of the Spirit in the life of the Church, and the eternity (as depicted in the analogy of journeying (*folau*)) of the Spirit. The spiritual manifestations indicate the outward responses, which can be interpreted in many ways, such as worship and manifestations and practices of spiritual gifts. These spiritual manifestations are all working towards the ultimate purpose of giving life, and fostering harmony and unity.

As we have witnessed in the introductory chapter (see Section 0.6), both the Hebrew term *rûah* (wind, breath) and the Greek term *pneûma* (breath) denotes air in movement, experienced as wind, or "breath." The impression of *breathing* implies the inherent power that brings forth life. These biblical connotations of the word 'spirit' as a 'life-giving' divine reality corresponds to the 'life-giving' principles embedded in the hermeneutic.

This 'life-giving' concept of the hermeneutic, will be used as the interpretative thread, piecing through and bring together the spiritual essences of culture (chapter 2) and Christianity/Biblical (chapter 3), which will come in full circle in discussion and interpretation (chapter 4).

1.6 Summary

In this chapter, I have set out to clarify the methodology and approach, as well as the intercultural hermeneutic. A critical review of the contextual approaches was given, highlighting how the social-cultural experience among church traditions and Scripture, was significantly important in doing contextual theology. I have also briefly touched on some of the weaknesses and challenges of these approaches. Furthermore, I have outlined some of the Samoan studies and works that were implemented along these lines of contextual approaches. Most of these studies were focused

on biblical contextual readings of the text. However, the shift to a reader-oriented approach allows Samoan biblical scholars to bring our local contexts into engagement with biblical texts.

Finally, a detailed explanation of the intercultural hermeneutic of *uluulumatafolau* was presented, starting with an etymological study of the expression. The two derivations of the expression were distinctively explained and clarified. Lastly, I have briefly underlined how the various elements of the hermeneutic function in the interpretative process. The next chapter will be mainly focused on the Samoan culture and the indigenous religious experience and the spirit-world.

CHAPTER 2
The Indigenous Spirit-World

2.0 Introduction

This chapter is focusing on the Samoan culture and the indigenous spirit-world. The aim is not to present an exhaustive account of the indigenous spirit-world due to its limited scope. Rather, it concentrates on the traditional world views, practices and examples in how the Samoan people sees the reality of their religious experience in terms of their existence, and in relation to their social and cultural norms. The chapter begins by exploring the spiritual foundation of the self as a human being and as a relational being, which helps to pave the way in understanding the holistic outlook of the individual in the Samoan culture in relational to the indigenous religion and to a divine reality. Secondly, the Samoan indigenous spirit-world will be explored, focusing on the indigenous religious beliefs and their worldview. Finally, this chapter will also look at various manifestations of worship (*tapua'iga*) as manifested in the everyday culture and indigenous religion.

2.1 The Self-Being

2.1.1 O le Tagata Ola

The Samoan indigenous religion starts with the living-self → the *tagata ola*. There are three vital parts of a *tagata ola*: *tino* (body), *mafaufau* (mind) and *agaga* (spirit). Most often people use the term *loto* to signify the soul, which in turn closely associated with the mind or consciousness and will (c.f., Figure 1).

The body or the *tino* and all its movements and/or performances always reflects God's divinity, from the most physical and ceremonial to the most ordinary. Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi recognised the significance of the divine harmony in the body as "it determined how well people could engage in core survival tasks such as planting, hunting, fishing, cooking, building, …and so on."[1] For Tamasese, the beauty and harmony in the body was reflected in the physical dexterity and spiritual symmetry achieved through the disciplines of surviving, and serving the family and the community.

The *mafaufau* or the mind has the function to assess sensory evidence for cognitive meaning. The evidence and signals perceived by the skin, the eyes, the mouth, the nose, and the ears, are communicated to the brain and made sense of by the mind. The spiritual connection of the *mafaufau* is usually reflected in the Samoan sayings associated with the wisdoms of the chiefs (*matai*), such as *tōfā sa'ili* (search for wisdom), *tōfā loloto* (profound wisdom), and *tōfā fetuutuunai* (reflective wisdom). All these are associated with reasoning and memory through the senses, and morally guided by reliance on a divine guide. Tamasese defined *tōfā sa'ili* as "a Samoan concept denoting man reaching out for wisdom, knowledge, prudence, insight, judgement - through reflection, meditation, prayer, dialogue, experiment, practice, performance and observance."[2] In this sense, it alludes to the idea that one is forever searching and researching for knowledge within the ethical imperatives of humanity and love.

The *mafaufau* is closely related to the Samoan word *finagalo* or *loto* - which is said to be the realm of decision, and it constitutes of the mind, will, and emotions. The mind thinks, remembers,

[1] Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi, "In Search of Harmony: Peace in the Samoan Indigenous Religion," in *Su'esu'e Manogi: In Search of Fragrance, Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi and the Samoan Indigenous Reference*, eds. Tamasailau M. Suaali-Sauni, et al. (Lepapaigalagala: The Centre for Samoan Studies, National University of Samoa, Samoa, 2008), 112.

[2] Tamasese, *Su'esu'e Manogi*, 183.

reasons, and imagines, while the will determines what a person wants or willing. Emotions create the impact of what a person thinks and what a person wants or willing to do. In other words, emotions impact what people think, what people do as well as their intentions. Hence the *loto* or the will, can be defined as the seat of consciousness, the place where freewill is exercised. The *loto* determines our personality and acts as the "neutral ground between the body, mind and the spirit (soul)"

The 'spirit' on the other hand is usually translated into two Samoan words - *agaga*[3]and *mauli.*[4] The word *agaga* often denotes the 'human soul', in contrast with the mind (*mafaufau*) and will (*loto* or *finagalo*). Agaga is traditionally acknowledged to be the sacred or the divine reality of the *tagata ola*. Agaga comes from the root word *aga,* which in the Samoan language, has multiple meanings - Aga means "conduct or manner"; and when combined with the word *nuu* (village) it becomes *aganuu*. Hence *aganuu* means the customs, traditions, behaviour and social protocols of a village, or a community. Aiono Fanaafi Le Tagaloa considers *aganuu* as a word that "speaks of a world that recognizes the ideal as a 'complete whole'.[5] In relation to the spiritual essence, Tofaeono offers the following description:

> The word *aga* refers to the moral and social or behavioural character of a *nuu* (village or community). *Aga* bespeaks the spiritual (when interpreted from *agaga* – spirits) character of the community. It includes their visions, dreams, anticipations, fears and hopes, or the way they conceive and face the ups and downs of life. This

[3] Pratt, *Samoan-English Dictionary & Grammar*, 68.

[4] George Bertram Milner, *Samoan-English Dictionary* (Auckland New Zealand: Pasifika Press, 2001-1966), 141; Tamasese, *Su'esu'e Manogi*, 113.

[5] Le Tagaloa, *O Motugaafa*, 17. → Le Tagaloa further relates this holistic nuance of the Samoan word *aganuu* to the Samoan expression "E atoa li'o o le masina." (The moon comes to full-circle). For Le Tagaloa, the basic nature of man that he inherits genetically is as important, as powerfully influential as his cultural inheritance through all spheres of his/her Samoan society.

> means that [the] spiritual and social behaviours of the community are intimately interwoven to foster a specific ethos and a way of life of a society.[6]

From these definitions, one can observe that the very existence of the *tagata ola* is realised and understood within the holistic integration of the physical and the spiritual realms. On the other hand, the word *aga* refers to the action of "moving" or "facing" – *aga atu* (to go away) and *aga mai* (to come). The idea of "moving" designates the notion of the spirit as a "wind" or "vapour", an intangible element that is freely moving. Hence the reduplicated (*aga aga*) may have also designated the spirit as distinct from the body, "which at death was supposed to go away and proceed to *Pulotu* and *Lagi* (heavens)" [7] - a place remote from human habitations, were also identified as the divine's dwelling place.

The word *agaga* often carries the same nuance as the word *mauli*, which in this case, a term frequently uses to represent "the whole being or the whole person." That is, the living part of the self-being which is believed to be divinely originated. The word *mauli* is quite stimulating, though the term still exists in the Samoan language in certain expressions, the sense or meaning is lost on the people. George Milner translated *mauli* as the "seat of emotions" localized in the region of the solar plexus known as the *moa* or "the center".[8] Tamasese Efi supported such definition when he recognized the *mauli* as the soul of the person, resides between the heart (*fatu*) and the lungs (*māmā*).[9] The significances of Tui Atua's recognition is that "the heart represents God as the prime mover, who provides rhythm and life to the mind and body, whilst the lungs are the custodians of the breath of life."[10] Efi made a significant claim, in which he presaged the *mauli*

[6] Tofaeono, *Eco-Theology*, 28.
[7] Tofaeono, *Eco-Theology*, 167.
[8] Milner, *Samoan-English Dictionary*, 141, 146.
[9] Tamasese Efi, *Su'esu'e Manogi*, 113.
[10] Tamasese Efi, *Su'esu'e Manogi*, 113.

as a divine essence that inaugurates and gives life. On the other hand, Fanaafi Aiono - Le Tagaloa identified *mauli* as an essential part of the inner person, or the major part of the intellectual life of the person, and closely related to the English word 'psyche'.[11] Most importantly, le Tagaloa recognized the vital function of the *mauli* when one makes a spiritual connection with God through *tapuai*, or worship.[12] In this case, both the *agaga* and the *mauli* signify a sacred realm of the *tagata ola*, that has the main function of interacting with the divine or the Spiritual realm.

In a nutshell, the *tagata ola* or the living person encompasses the whole person, *tino*, *loto*, *mafaufau* and *agaga*. The physical and the spiritual are inseparable, but reciprocal. This means that the spiritual insights assist in the achievement of mental and physical harmony in the self. Through the harmonies of the body, mind and soul or spirit, the *tagata ola* searches and achieves levels of spiritual harmony or personal peace internal, and external.

In the Samoan cultural tradition, there is a special term that describes the *tagata ola* and everything pertaining to the individual. This term is known as *lotoifale*. Lotoifale is a Samoan term that refers to things that are central to a specific situation. It is made up of two words, *loto* and *fale*. The word *loto* means the centre or the (core). It also means the will or the soul of a person. The word *fale* means house or home. In essence, it is translated as the "core of the house". Hence *lotoifale* is a generic term that describes those aspects (or internal affairs) pertaining to an individual, a family (home), a community, or the Church.

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[11] Fanaafi Aiono - Le Tagaloa, *Tapuai - Samoan Worship* (Apia, Samoa: Malua Printing Press, 2003), 48. → In contrasts with Freud's three divisions of psyche (ego, super ego, and identification), Le Tagaloa identified seven parts or divisions of the *mauli*, "[(i) *iloilo* – ability to reason, (ii) *masalo* – ability to divine, foresee, or predict, (iii) *finagalo* – ability to make promulgations, (iv) *mana* – grace and/or power [Samoans do not speak of *mana* anymore for this was given to the God of Christianity. He alone hold all *mana* – power and grace], (v) *sau* – breath of life. This comes through the spoken word, (vi) *mana'o* – feelings, emotions, desires, (vii) *mafaufau* – the ability to remember, memories and memory itself.]"

[12] Le Tagaloa, *Tapuai*, 49.

The *tagata ola* as a *lotoifale* is the whole of the person, including his/her behaviour (*amio*), thoughts (*manatu*), and characters (*uiga*). The *Aiga* (family) as the *lotoifale,* is the foundation and the most basic social and cultural organisation unit in Samoa. The *aiga* is also the place where the *lotoifale* of an individual, is nurtured and cultured. It is the collective effort of all members of the family to nurture the child through language, words, and discipline. The proper discipline of the child is moulded through obedience, *tautua* (serving), and observing the *va fealoa'i* (relational space). Through the holistic cultural experience, the spiritual and the ethical morality of the child is cultivated through the values of *alofa* (love), and *fa'aaloalo* (mutual-respect).

2.1.2 O le Tagata o Faiā

The Samoan indigenous religion also recognises the living-self as the *tagata o faiā*, "the interrelated" or "the relational being". Fatilua Fatilua asserts that the term *faiā* "embodies the notion of interconnectedness and relations."[13] He elaborates on this further by saying that *faiā* connotes a sense of "finding connection or relation among things that are isolated and separated."[14] It underscores the importance of recognizing the space in between, hence acknowledging gaps and voids. Thus *faiā* in general symbolizes relations and connections between people or matter. Recognising the meaning of this *faiā* gives way to understanding one's relationship with others, whether with the living and/or the dead.

The *Aiga* as previously mentioned, is the heart of a Samoan village community and village governance. The *aiga* is the root of communal relations, and the driving force of the Church in Samoa. It signifies the relationship of people through blood, and connects people to culture and

[13] Fatilua, *Fāiā Analysis of Romans 13:1-7,* 29.

[14] Fatilua, *Fāiā Analysis of Romans 13:1-7,* 30.

environment, and builds cohesive between our way of life (*Fa'aSamoa) and Christian traditions.* The *aiga* is where the identity (*faasinomaga*), the inner-being (*lotoifale*), and relationships (*faiā/so'otaga*) of a Samoan individual are nurtured and cultured. It is the collective effort of all members of the family to nurture the child through words, love, and discipline. The proper discipline of the child is moulded through obedience, *tautua* (serving), and observing the *va fealoa'i* (relational space). Through the holistic cultural experience, the spiritual and the ethical morality of the child is cultivated through the values of obedience, humility and love.

In other words, it is the *lotoifale* of the *aiga,* that defines the *lotoifale* of an individual. Love springs from the womb of the mother, the *fanua* (placenta), where the motherly love nurtures and embraces the unborn child. Love is manifested in and through the holistic interconnectedness and experience of an individual within the family and in the community. Furthermore, the *matai* being the representative of the family to the village council or the *fono a matai*, is the voice of the family in the village decisions and matters. The village council is where all decisions are made on village matters beyond the scope of individual *aiga*. It aims at protecting solidarity and creating peace for better living conditions of the Samoan people.

Filemoni Crawley in his work on the "Faiā Model"[15] which focuses on people with physical disabilities, defines the concept of *faiā* as "the traditional relationships between: a 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."[16] Crawley clearly exemplifies his concept by focusing on the etymology of the word *faiā* The term *faiā* is made up of the root word *fai* and suffix *ā*. The word *fai* is generally 'implementing or doing something'

[15] Filemoni Crawley, "Faiā Model: Including People with Physical Disabilities within the Vaimauga i Sisifo Sub-District of the Congregational Christian Church Samoa" (MTh Thesis, Pacific Theological College, 2016).

[16] Crawley, "Faiā Model", 4.

that Milner defines as 'do' and 'make'.[17] The suffix *ā* is defined by Milner as "…denoting an abundance or plentiful supply of person, animal, or thing denoted by the base."[18] Hence the word *fai* as the etymology pointing to 'do and make,' and the suffix *ā* denoting 'abundance and plentiful', highlights the nature of the term *faiā* as 'relationships that is full of duties and responsibilities needed to be implemented for the well-being of all parties.'[19] This means that within the Samoan society and culture, the identity and obligation of the self-being is not seen as an individual, but a co-carrier of the family and the community's identity and vice versa. In other words, the self-being lives with and for the community, and the community lives with and for the self-being. In this sense, the relational being is a responsibility, or an obligation that accentuates honour and respect, not only with other beings, but also with the cosmos and the divine.

Carrying out these responsibilities is often recognized and demonstrated by the Samoan word *vā fealoa'i*. According to Nofoaiga, "*vā* refers to space (actual and metaphorically) between people and social, cultural and religious systems; while *fealoa'i* means to interact respectfully"[20] Hence for Nofoaiga, "*vā fealoa'i* designates respectful relationships in between people, and between people and the social and cultural systems in the society."[21] These spaces are relational and have boundaries described in Samoan as *tua'oi*. Tua'oi is the short form of the Samoan phrase '*tua atu o i*' which means "beyond this point." It expresses the expectation that respect is given to other people, who own customary lands, and who hold social and cultural status in the matai system. Nofoaiga points out that,

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[17] George Bertram Milner, "Fai," in Samoan-English Dictionary (Auckland New Zealand: Pasifika Press, 2001-1966), 52.

[18] Milner, *Samoan-English Dictionary*, 1.

[19] Crawley, "Faiā Model", 4.

[20] Nofoaiga, *A Samoan Reading of Discipleship,* 37.

[21] Nofoaiga, *A Samoan Reading of Discipleship,* 37.

> The function of *tua'oi* is not to separate the person in high status as colonizer from the person in the low status as colonized. Rather, *tua'oi* reveals the importance of the social and cultural order in a local Samoan family and community where the young people respect the elders and where untitled men and women respect the person chosen by the family as family leader."[22]

From these meanings, one can observe that embracing the *vā fealoa'i* and *tua'oi* incorporates a deep sense of respect and how the embodiment of such respect is to be manifested between two or more people. Fanaafi Aiono Le Tagaloa maintains this perspective, when she insists that *vā*, is first of all, "the relationship between the Creator and the created."[23] It designates "relationship, connection, affiliation, boundaries, difference, separation, space, distance, responsibility, obligation, state of being, position, standing, and much more".[24] For Le Tagaloa, *vā* governs and directs all things and embraces all things together, between the Creator and the created and between all of creation.

Correspondingly, Tamasese courteously delineates this relational nature for a Samoan individual as follows:

> I am not an individual; I am an integral part of the cosmos. I share divinity with my ancestors, the land, the seas and the skies. I am not an individual, because I share a *tofi* (an inheritance) with my family, my village and my nation. I belong to my family and my family belongs to me. I belong to my village and my village belongs to me. I belong to my nation and my nation belongs to me. This is the essence of my sense of belonging.[25]

For Efi, the substances of the relational being is recognized in the nurturing of a Samoan child as the collective responsibility of the community. A responsibility shared by parents, elders, *matai*

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[22] Nofoaiga, *A Samoan Reading of Discipleship,* 37.

[23] Le Tagaloa, *Tapuai*, 7.

[24] Le Tagaloa, *Tapuai*, 7.

[25] Tamasese Efi, *Su'esu'e Manogi*, 80.

and the village hierarchy. It is through this collective nurturing that enables the child to learn about *alofa* (love), *faaaloalo* (mutual respect), *tautua* (service), and *loto maualalo* (humility) – these are the fundamental values of the Samoan culture. It is through this holistic nurturing that the child will learn about his or her *faasinomaga* (heritage, inheritance, designation and identity). This nurturing is reflected in the Samoan expression:

> "*O tama a manu e fafaga i i'a ma fuga o laau, a o tama a tagata e fafaga i upu ma tala*" – (lit. the young of birds are fed with fishes and the blossoms of trees, whereas the young of humans [shall] be fed with words).[26]

Such expression convenes that discipline taught through love nurtures the spirit within. In other words, the disciplining of a Samoan child takes more than physical sustenance, he/she must also be nurtured on good thinking and good behaviour. As Tamasese insists, the principal drive and purpose of this nurturing is to identify, teach and respect the boundaries "between child and parent, child and elderly, child and child, and child and village."[27] It is here in the loving presence of the community that the children through their everyday life experiences began to learn and assimilate the message of culture and the living spirit of *faaSamoa* (Samoan way of life). Hence, the interrelatedness of individuals, families, society, and the divine nurtures the moral life and fosters the community's wellbeing and harmonious living.

Central to the living spirit of *faaSamoa* is "*tautua*". The word *tautua* is both a verb and a noun. In verbal form, it means "to serve", and as a noun, it means "a servant". *Tautua* is the act of serving the *matai* and/or the family. It is the role undertaking by any member of the family regardless of status and gender. According to Nofoaiga, "the *tautua* listens, sees, and feels the needs of his or her family, and acts to fulfil them despite challenges." This implies that the *tautua*

[26] AFLT, *O Motugaafa,* 12.
[27] Tamasese Efi, *Su'esu'e Manogi*, 55.

puts the parents and family, especially the young siblings, ahead of her/himself. Nofoaiga puts this rightly:

> The tautua prepares and serves food to the family and at meal times, s/he sits at the back and waits until the family are satisfied. The left-over food will be her/his meal. But if there is none left, s/he will not eat. As a tautua, s/he does not worry about her/his stomach as long as the family are satisfied. The way s/he serves the parents makes them happy because it is a sign of the tautua becoming a good family leader in the future. For the siblings, how s/he fulfills tautua role will be a good example for them to follow.[28]

From these descriptions, we recognize the concept of *tautua* as an obligation, which is to be rooted in the spirit of humility, love, and respect. Therefore, carrying out his/her roles as a *tautua* is demonstrated through the *va fealoa'i* as previously described.

As we have witnessed, the *tagata ola* lives with and for the community, and the community lives with and for the *tagata ola*. This mutual reciprocity makes the *tagata ola* a *tagata o faiā*. As an obligation, the *tagata o faiā* has to be responsible and be accountable to maintain the *vā* and the *faiā* between the self, others, and the Divine while at the same time recognizing the *tua'oi*. In other words, it is the *vā*, the *faiā,* and the *tua'oi* that embodies the totality of the relational being, embraces and directs all things together, both physical, and divine. It is also very important to keep in mind, that the very crux of embracing, nurturing, and respecting this *vā*, is the imperative to "give life" and to "sustain life". Embracing and respecting this *va*, ensures the harmony, between people, and between people and nature, both physical, mental, and spiritual. With this thought in mind, I will now explore the Samoan indigenous spirit-world.

[28] Nofoaiga, *A Samoan Reading of Discipleship*, 35.

