

The Samoan diaspora church in New Zealand:
Patterns of movement and dynamics
amongst three generations of Samoan families

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Abstract

This qualitative study explored the dynamics of movement in the Samoan diaspora church in New Zealand using a case study of three generations of Samoan families who began their journeys within the Pacific Island (Congregational/Presbyterian) Church. It has mapped the journeys and patterns of 27 participants within seven families and recorded the emerging trends, patterns and themes along with their various narratives that emerged from their *talanoaga* (verbal interviews).

The purpose of the thesis is to document the movement of Samoan families between churches and the emerging trends and patterns: how many moved, why they moved and where they chose to move to. It identifies the reasons why they left their original churches and why they eventually moved on from one church to another and looks at these dynamics and their own personal narratives behind these moves. It also asks the question of whether the *fa'asamoa* and Samoan language were important factors in where they chose to worship.

The methodology used for this research was *talanoa*. This was to capture the essence of language and the nuances of culture and observation.

The key findings of this study were that while there were changes in churches by six families over three generations, one family had no movement. For the second and third-generation participants, the Samoan language and *fa'asamoa*, although important, did not feature as a consideration when it came to choosing a new church to worship in. Anecdotal evidence suggests that from first-generation to third-generation families there was a weakening of the *fa'asamoa* and Samoan language and culture. Many first-generation parents learnt the English language from their second-generation children.

Questions of Samoanness is highly debated and a challenge to youth especially as is related to language competence.

This study also showed that people left churches *en masse* when a conflict arose involving the minister. The churches would split and one side would walk out creating a schism. Most of these conflicts were unresolved, resulting in the departure of families from their church to join new churches or form new ones. This study has highlighted a significant number of organisational issues which should be considered by church leadership and congregations if the church is to maintain its role and relevance in the lives of Samoan diaspora families today. For example church organisation, hierarchical leadership, pastoral care, and financial issues. This thesis has raised issues that need challenging. In order to reduce these type of departures there needs to be accountability procedures in place in the churches particularly with clergy to address issues of conflict and a provision for pastoral care to those who have been aggrieved.

It is possible that the result of this research could differ enormously if this study was carried out with a Samoan Congregational (C.C.C.S.) or Samoan Methodist three-generational families.

This study will be of value if the recommendations are implemented particularly around the issue of identity. It needs to be clear that Samoan identity is not dependent on one's ability to speak the Samoan language and carry out the *fa'asamoa*. Although these are important it is not necessarily an easily-achievable goal for many second- and third-generation New Zealand-born Samoans. Samoan identity should be based on biological ties and connection and not on competencies in language and culture.

This study adds value to knowledge and practice by highlighting the different journeys of three generations and their experiences within the church. It is ground-breaking in

that there has been no study of this type before and therefore it will raise some important issues for the church to consider for future generations. It will add to the global literature of the churches concerned and the Samoan community.

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed _____ Date _____

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Ethics Approval

The ethical approval No 13/351 for this research was granted by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) in its letter dated 20th May 2014.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

A.O.G.	Assemblies of God
C.C.C.A.S.	Congregational Christian Church American Samoa
C.C.C.S.	Congregational Christiana Church Samoa
C.C.F.	Community Christian Fellowship
C.L.C.	Christian Life Church
C.U.N.Z.	Congregational Union of New Zealand
C.W.M.	Council for World Mission
E.F.K.A.S.	Ekalesia Fa'apopotoga Kerisiano Amerika Samoa
E.F.K.S.	Ekalesia Fa'apopotoga Kerisiano Samoa
L.M.S.	London Missionary Society
P.C.N.Z.	Presbyterian Church of New Zealand
P.C.A.N.Z.	Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand
P.I.C.C.	Pacific Islander's Congregational Church
P.I.P.C.	Pacific Islander's Presbyterian Church