2.2 The Samoan Indigenous Spirit-World

2.2.1 Tagaloalagi and Creation Mythology

The Samoan indigenous reference to its ancient religion and the spirit-world like many other cultures, emerged from "creation mythologies."[29] Early accounts of the Samoan creation mythologies passed down for many centuries through oral traditions, and were recorded through the writings of the early missionaries[30] in the mid-19th century. Although there are numerous versions of these creation mythologies and cosmogonies among the Samoan people, they all speak of the high god *Tagaloa* or *Tagaloalagi* (Tagaloa in heaven) – who was the principle god[31], the creator of the world, and the progenitor of other deities and people. The god *Tagaloa* is usually associated with the heavens and was widely known as the god who lived in the tenth heaven. As his name suggests, *taga* means "unrestricted,"[32] *loa* means "to be long since,"[33] which may refers

[29] The creation story of Israel in Genesis 1:1-2:4 was depicted as *myth*. Its reconstruction was very much influenced by many creation mythologies of the Ancient Near East. One of these ancient mythologies was the Babylonian account of creation known as *Enuma Elish*. In this text, probably composed in the late second millennium BC, and, long before the Priestly account, the world begins from Apsu and Tiamat, the Babylonian gods of Fresh and Salt Water. According to the myth, creation only begins after a long series of conflict and chaos among the gods and the goddesses and their offspring, to which the offspring Marduk becomes the victor, and instates himself to be the principal God. → While the Priestly authors may have known the Babylonian story, or one similar, and used its outline, they did not accept their theology. Rather, in direct opposition to all that the Babylonians held about the origins of the universe, and in particular about the claims of their city-god Marduk to be lord over all other gods, the Priestly account of creation affirmed the basic insights of Israel's faith. That is, there is one God, without sexual gender, who created from his goodness and wise plan a world order. A world order in which matter is good and not the result of whim or magic, but of God's *word*, which decrees what is to be and establishes limits. He gave humans a place of honor, made in his own image; and that they were to have responsibility over what was created, and share divine gifts of procreating life, sharing God's Sabbath rest, and knowing them personally. *See also* Lawrence Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament: An Introduction* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2012), 90-94.

[30] John Williams, *A Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1837), 546f.; J. Fraser, "The Samoan Creation Story," *JPS* 1 (1892), 169.; George Turner, *Samoa: A Hundred Years and Long Before* (London: Macmillan, 1884), 3f.

[31] Pratt, *Samoan-English Dictionary & Grammar*, 294.

[32] Pratt, *Samoan-English Dictionary & Grammar*, 293.

[33] Pratt, *Samoan-English Dictionary & Grammar*, 188.

to the endless and vastness of space and time, and *lagi* embodies the heavenly habitation of God.[34] *Tagaloalagi* is therefore exemplifies the endless freedom or the existence of the omnipotent god of the heavens.

As with the Christian religion, this highest god (*atua*) has numerous other names, "thus the Creator (*Faatupunuu*), the Immeasurable One (*Nimonimo*), the Giver of Life (*Sau o le Ola*), the Progenitor (*Tupu'aga*), and the Workers of Miracles (*le Mana*)."[35]

> The origins of Samoa begin with the union and separation of the gods Lagi and Papa. Both were issues of Tagaloa. It is at the separation of this union between Lagi (a female god) and Papa (a male god) that heaven and earth were formed. Conflict, instigated by the respective siblings of Lagi and Papa, caused their separation. Their separation was marked by storms, earthquakes and floods. The Samoan name for the heavens is Lagi. Papa is the Samoan word for earth or rock. When Lagi ascended to the heavens, Papa remained beneath Lagi. The Samoan name for the planet earth is Lalolagi, literally meaning 'beneath Lagi' or 'the heavens'. According to Samoan mythology, Tagaloa, who issued Papa and Lagi, also issued man. Man came to reside within the embrace of Lagi and Papa, i.e., within the cosmos, beneath the heavens, on earth...[36]
>
> …But Tagaloa stood facing the west, and spoke to the Rock (Papa). Then Tagaloa struck the Rock with his right hand, and it split open towards the right side. Then the Earth (Eleele) was brought forth (that was the Parent of all the people in the world), and the Sea (Sami) was brought forth. . .
>
> …Then Tagaloa turned to the right side, and the Fresh-water (Vai) sprang up. Then Tagaloa spake again to the Rock, "Be then split!" and the Sky (Lagi) was produced. He spake again to the Rock and Tui-te'e-lagi was brought forth; then came forth Ilu, 'Immensity,' and Mamao, 'Space,' (that was a woman); then came Niuao. Tagaloa spake again to the Rock; then Lua'ō, a boy, came forth. Tagaloa spake again to the Rock, and Luavai, a girl, came forth. Tagaloa appointed these two to the Sā-Tuālagi. The Tagaloa spoke again, and Aoa-lālā, a boy was born, and [next]

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[34] Pratt, "Lagi," *Grammar and Dictionary of the Samoan Language*, 179.

[35] Augustine Krämer, *The Samoa Islands: Constitutions, Pedigrees and Traditions*, Vol. 1, trans. Theodore Verhaaren, (Auckland, New Zealand: Polynesian Press, 1994), 24. *See also* Meleisea, *Lalaga*, 24-38.

[36] Tamasese, *Su'esu'e Manogi*, 105.

> Gaogao-o-le-tai, a girl; then came Man (o le Tagata); then came the Spirit (o Agaga); then the Heart (o Loto); then the Will (o Finagalo); then Thought (o Masalo).
>
> .
> .
> That is the end of Tagaloa's creations which were produced from the Rock; they were only floating about on the sea; there was no fixedness there.
>
> .
> .
> Then Tagaloa made an ordinance to the Rock and said: Let the Spirit and the Heart and Will and Thought go on and join together inside the Man; and they joined together there and man became intelligent. And this was joined to the Earth (Eleele), and it was called Fatu-ma-le-Eleele, as couple, Fatu the Man, and Eleele the Woman…[37]

According to the above creation mythology, the dwelling of the Samoan people on the lands of Samoa was a consequence of their genealogical relations (*faiā* or *gafa*) with *Tagaloa* (the Creator-God), *Lagi* (the heavenly-foundation), and *Papa* (the earthly-foundation). This shows that the connection between mankind, the animal world, the cosmos and the environment is one genealogy, "a genealogy that is at once divine and temporal."[38] The union and separation of *Papa* and *Lagi* is our *tupu'aga* (ancestor), our relation to the cosmos and the spirit of the cosmos. The word *tupu'aga* comes from the word *tupuga* meaning "descended from", which derives from the word *tupu* which means "to grow out of" or "to grow up from."[39] In relation to genealogy, it implies

[37] John Fraser, "The Samoan Story of Creation," *JPS* 1, no. 3 (1892): 169, accessed July 15, 2023, https://www.jps.auckland.ac.nz; George Turner, *Samoa: A Hundred Years and Long Before* (London: Macmillan, 1884), 164-189.

[38] Tamasese Efi, *Suesue Manogi*, 105.

[39] Pratt, *Samoan-English Dictionary & Grammar*, 329.

the meaning of "ascending from," that is, having the notion of *papa* or rock formation which everything grew out of.

Furthermore, the ordinance given by the word of Tagaloa to the Spirit, Heart, Will and Thought to join inside the man, demonstrates the intellectual and the divine capabilities and functions, sanctioned upon the human being. People are born through the union of *Papa* and *Lagi* and they are said to have natures both physical and divine. Heaven is the giver of life and Earth is female, the mother who carries that life in her womb, enclosing the reality of humanity in her. This genealogical connection is also evident in the way in which the Samoans draw links between man and his earthly environment. For example, [the term *eleele* (earth) and *palapala* (mud) are also words for "blood". The term *fatu* (rock) is also the word for the "heart". The word *fanua* (land) is also the word for "placenta".][40] In the Samoan indigenous rituals, when a child is born, the umbilical cord is cut and then buried in the land where the family resides. This significant act links the child physically and spiritually to his/her *fanua* or land, his identity or *fa'asinomaga* - hence the expression: "*tama a le eleele*" or "child of the land". This is a significant aspect of understanding the world and it explains why traditionally, the Samoans had seen life as complementary of the natural and supernatural. The spiritual and physical were understood not as polarised spheres of existence, but as complements, demonstrating unity of life. Perelini according to E.S.C Handy, points out that:

> When a native planted, tended his crops, and harvested, he did so psychically as well as physically, rituals including consecration, purification, prayers, charms, and offerings, accompanying every phase of his physical husbandry.[41]

[40] Tamasese Efi, *Su'esu'e Manogi*, 156.
[41] Perelini, "Jesus' Healing Vs Healings in Traditional and Christian Samoa", 23.

For Perelini, what the modern person sees as ordinary, natural activities such as planting, building houses, fishing expeditions, sickness and healing, births, deaths and funerals as belonging to the profane, this may not be necessarily so with a traditional person who saw the close relationship between these activities and the realm of the divine.

Within this holistic realm, the human being recognizes the *vā* with the Creator, the *vā* with other creatures, as well as the *vā* with the environment and the cosmos. It is this *vā* that is expressed in the imperative, directing the created-person to make a spiritual connection in the act of *tapuai!* - to worship.

2.2.2 The gods (atua) and the spirits (agaga)

In Polynesian cultures, "*atua"* is a term used to refer to gods, deities, or spiritual beings and is commonly used in the context of traditional religions and belief systems. In Samoa, the term is used in an inclusive non-gender context to address the "original gods", the "superior gods" with non-human origins. The term is also applicable to all spiritual beings: gods of universal power and significance, deceased ancestors, or demons and sprites of purely local influence.

The term *atua* was used of the manifestations of *Tagaloa* the creator, and has been used to refer to the Christian God, since 1830s.[42] *Tagaloa* was considered the supreme *atua* of Samoa. He transcends space and time and in his Divine freedom and power, he does what he desires. As progenitor of other deities, and creator of the earth and all other forms of life therein, *Tagaloa* did not possess any form of imagery or personal representations and was not invoked in religious practises and worship.[43] However, even though *he* was not evoked, his help was always sought

[42] Malama Meleisea, "The Making of Modern Samoa: Traditional Authority and Colonial Administration in the History of Western Samoa" (PhD Thesis, Macquarie University, 1986), 33-34.

[43] Perelini, "Jesus' Healing Vs Healings in Traditional and Christian Samoa", 24.

after during long voyages, fishing expedition, building construction, and other difficult tasks. These practices may have some connection with *Tagaloa* the "god of the ocean" as he was known in most parts of Polynesia. The art of building houses was also closely associated with the cult of the supreme deity. The chief builder was and is still known as the *tufuga*, a title often used for *Tagaloa*.[44] Furthermore, *Tagaloa* was always adored with thanksgiving, especially the gifts of providence, particularly in terms of foods. Nonetheless, one can recognize then, that the knowledge of the supreme Creator-God had already been embraced by the ancestors.

The other category of gods was known as *agaga*, also mostly referred to as *aitu*, those of human origin. Pratt defined the term *aitu* as "a spirit" or "a god."[45] Meleisea further identified the *Aitu* as those deities with human origins but being half-god and half-human.[46] Stair on the other hand points out that *aitu* are the descendants of the original gods.[47] They include national war gods, district gods, and family gods to whom the priest interceded for protection and help. The indigenous use of the word correlates to the application of the term *agaga*, which exhibits different kinds of spirits (either god(s), good or evil spirits, ghosts, ancestral spirits, free wondering spirits, and so forth).

Being also recognized as "tutelary Gods", the Samoans appropriated the *aitu* as the "private gods" who act as Guardians to the individuals from his or her birth to death. Therefore, the tutelary Gods offered special protection throughout the lives of the individuals. Traditionally, the *aitu* are characterised as ancestral spirits, and unlike *Tagaloaalagi* who is known to be the high *atua* or

[44] Perelini, "Jesus' Healing Vs Healings in Traditional and Christian Samoa", 24.
[45] Pratt, *Samoan-English Dictionary & Grammar*, 58.
[46] Meleisea, *Lalaga*, 35.
[47] John B. Stair, "Jottings on the Mythology and Spirit-Lore of Old Samoa," *JPS* 5, No. 1 (1896), 35.

deity, the *aitu*, as well as the family and ancestral spirits, were the closest to the people, and this is evident in their form of *tapuaiga* or worship.[48]

According to Malama Meleisea, "Because the Samoans did not believe that death meant the end of existence, ancestral spirits were worshipped in the form of *aitu*.[49] He further comments that the divine concepts of Samoans seems to echo Syncretism[50] as a result of Theism[51] and Pantheism.[52] This is all true when considering the immense influence of the integration of multiple cultures of the Polynesians and Melanesians tribes, who have surged and sailed the vast Pacific Ocean, bringing along with them their vibrant and multi-coloured culture and religion.

2.2.3 Nature spirits and objects of power

Traditionally, unlike the Eastern Polynesians such as the Easter Islands who are famous for their stone carvings of human figures, and other Polynesian groups who made large figures of wood and stone representing their deified chiefs and priests, the Samoans did not have carved images of wood and stones. Their *atua*, *tupua* and family spirits were manifested and incarnated in living nature, most commonly in the form of birds, fish, shellfish, and reptiles, and people.

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[48] George Turner, *Nineteen Years in Polynesia* (London: John Snow, Paternoster Row, 1861/1867), 241.

[49] Meleisea, *Lalaga*, 35-36.

[50] Syncretism refers to the blending or merging of different beliefs, cultural practices, or religious traditions into a new, cohesive system. It often occurs when two or more distinct traditions come into contact with each other, leading to the integration of elements from each tradition into a single, syncretic entity. *see* Millard J. Erickson, *Concise Dictionary of Christian Theology* (Michigan: Baker Pub Group, 1986), 163.

[51] Theism is the belief in the existence of a god or gods, specifically of a creator who intervenes in the universe. It is further divided into other branches of beliefs such as deism, polytheism, panentheism, and others. *See* Erickson, *Dictionary of Christian Theology*, 165-166.

[52] Pantheism is a philosophical and religious belief system that views the universe and nature as divine or as an interconnected whole that is worthy of reverence. In pantheism, the entire cosmos, including all matter, energy, and the forces of nature, is considered divine or sacred. This is in contrast to theistic religions, where a personal god or gods are believed to exist separately from the natural world. *See* Erickson, *Dictionary of Christian Theology*, 123.

According to George Turner, most of these household gods whom he called them *aitu*, are inferior, and they are respected and revered throughout the community, and sometimes they were feared because of their capacity to cause harm to family members.[53] Nonetheless, the *aitu* acted as guardians of family morals and values and the inflictions were often understood as punishments and discipline, rather than malicious or evil deeds.

Turner also points out that at birth, every Samoan was believed to be taken under the care of some god or *aitu*. The help of several of these gods was probably invoked in succession on the occasion, and the one who happened to be addressed just as the child was born was fixed on as the child's name and the child's god for life.[54] The visible incarnations of these gods maybe seen in the form of an eel, a shark, a turtle, owl, lizard, birds or even shell-fish.[55] The indigenous Samoans were very respectful of their gods. And the particular thing in which one's god was in the habit of appearing, was, to the Samoan, an object of veneration. It was in fact, his living idol, and he/she was careful never to injure it or treat it with contempt. Turner courteously points this out:

> If a man found a dead owl by the roadside, and if that happened to be the incarnation of his village god, he would sit down and weep over it, and beat his forehead with stones till the blood flowed. This was thought pleasing to the deity. Then the bird would be wrapped up, and buried with care and ceremony, as if it were a human body. This, however, was not the death of the god. He was supposed to be yet alive, and incarnate in all the owls in existence.[56]

Turner's observation reveals some remarkable aspects in the religious experience of the indigenous Samoans. First of all, to go into such extreme act of remorse, evidently shows the utmost respect

[53] Turner, *Nineteen Years in Polynesia*, 238.
[54] Turner, *Samoa: A Hundred Years*, 14.
[55] Turner, *Nineteen Years in Polynesia*, 238.
[56] Turner, *Nineteen Years in Polynesia*, 242.

and devotion that the indigenous people have for their gods. Secondly, it shows that for the indigenous Samoan, death was not the end. Death was in fact, the beginning and yet, the continuation of the intimate connection of man to the divine. In this sense, life is an eternal cycle manifested in the totality of the physical and divine intervention.

2.2.4 Ancestral and Family Spirits (tupua and aitu)

Ancestral and family spirits are those who are well respected and honoured in families and in village communities, specifically the high chiefs (*ali'i*) of high ranking. *Áli'i* of high ranks according to Mālama Meleiseā, were regarded as having supernatural power which they received from their divine ancestors.[57] These powers were fundamental to chiefly authority. Meleiseā, according to Richard Moyle, *Tamafaigā*, the notorious high chief who reigned in the island of Manono, was thought to be possessed by the aitu *Nafanua*, who gave him special powers in war.[58] Some of the highest-ranking chiefs were termed *ali'i pa'ia* (sacred chiefs). Great nobles (male and female) became *aitu* after they died, spirits which could take human form or appear in plants, fish, birds and animals, and which could possess the body of another person. This belief was the basis of Samoan religion. These family deities and spirits which were much closer and more accessible to people. It was to these lesser deities that the people prayed and invoked for help in times of need as well as in healing and exorcism. People sought help and advice from their own personal deities and spirits. Many believed that these were the deities that protected them, and who also disciplined them if they failed to perform their duties and responsibilities.

[57] Meleiseā, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, 33.

[58] Meleiseā, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, 59.

On the other hand, the *tupua* which denoted the deified spirits of ancestors have been known in many different kinds of manifestations. Stair points out that many beautiful emblems were chosen to represent their immortality; some of the constellations such as *Li'i* [the Pleiades], *Tupua-lē-gase* [Jupiter][59], *Nuanua* [rainbow], *Laoma'oma'o* [the marine rainbow], and many others.[60] The reverence given to these gods was not necessarily idolatry; it was given in recognition of kin status and gratitude for service to the village and/or district. It is also agreed that *tupua* represented the deified spirits of chiefs, and that they constituted a different category from the original gods.

Pratt and Milner both translated the word *tupua* as an 'idol' or an 'image.'[61] This concept of idol or image implies the notion of inanimate objects which people use as objects of worship. This is also the interpretation of the word *tupua* in Exodus 20:4 (Samoan Bible Translation), "graven image" or an "idol". However, this is contrast to a traditional concept of *tupua* which comes from the verb *tupu*, meaning "to grow, to increase, to spring up, to arise, to cause."[62] Also, when the last vowel in the word is stressed (*tupuā*), it refers to something which is dynamic, alive and growing. Therefore, both etymologically and usage, the word *tupua* suggests life and growth. It indicates the living (not the dead) spirits of the ancestors and chiefs. Unlike inanimate objects, they are human spirits, alive and present among the living. This is why the early Samoans honoured their dead. The family ancestral spirits were venerated as family deities and their continued presence was acknowledged as a reality within the daily activities of the family.

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[59] Tupualegase is known to be the god of the Atua district in Upolu. Its name means "Tupua who does not die" or "Tupua the eternal." See Tamasese Efi, "Bio-ethics and the Samoan Indigenous Reference", *In Search of Harmony*, 105.

[60] Stair, "Spirit-Lore of Old Samoa", 37.

[61] Pratt, *Samoan-English Dictionary & Grammar*, 329.

[62] Pratt, *Samoan-English Dictionary & Grammar*, 329.

Some families embalmed (preserved) the bodies of chiefs of rank, or those who had been made into sun-dried gods or *Fa'a-Atua-alalaina*.[63] They were also reverenced under the name of *Tupua*. The personification of deified spirits of the paramount chiefs reveals the desires and aspirations of human beings to be with their prominent leaders. It is a manner of constantly reminded them of their divine presence, which assured them security, goodwill and life. Their divine presence could also influence the decision making of the people, as well as the daily activities of the community.

The respect and honouring of the dead is also recognised in the way that the Samoans buried the deceased closer to family residents. Makesi Ne'emia highlights the importance of the Samoan tradition of burying the dead closer to the houses or even inside the residents of the Samoan people. According to Neemia, Samoans, as most of the Oceania island nations, have great respect for the dead – "Burials in family land especially close to homes are signs of affection for the deceased family members".[64] This is seen in the cultural rituals and rites surrounding the burial of the dead. The selection of burial sites and the type of monuments chosen make visible statements about the traditional rank, family status and claims to property, so that the dead continue to influence and to work for the living in spirit and by the location of their local remains.[65] Perelini also points out that the placing of graves close to family homes, and the keeping of lights near the graves, indicated the affection and respect given to the dead, and the belief in their continued

[63] Stair, "Spirit-Lore of Old Samoa", 37. *See also* Tofaeono, *Eco-Theology*, 165.

[64] Makesi Neemia, "The Dead and Land in the Old Testament: A Perspective on Land and Land Rights from the Work of the Dead in Samoa," *Samoa Journal of Theology* 1, no. 1 (2022), 28.

[65] Neemia, "The Dead in the Old Testament and Samoan Perspective," 28.

presence.[66] This practice continues today, where graves are not only built alongside homes but are also housed and lighted.

Despite of these practises, many Samoans today are generally afraid of *aitu* irrespectively of their natures and inclinations. The fear of the *aitu* may have come from their being identified as demons and evil spirits in the gospels. People often associate the dark lonely paths and graveyards with *aitu*. The presence of *aitu* and their activities should not necessarily be thought of as consequences of their malicious and evil nature, however they may indicate the failure of family members in their relationship with their spirit-world. The *aitu* acted as guardians of family morals and values, and their affliction were often understood as punishments rather than malicious or evil deeds.

2.2.5 National and District Deities

These *atua* were known to be the guardians of the villages (*nuu*) and districts (*itumalo*). Every village had its god, and every one born in that village was regarded as the property of that god. Many of these gods were known in places by the same name but evidently manifested in various ways. Turner mentioned some of these gods including *Moso, Salevao, Salefe'e, Nafanua*, just to name a few. Some legends associate the god *Fe'e* with the sub district of Vaimauga in the district of Tuamasaga. This belief and locality of the legend of the *fe'e* is evident in the existence of the remnants of the famous *fale o le fe'e* (the house of the cuttlefish) behind the main town of Apia. Like most of the well-known national gods, the *Fe'e* was a god of war.[67] His help was often sought

[66] Perelini, "Jesus' Healing Vs Healings in Traditional and Christian Samoa", 29.

[67] Turner, *Samoa: Hundred Years*, 28-32.

after by the various high chiefs because of his strength. He was also believed to have a dwelling place under the ocean, where he was often retreated to from time to time.

The most important of these *atua* was the goddess *Nafanua*. In Samoan traditions, *Nafanua* was hailed as the goddess who prophesized the coming of Christianity. Legends said that she was a prominent goddess and a powerful war deity particularly in the mythology of the island of Savai'i. As a warrior goddess, she was said to have played a crucial role in assisting and protecting her people during times of conflict and warfare.[68] It was also believed that after *Nafanua* had conquered all her enemies, she had control over all political authority in Samoa, and she gave the *mālō* (the authority of conquerors) to the district of *A'ana* and its allies. When *Malietoa* came from his village of Sapapali'i in Savai'i to ask her for a share of the *mālō, Nafanua* told him that he would have to wait for his turn, and that it would eventually come from heaven. The arrival of John Williams with the Gospel in Savai'i in the year 1830 was considered by many as the fulfilment of this prophecy. Orators and even church ministers still refer to this legend in their speeches when they talk about the arrival of Christianity, a period which is accepted by the majority of Samoans as the beginning of the modern epoch in Samoan history, *o aso o le malamalama* ("the time of enlightenment").

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[68] According to oral tradition, a savage war was fought between the *A'ea i Sasa'e* and *Ae'a i Sisifo* (conquest of the hills to the east and to the west) in the island of Savai'i. High chief *Lilomaiava*, the leading warrior of the *A'ea i Sasa'e,* being the victor, enslaved the *A'ea i Sisifo* warriors and the people from the west, including those from the village of *Falealupo*, and put them to hard labour. As a strange form of punishment against his enemies, chief *Lilomaiava* forced his captives to climb coconut trees feet first and head downwards. One of chief *Lilomaiava's* captives was chief *Tai'i* from Falealupo. As he did with his other captives, *Lilomaiava* ordered *Tai'i* to climb a coconut tree with his feet first. As *Tai'i* made the climb, he lamented its difficulty and let out a loud sigh. The sigh was so loud that it was heard in all corners of *Savai'i*, and even reached the depths of the Spirit World, *Pulotu*. Unbeknownst to *Lilomaiava, Tai'i* was the brother of *Saveasi'uleo*, the god who presided over *Pulotu*. *Saveasi'uleo* heard the sigh of his brother, and became enraged. In response, *Saveasi'uleo* sent forth his daughgter *Nafanua* to avenge chief *Lilomaiava,* and to liberate chief *Tai'i* and the people of *A'ea i Sisifo.* To prepare for this war, *Nafanua* had four clubs made out of a *toa* tree, infusing them with the spirits of *Pulotu*. These powerful weapons, once completed, were given the names *tafesilafa'i, fa'auliulitō, ulimasao,* and *fa'amategataua*. The legend says that *Nafanua* fought and won the war, destroying all of *A'ea i Sasa'e*, and saved chief *Tai'i* and all the people of *A'ea i Sisifo*.

The name *Nafanua* means "hidden in-land". She was the daughter of *Saveasi'uleo*, the god of *Pulotu*, and her mother was *Tilafaigā*. She was hidden inland when an infant by her mother, who was ashamed of the illegitimate birth. Her being considered the processor of all knowledge was determined by her very own birth. An embryo who was formed from the sea by a male sea-creature, buried and rooted in the land, and was nurtured by the air (sky) – a divine human being.

Like all other gods, these national and district *atua* did not survive the impact of Christianity, and all of them are simply referred to in the legends and folklores of the past which have no religious or spiritual significance upon the present lives of the people. They are occasionally mentioned in oratory, but they no longer have any significant influence in the beliefs and daily affairs of the Samoan people today.

2.3 Worship - Tapuaiga

The Samoan word for worship is *tapuaiga*, which is derived from the verb *tapua'i*[69] meaning "to worship". The word *tapua'i* itself originates from the word *tapu*, which in Samoa, it means "to make sacred" or "to place under restriction".[70]

Tapuaiga on the other hand is made up of two words, *tapu* and *āiga.* Āiga in the Samoan sense is "a family, a cohabitation, or people who are bounded in and through relations."[71] Therefore, the *tapua'iga* is referred to the sacred worship of the family. Here, there is no reference to private or personal worship, rather, the *tapua'iga* designates the family or a communal act of

[69] Pratt, *Samoan English Dictionary & Grammar*, 303; → Pratt ascribes the word *tapua'iga* to certain villages which did not engage in war, but served as a refuge to those who fled on defeat. This shows that even in times of war or conflict, there was always a sense of remorse and the willingness to be kind to those who are defeated.

[70] Pratt, *Samoan English Dictionary & Grammar*, 303.

[71] Pratt, *Samoan English Dictionary & Grammar*, 56.

worshipping. In it sociological dimension, to *tapua'i* implies meanings such as "…to abstain from certain activities such as work and sport; to sit waiting for success in war or in sickness; to give something to bring success, such as '*ava*; and to offer religious worship."[72] Pratt on the other hand contends that *tapua'iga* refers specifically to certain villages which did not engage in war, but served as a refuge to those who fled on defeat.[73] The act of *remaining in peace and finding security* are the anticipating goals of the religious act in this context. One can induce that this connotation is based on the religious experiences associated with traditional warfare, whereby the gods were called upon for victory and success. Yet those who participated in the *tapua'iga* also remained neutral; in other words, they mediated and offered security by fostering harmony between the two opposing parties. The goals were not only to seek and encourage peace, but also to heal and comfort the victimized, broken and defeated party, both spiritually and physically.

In the indigenous Samoan, the practices of *tapua'iga* has many forms. Some of these forms of worship which will be discussed include fire votives (*tapuaiga fa'amalama),* 'ava ceremonies (*alofisa*), meeting with the spirits (*fono-ma-aitu*), forgiveness and reconciliation (ifoga), and reburial of the dead (*liutofaga*).

2.3.1 Fire Votive (Tapua'iga Fa'amalama)

The most common form of worship was carried out by lighting of fire votive in the house where the worship is led by the *matai* or the chief of the family. This form of worship is usually done in honour of the family gods or the national gods. If and when there was no *matai*, the eldest untitled female or the *feagaiga* of the *aiga* would lead the worship. According to Le Tagaloa, this form of worship or *tapuaiga*, "placed importance on the lighting of the fire until the flames shoot up and

[72] Pratt, *Samoan-English Dictionary & Grammar*, 303.
[73] Pratt, *Samoan-English Dictionary & Grammar*, 303.

lit up the whole house; this was referred to as *fanaafi o faamalama*."[74] The worship was observed twice a day; in the morning before the sun rose, and in the evening when the fires are blown *ula afi*. The evening is also known by many names: "Ua maluafiafi,"[75] "Tagi alisi,"[76] "Ula afi,"[77] "Gaga ifo le la."[78]

At the worship, the priest or the priestess (*ositaulaga*)[79] would raise his/her right hand for the *vala* (*siapo*) or the thick mulberry bark cloth with which he/she wrapped him/herself, and take part in offering a prayer for the family members.[80] With the shoulders carefully covered with *vala*, the *ositaulaga* (traditional priest) "made the fire leap and burst into flames", while saying the prayers:

"O le fanaafi o faamalama lenei mo lau Afio le Atua!	*"This is fire votive for you our God!*
Ia apepelea i matou i lou agalelei."	*May you wrap us, cloak us in your goodness and kindness."*

Again, the fire flamed –

[74] Le Tagaloa, *Tapuai*, 64; AFLT, *O Motugaafa*, 27.

[75] The Samoan name for fire is *afi*. Hence *afiafi* or *maluafiafi* is a sacred time of the day, when all the families light their fires. The concurrent illuminating of the fires from each family generates a sense of unity, hence the term "*tauafiafi"*. *Malu* is the Samoan term for "being sheltered", often refers to when one is sheltered in the shadows of the trees. Hence when the sun was about to set, it casts the shadows of the mountains and trees' tops upon the villages. *Maluafiafi* therefore is the time when everyone needs to enter into the safety of their shelters, illuminating by the evening fire of worship.

[76] The sound or the cries of the *alisi* (the cricket) in the evening.

[77] The ash-cover of the *magālafu* (hearth or fireplace) of the *fale tele* is "dusted away" (*ūla*). The *matai* or *tamaita'i* who was the *aiga* priest blew on the uncovered coals and threw on the live coals, handful of dried kindling which immediately made the flame "shoot" (*fana*) and illuminate the house. These were the *fanaafi-o-fa'amalama* or the fire votive to the gods.

[78] The setting of the sun.

[79] The traditional Samoan name for the priest or the priestess. *Ositaulaga* is made up of two words; *osi* (to make or build, as a speech, a covenant, a sacrifice), and *taulaga* (a sacred offering or sacrifice).

[80] Le Tagaloa, *Tapuai*, 64.

"O le Fanaafi o Faamalama mo lau Afio, le Atua!	*"This is fire votive to you our God!*
Ua se Atua ma lau Afio lo matou agamasesei"	*Our erring, wrongful, defiant ways*
	are blatant before you"

Again, the fire flamed –

"O le Fanaafi o Faamalama mo lau Afio, le Atua!	*"This is fire votive to you our God!*
Ia taiesea i nu'u le aina atua folau, e latou te	*Direct those 'gods' of the seas –*
aumaia mai ma mala"	*seafarers, to uninhabited lands for they*
	bear sickness and curses.

Again, the fire flamed –

"O le Fanaafi o Faamalama mo lau Afio, le Atua!	*"This is fire votive to you our God!*
Ia aafu i matou i le ie lautele o lou alofa…"	*Cover us, hide us in the broad*
	mantle of your love…"[81]

According to Turner, the head of the family who is the *matai*, after offering a short prayer for the well-being of the family, he then *pours* a libation of *'ava* out upon the ground or *waves* the cup towards the heavens, as an offering for the tutelary gods who supposed to be present. The first cup was in honour of the gods.[82]

[81] Le Tagaloa, *Tapuai*, 65-67.

[82] Turner, *Nineteen Years in Polynesia*, 241.

Tofaeono describes the term *tapuaiga fa'amalama* as "to be enlightened" (*malama* means 'light') in the sense that it is a continuous act whereby people ask for enlightenment.[83] In other words the experience of being enlightened was symbolically expressed by the fire votive and the offering of prayers. The prayers were, indeed, a cosmic adoration of divine goodness, together with mediations for the continuous sustainment of the essential gifts of life.

Tapuaiga faamalama is clearly a profound act of sacrifice that illuminate the continuous harmony between the physical and the spiritual realm. The fire as a symbol of light and purification, embodies life. A life that is shared and nurtured by the living and the divine. The mutual reciprocity of love, respect, and sacrifice, is experienced when one is illuminated by the divine spirit, giving peace, and harmony, in complete serenity.

2.3.2 'Ava Ceremony (Alofisā)

Another form of indigenous ritual that is central in the Samoan culture is the *alofisā* or what is commonly known today as the *'ava* ceremony. *Alofisā* comes from the word *alofi*, which signifies the "coming together', and *sā* means sacred or forbidden, which is similar to the word *tapu*). Hence *alofisā* signifies a 'sacred gathering'. The *alofisā* place in almost all special gatherings, starting from worship, the conferring of new *matai* titles, or when welcoming visitors. The *alofisā* itself is a form of worship, it is an act of thanksgiving to the gods. We have already witnessed from the *tapuaiga* above, the *matai* after offering a short prayer for the well-being of the family, he then *pours* a libation of *'ava* out upon the ground or *waves* the cup towards the heavens, as an offering for the family gods. The first cup was in honour of the gods. The alofisā symbolizes unity and

[83] Tofaeono, *Eco-Theology*, 159.

respect. It is a ritual that brings peace and harmony among family members, village, or even with strangers.

2.3.3 E lē Sili le Ta'i na i lō le Tapua'i

Connection with the divine can be explained through the use of wisdom traditions. *Muāgagana*[84] and *Alagāupu,*[85] being the foundation of the oratory language (*gagana a Tulāfale*), are the poetic devices used to paint the metaphors and meaning of words, phrases, and chants. The proverbial expression "*E lē sili le ta'i na i lō le tapua'i*" which means "The one who is partaking (*ta'i*) is equally important as to the one who is praying (*tapua'i*)", is one prominent example that strongly replicates the sagacity and the essence of a spiritual connection. The participation and the act of both parties are equally significant. In this sense, the *tapuaiga,* is a reverberation of the spiritual connection of the one who is *tapua'i* with the gods and the ancestral spirits.

This spiritual connection is actuated through the act of praying, pleading, and meditate silently, giving hope for the successful return or the successful completion of a task at hand, or simply pray for the welfare and the sake of those who are partaking in an exhibition. In other words, the connection between those who worship with the spiritual realm, symbolises a process of initiating harmony and peace between the two worlds, for the sake and the success of those who partake in the act of service or similar exhibits.

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[84] Muāgagana is an expression that originates from nature and everyday cultural experience. For example, "E lele le toloa ae ma'au i le vai", refers to the nature of the *toloa* bird. No matter how often it flies, it will always return to the swamp, its natural habitat.

[85] Alagaupu on the other hand is an expression that originates from an event or a legend. For example, "Ia tali i lagi se ao o lou malo." When Malietoa came from his village of Sapapali'i in Savai'i to ask Nafanua for a share of the mālō (national political power), Nafanua told him that he would have to wait for his turn, and that the head of his mālō would eventually come from heaven. Such prophecy was believed to be fulfilled when John William arrived in 1830 with the Christian Gospel, in which Malietoa was the prime receiver and the reigning national chief at the time.

In prehistoric times, it was common for villages or districts to travel to other villages and districts for gatherings such as *tōloga* (spear throwing), *tapalega* (water games), *taulafoga* (disc throwing on a mat), *tauti'aga* (javelin), among others. Accompanying the participators, a vanguard of supporters from the entire village would also travel. The practice of the *tapua'iga* was also carried out for gatherings such as *tuligāpua'a 'aivao* (wild boar hunting), *seugālupe* (pigeon snaring), and for tasks at sea such as '*alofaga* (canoe hauling), *tiugāmalie* (shark fishing), *tumatuma laumei* (turtle fishing) and many other expeditions. The practice of *tapuaiga* was sacred throughout the whole of Samoa, especially when performed by *matai* and elders, for and during specialised tasks such as constructing a house, tattooing, and canoe building. As the saying goes, "*O faiva e tapua'ia e manuia"* - The tasks that are supported and prayed for, are the ones that will be completed successfully.

The practice of such Samoan *tapuaiga* was usually conducted in seated observation, and accompanied by various actions such as the gentle stroking of a mat, and reverent whisperings. Most prominent in the worship atmosphere, is the element of "silence". Those who are participating in the *tapuaiga* would sit silently, sometimes accompanied by whisperings and sighs. This is known as *fa'anōnōmanū*, an influential term that exhibits the spirit of "worshipping in silence" or *tapua'i ma le filemū*. Mats were also laid out and the *'ava* was distributed during sacred gatherings.

Most often, the elders would gently rub their knees and look deeply in the eyes of those who served. They would gently press on the palms of their hands and blow gentle breaths from their mouths. Tapuaiga was also exhibited through the flowing of tears and the uttering of words. This was how *tapuaiga* was conducted, and blessings bestowed. A prevalent story about *Fe'epo*, an old man who prayed silently for his son *Leatiogie*, who was participating in the ancient game of

'aigofie (clubbing contest) during his *tapuaiga*. Upon receiving news of his son's victory, the old man, with the utmost humility, lay down on the mat, and clapped his hands silently. The act of praying and meditating silently, resonates the sense of pleading and beseeching to the spiritual divine for the success of an expedition.

Spiritual connection can also be recognized during the ceremonies of *saofa'i,* which is the Samoan ritual of the conferring or the sanctification of *matai* (chiefly titles). During such ritual, the paramount chief upon blessing the newly entitled successor, would cautiously blow air in the open mouth of his successor and says: "*Ia faagaganaina oe e le Atua Fetalai*." Meaning, "May the God of rhetoric endow you with the gift of tongues!" According to Tui Atua, "with his breath, the paramount chief is not only bestowing his blessings, but he is also imparting spiritual *mana*."[86]

In the Samoan tradition of the orators or the talking chiefs (*tulafale*), when an orator prepares to give a traditional speech (*lauga*), he or she would first of all consults chiefs or clergy to ask for their blessings. When the blessings are bequeathed, this means that the orator is joined by the *tapuaiga* of his ancestors, including those who are present and those who have passed. The combined *tapuaiga* is believed to be the sacred source of the orator's words and thoughts. It is as if the orator is being prompted by the whispers of the spirits of his or her ancestors. It is also the case that when the orator or the *tulafale* received gifts such as money, fine mats, or foods from the opposite party, he would have to distribute what he gets among his fellow orators, who have been doing the task of *tapua'i.*

The mutual reciprocity of the *tulafale* in this specific act reverberates the sense of unity and thanksgiving. It is a token of appreciation, in which one has to acknowledge that his success was

[86] Tamasese Efi, "In Search of meaning, nuance and metaphor in social policy", *Su'esu'e Manogi*, 87.

not through his knowledge or personal magnitude, but through the syndicate effort and divine mediation of his fellow colleagues, through the act of *tapua'i*.

2.3.4 Invoking the Spirits (Fono ma Aitu)

One of the ancient form of indigenous *tapuaiga* is the *fono-ma-aitu*, which literally means "meeting with the ancestral spirits" or a ritual of invoking the ancestral spirits. It is a very specific type of ritual, and it shows the fact that the *aitu* does not die with the body and is also acknowledge as part of the living person. The *fono ma aitu* is only called when serious matters arise. It is also the case that if an issue cannot be resolved in the council of *matai*, the last resort was to take the matters to the graves and consult the opinion of their ancestral spirits. Summoning the ancestral spirits would have to be implemented through the ritual of *fono ma aitu*. In most villages, during the *fono ma aitu*, young fresh coconuts were opened (*tita'e*) and placed in the middle or on the sides of the *fale tele*. Some villages like those at the Aleipata district, the presence of the ancestral spirits was recognised if there was a fire speck (*'aloi afi*) present during the *fono ma aitu* at night, and that the two coconuts (supposedly for Tafua and Fuataga, the two high chiefs of Aleipata) have been found emptied or being consumed in the morning.[87]

Kramer[88] also mentioned a similar occasion at the great Fono of Aana at Ma'auga. The *fono* took place at midnight and executed by Galu and Lemana, who were among the high chiefs at Leulumoega. They would sit all night without talking, but concentrated in deep contemplation. Like the *Aleipata fono*, the coconuts were checked again in the early hours of the morning and if

[87] Ta'iao Matiu Dr. Matavai Tautunu. Interview on 4 June, 2023. per. comm.

[88] Krämer, *The Samoa Islands*, 197.

the juices were consumed, it was a sign that the spirits were present, and that the village *fono* may proceed the following morning.

Some of the orators have the habit of visiting the graves of their ancestors, when prepared for an important event in which they were to perform *lauga*. Their visits to the graves was a symbol of paying respect and tribute, and at the same time seeking for their help and blessings for the task at hand.[89] This quest for spiritual support and the blessings of the ancestors symbolizes a sense of humility and spiritual adoration and honour. The orators' dependence on the help and the presence of the spirits signifies humbleness, in which one should not rely on his or her own strength, but seek the help of the spiritual divine. *Fono ma aitu* may seemed strange to the modern person, but such a spiritual experience shows how intimate the relationships between the indigenous people were to the spiritual realm.

2.3.5 Burials and Reburials (Disinterment) – Maliu and Liutofaga

The early Samoans showed ample respect and great honour for the dead. The family ancestral spirits were venerated as family deities and their continued presence was acknowledged as a reality within the daily activities of the family. The practice of providing food for the dead and the burning of fire before and during funerals and for a few days afterwards, were seen as rituals for honouring the continued presence of the dead, and a and a mark of tender regard.[90] Also, the placing of graves very close to family homes, and the keeping of lights near the graves, indicated the affection and respect given for the dead, and the belief in their continued presence.

[89] Ta'iao Matiu Dr. Matavai Tautunu. Interview on 4 June, 2023. per. comm.

[90] Turner, *Samoa: A Hundred Years*, 82.

The same respect and motive also realised in the rituals of *liutofaga*. *Liutofaga* or secondary burial refers to the ritual of moving of the remains of the dead from a grave and reburying them closer to the homes of the diseased or even inside the house. In ancient times, the remains usually reburied under the main post/posts of a residence. Performing the ritual of *liutofaga* underlines the idea of nearness, intimacy, and proximity where the dead being buried in the house helps to remind the living of the inextricable relationship between life and death. As Tamasese puts it, "by burying the dead in the new residence, recognition is also given to the principle of continuity, where the medium for dialogue between the living and the dead requires close proximity between them."[91]

The deeper meaning and appreciation of *liutofaga* is found in their representations of the uniqueness and sacredness and beauty of ethnic culture. In terms of the preservation of the human being even after dearth, the body is an integral part of the total Samoan being. The manifestation of the virtues of love and respect in all their splendour and civility are primary motives in these rituals and traditional practices that must surely negate any implications of immorality.