Samoan Terms

<i>‘aiga</i>	family
<i>‘aiga potopoto</i>	extended family
<i>a’oa’oina</i>	taught
<i>aganu’u</i>	Samoan culture
<i>ailao</i>	announcement of gifts
<i>ala</i>	road, pathway
<i>alii</i>	high chief, male
<i>alii paia</i>	sacred chief
<i>alofa</i>	love, caring, charity, sacrifice and commitment
<i>Ao</i>	Head
<i>a’oa’o fesoasoani</i>	Lay preacher
<i>aofa’alupega</i>	formal term for minister within the church
<i>atina’e</i>	development
<i>aualuma</i>	young women’s group
<i>auauna</i>	servant
<i>aufaipese</i>	choir
<i>aumaga</i>	group of untitled young men
<i>auso</i>	sisterhood
<i>autalavou</i>	youth group
<i>ava</i>	manners
<i>fa’a Mati</i>	March event
<i>fa’aaloalo</i>	reciprocal respect and involves honouring others
<i>fa’aevagelia</i>	evangelism
<i>fa’afeagaiga</i>	formal term for minister or clergy, covenant maker
<i>fa’alavelave</i>	problem, occasion such as a funeral, wedding, when family assistance should be given, in the form of labour, goods or money
<i>fa’aleagaga</i>	things of the spirit
<i>fa’aleatunu’u</i>	things of the country
<i>fa’alelalolagi</i>	things of the world
<i>fa’alupega</i>	genealogy
<i>fa’a-matai</i>	chiefly system of Samoa, central to organization of Samoan society
<i>fa’amati</i>	March inspection for church and ministry
<i>fa’apotopotoga</i>	fellowship, gathering, church
<i>fa’a-Samoa</i>	the Samoan way of life, according to customs and traditions – in manners of the Samoans
<i>fa’avae i le Atua Samoa</i>	Samoa is founded on God
<i>fafa</i>	entrance into the spiritual world

<i>faifeau</i>	minister, clergy
<i>faiga Me</i>	May offerings for the work of missions
<i>failauga</i>	lay preacher
<i>faioa</i>	maker of wealth
<i>faletua</i>	wife of minister, wife of high chief
<i>feagaiga</i>	sisterhood, covenant
<i>feau</i>	chores
<i>fono</i>	meeting
<i>fono tele</i>	General assembly conference of C.C.C.S.
<i>gagana</i>	language
<i>galuega</i>	job, ministry
<i>gaogaosa</i>	complexity, chaos
<i>i'e toga</i>	fine mats
<i>Kerisiano</i>	Christian
<i>komiti</i>	committee
<i>lagi</i>	heavens
<i>lotu</i>	church, religious observance, as in family prayers or church services
<i>mafutaga</i>	fellowship
<i>malo</i>	power centre
<i>matafale</i>	families within the church
<i>matai</i>	chief
<i>mealofa</i>	gift
<i>moa</i>	centre
<i>moetolo</i>	sleep crawl
<i>mu'umu'u</i>	woman's dress no waist
<i>noa</i>	profane, normal
<i>nu'u</i>	village, political and administrative unit in Samoa
<i>ositaulaga</i>	priest, priestess
<i>palagi/papalagi</i>	used to describe foreigners or anything that does not belong to Samoa culture, often associated to Europeans
<i>pou</i>	poles
<i>pule</i>	the matai's representing the island of Savaii
<i>pule</i>	power
<i>sa</i>	sacred
<i>sa'o tamaitai</i>	daughters or sisters of high chiefs
<i>sa-le-fe'e</i>	land of the bounds
<i>soalaupule</i>	consensus
<i>suafa</i>	name
<i>susuga</i>	formal address used to greet ministers and important people

<i>ta'i le sua</i>	ceremonial offering
<i>tafaifa</i>	holder of 4 high chiefly titles
<i>Tagaloa-a-lagi</i>	supreme god
<i>tagata</i>	person
<i>Taiti</i>	Tahiti
<i>tala o le vavau</i>	myths and legends
<i>talafa'asolopito</i>	history
<i>talanoa</i>	to talk
<i>talanoaga</i>	conversation
<i>tamaita'i</i>	lady, young woman
<i>tamaiti</i>	children
<i>tapu</i>	sacred
<i>taulaitu</i>	sharman, traditional healer
<i>taulasea</i>	healer
<i>taulealea</i>	untitled young men
<i>taupou</i>	virgin
<i>tapuaiga</i>	worship, congregation
<i>tausala</i>	maiden, redeemer
<i>tausi</i>	wife of an orator chief
<i>tautala</i>	speak
<i>tautua</i>	serve
<i>tiakono</i>	deacon
<i>tina</i>	mother
<i>toeaina</i>	elderly male or elder minister
<i>tofi</i>	calling
<i>toto</i>	to plant
<i>tulafale</i>	orator
<i>Tumua</i>	the matai's representing the island of Upolu
<i>tupe</i>	money, finances
<i>tupu</i>	sovereign, king, queen
<i>usu</i>	morning sojourn
<i>va</i>	Space
<i>va fealoaloa'i</i>	sacred space between relationships

Chapter 1 Background and context of the study

My research explores the church going stories of three generational Samoan family journeys over a 50-year period, and the insights and understandings that emerged with decisions made to move on from one church environment to another if at all. I ask why did people choose the church they moved to and, did the Samoan language and culture *fa'asamoa* have a role to play in the choice of church they chose to worship in?