2.3.6 Forgiveness & Reconciliation (Ifoga)

The ritual of *ifoga* is perhaps the most stimulating and spiritual customary of the Samoan people. It is stimulating in the sense that it is thought-provoking, intense, and even the worst can be expected. It is a ceremonial practise of "seeking forgiveness and reconciliation, when one committed a serious offending." It is considered a formal apology, an admission of guilt, in which the urgency of the spiritual harmony is sought after. *Ifoga* comes from the word *ifo*, which means "to bow down". The most significant aspect of *ifoga* is the participation of the *matai* (or the leaders

[91] Tamasese Efi, "Bio-ethics and the Samoan Indigenous Reference", *Su'esu'e Manogi*, 96.

of the offender's family) and the use of the *measina* (*ie* toga), which signify unity and humility, and the highest honor and respect. An *ie toga* or fine mat known as the *pulou o le ola* (concealment of life), is used by the *matai* and the offender's family to cover their heads as they are sitting outside the victim's residence, offering themselves as objects of venting anger and revenge by the victim's family. It is a symbol of deep remorse and regret, while at the same time, yearning for forgiveness and reconciliation. In doing so, the *matai* and his *aiga* humble themselves to the mercy of the aggrieved family and are exposed to serious harm and even death. When and if the victim's family accepts *ifoga*, speeches of reconciliation are made accompanied by presentation of fine mats and food as offerings of amends. I have witnessed a number of *ifoga* throughout my life, and none of the ones that I have experienced, have been turned down or rejected. The tranquillity of the end result is not as easy as it sounds. But this shows that no matter how serious the offend is, unity can still be possible, when the spirit of remorse and forgiveness are present. To be truly remorseful and apologetic is a symbol of *faamaualalo* or humility; which means to seek for acceptance, yearning for peace and searching for *leleiga* or reconciliation. Tui Atua points out that forgiveness by the offended party is not forgiveness for its own sake, for it is based on the Samoan concept of harmony. Hence the ritual of *ifoga* can be recognized as a spiritual approach that people will resort to when they try to heal divisions and seek for harmony in both social and sacred boundaries. This harmony is realized through the *va fealoa'i.* Through the *ifoga*, shattered relationships can be healed, when the power of the spiritual divine intervenes and melts the heart, ensuring peace, and harmony.

2.4 Summary

In chapter one I have stated the authenticity of historical and ancient materials such as legends or mythical stories as relevant sources in the context of theology. They breath as living texts in the cycle of our daily lives and continue to speak to us in our cultural experience, as we transform and reshape our modern existence in time of change.

The importance of setting the foundation from the perspective of the *tagata ola* and the *tagata o faiā*, helps us to gain a spiritual and divine relationship of the *tagata* to the culture and his/her religious traditions. This foundation discloses that the fulfilment of the obligations of the Samoan self, is to be realised in the essence of *faaaloalo* and *alofa* which are manifested in the *va-fealoa'i* and *tua'oi*. This obligation is to be performed within the space of *tautua*, knowing that his/her obligation is an act of humility, embraced within the divine spiritual awareness that is already indwelled in him/her, which is part of the image of God.

The proximity of the human being to the physical and the spirit-world was genealogically and cosmologically originated in the creation stories of *Tagaloalagi*. From this ancient credence, we have learned that the connection between mankind, the animal world, the environment, and the cosmos is one genealogy, a genealogy that is once divine and temporal. That is, the indigenous Samoans see the totality of life in the integration of the physical and the spiritual. This means that every aspects of human life such as birth, growth, family and death were closely integrated with the divine so that the two worlds, spiritual and physical were simultaneously embraced within everyday existence. Death, to the indigenous Samoan, is not the end of life, but an extension to the beyond, and the continuation of existence in the spirit. From this traditional belief, the indigenous Samoans see the *aitu* and *ancestral spirits* as essential parts of living. They look upon them as protectors and guardians of families and communities.

From the context of *Uluulumatafolau*, both realms are interconnected and inter-related (hence the term *uluulu* or *feuluuluta'i*). From the holistic disciplinary world of the individual, to the reciprocity life-giving unity of the community, everything is interconnected (*uluulu*) and eternal (*folau*), through the cultural values of *fa'aaloalo, tautua, and alofa*, extending towards the gods and the ancestral spirit-world.

CHAPTER 3

The Biblical Revelations of the Holy Spirit

3.0 Introduction

The Introductory Chapter (§0.6 *What is the Holy Spirit?*) set the background in approaching a general understanding of the "Holy Spirit". These general observations were focused on the scriptural and theological understanding of the Holy Spirit in the creative and the salvific work of God for humankind and for all of his creation. This chapter will extend on these observations. It is also noteworthy that the purpose of this chapter is not to present an exhaustive study of the Holy Spirit due to its limitations. Rather, it focuses on selected biblical witness and revelations of the Holy Spirit. Selected Scriptures will be discussed in relation to the Holy Spirit, specifically in the accounts of Creation, Jesus' baptism, The Gospels, Pentecost, Paul's Ministry, and the Book of Revelation. The chapter concludes with a presentation of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and in relation to the doctrine of God, the doctrine of the Trinity, and Christological developments.

3.1 The Holy Spirit in Creation

The Book of Genesis brings together stories about the beginning of the world and humanity (Gen 1-11) with stories about the beginning of the particular people of Israel and their earlier ancestors (Gen 12-50).[1] As such, Genesis is important in setting God's interaction and concern

[1] Dennis T. Olson, "Genesis," in *The New Interpreter's Bible (NIB) - One Volume Commentary*, eds. Beverly Roberts Gaventa & David Petersen (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010): 22-63.

with God's specially chosen people, Israel, within the broader universal horizon of God's interaction and concern for all humanity and all creation.

Genesis 1–2:4 presents a Priestly account of creation - it is a poetic narrative that likely formed for liturgical usage.[2] Hence it is a product of literary formation and theological motifs,[3] and it formulates the foundation and the framework of the divine, creative act of God. Most prominently, the Priestly writers' focus on *order* is reinforced by the style of Gen 1–2:4, which features a formulaic, almost liturgical, rhythm.[4] Each day follows the same pattern: *announcement* ("God said") → *command* ("Let there be…") → *report* ("And it was so") → *evaluation* ("And God saw that it was good") → *temporal framework* ("And there was evening and there was morning, the first day").[5] From this creative formula, Moltmann sees the Spirit as the "breath of God" when he was uttering his Word, hence the Spirit is denoted as the breath of God's voice.[6] Moltmann further points out that if this unity of breath and voice is carried over to God's creative activity, then all things are called to life through God's Spirit and his Word.[7] In this sense, the Spirit, has an active role in creation.

On the other hand, McGrath points out that the "establishment of order" is generally represented in two different views: First of all, c*reation is an imposition of order on a formless chaos*. This model is especially associated with the image of a potter working clay into a

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[2] Walter Brueggemann, "Genesis," in *Interpretation: Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, ed. James Luther Mays (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 22.

[3] John H. Marks, "The Book of Genesis," in *The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible*, ed. Charles M. Laymond (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 1.

[4] Andrew R. Davis, *Exploring the Old Testament: Creation. Covenant. Prophecy. Kingship* (New London, Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publications, 1989), 7.

[5] Davis, *Exploring the Old Testament*, 7.

[6] Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 41.

[7] Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 41.

recognizable ordered structured (Gen 2:7; Isa 29:16; Jer 18:1–6). Secondly, c*reation concerns conflict with a series of chaotic forces* - often depicted as a dragon or another monster (variously named Behemoth, Leviathan, Nahar, Rahab, Tiamin, or Yam) who must be subdued (Job 3:8, 7:12, 9:13, 40:15–41:11; Ps 74:13–15; Isa 27:1).[8] The establishment of order affirms a divine victory over the forces of chaos. This triumph is achieved not through a battle between deities but through the mutual work of the Triune God, in whom whose Spirit (*rûah*) subdues the roiling deep.

> **1** "In [the] beginning God created the heavens and the earth, **2** The earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind [the spirit] of God swept over the face of the waters." (Gen 1:1–2)

In the introductory verses of the Priestly account of creation, verse 1 declares a bold statement; that is → "God created the heavens and the earth". Whereas the last part of verse 2 ("a wind [the spirit] of God swept over the face of the waters") explains the fulfilling action, or most specifically, hints at how God initiated the creation activities. In other words, it complements verse 1 in the sense that it verifies the attribution of creation to God as stated in verse 1, by testifying to the precreation existence of God.

The Hebrew terms *rûah* and *rāchaph* described the presence of God. The term *rûah* carries the nuances 'wind', 'breath' or 'spirit' while the term *rāchaph* can be translated as 'hovering' or 'moving' or 'swept'. The two terms (*rûah* and *rāchaph*) bring movement to the chaotic and disordered primordial scenes as described by the words *tōhū* (formless, confusion) and *bōhū* (void, emptiness). Together, the two terms *rûah* and *rāchaph* depict that God already in action in the creation process. In the Samoan Bible translation, the word "hovering" is translated to the term "*fegaoioia'i*". The term *fegaoioia'i* is a derivative of the word *gaoioi*, which is a verb that

[8] McGrath, *Christian Theology,* 195.

intensifies the act of "continuous moving."[9] This implication not only signifies the Spirit as a "living identity," but also implies the "life-giving" nature of the Spirit and her role as an active participant in the creative act of God.

Moreover, the grammatical features of the Hebrew term *rachaph* ("hovering") indicates a piel participle feminine verb.[10] This grammatical feature not only denotes both an intensive and a continuous action, but also implies the motherly nuances of the Spirit, who brings forth life. The only other time that the word *rachaf* is used in the Old Testament is found in the song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32:11.[11] Here, Moses asserts that the Lord's presence with Israel in the wilderness was "like an eagle that stirs up its nest, and hovers over its young; as it spreads its wings, takes them up, and bears them aloft on its pinions."

In his work on *God in Creation,* Jürgen Moltmann described this life-giving connotation of the Spirit in terms of 'ecological doctrine'.[12] In a much deeper sense, it is a reference to the symbolism of "home" and "dwelling". The Greek term *oikos*[13] which means "house, family, or household" - symbolizes 'ecology' as the 'doctrine of the house'. Using such analogy, Moltmann points out that the Creator, through his Spirit, dwells in his creation as a whole, and in every individual created being, by virtue of his Spirit holding them together and keeping them in life.[14]

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[9] Rev. George Pratt, *Grammar and Dictionary of the Samoan Language* (London: The London Missionary Society, 1911), 158.

[10] Bible Works: Software for Biblical Exegesis & Research (version 7.0). Windows. Virginia: Bible Works LLC, 2006.

[11] Marks, *The Book of Genesis*, 1.

[12] Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation - an Ecological Doctrine of Creation*, The Gifford Lectures 1984 - 1985 (London, UK: SCM Press Ltd, 1985), xii.

[13] Stephen D. Renn, ed., *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*. Vine's Expository Dictionary (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2012), 501.

[14] Moltmann, *God in Creation*, xii.

Moltmann refers to this divine indwelling of the Spirit as the *Shekinah,*[15] God's indwelling; and the purpose of the *Shekinah* is to make the whole creation the house of God. In this sense, we recognized the Spirit as a Co-Creator, and the Sustainer of life. The role of the Spirit in creation reflects the belief in a God who is actively engaged in and with his creation, both in its original formation and ongoing sustenance. This perspective underscores the dynamic and life-giving nature of the Spirit, in the renewal and ongoing transformation of believers, in the spiritual, physical, and eternal.

3.2 The Holy Spirit in Jesus' Baptism (Matt 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:21ff).

The English word baptism is derived from the Greek word *baptisma,* which has its root in the Greek term *baptízō*, which means "to wash ceremonially for purpose of purification."[16] It implies the Pharisaic tradition whereby one could maintain ceremonial purity. It also refers to the tradition of "washing" prior to taking a meal.[17] The Old Testament equivalent of the term *baptízō* is the Hebrew word *tābal,* which primarily means "to dip". In relation to Israelite ceremonial practices, *tābal* indicates first of all the action of the priest in dipping his finger into the blood of the sacrificial bull prior to the sprinkling of the altar of incense for the forgiveness of the priestly sins.[18] In the Christian sense, baptism is a personal conviction and understanding of the need for cleansing in

[15] "Shekinah" is a Hebrew term that is not explicitly mentioned in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament), but the concept is derived from various passages that describe God's divine presence and manifestations of his glory. For example, the account of the construction of the Tabernacle in the wilderness describes how a cloud covered the Tabernacle (Ex. 40:34–38), signifying God's presence among the Israelites. This concept of divine presence is often associated with the term "Shekinah."

[16] Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon,* 144.

[17] Compare to Mk. 7:4 & Lk. 11:38.

[18] Renn, *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words,* 88.

repentance of sin, and an intimate fellowship with Jesus.[19] In other words it is a rite of *initiation* into the life in Christ; and marks the beginning of the journey of faith and discipleship that lasts throughout one's life.

In the tradition of the Church, "being baptized" into Christ, is a symbol of the believer's identification with Jesus in his death and his resurrection, as indicated in Romans 6:3; and Galatians 3:27. The later usage has to do with Christ's own personal trauma surrounding his death, as well as with the ritual applied to his followers signifying their spiritual union with him through the symbolism of immersion in water. The ritual of baptism is also associated with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Theologically, water baptism presupposes spiritual regeneration as a prevenient and primary work of God in and through the person of the Holy Spirit.

> **16** "And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. **17**And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased." (Matt 3:16–17)

According to the Gospel of Matthew (3:14–15), John the Baptist's refusal to baptize Jesus calls the reader's attention to the fact that it was not fitting for Jesus to receive a baptism which was a sign of repentance, because by nature he was a perfect man who had no consciousness of sin. However, his submission to John's baptism indicates the divine intention for him to be identified with human beings.[20] As David Graves suggests, Mathew's depiction of Jesus' willingness to be baptized by John is to fulfill the theme of "righteousness."[21]

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[19] Andreas J. Kostenberger, "Baptism in the Epistles: An Initiation Rite for Believers," in *New American Commentary Studies in Bible and Theology*, eds. Thomas R. Schreiner & Shawn Wright (Louisville: B&H Academic, 2007), 33.

[20] Renn, *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, 89.

[21] David E. Graves, *Key Themes of the New Testament* - a Survey of Major Theological Themes (New Brunswick, Canada: David E. Graves, 2013), 104 → This motif is developed especially in the Sermon on the Mount, where

The role of the Holy Spirit during Jesus' baptism was a public declaration that he was the Messiah. Unlike Mark, who depicts the coming of the Spirit and the voice from Heaven as a private experience of Jesus, Matthew implies that the heavenly voice addressed the onlookers, making it a public connotation of Jesus as the Messiah: "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." Archbald Hunter also comments on the significances of the symbol of the dove and the "voice from heaven" as Jewish images to express what is imperceptible to outward eye and ear[22]

"This is my beloved son" is the coronation formula of the Messianic king of Israel (Ps 2:7); "With whom I am well pleased" is no doubt the reminiscence of the ordination formula of Isaiah's Servant of the Lord (Isa 42:1).[23] The remarkable combination is an affirmation of Jesus' calling and destiny as the ideal king of Israel, and the lowly servant of the LORD.

On the other hand, the descendant of the Spirit upon Jesus and the appearances like a dove, are given a somewhat more concrete description in Matthew than in Mark. The dove in the Old Testament tradition as interpreted in first century Judaism was the symbol of God's Spirit, hovering over the creation (Gen 1:2) and caring for his people in the days of their wilderness wanderings (Deut 32.11).[24] Furthermore, it shows that while the Old Testament prophets were anointed by oil to represent God's divine coronation, Jesus was himself anointed by the Holy Spirit.[25] The Holy Spirit would come and permanently rest upon Jesus and accompany him throughout his ministry as a demonstration of the solidarity with the Trinity in redemptive history.

Jesus explores men to be obedient to the law of God in such a radical way as to exceed the zeal for righteousness of even the Pharisees (Matt. 5:17-20; see also on Mark. 1:9-11).

[22] Archbald Macbride Hunter, *The Work and Words of Jesus* (London W.C., UK: Hassell Street Press, 1956), 37.

[23] Hunter, *The Work and Words of Jesus*, 37.

[24] Howard Clark Kee, "The Gospel According to Matthew," in *The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible*, ed. Charles M. Laymond (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 613.

[25] Graves, *Key Themes of the New Testament*, 104.

Consequently, Jesus' baptism, as it stands, symbolizes the entrance of Jesus into his ministry, empowered by the Holy Spirit. By being baptized as a human, Jesus enters solidarity with lost humanity. And in doing so, Jesus sets an example for his followers – he demonstrates the importance of repentance, humility, obedience to God, and submission to God's will. With the power of the Holy Spirit, he begins the life of costly love and service that eventually leads to his passion, death, and resurrection. The Gospels all agree that Jesus' ministry was effective by the power of the Holy Spirit. Matthew and Luke reinforce this view by incorporating quotations from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah (Matt 12:18 = Isa 42:1; Luke 8:18 = Isa 61:1).

> "Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations." (Isa 42:1)

> "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners." (Isa 61:1)

As already hinted above, these proclamations not only affirm Jesus' identity, and declare Jesus' divine '*sonship',* but also impress upon the minds of the followers, that Jesus' ministry and that of the Holy Spirit were inseparable. The power of the Spirit now vested on Jesus can be affirmed in Jesus' victory over the Devil in his temptations which took place right after his baptism.

On three occasions, the Holy Spirit is mentioned connected to the ministry of Jesus; during the time of his virgin birth (Matt 1:18; Luke 1:35), his baptism (Matt 3:13–17; Mark 1:10; John. 1:32), and then during his resurrection (John 20:22). This also signifies the Trinitarian mutual roles from the very beginning towards the very end of Jesus' ministry, all participate in God's redemptive process.

In summary, the significance of the Holy Spirit in Jesus' baptism lies in the Spirit's role in anointing Jesus for his mission, confirming his identity, foreshadowing his work of salvation, highlighting the Trinitarian nature of God, serving as a model for believers, and representing the ongoing transformational work of the Spirit in the Church, and the lives of those who follow Christ.

3.3 Jesus' Allusion to the Holy Spirit and the Church

Among the Gospel writers, only Matthew uses the term "church" (*ekklēsía*). The Greek term *ekklēsía* is "a regular summoned legislative body, assembly," or "people with shared belief, community, congregation."[26] Perhaps the most prevalent and debated reference of the Holy Spirit that Jesus made in relation to the Church is found in Matthew, in Peter's confession regarding the identity of Jesus at Caesarea Philippi (Matt 16:13–20). But before the account of Peter's confession (in which Jesus declared the establishment of his Church), Jesus was teaching his disciples about the wisdom and knowledge one can attain when relying on and trusting the Spirit of God. Jesus' ultimate purpose of these teachings was to prepare and to equip his disciples for the most difficult task that they will face, that is, the establishment of his "Church". One of these teachings was the parable of the wise man who built his house on rock (*pétra*), which concludes

[26] Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 268. → The term "church" has its root in the Hebrew word *qāhāl* meaning "congregation," which in the (LXX) translates as church (Deut. 31:30; Acts 7:38). In the New Testament, the Greek noun *ekklēsia* meaning "church" is normally used to denote a gathered community of God's people assembled for worship (Renn, *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, 77). The derivation of *ekklēsia* from *ek* ("out of") and *kaleō* ("to call") signifies the purpose of those in the community → "those who have been called out of the world to fulfil God's purpose" (Green, Brown and Perrin, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, 138). It is therefore apparent there are no significant differences in meaning between the terms *ekklēsia* and *qāhāl*. Central to these two terms is the underlying phenomenon of a people who are bound together by a formal and intimate covenant relationship with their God. Such relationship is essential for the community of God's people.

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matt 7:24–27). Jesus also use the same term for the rock (*pétra*) in which he will build his Church upon when he said to Peter in Matthew 16:15–19.

The Holy Spirit as the Foundation of the Church

> **15** He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" **16** Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the ***living*** God." **17** And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not **revealed** (*apokálufen*) this to you, but my Father in heaven. **18** And I tell you, you are Peter (Pétros), and on this **rock** (*pétra*) I will build my **church** (*ekklēsia*), and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. **19** I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." (Matt 16:15–19)

Peter's confession identified Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of the *living* God. The word living resembles the active Spirit of God (*rûah*) that was moving/hovering on the face of the waters in the beginning of creation. Jesus expands on Peter's response by telling him that it was the Father (not human) who revealed this to him. The Greek verb *apokálufen* which means "to make known" or "to reveal" denotes a "revelation" (*apokálupis*), a feminine noun which is usually associated with the work of the Spirit of God. This word is linked to what Jesus says in verse 18. In verse 18, Jesus proclaims that "and on this rock (*pétra*), I will build my church". The Greek word *pétra* means "a large mass of rock" is a feminine noun, and it is different from *Pétros,* which in Greek means "a stone". The term *Pétros* is a masculine noun, and it is the Greek equivalent of the name Peter. Most people associate the rock on which the church is built upon to Peter, but as we have

seen in the Greek text, the rock that Jesus refers to is none other than the Spirit of God.[27] Hence in this case, the Holy Spirit is the foundation, whom the Church of Christ is built upon.