As affirmed in oral and written accounts, Samoans have always maintained a belief in the “wholly other” whether this be Tagaloa, the supreme being and creator God or in more recent times Yahweh, the Christian God. Samoans did not put their faith in icons or statues but placed their faith in creation and nature symbols along with some sacred creation totems specific to family and village. In addition there was a recognition and reverence for the guiding hands of the creator God in every daily life event and action. The rapid spread of Christianity in Samoa in the 1830s marked significant changes in the Samoan world view as for example in the concept of there being one God, of the Bible as the written word and setting the codes of right behaviours for all, literacy and the introduction of churches as the place of worship along with strict dress codes and practices. As documented, Christian tenets fitted well with the *fa'asamoa* chiefly systems of organization and so Christianity spread quickly as the paramount chiefs of the time competed for the power and influence Christianity bestowed on their families and villages. Church teachings became integrated into the *fa'asamoa* beliefs and practices to the point that they are almost inseparable today as the Rev. Leuatea Sio the first Samoan minister ordained within the P.I.C.C noted:

Christianity and the *fa'asamoa* were so intertwined that it would be difficult to separate one from the other, that the Christian way of life is so overlapped in many ways with the *fa'asamoa* that you would find it difficult to see whether the people are Christian Samoans or Samoan Christians (Taule'ale'ausumai, 1990, p.23).

On this point, several commentators have suggested that the Samoan church and the *fa'asamoa* are so intertwined that one cannot exist in its totality without the other. For others the *fa'asamoa* is seen to be a stumbling block to the Christian faith, an unnecessary burden to one's spiritual purpose. Colless notes that identity within the context of conservative Christian theology sees the term “culture” as something that is totally negative, that is, outside the Christian community (Colless, 1980, p.69).

It is difficult to know how much of the quick conversion and overwhelming adherence to the Christian faith in Samoa was based on ritual, habit or because of a sense of faith and belief in God. Did people go to church because this was expected, or because everyone else was doing it and the village expectation was that everyone practiced the Christian faith? According to Johnstone (2009),

...when faith remains inherited rather than owned, the motivational basis of accepting social influence from church or youth group will be that of compliance. Furthermore, when a person's faith is inherited, then the level of influence from another social circle, such as a friendship group outside of church is potentially stronger, most likely at the level of identification as adolescents and young adults want to either establish or maintain satisfying friendships within the group. However, when a person begins to own their faith, then the motivational basis of accepting social influence from church and Christian friends will be that of identification and eventually internalization, if they continue to grow and mature in their faith (Johnstone, 2009, p.50).

Faith, says Johnstone, can be understood as a journey, rather than a once-off conversion experience ("once saved, always saved" mentality).

Given these beginnings in the homelands it is not surprising then that as Samoans began migrating to New Zealand from the mid-1940s onwards, a first priority was to find a place of worship. As Lesa has noted:

Regardless of geographical areas of residence, the Samoan Christian Church has been a gathering place for Samoan families and individuals abroad. For these families and friends, the church is their village away from Samoa (Lesa, 2009).

In the early days finding a place of worship was not as easy for Pacific migrant families as it is today. Reports indicate early migrants of the Catholic faith had a wider choice because of the universal rituals of that church, while other families joined Methodist, Presbyterian and Salvation Army English-speaking congregations. As Pacific migrant numbers swelled through the 60s and 70s in response to New Zealand's demand for unskilled labour, the first Pacific Islander's Congregational Church (P.I.C.C.) was opened at Edinburgh Street in Newton, Auckland. This came to be known affectionately as the 'traditional church'. For this thesis I will name P.I.C.C. as the first-wave church for migrants. Newton P.I.C.C. was Pan-Pacific, catering for Samoans, Niueans, and Cook Islanders who were content to worship together as a multiethnic, multicultural group of worshippers, and later these groups were joined by Tokelauan and Tuvaluan migrants. The P.I.C.C. church format usually comprised an English combined service in

the morning service with ethnic-specific language services created for them to worship in their own mother tongue at another time of the day.