3.4 The Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:1–13)

Tradition is unanimous in ascribing both the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles to Luke, a companion of Paul.[28] The Acts of the Apostles received its present title, with the word "Acts" (*praxeis*) evidently meant to suggest both movement in the advance of the gospel and courageous deeds by the apostles.[29] From a theological perspective, we can say that between the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, there is a contextual difference in their pneumatology: the doctrine of the Spirit in the Gospel has a Christological context, while that of the Acts is ecclesiological. In fact, the Acts of the Apostles is more a story of the expansion of the church from Jerusalem to Rome than it is a complete account of the apostles' acts.[30] Whereas Jesus Christ is the principal character in the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles portrays the Holy Spirit as the authority working through the apostles in the beginning of the Church, and beyond. The inauguration of this authority however, was publicly sealed on the day of the Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was received by the Apostles (Acts 2:1–13).[31]

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[27] *See* Vaitusi Nofoaiga, "Su'esu'ega o le Tusi Paia e Fa'ataua ai le Manatu Autu o le Fonotele: Vaaiga i le Agaga o le Atua" (Paper presented at the EFKS Annual General Meeting, Malua, 2016).

[28] George Hogarth Macgregor, "The Acts of the Apostles," in *The Interpreter's Bible* vol. IX, ed. George Arthur Buttrick, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1954), 5.

[29] Richard N. Longenecker, "Acts" in *John-Acts: The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 9, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publication, 1981), 207.

[30] Donald A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2005), 285.

[31] The Greek term *Pentēkostē* is transliterated "Pentecost" in reference to the "fiftieth day" after the Sabbath of the Passover week, or the "day of the Pentecost." This is the Greek equivalent of the second of the three great annual

> **4** "All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability." (Acts 2:4)

The coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was of utmost significance both theologically and practically for the early Church. The "descending" symbolizes the Holy Spirit's sanctification of the apostles prior to their mission to the world, it also marked the fulfilment of the imparting of the Holy Spirit upon them as promised by Jesus Christ (Matt 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16, 24:49; John 7:39, 15:26, 16:7-15), and prophesized in the Old Testament:

> "Then afterward I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female slaves, in those days, I will pour out my spirit." (Joel 2:28–29).

The Pentecostal event demonstrated that the new era of fulfilment had begun - the Church entered into the new age of the Holy Spirit, and the preaching of the fulfilled message of the promised and the risen Christ. From this perspective, Luke presents "the things that have been fulfilled among us" (Luke 1:1) as a continuation of the salvific history of the Old Testament. It shows how history reaches its culmination in Christ and flows from him through the Spirit-led apostles into a new phase. That is, the Church as a gathered community of believers uniting in *one*, in the *holiness* of the Spirit.

Luke on the other hand presented the Holy Spirit as the God-given "gift of life" – the Pentecostal event was accompanied by tongues of fire, rested upon and abiding with the gathered disciples. Luke interprets this phenomenon as a miracle of communication and linguistics.[32]

Jewish festivals → the Feast of Weeks, or Harvest, in grateful recognition of the completed harvest. (Renn, *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, 721).

[32] William Baird, "The Acts of the Apostles," in *The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible*, ed. Charles M. Laymond (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 729-67.

Among other spiritual gifts that are often mentioned by Paul in his writings, the gift of "speech" was most needed at the time, as the Apostles began their mission of the Gospel to the Gentile nations. The experience would have been full of significance and most scholars associated it with the giving of the law, when God spoke to Moses on the mountain burned with fire (Exod 19:11–18).[33] The Pentecost event, thus was portrayed as the fiery Sinai, in the form of tongues, to symbolize that God was speaking and bestowing his people with the gift of the Spirit.[34] A gift that empowers the disciples to take the Gospel to the ends of all nations as they have been commissioned by Christ. The gift that fosters unity in diversity, and demonstrates the inclusivity of God's gift of salvation, thus the "catholicity" (*universality*) of the Church. Moltmann describes the experience and the perpetual presence of God which is to be expected from the coming of the Holy Spirit as *universal, total, enduring,* and *direct*.[35] Through the Holy Spirit, the presence of God is no longer particular, nor partial, nor historical temporary, or through revelation and tradition, but effective in the human 'heart' in the depths of human existence and in the whole breadth of creation, grounded on the contemplation of God and his glory, and conceived as the 'resting' or 'dwelling' of the Spirit.

Thus, the gift of the Holy Spirit inaugurates and seals the eternal presence of Christ upon his Church, guiding, empowering, transforming, and equipping believers and guide them in their Christian journey.

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[33] Graves, *Key Themes of the New Testament*, 170.

[34] The Greek word *glossolalia* from *glōssa*, meaning "tongue" or "language"; and *laleō*, "to speak, or talk". This event also reverses the effects of the confounding of languages at the tower of Babel (Gen. 11).

[35] Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 57.

3.5 Paul's Ministry and the Holy Spirit

Paul's commanding place in the development of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is due to the fact and the way that he took the notions of Holy Spirit in his religious heritage and rendered them distinctively Christian. In fact, it was his dramatic conversion on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1–9) that became a foundational spiritual experience for the Apostle. From the outset of this event, it was the Spirit who was instrumental in this conversion experience – it was the Spirit who initiated total transformation; and it was the Spirit who opened Paul's eyes to the truth of Christ. Ironically, the Hebrew name Saul (*Saoúl*) which means "asked or prayed for" [36]; and his Graeco-Greek name Paul (*Paûlos*) which means "small or little,"[37] reflect his spiritual character and transformation. Theologically, we see this connection in Paul's commitment - the total transformational experience when one humbled himself/herself in the full embrace of God's grace. Being both a Jewish and a Roman citizen, Paul as an Apostle to the Gentiles had a mind-set influenced by his understanding and knowledge of Judaism; a knowledge and understanding of Jewish culture, religious and political life.

Throughout his ministry, Paul insisted that believers have a responsibility to live their lives in the power of the Spirit, as he himself was led by the Spirit. This means that the believers must let their character be moulded by God according to the pattern of Jesus Christ – not as something which they achieve for themselves ("work"), but as something which by attentive openness to God, they allow the Spirit to produce through them ("fruit")[38] Dunn puts this rightly when he says: "Paul

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[36] Bible Works: Software for Biblical Exegesis & Research (version 7.0). Windows. Virginia: Bible Works LLC, 2006.

[37] Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 701.

[38] Dunn, *The Christ & the Spirit, Pneumatology*, 15. → For example: (2 Cor 3:18; Gal 5:18–23; cf. Rom 8:28; 9:1; 14:17; 15:13, 30; 2 Cor 6:6; Gal 6:1; Col 1:8).

was able to talk of his daily conduct as a "walking by the Spirit," as a being "led by the Spirit," as an "ordering one's life by the Spirit."[39]

It is also noticeable that Paul contrasts this experience of daily guidance with the sort of independence on the rule book of Law which had characterized his previous religious practice. Which is to say that Paul experienced the Spirit precisely as the fulfilment of the prophetic hope that the Law would be written on the heart not on just tablets of stones (c.f. Rom 12:2; 2 Cor 3:3, alluding to Jer 31:31–34). In this sense, Paul sees this inter-dwelling experience in the Spirit, as "life in the Spirit." For Paul, the Kingdom of God is the final goal of the relationship between the Spirit, Christ and the People of God. So that God's righteousness and rule be the culmination of it all. The Kingdom of God is nevertheless a present reality, in that righteousness, peace and joy are already the experience of the Church.

On the other hand, it is also important that for Paul, the Spirit is a shared gift. The Spirit is a united power drawing believers together into the one body of Christ. Thus, on the one hand, the corporate life of Christians arises out of the shared experience of the Spirit. They are constituted the one body of Christ by their common participation (*koinōnia*) in the Spirit (1 Cor 12:13; 2 Cor 13:14; Eph 4:3–4; Phil 1:27; 2:1). And on the other hand, the continuing existence and unity of any church depends on the sharing of that shared Spirit - that is to say, the Spirit who creates community constantly seeks to manifest himself on the concrete expression of grace which alone can build up that community to maturity in Christ (Rom 12:4–8; 1 Cor 12:14–26; 14:12, 26).

[39] Dunn, *The Christ & the Spirit, Pneumatology*, 15.→ For example (Rom 8:4–6, 14; Gal 5:16, 18, 25; cf. Rom 8:13; Gal 6:8)

Such unity in the Spirit is also noticeable in Paul's Letter to the Ephesians (Eph 4:1–16). After begging his readers to lead a life worthy of their calling (v.1), Paul urges them to be eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit "with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love" (v.2) and "making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (v.3). He follows up this petition with a list of rudiments which unite believers: "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through and in all (vv. 4–6).

3.6 The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit and its Development

3.6.1. Early Developments

Christian theology begins, continues, and ends with the inexhaustible mystery of the divine God.[40] This means that the human being cannot fully express or adequately fathom the divine realities; as there are limits placed upon the human ability and knowledge to grasp the things of God. Hence we can only speak of God, however, not in ambiguous and broad terms, but on the basis of the particular actions of God attested in Scripture.[41] In other words, our understanding of the complexity and the immensity of God can only be understood in his creative work, his revelation and in his work of redemption throughout the Scripture and in our own personal experience.

In the early centuries of the Church, as Christianity spread, so was the spread of different interpretations of the Gospel. There was a need to maintain and preserve the truths and teachings

[40] Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014), 102.

[41] McGrath, *Christian Theology,* 300.

of the Church. Hence was the development of Ecumenical Councils. The idea of an ecumenical council is significant to the ecumenical movement, as its ultimate purpose is to bridge the differences among Christians. The fundamental biblical reference and the essential elements for an ecumenical council is found in Acts 15:22 (the Jerusalem Assembly). That is: representation of the whole ecclesial community, assistance of the Holy Spirit, and unanimity in the decisions that must be applied in the life of the Church.[42] The special assistance of the Holy Spirit can be supported by a reference to Matthew 18:20 → "*Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them*."

The development of the doctrines of the early Christian Church were prompted when the Church was encountering major doctrinal issues and debates over the nature of God and Christological debates with regards to the Person of Christ. Labelled as "heretics"[43], the false teachings against the Christian teachings were seen as unorthodoxy because they were nonconformist with the common faith and the teachings of the Church.[44]

One of the leading forces and perhaps the greatest philosophical threat to the early Church in the second century, was Gnosticism[45] and their philosophy of *dualism*. Gnosticism taught a

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[42] There are no fixed set of conditions for an ecumenical council, they developed gradually in history. However, primary requirements include: (i) docility or obedience to the Holy Spirit, and (ii) Faithfulness to the Word.

[43] The Ancient Greek word *hairesis* from which the English terms "heresy" and "heretic" are derived from simply means "act of choice", "party" or an "attachment". From this sense of the word, it further develops and defines heresy as "a formal denial or doubt of any defined and accepted belief(s) or doctrine(s) of an established faith or religious organization." *See* Frank Leslie Cross, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 758.

[44] Joseph F. Kelly, *The Ecumenical Councils of the Catholic Church* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2009), 19.

[45] Gnosticism drew its name from the Greek word "gnosis" (γνοσισ), which means "knowledge". To the Gnostics, they claimed to stress the importance of this gnosis – which according to them, a secret, direct inner knowledge of God – above dogma, that only a small segment of human could attain. Gnosticism mixed elements of various religions and philosophies, from Platonism to Eastern mysticism to Zoroastrianism, with elements of Judaism and Christianity. Gnosticism arose from the natural human desire to create a theodicy, an explanation for the origin of evil. This is turn, raised the question of why a perfectly good, almighty, and all-knowing God permits evil.→ *See also* Steven J. Lawson, *Pillars of Grace: A Long Line of Godly Men* (Sanford, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing,

sharp dualism, deeming the spiritual realm to be good but matter to be evil. Since God is a spirit, the Gnostics reasoned, He could not have created an evil material world. Thus, a lower god, the demiurge, sometimes identified with the God of the Old Testament, whom they heartily disliked, must have created all matter.[46] For Gnosticism, a sharp distinction was to be drawn between the God who redeemed humanity from the world, and a somewhat inferior deity (often termed "the demiurge") who created that world in the first place.[47] The Old Testament was regarded by the Gnostics as dealing with this lesser deity, whereas the New Testament was concerned with the redeemer God.

In response to this Gnostics' dualistic attack, Irenaeus of Lyons (c.130-c.202) argued that "creation was an act of pure love. God created humanity in order to have someone to whom benefits might be given."[48] Irenaeus declared that the material world was created good by God, despite its subsequent contamination by sin. The central point of Irenaeus theology was the "unity of God," as opposed to the Gnostic's division of God into a number of divine "aeons"[49]; and how the Gnostics made clear distinction between the "High God" and the wicked "demiurge" (Demiurgos, a semi-God) who created the world.

The second prominent force of these heresies was Arianism → a heresy popularized by Arius, a priest in one of the larger churches in the Egyptian city of Alexandria, which denied the

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2011), 102; Earle E. Cairns, *Christianity through the Centuries*: *A History of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2010), 96.

[46] Cairns, *Christianity through the Centuries*, 75.

[47] McGrath, *Christian Theology,* 196

[48] McGrath, *Christian Theology,* 196.

[49] The Gnostics have a general belief that there are 30 beings or Aeons: God made the 1st Aeon, who then made the 2nd Aeon, etc.…and so on to the 30th Aeon, which made the material world. Jesus was 30 when He began His ministry.

full divinity of Jesus Christ.[50] Arius taught that Jesus was a creation of the Father (*ktisma* or *poiema*) and identified him as "Supreme among the Creatures", but did not possess divine attributes or share the same status with God.[51] In response to Arius' controversy, the first ecumenical council was called, authorized by the Roman emperor Constantine at the time, and was held in 325AD in the town of Nicea in modern northwestern Turkey. [52] The Council of Nicaea (325 A.D.) was known to be the first of the seven ecumenical councils of the church. Opponents of Arianism like Athanasius (c.293-c.373), Deacon of Alexandria, defined the relationship between the Father-Son as coeternity and coequality using the term "*Homooúsios*"[53], a Greek version of the Latin *consubstantialis*, that is, the Father and Son were consubstantial, sharing the same divine substance.[54] Athanasius argued that if Christ was merely "supreme among the creatures," he was unable to be the savior of humanity. Athanasius drawn upon John. 1:14, by arguing that when the "Word made flesh", God entered into our human situation, in order to change it.[55] This affirmed his argument that the Son is inseparable from the Father. This inseparability can only be achieved in the co-inherence or mutual inclusiveness of one on the other. In this sense, salvation for Athanasius involves divine intervention. [56] In other words, "the human race would have perished completely had not the Lord and Saviour of all, the Son of God, come among us to put an end to death."

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[50] McGrath, *Christian Theology,* 217.

[51] McGrath, *Christian Theology,* 217.

[52] Philip Schaff, NPNF2-14, *The Seven Ecumenical Councils* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: T&T Clark, 2005), 32.

[53] *Homooúsios* is a Greek word which means "same in being" or "same in essence". It is made up of two words: *homós* which means "same", and *ousía*, which means "being" or "essence".

[54] Joseph F. Kelly, *The Ecumenical Councils of the Catholic Church* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2009), 23.

[55] McGrath, *Christian Theology,* 219.

[56] McGrath, *Christian Theology,* 219.

The Council of Nicea (325 A.D.) condemned Arianism and affirmed Christ as being one essence (*homooúsios*) with the Father, even though it said very little about the Holy Spirit. This council also revised the Apostolic Creed, a statement of the declaration of the faith of the church and named it the Nicene Creed. The confirmation of the two natures (divine & human) in the one person of Christ was further endorsed and proclaimed in the fourth ecumenical council, the Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.).[57] This council also condemned Monophysitism - a belief that Jesus Christ only has the divine nature, but not the human nature.

3.6.2 The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

During the first three centuries, the relative absence of extensive discussion of the role of the Holy Spirit reveals the fact that theological debate was concentrated elsewhere. The apologists, in particular, concentrated so heavily on the doctrines of the Logos that the Spirit is effectively pushed to the margins.[58] Furthermore, the original Creed of Nicea (325), from which the "Nicene Creed" ultimately derives, only briefly mentioned the Holy Spirit. The Nicene Creed managed to affirm only "[We believe] in the Holy Spirit" in the its third article, failing to specify further what the shape of this belief ought to be. Perhaps the first one to take the challenge in approaching the clarification concerning the person and the work of the Holy Spirit was Irenaeus of Lyons.[59] Writing in the second century, Irenaeus was a witness to an important process of clarification which took place during the early church concerning the person and work of the Holy Spirit. His theology insisted upon the distinct yet interrelated roles of the Father, Son, and Spirit within the economy of salvation. Irenaeus affirmed his faith in:

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[57] Schaff, *The Seven Ecumenical Councils*, 328.

[58] Vanhoozer, *Dictionary for the Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, 304.

[59] McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 282.

> "God the Father, uncreated," in "the Word of God, the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ," and the "Holy Spirit." In commenting on each of these three persons, Irenaeus offers a succinct account of the role of the Spirit: "in the fullness of time, [the Holy Spirit] was poured out in a new way on our human nature in order to renew humanity throughout the entire world in the sight of God."[60]

This ephemeral proclamation reverberates a widespread consensus within the second-century church, which saw the Spirit primarily as God's means of renewing and restoring human nature, and as the inspiration of prophecy → an important role within the early church.[61] What was most significant was the fact the Irenaeus did not use the vocabulary of the Trinitarian formula, which was only started to develop a century later. His theology was best seen as an elaboration of the basic "rule of faith" which was being widely adopted around this time.[62] In this statement, Irenaeus clearly claimed that the idea of a personal entity called "the Spirit" alongside the Father and Jesus Christ as the Son and Word of God was an integral and essential aspect of the faith handed down to the Church from the Apostles.

For Irenaeus, "God brings the created order into being through Jesus Christ." Yet, Irenaeus is clear that the Holy Spirit has a role in this process - He speaks of the Wisdom and Word of God as the "two hands" of God. "For the Word and Wisdom, the Son and the Spirit, were always present with [God], by whom and in whom, all things were made." There is one God, who created and arranged all things by the Word and Wisdom. Human beings were "created in the likeness of God by the hands of the Father, that is, by the Son and the Holy Spirit."[63]

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[60] McGrath, *Christian Theology,* 282.

[61] McGrath, *Christian Theology,* 282.

[62] McGrath, *Christian Theology,* 282.

[63] McGrath, *Christian Theology,* 283.

As in the case of Christology, however, controversy eventually brought the doctrine of the Holy Spirit openly to the front, after the Christological question had been mainly resolved. After the first ecumenical council of Council of Nicaea (325 A.D.), a moderate version of Arianism reasserted itself in the middle decades of the fourth century, maintaining that, whatever may be said of the Son in his relation to the Father, the Spirit at least remains a creature.[64] The major responses to this claim came from the bishop-theologians Athanasius of Alexandria, Basil of Caesarea, and Gregory of Nazianzus.[65] Their contributions seemed to have been of decisive importance in establishing the divinity of the Holy Spirit during the later fourth century.

The response of Athanasius and Gregory to the new Arian challenge was clear-cut: the Spirit is "consubstantial" with the Father and/or the Son. First, Gregory drew particular attention to the word "holy" to refer to the Spirit, arguing that this holiness did not result from any external source but was the direct consequence of the nature of the Spirit.[66] That is, the Spirit was to be considered as the one who sanctifies, rather than the one who requires to be sanctified.

Secondly, the functions which are specific to the Holy Spirit establish the divinity of the Spirit. Gregory and Athanasius emphasized the point that the Spirit was responsible for the creation, renewal, and sanctification of God's creatures.[67] Yet, according to the Arius' dispute, if the Spirit is merely another creature, then how could one creature renew or sanctify another creature? Only if the Spirit was divine could sense be made of these functions.[68] In other words, "If the Holy Spirit performed functions that were specific to God, it must follow that the Holy

[64] Vanhoozer, *Dictionary for the Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, 304.

[65] McGrath, *Christian Theology,* 284

[66] McGrath, *Christian Theology,* 284

[67] McGrath, *Christian Theology,* 284

[68] McGrath, *Christian Theology,* 284

Spirit shares in the divine nature." Basil took Athanasius and Gregory's point further, by presenting his case on the basis of ecclesiastical precedent, arguing that the matter could be resolved by recognizing that the Spirit is the Sanctifier who is, as such, rightly the object of worship.[69]

Thirdly, the reference to the Spirit in the baptismal formula of the church was interpreted as supporting the divinity of the Spirit. As clearly echoed in Matthew 28:19, baptism took place in the name of the "Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit". Athanasius and others argued that this formula established the closest of connections between the three members of the Trinity, making it impossible to suggest that the Father and Son shared in the substance of the Godhead, while the Spirit was nothing other than a creature.

In his treatise entitled *On the Trinity*, Augustine of Hippo (c.354-c.430) regarded the uniqueness of the Spirit, claiming that the Spirit is what is common to the Father and Son.[70] In other words, "the Father is only the Father of the Son, and the Son only the Son of the Father. The Spirit, however, is the Spirit of both Father and Son, binding them together in a bond of love."[71] To elaborate his point, Augustine conceded that the "Scripture does not explicitly state that the Holy Spirit is love; however, in that God is love (1 John 4:8, 16), and the Spirit is God, it seems to follow naturally that the Holy Spirit is love."[72] For Augustine, the Spirit is the bond that not only forges the unity between the Father and the Son, but also the gift that unites believers both to God and other believers.

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[69] Vanhoozer, *Dictionary for the Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, 304.

[70] Gareth B. Matthews, *Augustine - on the Trinity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 213.

[71] McGrath, *Christian Theology,* 285.

[72] McGrath, *Christian Theology,* 285.

Consequently, in order to confirm the divinity of the Holy Spirit, the second ecumenical council, or the Council of Constantinople I (381 A.D.) was called. Held in the city of Constantinople (modern day Istanbul, Turkey), under the authority of the Roman emperor Theodosius and Pope Damasus, this council proclaimed the divinity of the Holy Spirit.[73] This council also condemned Macedonius' heresy which taught that the Holy Spirit was created like the angels. Macedonianism, also known as Pneumatomachi → was an anti-Nicene Creed sect which flourished in the latter half of the fourth, and the beginning of the fifth century led by Eustathius of Sebate (c.300-77 or 380).[74] They denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit, hence the Greek name *Pneumatomachi* or 'Opponents of the Spirit'.[75] They argued that neither the person nor the works of the Holy Spirit were to be regarded as having the status or the nature of a divine person.[76] Furthermore, the council also condemned Apollinarianism – this was a belief by Appolinarius. A belief that explicitly denied the presence of a human mind or soul in Christ, which implied that Christ's manhood was incomplete.[77] Hence according to the Church, if there is no complete manhood in Christ, He is not a perfect example for us, nor did he redeem the whole of human nature.

One of the most important outcome of this ecumenical council, was the revision of the Nicene Creed with regards to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.[78] The Spirit was here described, not explicitly as "God" but slightly more indirectly as "the Lord and Giver-of-Life, who proceedeth

[73] Schaff, *The Seven Ecumenical Councils*, 231.

[74] McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 283.

[75] McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 283.

[76] McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 283.

[77] McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 220.

[78] Schaff, *The Seven Ecumenical Councils*, 233.

from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spake by the prophets..."

3.6.3 The Doctrine of the Trinity

The starting point for Christian reflections on the Trinity as previously mentioned, is the New Testament witness to the presence and activity of God in Christ and through the Spirit. Therefore the Christian understanding and confession of the Trinity is a summary description of the witness of Scripture to God's unfathomable love incarnate in Jesus Christ and active by the power of the Spirit in the community of faith today.[79] Brian Daley declared the doctrine of the Trinity as the central principle concerning the nature of God, which defines "one God existing in three coequal, coeternal, consubstantial divine Persons."[80] In simple terms, the doctrine of the Trinity asserts that there are three Persons within the Godhead – The FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY SPIRIT.[81] Within the three Persons of the Triune God, they are regarded as equally divine and of equal status.[82] The guiding principle has been the creedal declaration that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit of the New Testament are consubstantial (i.e. the same in substance (*consubstantialis*) or essence (*homooúsios*). Because this shared substance or essence is a divine one, this implies that all three named individuals are divine, and equally so.[83]

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[79] Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 105.

[80] Brian E. Daley, "The Persons in God and the Person of Christ in Patristic Theology: An Argument for Parallel Development," in *God in Early Christian Thought*: *Essays in Memory of Lloyd G. Patterson*, eds. Andrew B. McGowan, Brian E. Daley & Timothy J. Gaden (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2009), 323-50.

[81] McGrath, *Christian Theology,* 17.

[82] McGrath, *Christian Theology,* 17.

[83] McGrath, *Christian Theology,* 17.

According to the Scripture, there are only two biblical verses which are open to a Trinitarian interpretation. The first one (Matt 28:19) echoes the timeless command of Jesus to his disciples after his resurrection - to go forth and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit". The second (2 Cor 13:14), speaks of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit in the familiar words of "the grace." These two verses have become genuinely rooted in the Christian consciousness, the former on account of its baptismal associations, and the latter through the common use of the formula in Christian prayer and devotion.[84] Nonetheless, these two verses, taken together or in isolation, can barely be considered of as constituting a doctrine of the Trinity. McGrath contends otherwise that the foundations of the doctrine of the Trinity are to be found in the pattern of divine activity to which the New Testament bears witness.[85] The Father is revealed in Christ through the Spirit. Various passages in the New Testament link together these three elements as part of a greater whole.[86] The totality of God's saving presence and power can only, it would seem, be articulated by encompassing all three elements.

It was Irenaeus who first recognized the inseparability and the unity of the three Persons of the Triune God. Irenaeus strongly acknowledged that the whole process of salvation, from its beginning to its end, bore witness to the action of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. Irenaeus used the term "economy of salvation". The Greek term *oikonomía* ("economy") basically means "management of a household"[87] or "the way in which one's affairs are ordered." For Irenaeus,

[84] Alister E. McGrath, *Theology*: *The Basics* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2008), 103.

[85] McGrath, *Theology: The Basics*, 103.

[86] For example: (2 Cor. 1:21–22; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 2:20–22; 2 Thess. 2:13–14; Titus. 3:4–6; 1 Peter 1:2).

[87] Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 619.

"the economy of salvation" meant "the way in which God has ordered salvation of humanity in history."

On the other hand, Athanasius approached the Doctrine of the Trinity by using the idea of "mutual inclusiveness." This concept of mutual inclusiveness is based on his use of the term *homooúsios* as previously mentioned. Furthermore, the Cappadocian fathers[88] were exclusive in the development of the doctrine of the Trinity. Most prominently, in the sense that they were able to clearly designate the relationship of the unity and distinction of the three Persons of the Trinity, within the Godhead. In a nutshell, the development of the doctrine of the Trinity took place in three stages, and was essentially completed by the end of the fourth century. The first stage was the recognition of the full divinity of Jesus Christ. This was followed by the recognition of the full divinity of the Spirit. And finally, the definitive formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity, embedding and clarifying these central insights, and determining their mutual relationship.

3.6.4 The Filioque Controversy

So far, as we have witnessed from the development of the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, one of the most momentous events in the early history of the church was the achievement of broad agreement throughout the Roman empire, both East (Greek) and West (Latin), on the text and leading ideas of the Nicene Creed (325) and Constantinople Creed (381). These documents were intended to bring doctrinal stability to the church in a period of considerable importance in its history. In the revised Nicene Creed authorized in the Council of Constantinople 1 (381), part of that agreed statement of faith referred to the Holy Spirit "proceeding from the Father."

[88] The well-known Cappadocian fathers were Basil the Great (c.330-c.379), Gregory of Nyssa (c.335-c.394), and Gregory of Nazianzus (c.329-c.389).

However, by the ninth century, the Western (Latin) church routinely altered this phrase, referring to the Holy Spirit as "proceeding from the Father and the Son.".[89] The Greek word *filioque* which basically means "and from the Son", alludes to the decision of the Catholic Church to add this clause in the original Creed (as opposed to the pre-established view of the Orthodox Church (from the First and Second Ecumenical Councils in 325 and 381, respectively).[90]

The decision was made due to their dissatisfaction with the language offered at the Council of Constantinople. Hence the root of the controversy lie in the development of different forms of Trinitarian thinking in East and West, that nevertheless were not regarded as being controversial for several centuries.[91] The filioque clause was firstly used in liturgy in Spain and 767 when Greeks possibly raised the issue as a formal level, and since then, it remains a Church dividing issue between Western and Eastern Churches.[92]

The basic issue at stake is whether the Spirit may be said to proceed *from the Father alone*, or *from the Father and the Son.* The former position is associated with the Eastern Church and is given its most weighty exposition in the writings of the Cappadocian fathers (Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzus); the latter is associated with the western church and is developed in Augustine's treatise *On the Trinity*.[93]

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[89] McGrath, *Christian Theology,* 287.

[90] Iakovos Menelaou, "The Interpretation of the Filioque Clause by Orthodox Ecclesiology and Biblical Exegetical Methodology," *Scriptura* 116, no. 1 (2017), 1.

[91] Bernd Oberdorfer, "The Filioque Problem - History and Contemporary Relevance," *Scripture* 79 (2002): 82.

[92] Menelaou, "The Interpretation of the Filioque," 1.

[93] McGrath, *Christian Theology,* 287.

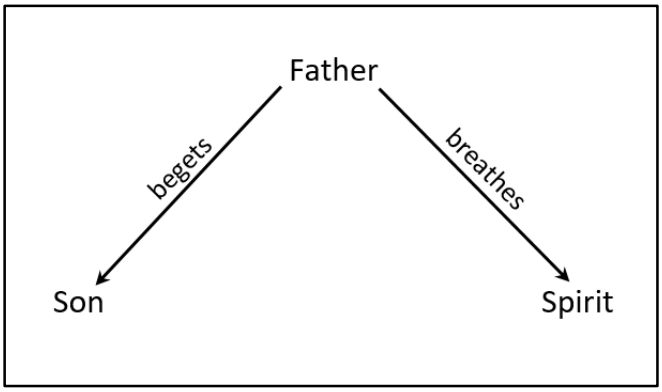

Figure 4: The eastern approach to the Spirit in the Trinity.

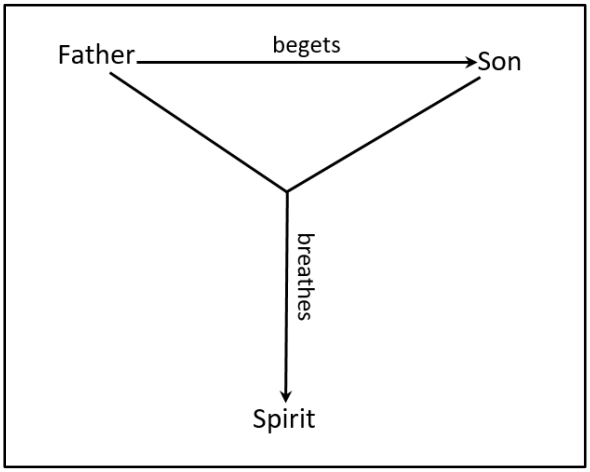

Figure 5: The western approach to the Spirit in the Trinity.

The Eastern or the Greek patristic fathers contended that the Father alone was the sole and supreme cause of everything. The Son and the Spirit derived from the Father, but in different behaviours → the Son is *begotten* of the Father, while the Spirit *proceeds* from the Father (Figure 4). To the Greek fathers, they see the Son as the Word of God, and the Spirit as the breath of God. When the Father pronounces his Word, he breathes out as the same time in order to irradiate the

distinctiveness of Son and Spirit, affirming their mutual involvement in the work of the Father.[94] From this illustration, fail to clarify clearly the distinctiveness of the Son and the Spirit in relation to the Father, would lead to God having two sons.

Furthermore, the Eastern Fathers claimed that if the Spirit proceeds from both the Father and Son as shown in Figure 5, it would compromise the principle of the Father as the sole origin and source of all divinity. This would amount to supporting that there were two sources of divinity within the one Godhead. Certainly, this would generate more tensions and internal contradictions.

3.7 Summary

This chapter presented a biblical basis with regards to the various revelations and manifestations of the Spirit. It also explored the development and the basic principles of the core theologies and the doctrines of the Church with a specific focus on the Doctrine of the Trinity and of the Holy Spirit. The biblical basis and an understanding of the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit will pave the way towards a theological interpretation of the Spirit from the Samoan culture perspective, and how it fits well within the life and the mission of the Church.

[94] McGrath, *Christian Theology,* 288.

CHAPTER 4

A *Uluulu-a-matafolau* Pneumatology

4.0 Introduction

In the introductory chapter, we have asked some questions: How do we determine and have determined the reality of the Holy Spirit within the Samoan social and cultural identity? As Samoans, how do we recognize and come to understand the existence and reality of the Holy Spirit, based on our indigenous and cultural beliefs? To answer these questions, this chapter sets out to provide a dialogue using the interpretative method of *Uluulumatafolau.* Most specifically the trends and drifts from a cultural and indigenous beliefs towards the Christian/Biblical theologies and teachings, in embracing the Holy Spirit as the Foundation and the Life Giver to the Church.

As already mentioned in Chapter 1, the *uluulumatafolau* as a method of interpretation is intensely rested upon the cultural concept of "life-giving". It recognised the "life-giving" aspects of the Spirit experienced in and within the Samoan social protocols and cultural values. This "life-giving" concept can be recognised in the spirit of unity, love, and respect. It shows that *uluulumatafolau* is an intrinsic model that weaves together unity and harmony in order to give, sustain, and transforms life. It culminates in the act of seeking in the spirit, giving in the spirit, sacrificing through the spirit, and sheltering by the spirit.

As an interpretative method, *uluulumatafolau* uses the terms *uluulu* (inter-dwelling, mending) and *feuluuluta'i* (interweaving) to describe the life-giving nature of the Holy Spirit as manifested and etched in the culture. Consequently, this dialogue begins with this life-giving standpoint of the Spirit, which I called the "Indwelling Spirit". The first step is to set the framework of the Indwelling Spirit in the context of the Church. This part will underline the Holy

Spirit as the ultimate foundation and divine authority in which the Church is founded. The second step is to articulate the two governing principles of the "Indwelling Spirit". The first principle embraces the Spirit as the ultimate Giver of Life (manifested in the *Spirit of Grace*). The second principle embraces the Spirit as the One who nurtures Unity (manifested in the *Spirit of Unity*).

Lastly, the discussion will shift to the divine work of the Holy Spirit in the worship of the church. This section will give special attention to the worship traditions of the EFKS including the sacraments. I also like to make note that although this discussion may not issue new knowledge or contribution to the theological academia, my main intention is not only to shed light, and to rediscover the ultimate purpose of the Holy Spirit in the life of the EFKS and her worship traditions, but also to bring aspiration and motivation for a transformation, renewal, and sanctification of the Church, which starts from the spiritual experience of the individuals.

4.1 *Uluulumatafolau* – The Indwelling Spirit

4.1.1 The Holy Spirit and the Church

In chapter 3, we have identified the Holy Spirit as the foundation on which the Church is founded and built on (§3.4 The Holy Spirit as the Foundation of the Church). Here, Jesus made it clear that "upon this Rock (*petra* – refers the Holy Spirit), he will build his church (*ekklēsia*). And that he will give her the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever she binds on earth will she bound in heaven, and whatever she loses on earth will be loosed in heaven.

According to the EFKS Constitution, the *Church* is the name given to the company of those who are gathered together in Jesus, who believe in Jesus and who celebrate the sacraments

ordained by Jesus for His Church[1] The basis of this credence arises from the promise of Jesus Christ which has become the hope of His people, namely, "Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them" (Matt 18:19-20). Jesus also made this very promise when he sent forth his disciples to take the gospel to all the ends of the world, and that through the Spirit, he will abide with them always, until the end of days (Matt 28:20).

These words, according to the EFKS Constitution, assured the church of the presence of Jesus Christ in and through the Holy Spirit, whenever there is a true gathering of those who meet in His Name. Jesus cited parables to express that the Church cannot be considered as separate from Himself, and that they are not trees each with its own roots but are branches of the True Vine; it is by His Life that they live; they have no life in themselves separate from the life of the vine, but the life of the vine is the life of the branches. The same message is often quoted by Paul, as in, "You are the Body of Christ" (1 Cor 12:27). Jesus Christ is here seen as the Head, and the Church as His Body. The Church is also described as the "Household of God." (Eph 2:19). Jesus Christ is the Head and the Church is His Household. The Household built and founded on the Holy Spirit.

In the 9th creed of the Statement of Doctrine of the Samoan Church (L.M.S) established in 1957, it recognizes the ultimate purpose of the Holy Spirit as follow:

> The Father is ever willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask. The Holy Spirit has spoken through men of God to make known his saving truth. Through our Saviour, the Holy Spirit was sent forth with power to convict the world of sin, to enlighten men's minds in the knowledge of Christ, and to persuade and enable them to respond to the call of the Gospel. He abides with the Church and with each

[1] EFKS/CCCS, *The Constitution of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa* (Apia: Malua Printing Press, 2022), 4.

> believer as the Spirit of truth, of power, of comfort and of love. The Holy Spirit moves in men to restrain them from evil and to incite them to good. Through the work of the Holy Spirit among men, Christ is glorified.[2]

These doctrinal statements and biblical text underlined the Holy Spirit as the ultimate foundation and authority of the Church. The Holy Spirit gives life and vitality to the Church. From the *uluulumatafolau* perspective, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believers and in the Church, ensures the Grace of God and the outpouring of his Spiritual gifts upon the believers, and the power of the Holy Spirit to sanctify, and to unite all believers in the redemptive love of Christ, to glorify the Almighty God.

4.1.2 The Spirit of Grace (O le Agaga o le Alofa Tunoa)

The cognizance of the pre-Christian Samoans that 'God' revealed God-self to them through their indigenous religio-cultural traditions and knowledge has been evident in Chapter two. This is apparent in the fact that the indigenous Samoans see the totality of life in the interconnectedness of the everyday living and the spirit-world. Peace and harmony in the Samoan life was attained in the unity of the all-inclusive cultural experience of the individual, in the mutual reciprocity of the community, and in the intimate connection with the spiritual divine, the gods and the ancestral spirits. In other words, the totality of life is manifested in the core values of culture such as *alofa* (love), *faaaloalo* (respect), and *tautua* (serve), which are "divinely enthused and inspired." The *uluulumatafolau* model uses the term *uluulu* and *feuluuluta'i* to designate the interconnectedness and the inter-dwelling of this divine adoration within the Samoan culture and traditions.

[2] O le Ekalesia Samoa (L.M.S), *The Statement of Doctrine of the Samoan Church (L.M.S)* (Malua: Malua Printing Press, 1957), 4.

Love is manifested and rooted in the family or *aiga*. Chapter 2 speaks of the *aiga* as the place where the identity (*faasinomaga*), the inner-being (*lotoifale*), and the relational-being (*tagata-o-faiā*) of a Samoan individual are nurtured and cultured. It is the collective effort of all members of the family to nurture the child through words, love, and discipline. The proper discipline of the child is moulded through obedience, *tautua* (serving), and observing the *va fealoa'i* (relational space). Through the holistic cultural experience, the spiritual and the ethical morality of the child is cultivated through the values of obedience, humility and love. In the Samoan world view, this spiritual and ethical morality is manifested in the ways that we respect and value our parents, the elders, as well as the spiritual presence of ancestors, and the divine realm.

In other words, it is the *lotoifale* of the *aiga,* that defines the *lotoifale* of an individual. Love springs from the womb of the mother, the *fanua* (placenta), where the motherly love nurtures and embraces the unborn child. Love is manifested in and through the holistic interconnectedness and experience of an individual within the family and in the community.

Love is also deeply expressed through the experiences of *tautua*. The *tautua* as an obligation is a way of demonstrating the true values of serving others and sacrificing. Serving the *matai* and the *aiga* are the marks of a *tautua,* ensuring the welfare and the prosperity of the family. Through the acts of *tautua,* the household and all of its members are being taken care of and being sheltered by love, hence the expression "*e malu i fale*" or being sheltered at home. Through the *tautua,* an individual expresses respect and honour for the *matai*, who is the divinely endorsed leader of the family and the head of the household. His blessing and his responsibilities as the mediator between the family and the gods and the ancestral spirits, ensures the welfare and the continuation of the generations to come.

Love is also manifested in the spirit of *tapua'iga* or worship. In the indigenous religious beliefs, to *tapua'i* is to make connection, an act of appreciation and humility, an act of showing respect to the gods and the ancestral spirits. The indigenous Samoan were very respectful of their gods and the spirits of their ancestors. Through their act of *tapua'i*, the indigenous Samoans interceded the gods and the spirits for their protection and help. The gods and the spirits acts as the Guardians to the individuals and community from birth to death. They are respected and revered throughout the community, and sometimes they were feared because of their capacity to cause harm to family members. Nonetheless, the gods and spirits acted as guardians of family morals and values and the inflictions were often understood as punishments and discipline, rather than malicious or evil deeds. Death to the indigenous Samoans was not the end, but it was the extension and continuation of the intimate connection of man to the divine. Life and death was seen as an eternal journey (*folau*) manifested in the totality of the physical and the spiritual realms, interpenetrated with the spirit of caring and love.

Most importantly, the interweaving of these cultural ethics and morale with the Christian beliefs and principles, made up the identity or *fa'asinomaga* of a Christian Samoan. They define the personality (*lotoifale*) of a Samoan Christian. A *lotoifale* that is deeply rooted in the spirit of love and respect. From a Christian perspective, it is a *lotoifale* that is indwelled and impacted by the Grace of God under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the presence of God's Spirit can be interpreted theologically to mean God's self-communication to human beings, or God's personal presence and influence on human subjects. Inversely, this self-communication of God to human beings can be referred to and in turn be interpreted in relation to the meaning and function of the Holy Spirit in Scripture. The "Grace" of God is at the centre of Christianity. God's love and compassion are indwelled and interpenetrated in and within the Triune God. The ultimate grace

of the Father is revealed in Christ through the Spirit. In chapter 3 we have witnessed that from the beginning, the Holy Spirit was in the midst, and (is) still active in the creative and redemptive work of God for humankind and all of creation. God's grace is the spindle and the foundation in which all the Christian theologies and teachings are rooted and sprang from. In the *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas Aquinas claimed that God in his sovereignty and freedom, created the world out of his love and free determination. In this love, "God does have a purpose in creating, and this purpose is the manifestation of the goodness and the grace of God."[3] For Aquinas, the Spirit of grace takes precedence in the unity of God's work in the creation, redemption, and the sanctification of all things.

When God sent forth his Son Jesus Christ, his Spirit was upon him, enabling him to fulfil his will. Under the guidance of the Spirit, the Church continues to exist and inspires the faith of the believers. Out of his grace and compassion, God bestows upon the believers the Spiritual gifts, and the ultimate gift of salvation. *Ua sa'a fa'aoti le utu a le faimea* - "The fisherman completely emptied his vessel". God's grace signifies the willingness of the *Tautai* to offer the best and everything to the one who seeks, not withdrawing anything from him. The emptying of the *tautai's utu* (vessel) in which he stores all his important fishing artefacts, evokes God's gift of Salvation – God's complete Self has been emptied unto us, so that we can be saved, and continue to bind with him in the Spirit.