During these early years cultural security within this Pan-Pacific church appeared to be strong. Although services were led by a *palagi*, Rev. Lyle Challis, the different Pacific island groups also had their ethnic-specific ministers to offer them indigenous-language services as well as pastoral care and oversight. Sunday schools in this first-wave church were filled to overflowing, so much so that classes had to be conducted outside on the footpath because there was not enough room to conduct them indoors (Anae, 1998). There was a real sense of pride also in the Pacific way of doing things within their own ethnic language services and when they met together for their combined worship in the morning. English language and a congregational liturgy prevailed in order to cater for the multicultural of languages within the church (Sio, L. 1998, conversation).

Anecdotal evidence today suggests that since these early beginnings Samoans have been moving from the first-wave churches and are now more visible in second-wave ethnic-specific and third-wave Pentecostal and non-denominational contemporary churches. These stories however have not been recorded or analysed in depth for their truth. For example, if they have moved is this because they are worshipping at a church closer to their homes or because of some significant faith-miracle experience in their lives or in the life of a family member?

Pacific communities and the church: 2013

In the 2013 census 14.6 percentage of the New Zealand population identified as Pacific. Almost 35.7% were under the age of 15 as compared with the New Zealand population number of 4,242,051. The Pacific population is also very diverse: 70% were New Zealand-born, multi-ethnicity had increased through intermarriage and there were significant number of third- and fourth-generation migrant families. Samoans were the largest group comprising just over 50% of the total Pacific number and most lived in the Auckland Region (66.5 percent or 95,916) people, (stats.govt.nz, 2013, Census ethnic group profiles Samoan). This census data also indicated

- Terms of language, 48.5% registered as speaking two languages and 45.4 speaking one language. This indicated Samoan language speaking reasonably healthy (archive.stats.govt.nz/Census/profile-and-summary-reports/ethnic).

Census data on religious affiliation indicated just over 82% affirmed a religion which was a contrast with the total New Zealand population figure of 52% (Samoan People in New Zealand 2013; Statistics New Zealand, Tatauranga Aotearoa, Wellington, New Zealand, www.stats.govt.nz). The most common denominations for Pacific were Catholic (22.8 percent or 31,164 people), Presbyterian, Congregational and Reformed (17.1 percent or 23,400 people), and Christian not further defined, (11.4 percent or 15,510 people).

While this religious affiliation data remains strong, anecdotal reports and thesis suggest there has been a tremendous movement in the church attendance generally and, notably by the young.

Given this data of movement, there had been little in-depth study on the stories and emerging patterns underpinning these recorded statistics. For example, are Samoan people changing/moving denominations? If so, who is moving, and why are they moving and where are they going?

Research gap

While the amount of research on Pacific/Samoans and the church is increasing, there is a research gap in the vital area relating to migrating Samoan peoples' patterns of choosing particular churches to worship in and any transitions therein over succeeding generations. Questions such as, how much of people's decisions to move from one church to another was spurred by a change in theology or based on a desire to move from wave-two ethnic-specific churches back to wave-one multicultural worship communities? Also, how does cultural security fit when measuring the patterns of those who stayed and those who moved on? Apart from census statistics, anecdotal evidence suggests that little or no research has been carried out on mapping the trends and patterns of people's movement between denominations and their reasons for changing and moving.

Much of the research to date has been a one-time snapshot of church going as for example Anae (1998) and Tunufa'i (2005). While valuable, these studies do not capture any patterns of movement by generation and over time. As a result, I saw the value of a study focusing on a 50-year time scale and focusing on the expectations of worship of a small number of families who started their worship at the first-wave church in the 1950's. In this way, my aims were to explore the views and experiences of three

generations of family members so gaining an historical review of patterns of any movement by church and influencing factors by generation.

Research questions

This research will explore and document the stories of a group of Samoan families who joined the Newton P.I.C.C. in the 1950's, where they worship now, their transitions in faith, culture and language. This three-generational study will start with the journeys of the first-generation migrant parents, followed by those of their children and finally their children's children. There are three research questions:

- 1 Are Samoans leaving the church and if so what are the emerging trends and patterns associated with this?
- 2 What are the dynamics underpinning these trends and patterns?
- 3 Does any movement between churches signal a strengthening or weakening of the *fa'asamoa* (including Samoan language)?

Given the strong integration of Christian ideals into the Samoan social system, at the heart of this research lies the all-important question 'does a change in church indicate also an erosion of the *fa'asamoa* language and culture which in time presents a threat to Samoan identity. In an earlier interview with Rev. Sio he notes:

It may be true that the first thought in the mind of any Samoan arriving into a new and foreign land is to make sure that he or she has a secure job and that this person is brought up within and has belonged to two types of circles: (1) the village circle and (2) the church circle. Therefore, this person's heart and mind will always look out for those two things in life away from Samoa. Firstly, they would look for a place in which to use their Samoan language and the *fa'asamoa* and secondly, they would look for a place where they could find their usual type of worshipping God as they were used to in their homeland. Such a person would never be fully satisfied or happy until he or she finds these two main things in life. And this is exactly what has happened to the Samoans living in Fiji, New Zealand, Australia, Hawaii, the United States etc. In fact so much so to the extent that they organized themselves into establishing their own groups to build new churches (Taule'ale'ausumai, 1990, p.23).

A qualitative approach will be used for this study. I will use the lens of spirituality and faith to explore the *fa'asamoa*. Aims are that up to eight families form the sample group.

Auckland is the chosen study site because this has the largest Samoan population in New Zealand. Also, I was born and raised in Auckland so my personal connection and

interest in where things were and where they are moving today is important. As a second-generation New Zealand-born Samoan I have been immersed in the very context in which this thesis has evolved and have been interested in what changes, if any, there are between my parent's generation, my generation and the generation of my nieces and nephews. Individual interviews are the best approach given the sensitivity of this issue. These will be carried out with family members of each of the three generations and chosen by the family. *Talanoa* will be carried out in English or Samoan as appropriate.

Research perspectives

Global research confirms the importance of a three-generational approach if an in-depth exploration of this nature is to be achieved. Much of the research on Pacific church going has highlighted the movement from Pan-Pacific to ethnic-specific Samoan churches as Fairbairn Dunlop and Makisi (2003) note. However, that study was carried out in 2000 and likely there have been movements into Pentecostal and contemporary churches since that time.

Of particular relevance is Ebaugh and Chafetz. (2000a, p.434) who propose a three-stage model for ethnic Religious Institutions (R.I.s) which feature a transitional movement process over time from native-speaking to English within the traditional church. The three-stage model for Ethnic Religious Institutions (R.I.s) outlines three transitional movements of the first-wave traditional church:

- 1 strong leadership from 1st generation with cultural and linguistic distinctiveness providing immigrants with motivation to start Religious Institution;
- 2 bilingual religious leaders conduct service in English and native language to provide a bridge between the first and second generations;
- 3 ethnic Religious Institutions morph into multi-ethnic Religious Institutions as structural assimilation occurs and services are in English only (p.433).

Ebaugh and Chafetz further propose also a six-stage model which further develops the above detailing the movements to a second-generational church. The six-stage model for ethnic Religious Institutions:

- 1) parents and children speak the native tongue;
- 2-3) children demand Sunday School and services in English;
- 4) 2nd generation young adults (English-speaking) develop leadership skills;

- 5) 2 parallel congregations with equal power and influence are developed;
- 6) 1st generation withdraws and the Religious Institution becomes a primarily English-speaking entity with a foreign language department (Ebaugh, H. & Chafetz, J. 2000a, p.434).

My research will document and explore any movements and reasons why and critique these against the above models.

From a Samoan perspective the points in model one to six suggests that when Samoan elders choose to leave a parish it becomes an English-speaking-only church and then the Samoan language becomes an option. The emergence of a parallel congregation with equal power and influence is significant in addition; this dynamic which occurred amongst Korean churches within the Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A. (Min, P.G., & Kim, D.Y., 2005, p.1) will be discussed in the following chapter.

From a different perspective the place and role of recent immigrants within these multicultural churches may vary. For example, some believe that the multicultural church does not recognise their own personal gifts and that the ethnic-specific church gives them a deeper sense of belonging and identity because of the cultural and language aspect.

Participants noted that recent immigrants were often not accepted within leadership and decision-making positions of churches in Canada. There was also a perception that immigrant talents, gifts and skills were not accepted or adequately utilized. This lack of involvement and inclusion is another reason why many recent immigrants turn to ethno-specific immigrant churches. They feel that ethno-specific immigrant churches are more open and embracing of them, and quicker to value and utilize their giftedness. As a result, recent immigrants who attend ethno-specific churches generally develop a deeper sense of belonging with other church members and feel included in church life (Janzen, R., Dildar, Y., & Araujo, L. 2010, p.19).

From a Samoan perspective Faafetai Lesa's doctoral research which focused on the Samoans in Hawaii and the impact of Samoan Christian Churches on Samoan language, competency and cultural identity".