From the context of *uluulumatafolau*, the Spirit of Grace, then, quite simply "refers to God." By extension, grace includes the influence that God's Spirit or the Holy Spirit has upon human beings and the effects the Spirit of God has on human beings. The Grace of God is God's Spirit,

[3] Joseph P. Wawrykow, *God's Grace & Human Action – 'Merit' in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 150.

which is God's personal communication of God's own self in love. This is what is revealed in and through the Son, Jesus Christ; this is the message of salvation in the New Testament.[4] Intrinsic to this concept of grace is the total and absolute gratuity in every aspect that makes God's grace grace. The very logic of God's own self indicates that this self-giving or opening up to human beings in personal love is totally free; it emerges out of God's inner freedom. Moltmann explicitly talks about the presence of God through the Spirt as an "experience". He says,

> If the power in which people experience their inward and outward liberation is called God's Spirit, then this power is given a transcendent foundation in its immanence… 'The Spirit' is the name given to the experienced presence of God.[5]

For Moltmann, freedom is present where Christ is experienced in the Spirit. But this freedom is not merely sovereignty. Without love, freedom becomes the arbitrary liberty that led man to sin. Moltmann claimed that this dimension of freedom in the Spirit can be explored through faith, through love, and through hope. It is out of God's grace that he inspires and transforms humans through the Spirit for a good cause. If God is Love (1 John 4:8, 16), and God is the Spirit (2 Cor 3:17), then the Spirit is Love. The indwelling Spirit of God is the One who reveals the ultimate love of God in the spirits of humans.

God as a trinity is in God himself, in a manner of speaking, a circle of love → The triune God is intrinsically a unique fellowship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit; a communion of three persons existing for each other and in each other.

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[4] I use the phrases "the Spirit of God," "God's Spirit," and "God as Spirit" in a theocentric framework that envisages God as Spirit at work in all history. In the Christian community, the Spirit of God is revealed and identified by Jesus. In terms of Trinitarian theology, the stress is put on the doctrine that the Spirit is not less than or other than God.

[5] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 120.

4.1.3 The Spirit of Unity/Connection (O le Agaga o So'otaga)

The indwelling Spirit is also manifested in the Spirit of unity. Given that the Samoan culture is strongly a community-based (dyadic), there is an overwhelmed sense of interrelatedness and sharing. First of all, unity in the cultural and socio-religious is manifested in the spirit of mutual-reciprocity and communal living, where love and respect exalted in relationships. This unity is rooted in their creation mythologies. According to the indigenous creation mythologies, the dwelling of the Samoan people on the lands of Samoa was a consequence of their genealogical relations (*faiā* or *gafa*) with *Tagaloa* (the Creator-God), *Lagi* (the heavenly-foundation), and *Papa* (the earthly-foundation). This shows that the connection between mankind, the animal world, the cosmos, and the environment is one genealogy, "a genealogy that is at once divine and temporal."[6] Here, we have recognized that the Samoan cultural, social, religious, and economic roots, dictate that they hold a sacred reverence for the environment, that is, the natural surroundings. It is their close proximity with all of creation that they draw their wisdom and divine aspiration.

Moreover, unity in the Samoan culture is manifested in the spirit of reconciliation (*Leleiga*). We have seen this in the ritual of *ifoga*, where forgiveness and reconciliation are pursued and ensued. To be truly remorseful is a symbol of *faamaualalo* or humility; which means to seek for acceptance, yearning for peace and searching for *leleiga* or reconciliation. Here, we recognize the *ifoga* as a spiritual act that people will resort to when they try to heal divisions and seek for harmony in both social and sacred boundaries, in the spirit of forgiveness. This harmony is realized through the *va fealoa'i.* Through the *ifoga*, shattered relationships can be healed, when the power of the spiritual divine intervenes and melts the heart, ensuring peace, and harmony, through humility and forgiveness.

[6] Tamasese Efi, *In Search of Harmony*, 105.

In Christian circles, the conventional belief states that the Holy Spirit forges bonds of unity between believers, upon which the unity of the church ultimately depends.[7] This unity demonstrates that the inescapable love of God, is continuously present in all of his creation, in and through the Holy Spirit.

In the context of *uluulumatafolau*, the Spirit forges unity, not only in the individuals, but the community and the Church. A Samoan *fale*, just like any other house, is of no use at all, if there is no roof. A *fale* without a roof will expose the household or the *lotoifale*, to the heat of the sun, and the rain. The roof needs to be mended from time to time, so that the *lotoifale* is sheltered and safe. The analogy is clear; without the Spirit, the Church or the household of God will experience difficulties and exposed to all sorts of problems. Unity from the *uluulumatafolau* perspective is reflected in the sense of being 'sheltered' or *malu*. This unity is the continuous work of the Spirit. This is reflected in the act of *taulu* and *uluulu* – the continuous work of the Spirit to mend and to restore our brokenness because of sin. Christ is the Head of the Church, and through the Spirit, he is the *Malu*, the Asylum, the Safe Haven for all believers.

We are at the era of the Church, and subsequently, we are at the age of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the Church cannot exist, without the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the divine power that inspires, sustains, and breathes life into the Church, making the Church alive and continue to exist. As believers, we respond to this presence of the Spirit through faith. Reminiscing the words of Tillich, "if the Spirit breaks into the human spirit, this does not mean that the Spirit rests in there, but he drives the human spirit out of itself." The "in" of the divine Spirit is an "out" for the human spirit, that goes out of itself under the impact of the divine Spirit. In other words, it is only by the power of the Holy Spirit that transform the believers and respond accordingly. *Folau*

[7] Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology - an Introduction* (West Sussex, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2017), 285.

designates the eternity and the universality of God's authority and grace in and through the Spirit. The Spirit breathes life and make the whole creation the household of God. The dynamic and life-giving nature of the Spirit is realised in the renewal and the ongoing transformation of believers, in the spiritual, physical and eternal. The Holy Spirit is the Comforter, the Paraclete, the Giver of Life. Through the Spirit, we seek help and comfort in the loving arms of God. Just as our indigenous forefathers seek help in our ancestral spirits, we too shall seek comfort and unity, in the Holy Spirit.

The Church is called the "Body of Christ", and the unity of her various members is emphasised. The foundation of this unity is made very clear in the statement, "One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism." The EFKS Constitution underlines this unison very clear:

> We believe that by the Grace of God, all people are called, those who have shared in His blessings, so that they may clearly understand those matters where there are differences and similarities with other Churches, and this should be useful for our hope of unification. Because Christ has Died and Risen for us, All the Brethren should "do the work of servants, for the building-up of the Body of Christ." [Eph. 4:4-16]. We believe that the true difficulty lies not in our differing opinions, but in the divisive spirit, and the spirit of self-righteousness.[8]

From these statements, the EFKS emphasises the interconnectedness between all the persons who make up the church. Christian faith is not to be defined merely in terms of individual relationships to the Lord. There is no such thing as an isolated, solitary Christian life. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul develops the concept of the interconnectedness of the body, especially in terms of the gifts of the Spirit. Here he stresses "that all the members of the body, through many, are one body" (v.12). they all, whether Jew or Greek, have been baptised by one Spirit into one body, and have been made to drink of one Spirit (v.13). All of the various members have been given gifts – these gifts

[8] EFKS/CCCS, *The Constitution*, 15.

are not for personal satisfaction, but for the edification (building up) of the body as a whole (1 Cor. 14:4-5, 12). Dwelling within the church, the Holy Spirit imparts his life to her. Those qualities which are his nature and which are spoken of as the "fruit of the Spirit" are found in the church: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23). The presence of such qualities is indicative of the activity of the Holy Spirit and thus, in a sense, of the legitimacy of the church.

In addition, the EFKS Constitution emphasised relations and fellowships with other churches.

> We believe that we should accept every opportunity that could be used to consult with our brethren in other Churches, so that we may share and exchange knowledge in spiritual truths which we hold in common and we know that this will involve our own recognition of where we are wrong and of which we should be repentant. We must not allow our practices, customs and opinions to become restrictions on our true freedom and our spirit of trust and love of one another…We believe also that it is very important for us to join the great Family of the Church, not only in this country or ocean but the great Family of the Church in the world by taking part in Assemblies, brotherly discussions, and by the mutual visitation of the brethren between Churches…This ideal should be alive within us because it was the will of Jesus as expressed in the prayer that He made in His hour of agony, "THAT THEY MAY BE ONE."[9]

The spiritual unity of the believers should show itself or come to expression in goodwill, fellowship, and love for one another. We should employ every legitimate way of affirming that we are one with Christians who are organically separated from us. Where Christians do disagree, whether as individuals, churches, or denominations, it is essential that they do so in a spirit of love, seeking to correct others and persuade them of the truth, rather than refute them or expose them to ridicule. Truth will always be linked to love.

[9] EFKS/CCCS, *The Constitution*, 16.

Paul makes a somewhat similar appeal in Philippians 2:2, where he urges his readers to be "in full accord and of one mind." The key to developing this attitude is humility and concern for others (vv. 3-4). And the perfect model is the self-emptying action of Christ (vv. 5-8). Following Jesus' example will lead to true unity among the members of the congregation. On the other hand, McGrath recognizes that too much emphasis is placed on the uniqueness of the Holy Spirit in the world, it might be concluded that the work of the Spirit is independent of, and potentially unrelated to the work of Jesus Christ. That is, emphasizing the unity of the divine work in the world could create the impression that the missions of the Son and the Spirit are indistinguishable. Pope John Paul II recognizes this point, and emphasizes that this general work of the Spirit in the world is not to be seen as "an alternative to Christ" but as a means of leading people to Christ.[10] For John Paul, the work of the Spirit is set in the context of a Trinitarian understanding of the "economy of salvation". It is not seen as an independent or self-serving activity but as a means of leading human hearts and minds to discover and embrace the fullness of God. Whatever the Spirit brings about in human hearts and in the history of peoples, in cultures and religions serves as a preparation for the Gospel. This can only be understood in reference to Christ, the Word who took flesh by the power of the Spirit, "so that as perfectly human he would save all human beings and sum up all things."

Trinity in unity, therefore, is apparent in the unity of the Church – the Father, as the principle to which we are united, the Son as the milieu in which we are united, the Holy Spirit as the tie in which we are united: and all is one.

[10] Ioannes Paulus PP. II, *The Holy See: Redemptoris Missio. Encyclical Letter of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II on the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate*. (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1990), 19.

4.2 *Uluulumatafolau* – The Holy Spirit and Worship

From the gentle blowing of the embers to the bursting of the fire into flames, with the raising of the right hand of the *ositaulaga* for the *vala* (*siapo*) to cover his/her shoulders when it is time for the *afiafi*, and the pouring of the '*ava* out upon the ground as an offering to the gods, to the silent meditation and prayers of the elders, through the flowing of tears and the soft uttering of words, the indigenous Samoans embraced the *tapuaiga* as a sacred offering of thanksgiving, honouring the gods and the spirit-world with the utmost respect, and humility.

It is a communion act, where the *matai* and his family come together in an act of worship. The *tapuaiga* illuminates the continuous harmony between the physical and the spiritual realm. The fire motive as a symbol of light and purification, embodies living, and the sense of "being enlightened". A life that is shared and nurtured by the living and the divine. The *tapuaiga* as a sacred ritual, expressive in the mutual reciprocity of love, respect, and sacrifice, is experienced when one is illuminated by the divine spirit, giving peace and harmony, in complete tranquillity. Consequently, the *tapuaiga* in the Samoan context, symbolizes unity. A unity that not only brings the family and community together, but also to unite them with the divine and the spiritual realm, in an all-inspiring and sacred serenity. A unity that is rooted in the integrity of the *tagata ola* to humble himself/herself, offering the utmost respect, making connection with the gods and the spirit divine.[11]

[11] The word *tapuaiga* is closely related to the meaning of the word "religion", in the sense of "bonding". The word "religion" in its fundamental sense is "to reunite, or to bind together what has been broken." Derived from the Latin root-word *relegere* (to summon, bring together), *religere* (to observe with thoughtful attention or consideration), and *relagere* (to reunite, to hold fast together or to be in communion with), the concept of religion can also be defined as recreating links or relationships between separated parts. Etymologically, the term suggests an acknowledgement of brokenness, the insecurity of separateness or being estranged from Otherness or, specifically, the Holy Other. It can also portray the insecure and finite condition of human beings yearning to find peace in the present life and continuity after death. Besides the anticipation of the life beyond, religious consciousness implies a longing or inner

The Christian worship manifests such unity and divine connection in her worship traditions. The "fire votive" or the *afiafi* is now replaced by the Christian family service, which is to be observed both at dawn and in the evening. It may have seemed different, but the motive and sentiments are the same. It is a time for the family to come together as one, to give thanks to the Divine, and to glorify his name. Church traditions nominated Sunday to be the day in which the local church in the village community gathered together to *tapua'i* or to worship God. As being declared in the section entitled "Church Order", the EFKS Constitution maintains the significance of communion worship in the Church traditions:

> "the Church in the village is the Congregation of those who have covenanted to live together in the new life, through their common faith, and as they are nourished by Grace received through the preaching of the Word and the celebration of the Sacraments. This new life has springs forth because they have worshipped together."[12]

Following the traditions of the Protestant Reformed, the EFKS maintains her worship based on the New Testament. The Greek word *proskunéō* which is a common term for worship in the New Testament, is used "to express in attitude or gesture one's complete dependence on or submission to a high authority figure, (fall down and) worship, do obeisance to, prostate oneself before, do reverence to, welcome respectfully."[13] According to the New Testament, the community of believers of the first Church in Jerusalem used to gather together in the morning of the Lord's Supper in accordance with Jesus' Command. In that Service, some scriptures were read and

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urge to be in constant and everlasting communion with the Holy Other, through commitments to participate in rituals, cults and ethics that serve the religious purpose.

[12] EFKS/CCCS, *The Constitution*, 13.

[13] Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 783.

expounded upon which are now in the Old Testament; and there were Prayers and Hymns. But the climax of the service was the remembrance anew of the acts and words of our Lord in the Last Supper. The EFKS held this special service to commemorate the Holy Communion every first Sundays of each month. As a recurrence communion rite, the ultimate purpose of Christian worship is union with God. Martin Luther according to James White claims that, "in worship, our dear Lord Himself talk (*rede*) to us through His holy word and that we, in turn, talk (*reden*) to him in prayer and song of praise."[14] Thus for Luther, Christian worship has a duality, "revelation" and "response" – both of them empowered by the Holy Spirit. This duality of revelation and response is also echoed by the Russian Orthodox theologian. As quoted by White, George Florovsky claims that: "Christian worship is the response of men to the Divine call, to the 'mighty deeds' of God, culminating in the redemptive act of Christ."[15] Florovsky strongly stresses the corporate nature of this response to God's call, when he states that, "Christian existence is essentially corporate; to be Christian means to be in their community, in the Church." It is in this community that God's work is active in worship as much as the worshippers themselves.

Worship is to show forth the excellency of Him who has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light. It is to reflect the glory of Christ ever shining upon us through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, worship is not primarily man's initiative but God's redeeming act in Christ through the Spirit. By the power of the Holy Spirit, the Church as the Body of Christ can offer worship that is pleasing as an act both from and directed to the Holy Trinity.

The revelation of God through the Holy Spirit, and our proper response to such revelation are essential aspects of worship. The concept of *uluulumatafolau* reflects both aspects of worship.

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[14] James F. White, *Introduction to Christian Worship*, 3rd ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 21.

[15] White, *Christian Worship*, 21.

Revelation functions in the enigmatic inspiration of the Holy Spirit in the mind, heart, and soul of the believers. This divine revelation of the Holy Spirit initiates our determination to worship whole-heartedly, fostering our proper response in glorifying our God. Through the divine fusion of the Holy Spirit, love and tranquillity are instilled in the hearts of the believers and in the church, establishing unity in the believers, in the Church, and with the Triune God. From the beginning of the service when the minister calls everyone to worship (commencing with the prayer of invocation), to the end when the minister says the prayer of benediction, the Spirit of God indwells in and throughout the worship, upholds and sanctifies the believers.

4.2.1 Prayer of Invocation and Benediction – The Eternal Fellowship of the Spirit

When the Church Minister utters the words, "Let us worship God" (*Tatou tapuai i le Atua*), he is calling for unity. It is a call that summons every individual of the congregation to unite, and come together in one spirit, to exalt and to give glory to God. The worship commences with words of adoration. These are words of admiration, which express our gratitude and awe, for the everlasting grace and reverence for God. They signify our utmost respect and honour for the Divine and his compassion on humanity and all his creation. Through our words of adoration, we glorify God's universal authority, his holiness, and his wisdom.

The Prayer for the Holy Spirit (*Tatalo mo le Agaga Paia*) or the Prayer of Invocation that follows is in fact, a plead of humility and submission. It denotes our sense of 'emptiness', while at the same time we are humbly seeking (*sa'ili*) and pleading (*asamo*) for the power (*mana*) and the presence of the Holy Spirit to sanctify all believers and the whole of the congregation, giving the utmost respect and honour in worshiping God. Our search for the anointing of the Holy Spirit indicates our self-proclamation of our sinful natures as human beings. Who are we to come face

to face with the glory of God? Who are we that we dare to invoke and to venture in the holiness of God? Through the prayer of invocation, we seek for the presence of the Holy Spirit to stir our inner-selves, and sanctify our incompleteness, to make us whole again, and regenerate our personalities, to give us peace, and be well with others. *Uluulumatafolau* bespeaks of this presence of the Holy Spirit as the Shelter, our *Maluapapa.* Through the act of *uluuulu* or *taulu* (mending), the Holy Spirit makes us whole again, mending our sinful hearts, and repairing shattered relationships. |The prayer of invocation is an appeal, a petition to God, for his Spirit to indwell within us and in our worship right from the beginning until the end, and the continuing fellowship with the believers. The presence of the Holy Spirit therefore, affirmed and manifested in all parts of the worship: in the reading of the Holy Scripture, in the uttering of Prayers, in the offerings, in the preaching of his Word (Sermon), in the sacraments, and in the Prayer of Blessings.

The Benediction or the Prayer of Blessings is a petition that invokes blessings and the continuous fellowship of the Holy Spirit. It is usually pronounced at the end of the service to send the congregation off with a blessing of the Holy Spirit, and a sense of peace and goodwill. In this sense, the petition for the continuous abiding of the Holy Spirit is our seeking of God's continuous presence not only in the Church as a community, but also in all of creations.

4.2.2 Hymns and Prayers – the Presence of the Holy Spirit

In any Congregational worship, hymns are an important part of praise and worship. Hymns are a way of expressing emotions, whether these emotions are of gratitude, remorse, or offering deepest condolences. James White states that "the chief function of church music is to add a deeper

dimension of participation to worship."[16] To further elaborate his point, White describes hymns as a more expressive medium than ordinary speech. A hymn can, and often does, conveys passion and greater intensity of sentiment than would be expressed in its absence. They reflect God's story, the ordinary stories of faith by believers transformed by divine revelation into life-changing testaments. Churches with dynamic congregational singing radiate spirituality and witness. Hymns, prayers, and liturgies accumulated through centuries of Christian wisdom provide essential and positive resources for effective worship.

Hymns also reflect life situations that challenge our faith. These are the same kinds of experiences expressed by the Psalm writers – thanksgiving, lamenting, longing for healing, justice and reconciliation, love for others, personal peace, vocation and work, and many others. On the other hand, Hymns are poetic in nature, frequently metrical, and often grounded directly on a particular scripture passage. They are usually transcribed with the intent of providing congregational song, so sound biblical truths are an important element. When sung, a hymn should have the effect of unity and integration with the singers, creating a sense of solidarity, fellowship, and shared beliefs. Furthermore, Hymns enable us to express an intensity of feeling through variety in tempo, pitch, volume, melody, harmony, rhythm, and words. When all of these are being harmonized in the true spirit of worship, a hymn can strengthen our spirit of gratitude, deepened our remorsefulness, soothed our broken hearts, fosters peace in our souls, give hope to our spirits, and unite us all in one love, in the presence of God's Spirit.

Likewise, prayers are a vital and integral part of Christian worship. They serve as a means of communication with God, a way to express worship, confession, and thanksgiving, and a means of seeking God's guidance and presence in one's life. They are essential for personal spiritual

[16] White, *Christian Worship*, 106-107.

growth and for building a sense of community and unity among believers. Prayers offer a way for individuals to express their thoughts, feelings, needs, and desires to God to seek his guidance, forgiveness, and presence in their lives. In the EFKS tradition, prayers can be divided into various categories. Though each congregation may have their own prayer tradition, the following are the most common categories: (i) the prayer for the Holy Spirit or Invocation, (ii) Thanksgiving, (iii) Confession, (iv) Intercession, and (v) Benediction. Through these prayers, the congregation will come together to glorify the God in adoration and exaltation. Individuals will confess their sins and seek forgiveness interceding for their needs, concerns and wellbeing.

Through prayers, the believers also uphold and pray for *others*, petitioning and pleading for the welfare of the whole of creation. In this way the prayer should be inclusive, not only on behalf of the believers, but also for all of mankind and the whole of God's creation. When offering the prayers, the Holy Spirit is also assisting those who are praying, in their words and thoughts, through spiritual revelation. This is evident in Romans 8:26,

> "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words." [NRSV]

In this sense, not only that the Holy Spirit speaks to us through self-revelation, but also acts as our mediator, who intercedes with the Father on our behalf. Through hymns and prayers, God's grace is instilled in the believers, fostering unity in the church and with the Triune God, in an all-inspiring tranquillity of the Holy Spirit.