Samoan, like many endangered migrant community languages, is on a spiralling downward cycle of language attrition. Along with this language loss there has also been a sense of confusion with cultural identity. Most recent sociology of religion uses the framework of believing without belonging, arguing that to a significant degree religious believing has been detached from religious belonging (Lesā, 2009, pp.72-73).

Lesa also raises the further question, if the Samoan church is the place where identity, cultural values and language is attained, what will happen to the generations of Samoans who no longer find the Samoan church relevant for them today? (Lesa, 2009).

Research context

These dynamics underpinning any movement away from the first-wave church raises some significant questions which this research will investigate.

For example, in 1963 a schism occurred at the Newton P.I.C.C. and a group of Samoan church members broke away to form their own wave-two ethnic-specific church. This schism was based around issues of cultural security. Some Samoans within the Newton P.I.C.C. did not feel culturally secure with what was available and on offer at this church. They believed multiculturalism lacked an authenticity for Samoan culture and language and that they were having to compromise and sacrifice particular aspects of their culture for the sake of keeping the masses happy. According to these dissenters, at the end of the day, what the *palagi* leader wanted of the multicultural groups took precedence and this was the bone of contention for the breakaway group. Those who continued to stay on at Newton P.I.C.C. continued to enjoy the multicultural flavour of its worship and the opportunities to worship in their own native language in the afternoons. Many did not feel hard done by as did those who had broken away. The Samoan group had become a very strong presence in its own right and lead the way in terms of fund-raising for the new church and other activities.

New Zealand's changing ecclesiastical landscape

As noted by Redding:

The ecclesiastical landscape in N.Z. is vastly different to what it was 40 or 50 years ago. The decline of the mainline churches has been partially offset by a proliferation of independent churches, many of which associate themselves with the Pentecostal movement. Their membership consists largely of former members (and their offspring) of the mainline churches. Meanwhile the percentage of people describing themselves as Christian in the census continues to fall (Redding, 2011, p.37).

Redding's and other similar studies raise questions as to whether the Samoan pattern of church going and church moving in New Zealand to second and third-wave churches is the same or differs from those of other migrant groups globally.

Restlessness of Pacific youth

Is movement of any kind part of the normal dynamic of restless youth? As suggested by Sila:

Young people see the Mainline Church worship as boring and obsolete. It does not permit the freedom to express the feelings of the worshippers: for they maintain the value of silent worship (Sila, 2001, p.34). While talking about the Samoan experience

Saada notes:

Young people of Samoa are moving to more charismatic churches in an attempt to “re-contextualize” their worship (Saada, 2008, p.xxiii).

Saada’s comments suggest that the Samoan traditional church is out of touch. Changes are needed to reduce the gradual exodus of third and fourth generation from the church. As Saada further states;

One may wonder what significant changes may arise from this change in attitude, especially in the context of globalization (Saada, 2008, p.xxx).

Samoan language and identity

Many New Zealand-born Samoans have struggled with their identity as Samoans. One participant talks of being identified as a “milky way bar” or a “potato”, brown on the outside and white on the inside, that when he’s in Samoa he is a *palagi* and when he is in New Zealand he is seen as a coconut. Those who do not speak the Samoan language have been challenged over the years as not being a “real” Samoan. They were told unless you can speak the language then you are not a true Samoan. Did they feel less Samoan as a result? I do not believe they did as for them, being Samoan is not based on language or cultural competency but on biological makeup. With second-generation non-speaking Samoan it becomes obvious that their children, the third generation, will not learn the language from their parents. Many of this generation have sent their children to the Samoan language nests or *Aoga Amata* as a pre-school option and like their parents are learning the basic Samoan language from their third-generation children. Many second-generation people are enrolling to attend Samoan language classes at night school in order to learn the Samoan language and culture and to become proficient in their understanding of the *fa’asamoa*.

The percentage of New Zealand-born Samoans who were able to speak Samoan in 1996 remained the same in 2001. However, in 2006, there was a drop, from 48% in 1996 and 2001 to 44% (Statistics New Zealand, 2006).

It is against such a backdrop of shifting context that my dual research perspectives and subsequent questions are established. What is the role of the church for Samoan migrants and their children and grandchildren, and how has this changed over time?

My place in this study - as an insider N.Z.B.S.

In my time I have seen many changes in the church. For me, this thesis journey began over 57 years ago when I was born into the Pacific Islanders Congregational Church P.I.C.C. church and baptized as an infant in 1961 at the New Lynn Congregational Church. Our church was a Samoan congregation worshipping with *palagi* (European) families in a tiny concrete church in what was at the time a new subdivision of baby boomer housing development in West Auckland. My parents began their marriage at Newton P.I.C.C. in Edinburgh Street and when my uncle's home grew too small for all the extended families that were sharing a house in Georgina Street, Ponsonby, my Mum and Dad saved for a deposit on their new home and moved into 5 Kiernan Place, Kelston in March 1961. They were the first family to settle into the new subdivision in Kelston.

At the New Lynn Congregational Church, there was a combined English service in the morning with a *palagi* congregation and then a Samoan service later in the afternoon, often led by a lay-preacher. In 1969 when the P.I.C.C. merged with the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, all these Samoan families were up-lifted and encouraged to move to St. Martins Presbyterian Church in Glen Eden.

A new Samoan minister Rev. Setu Solomona had been called to minister to this new Samoan congregation which was to cater for the new Samoan families of the West Auckland region. Some went willingly, others preferred to delay their inevitable departure and stayed behind at the Congregational Church. Eventually however, all the Samoan families moved. The transition took some adjusting to for most families but the majority were happy to move as a Samoan minister would provide what they saw to be a much more stable pastoral set up for them. Thus the exit from the New Lynn Congregational Church was due to the merger of the Pacific Island's Congregational Church with the Presbyterian Church 1968-69. This move from New Lynn to

Glen Eden was almost non-negotiable and people were expected to go and join this new church because a minister had been chosen to work specifically with and for them.

After a few years the new church in Glen Eden known as St. Martins Presbyterian Church, found that the church building became too small so the Samoan congregation wanted to build a bigger church. This was a desire which the *palagi* congregational members did not support. Eventually the Samoan members went on to build their big church on the open land next to the old church and the *palagi* members continued to worship in the small church. This effectively split the church with the Samoan congregation of St. Martins becoming Glen Eden Pacific Islander's Presbyterian Church (P.I.P.C.) whilst the *palagi* congregation remained as St. Martins. The P.I.P.C. became a wave-two ethnic-specific church and conducted its services in both the Samoan language in the afternoon and English language in the morning. The New Zealand-born youth continued their youth groups and Sunday School in the English language because that was the first language for many of the young people. Many could not speak Samoan either in the home or at church. The *palagi* and Samoan congregations had the occasional combined service on special Christian festive days throughout the year like Easter and Christmas but over time became two separate worshipping communities. This was mainly due to economic and theological differences between the two ministers.

Very few families left Glen Eden P.I.P.C. over the early years. It was a stable congregation. However, later, there were a few occasions when families left due to conflict situations. When these families left they moved back to wave-one multicultural churches preferring the *palagi* services to the wave-two ethnic-specific Samoan services. There was almost always a family fight going on or about to break at any particular time. I saw this as an attempt to get away from the *fa'asamoa* which to some had been the reason for the conflict and in some ways was too stifling.

I joined the Presbyterian ministry in 1991, and as a Presbyterian minister, in my 27 years of ordained ministry within the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, I have been intrigued by the steady exit of young people from our mainline church into wave-three non-denominational, independent, contemporary and Pentecostal-type churches. Some of them have drifted off on their own to new contemporary churches of their own selection whilst others have followed their peers to the same church. The youth I talked to said that the reasons many of these young people left was due to the

fact that there was no opportunity for leadership, one having to become an elder in order to lead. They were also attracted to the more modern upbeat worship and music which was on offer in the wave-three contemporary/Pentecostal churches and had also moved away from the corporate inherited faith with an experienced individual conversion where they personally asked Jesus to come into their life. One particular church which many of these young people went to worship in is the Community Christian Fellowship (C.C.F.) in Kelston, West Auckland. This is a wave-three contemporary church in terms of music and worship and would not classify themselves as Pentecostal. I wondered whether the departure of some of these young people from the mainline church of their parents was consistent with Carlton Johnstone's research where he suggests that "Church attendance for some young people is based on compliance because attendance is required by their parents rather than a free choice" (Johnstone, 2009).

I first attended this C.C.F. fellowship as a visitor on my return from the United Kingdom in 1998. My youngest sibling, who had not been attending any church when I left for the U.K. in 1994, was now a member of this church with his family. At their invitation I attended a Sunday evening worship service at C.C.F.'s former place of worship which was located at Don Oliver's gym in New Lynn. On arrival, I was surprised that the congregation was quite large and that there were many present from generation X and Y. I also noticed a little cluster of parents seated at the front of the worship centre. I was aware that many of them were parents of some of the adults present but I was not entirely sure whether they were visiting or actual members of C.C.F. I also found it strange to see my parents' peers worshipping in what I saw to be such a youthful scene. To me they looked awkward and out of place because I was so used to seeing some of them in the traditional Samoan church setting.