4.2.3 The Holy Word – the Anointing of the Word

The phrase "the Holy Word" or "the Word of God" is deeply rooted in Cristian worship as it is in Christian theology. The very term "Word" implies action and communication. McGrath points

out the three references to the "Word" in the Christian context: First, the Word is used to refer to "Jesus Christ" as the Word of God made flesh (John 1:14). Second, the Word is also used to refer to "the Gospel of Christ" or the message or proclamation about Jesus. Third, the Word refers to "the whole Bible".[17] For most Christians, the phrase "Word of God" is a theological alternative or equivalent to the Bible. Furthermore, it has been widely recognized in Christian circles that Holy Scripture is the Word of God revealed through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. We find such statement in Paul's second letter to Timothy:

> **16** All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, **17**so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work. (2 Tim 3:16–17)

The Greek word *theópneustos* which is translated "inspired by God"[18] occurs only once in the New Testament (as in the above passage). Its meaning, literally, is "God-breathed". *Theópneustos* is a combination of "God" (*theós*) plus "breathed" (*pnéustos*), from the Greek verb meaning "breath or blow" (*pnéō*).[19] Hence, such meaning denotes the scripture as the very breath of God. Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, God breathed the scriptures into existence, and God breathed life and vitality into the Scriptures.

The EFKS takes precedence of the divine revelation of the Scripture in her doctrines of faith. According to the first preamble of the Statement of Doctrine of the Samoan Church (L.M.S), it says:

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[17] McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 112.

[18] Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 398.

[19] Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 743.

> "We believe that sound Christian Doctrine is the work of the Holy Spirit who leads us into all truth. Such truth is based upon and is consistent with the Word of God, and as far as is possible is derived directly from the Holy Bible."[20]

Likewise, this is further underscored in the EFKS Constitution, where it says:

> The Congregational Christian Church of Samoa accepts that the Holy Bible of the Old and New Testaments is the greatest fountain of the Christian life, and contains all that is necessary for salvation. The Church must be always prepared to direct and to correct its life so that it is in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Bible as revealed to us by the Holy Spirit…[21]

In the EFKS worship, we acknowledge the spiritual revelation in the reading and the preaching of the Scripture. We proclaim that God speaks to us through the scripture, and at the same time God reveals the meaning and helps us to discern the meaning of his Word, through his Spirit.

On the other hand, we also acknowledge that the indigenous Samoans, although they did not possess the Scripture, they had the God-given gift of conscience and morality, that was expressed and etched in proverbial expressions (*muagagana* and *alagaupu*) of a Godly calibre. The very cultural values and social protocols shaped the ethical standards for a divinely inspired way of living. These cultural values and protocols are the ways of teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training the Samoan child in righteousness, and of a true Samoan dignity.

Furthermore, such affirmation of the importance of Scripture in the EFKS worship and doctrines of faith, conforms to Bevan's three sources for doing theology as previously mentioned, namely, "the Scripture", "church tradition", and "socio-cultural context" (Contextual Theology Approach).

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[20] O le Ekalesia Samoa (L.M.S), *The Statement of Doctrine of the Samoan Church (L.M.S)* (Malua: Malua Printing Press, 1957), 4.

[21] EFKS/CCCS, *The Constitution*, 12.

4.2.4 Baptism and Holy Communion – the Anointing and Celebration of the Spirit

Following the Protestant Reformed traditions, the EFKS observe two sacraments, namely, Baptism and the Holy Communion. The two sacraments are based on the belief that these were the only sacraments instituted by the Lord during his life and ministry for his disciples and followers to administer. Baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, has been instituted in the great commission in Matt 28:19, while the Lord's Supper or the Holy Communion is instructed by Christ to be done in remembrance of him whenever Christians come together to worship, as stated in 1 Cor 11:23–25.

In the Christian sense, baptism is a personal conviction and understanding of the need for cleansing in repentance of sin, and an intimate fellowship with Christ. In other words, it is a sacrament of initiation into the life in Christ; and marks the beginning of the journey of faith and discipleship that lasts throughout one's life. The sacrament of Baptism according to the EFKS Constitution is a symbol of entering into the fellowship with Christ through the Church.[22] Through baptism, the Church accepts both infants and adults as truly in accordance with the Will of the Lord. When children are baptized, the Church is certain that not all parts and blessings of baptism were carried out in respect of children, unless they were fully instructed by their own fathers and mothers and the Church, so that they become Church members. According to the EFKS Constitution, when infants are baptized, "God gives to His Church (and especially to Christian parents) the duty and obligation of instructing these children, not only by their words but their conduct, so that the children grow up to be Church members, who believe in Him, and have deep

[22] EFKS/CCCS, *The Constitution*, 14.

knowledge of His Will and Work, as He has done through Jesus Christ."[23] The infant, therefore, is gifted in baptism with a life together with Christ, administered in the name of the Father, the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. To be baptized in Christ, is a symbol of assurance in his love; and our faith in the Holy Spirit to be our ultimate sanctuary, and our refuge always.

From the *uluulumatafolau* perspective, baptism is seen in the metaphor of *ulu* or *ulufale*, (entering or being welcomed) into the fellowship with Christ administering by the Church. It reminisces the purpose of the one who enters and seeks in the household of the *Faimea* (maker) or the Mastery *Tautai* (Fisherman). Hence our baptism into Christ, is our entrance into His Church and to continue to realize in our individual lives and in the life of the Church, the true meaning of salvation. Salvation is a gift of love, giving to us unconditionally.

In a theological sense, when we seek to be baptized into Christ, we are welcomed open-heartedly into an eternal fellowship with him, which is to be sanctioned by the Holy Spirit. To be sanctified and to be grown maturely in the Holy Spirit, is the ultimate key in nurturing the unity in our families through love, and in turn, fosters the unity in the Church. The Church also believe that the second meaning of baptism is "to die together with Christ and to rise together with Him, as instructed by St. Paul."[24] This means that Christ died for our sins and was victorious over sin and death when He rose again. Therefore, because of the work of Christ, we are now able to die through sin and to rise as new persons in Christ. The renewal of the self in Christ is realized in the imperative to reciprocate and to respond to the love of God, in our relationship with others, and to reflect his love in everything that we do.

[23] EFKS/CCCS, *The Constitution*, 14.

[24] EFKS/CCCS, *The Constitution*, 14.

The Holy Communion according to the accounts given by the Gospels is based on the events that took place in the evening of the day before Jesus was crucified. It is an event to be celebrated among the Christian circles to commemorate the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of all humankind. The ordinary of the Holy Communion[25] is stated in the New Testament as instituted by Jesus (Matt. 26:26–29; Mk. 14:22–25; Lk. 22:15–20) and celebrated by the early Church (1 Cor 11:23–26). As a sacrament of thanksgiving, it sets out the spirit of celebration of the greatness of God being revealed in all that he did, does, and will do, not for just creation and all things that have been created, but for what he has done in and through Jesus Christ.

The Church in the sacrament of the Holy communion becomes the voice and action of the whole universe, of heaven and earth and everything therein, to give praises to God, an "offering and hymn of praise to the Creator, a universal communion in the Body of Christ, a kingdom of Justice, love and peace in the Holy Spirit."

Among other sacraments of the Church, the Eucharist, or the Holy Communion, is described by John Macquarie as the jewel in the crown[26] - an indication of the significance given to the Holy Communion by the Church. Since its inauguration, it has not only been the subject of much scholarship, but it was also the centre of an exhaustive attempt by the Ecumenical church, to unite the many divided churches.[27] In this sense, the Holy Communion, through the divine work of the

[25] The celebration that originated in the "Last Supper" has several other names, including the breaking of bread (Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7, 11); communion (1 Cor. 10:16); the Eucharist [Gk. *Eucharistein* / *eulogein* (Matt. 26:27; Mk. 14:23; Lk. 22:17, 19; 1 Cor. 11:24]); the "table of the Lord" (1 Cor. 10:21); and the "Lord's Supper" (Gr. *kyriakos deipnon* 1 Cor 11:20). Within the Catholic tradition it is called the Mass or the Holy Sacrifice.

[26] John Macquarie, *A Guide to the Sacraments* (New York: Continuum Publishing Company, 1997), 111.

[27] In 1982, the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, after many years of study, revision and consultation, produced one of the most decorated documents ever to emerge out of any inter-faith or inter-religion consultations called the BEM (Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry) document. Widely known as the Lima Document, the BEM text is an acknowledgement by member churches of the WCC, that "if the divided are to achieve the visible unity they seek, one of the essential prerequisites is that they should be in basic agreement on

Spirit, is seen to reunite things separated by time and space. It is a sacrament to unite all believers to partake in remembrance of the redemption, and "re-creation" act of God through Christ.

4.3 Conclusion

The main intention of this thesis is not only to shed light, and to rediscover the ultimate purpose of the Holy Spirit in the life and mission of the EFKS, but also to bring aspiration and motivation for a transformation, renewal, and sanctification of the Church, which starts from the spiritual experience of the individuals. With the aim to bring out an intimate reality of the Holy Spirit closer to home and cultural experience, this chapter highlighted a number of theological implications for the EFKS and for the Church in general.

Given that culture is depicted as a divine given gift, lived for and shared by society within the motives of love, respect, and unity, capturing the spiritual experience as a normal way of living and continuity: this study portrays that the Spirit is the One who "gives life" and the One who "nurtures unity" in humanity and all of God's creation. The spiritual and physical were understood not as polarised spheres of existence, but as complements, demonstrating unity of life. This means that as believers, the temperament of isolating the church as the *sole* repository of all truth and the *only* location in which the Holy Spirit is operative, should be reconsidered. In other words, as the experience of the Holy Spirit seems to be confined within the boundaries of liturgy and Church traditions, we should try to avoid setting "religious experience" in a category all of its own, cut off

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baptism, eucharist and ministry," see *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Faith and Order Paper no, 111, (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982), v, accessed July 25, 2023,

https://www.oikoumene.org/sites/default/files/Document/FO1982_111_en.pdf

from everyday human experience. In this sense, we seek and embrace the help and the presence of the Spirit in our everyday decision making and choices that we make. Having this intimate consciousness and close encounter of the Spirit, certainly will allow us to avoid temptations and make godly choices in our lives.

Furthermore, the "life-giving" nature of the Holy Spirit is manifested in the essences of love, respect, harmony and unity which are etched in culture. The strongest and most intimate relationship between human beings is love. The indigenous people see the pure of this spiritual experience in nature, and thereby living to that pureness a divinely given culture, embraced with love, respect, and harmony. This affirms that God's grace is "universal"; experienced and manifested in various ways in all cultures.

The interpretations indicated that an integrated reception of the Holy Spirit is to be acknowledged. Most importantly, acknowledging a personal experience of the Holy Spirit is rooted in our sense of humility, and in our willingness to respect others, and our self-sacrifices as servants of God. Such experience is rooted in our desire to be indwelled by love, and our obligations to be sheltered and to be gifted by the Spirit of God. This humility is core to the search for meaning and must not be a thought that only comprehends within our hearts, but it should be an obligation to be seen in our every action and reaction. As Hans Kung puts it rightly:

> This spirit sees to it that there is not just research, information and teaching about Christianity, but that Christianity is experienced with the heart and also really lived out and put into practice – for good or ill, since that is human nature, and in trust in this Spirit of God.[28]

[28] Hans Kung, *Christianity: Essence, History and the Future*. Translated by John Bowden (United Kingdom: The Continuum Publishing Co, 2003). 797.

This calls for a personal experience of the Holy Spirit, embraced in love and unity; this is important for the endurance and continuity of the Church today. Through the Spirit we were made sons and daughters of God; and are being fashioned and re-recreated in the image of Christ, the true Son of God. The Christian Church, animated by the Holy Spirit, is in its purity and integrity the perfect image of the Redeemer, and each regenerate individual is an indispensable constituent of this fellowship. The inter-dwelling of the Holy Spirit is the manifestation of divine involvement with the task of the Kingdom of God, which is nevertheless a present reality.

Furthermore, the spiritual transformation must begin from our own households (*lotoifale*). As leaders of families and churches, we have been given the privilege to lead by example, our inclination to nurture our own homes, our children, our own communities, to reach out, and to express our love for those who are in dire need. The unity of the indwelling Spirit, and the reciprocity of love and respect as reflected in the tones and nuances of *uluulumatafolau*, are the key elements for a pneumatology for the EFKS.

Lastly, from the context of *uluulumatafolau*, the sense of "life-giving" and unity in the Church, can be recognised in the spirit of respect, mutual-reciprocity, honour, unity, sacrifice, mending, protecting, sheltering, and love. It shows that the *uluulumatafolau* is a multifaceted expression that weaves together unity and harmony in order to give life, to sustain life, and in turn, transforms life. It culminates in the love and unity of the Holy Spirit - the Giver of Life.

CONCLUSION

The concluding chapter offers theological significances and implications of the study, along with my concluding personal remarks.

Significances & Implications of the Study

This work points us to the direction of the very existence and the actual realisation of the Holy Spirit. The importance of the implications of this topic in the prospects of humankind's continuous existence through faith and hope in the reality of God's presence is fundamental, not only in our individual lives, but also the life of the Church. It follows that the theology of humanity is ageless and one cannot therefore assume the restriction of context to a mere reflection of a particular time and space. As Moltmann puts it, "The Spirit of God is called the Holy Spirit because it makes our life here something living, not because it is alien and estranged from life."[1] God's eternal presence in humankind and all of creation is realised in and through the Spirit, which means that humankind now must continue to speak boldly and act in witness of its appropriateness and its timelessness. There is distinctly a need for the revival and continuous effort to sustain the Christian faith by embracing the reality of the Holy Spirit in our lives as believers.

As a Christian Samoan, I feel that the deeper meaning and appreciation of cultural traditions and the all-inclusive of the divine spirit is found in their representations of the uniqueness and sacredness and beauty of ethnic culture. Ancient traditions of Samoan society, dictate the dire need for unity. The point in question is whether local traditions that have established cohesion by their ability to bring together a people and maintain such unity through generations, ought to

[1] Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, x.

continue being labelled ‘atrocious and heathenish’. Ironically, to disregard the indigenous ways and labelled them as the “days of darkness” (*aso pogisā*), takes us back to the beginning of time - when the spirit of God was hovering over the deep and ‘darkness’. It shows that the Spirit is also present where the darkness is - God is omnipresence, God is everywhere, present in every culture.

Moreover, the indigenous traditions have shown endurance and vitality in surviving the onslaught of modernism by its continuous appeal to its people in spiritual and cultural affection. A tradition that represents flexibility and understanding of the Samoan culture, which quite freely generously gives way to adopting a new religion and God in the place of its own ancient beliefs and deities.

Such adoption gives way to a universal dimension of the Holy Spirit, which illuminates a sense of the purposes of God in creation and for humanity. That is, if the goal of the creation is to echo Trinitarian relationships on the creaturely level, it would be natural for the Spirit, who is knowledgeable of these relationships, to be summoning forth a human creature capable of implementing them. The divine Spirit calls forth a human spirit, a spirit capable of receiving and returning love, capable of personal give-and-take relationship with God. The ultimate tenacity of *uluulumatafolau* is rooted in the motifs of reciprocal love and the yearning of man to be sheltered by the continuous grace of God, our Refuge. It echoes the sense of the human spirit capable of receiving and returning love, and the willingness to be continuously sheltered, and find comfort in the Spirit. Its resonances are in our mutual-reciprocity and our obligation to maintain unity in our homes, and in turn, reassure unity in the church. How we can make this a reality can only be fulfilled by the inter-dwelling of the Holy Spirit in ourselves. And the only way to make this a reality in ourselves, is through humility, faith, and love.

Concluding Remarks

This study has certainly rekindled a spiritual transformation in my personal journey as a Christian Samoan. Culture is a way of life that lives day by day, and from generation to generation; therefore, traditional beliefs, can be seen in contextual form. As long as they represent the true intentions of God in terms of moral and divine values, traditional practices must be acknowledged as theologically a part of the living culture that God continues to provide in revealing the totality of his salvation to humanity, for each community of people and its way of life. On that basis one may suggest that no matter how God expresses and reveals Himself to the various ethnic cultures and contexts of the world, his *mana* as the one and only God remains exactly of the same effect and magnitude.

Conclusively one believes that the holistic and the inseparability of the Holy Spirit in our culture and in our everyday living, is indeed a living testimony to the continuing manifestation of the grace of God for humanity, from creation to eternity. As human culture changes, the struggle to keep up with development in understanding theology must address the issues, problems and aspirations of the people concerned in every generation. As Gustavo Gutierrez points out;

> Every theology is, and must be, a dialogue with the culture of its age.[2]

In this sense, the point one makes is that culture is a healer: a counsellor of sorts that speaks in the different tongues of the ages. The understanding and appreciation of one's culture stimulates human relationships that must be nurtured and encouraged in dialogue and respect for a society's customs and traditions. In turn, the core message of the gospel of Jesus Christ will find ease of accommodation and acceptance in the very hearts and souls of every generation and context in

[2] Gustavo Gutierrez, *The Truth Shall Make You Free - Confrontations* (New York: Orbis Books, 1991), 89.

society. A culture where hope, faith and unity, inheritance, loyalty and respect, forgiveness and reconciliation are a way of life, where righteousness, goodness and above all, love, are the mangers of warmth that the grace of Christ are truly and sincerely welcomed and continue to inspire the generations to come, in and through the Holy Spirit.

GLOSSARY

The Samoan words forming this glossary have been selected only where the author feels the need to re-express their meanings for the reader's convenience and benefit. However, most if not all of these words are also translated within the quotation that they appear. Some of these words may have other meanings but those given herein relate to the context that are used in this thesis. Some of the words in the longer phrases are not included individually in glossary but are translated or interpreted in the context of their combined application within the paper.

'afa	-	cinnet made from coconut fibre
afi	-	fire
afiafi	-	evening
aga	-	social protocols and behaviour; conduct or manner
agaga	-	spirit or soul
aga-i-fanua	-	traditions pertaining to a specific group of people (example, family or village)
aganuu	-	culture
aiga	-	family
aitu	-	spirit
alagaupu	-	proverbial expressions or sayings from historical events, myths or legends
alii	-	high chief
alofa	-	love
alofisā	-	'ava ceremony
atua	-	Samoan God or gods
'*ato*	-	basket
ato	-	to thatch or to cover

‘*ava*	-	traditional Samoan ceremonial drink; the ‘ava tree
eleele	-	earth; blood
Fa’atupunu’u	-	the Creator
faaaloalo	-	respect, courtesy, honour
fagota	-	to fish
faiā	-	connection, interrelated
fale tele	-	meeting house
fale	-	house
faleo’o	-	common house
fanua	-	land
fatu	-	heart; rock
fau	-	a Samoan tropical plant
feagaiga	-	covenant
fe’e	-	octopus/cuttlefish
fetu’utu’una’i	-	be flexible or being reflective
feluuluta’i	-	intertwined, interpenetrated, interconnected
finagalo	-	opinion
folau	-	to sail, to journey
fono	-	meeting
filemū	-	peace, peaceful
ifo	-	to bow down
ifoga	-	traditional ritual of submission or act of remorse and humility for the forgiveness of wrongdoing
lafo	-	a hard piece of strait reed or stem used for making a thatch; a Samoan plant
lagi	-	heaven
lagisoifua	-	a Samoan lifeworld referring to people, land, sea, traditional belief and so forth (*lagi* – heaven, *soifua* – life)

lagituaiva	-	the ninth heaven
lau	-	leaves
liutofaga	-	reburial and disinterment of human remains
loloto	-	deep
loto	-	will
lotoifale	-	internal affairs and matters pertaining to an individual or a unity
mafaufau	-	mind
malu	-	being sheltered or being protected
māmā	-	lungs
mamanu	-	pattern(s)
mana	-	divine or supernatural power
mata	-	eyes; raw
matai	-	person with a customary chiefly title, a customary chiefly title
matālau / *inailau*	-	a patch or a row of thatches
matā-tutulu	-	holes in the roof
mauli	-	spirit; seat of emotions
muagagana	-	proverbial expressions or sayings from everyday tasks or traditional expeditions
nimonimo	-	vast, immeasurable
nuu	-	village
‘*ofe*	-	bamboo tree; fishing rod made from bamboo
ola	-	fishing basket; life
pa fagota	-	fish hook or lure
pa’ia	-	holy, divine
palapala	-	mud; blood
sa’ili	-	to search or to seek
sasa’a	-	to pour
sau	-	the morning and evening dew
Sau o le Ola	-	Giver of Life

siapo	-	tapa-cloth
Tagaloa / *Tagaloa-a-lagi*	-	Samoan supreme god of creation
tagata	-	human being
tagata ola	-	living being
tala	-	stories; narratives
tao	-	spear
tapu	-	sacred
tapua'i	-	to worship, to pray
tapua'iga	-	worship
tatau	-	Samoan traditional tattoo for men
tau	-	season; to fight; leaves use to cover a traditional earth-oven
taulu	-	to mend
tautai	-	fisherman
tautua	-	to serve (verb); service (noun)
tautua-ile-va	-	service carried out in between spaces
tava'e	-	a common name given to a red-tailed (*Paethron rubricauda – tava'e 'ula*) and a white-tailed (*Phaethen lepturus – tava'e sina*) tropic bird
tino	-	body or flesh
tōfā	-	wisdom
tolo	-	sugar cane
tuā'oi	-	borders; neighbour(s)
tufuga	-	an artist – *tufuga faufale* (builder), *tufuga ta tatau* (tattooist)
Tupu'aga	-	Progenitor
tutulu	-	holes (in the roof)
ulu	-	head; to insert; to enter or to exit
uluulu	-	to mend or to re-thatch; intensive affection or emotion

upega	-	fishing net
utu	-	a type of Samoan traditional vessel
vā	-	relational or sacred space
va'a	-	canoe

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