The music at C.C.F. was new, loud and repetitive and we stood for long periods during the praise and worship time. I wondered how the older people were coping with the duration of standing. The singing was enthusiastic and people sang with emotion and clapping, some with their eyes closed and arms raised heavenward, others with their hands clasped in prayer and some like me quietly taking it all in and joining in the songs that I did know.

I remember thinking to myself, "oh so this is what draws all my ex Glen Eden youth here, the music, the sense of freedom that appeared to exist around me." I was interested that the service was almost in direct contrast to the traditional formal setting and

liturgical approach of the Pacific Islander's Church (P.I.C.) style and worship that I grew up in. The departure of many of these young people to C.C.F. left a void and had a huge impact on the wave-two traditional church and the people they had left behind.

I enjoyed my visit to C.C.F. that night and left thinking how much we as the Pacific Islander's Church within the P.C.A.N.Z. had lost as a church simply by the departure of our young adults to these new churches. Our loss as a church was C.C.F.'s gain, and it made me ask many questions around the sense of belonging, identity and participation within the P.I.C. and what it means to be the church in both P.I.C. and C.C.F. What was it that we were not doing as a P.I.C. church to retain our young people? I knew the many cultural protocols and do's and don'ts that would have restricted many of these young people from feeling a sense of belonging spiritually and that the concept of individual salvation over inherited salvation was the key determining point of belonging and identity. According to Johnstone, "faith transition occurs at a faith crossroad where an individual faces a choice between choosing to follow or walk away from faith" (Johnstone, 2009). On this point I agree with Johnstone that for many of these people in the past the main impetus for going to church was out of a sense of duty, a family obligation, something not yet freely chosen (Johnstone, 2009).

In 1999 I became one of the Maclaurin Chaplains at the University of Auckland for a couple of years and during this time I witnessed again many young Pacific Island students attending the weekly Pacific Students for Christ (P.S.F.C.) on Wednesday afternoons in the Chapel. There were usually around 40-60 Pacific students meeting every week and their gatherings were always lively and popular and evangelically focussed. At the other extreme the University's own weekly chapel services were lucky to attract 2-3 people to our worship.

As a theological student in my final year of study, I wrote a Post Graduate Diploma in Theology dissertation titled "The Word Made Flesh"; the Presbyterian Church published it in 1991. Accent publications also published it in 1997 in *Counselling Issues and South Pacific Communities*. It was a story of the New Zealand-born Samoan journey from my perspective. It was autobiographical in many ways and highlighted the hopes, fears, tensions and struggles of growing up between the Samoan culture and the New Zealand culture. The struggle was not a negative struggle; it was a journey where choices had to be made all the time and these choices were not necessarily ones I could easily opt out of. This thesis will pick up the ongoing story and explores in depth what

changes have occurred with the arrival of a third-generation within the 30 years after this dissertation was published and how markedly different these changes may be in terms of language, culture and faith.

The N.Z.B.S. of the 1980's is not the same as the N.Z.B.S. of the 21st century. Given that the third generation have been born to second-generation N.Z.B.S. parents, the Samoan language and culture has no option but to become “watered down” and for many this is not necessarily through choice but as the result of the intergenerational process.

In this time, technology has advanced dramatically and the internet, social networks and media have enabled people to become connected with one another on an almost daily basis through Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, etc.

Risks

As noted I am an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand. The fact that I am a minister may be either a help or a hindrance to this research process. Therefore, I know that it is my responsibility to build a rapport and a relationship of safety and confidence before I even begin interviewing the various participants. The risk that I take as a minister is that I have the perspective from the point of view of the clergy and I also have the perspective from the point of view of a parishioner. In this study I will move in and out of and between those two distinctions. I will seek to overcome this risk by being objective and impartial. My role within this research is to allow the participants voices to speak for themselves.

I will also constantly share and review findings with supervisors to ensure an impartiality.

So far, many of the judgements made on N.Z.B.S. cultural competencies within the *fa'asamoa ma aganu'u ma gagana Samoa* (protocol and language) seem to be from the Samoan-born and non-N.Z.B.S. perspectives.

It is timely for a N.Z.B.S. to document the Samoan diaspora journey and to add to the global diasporic research on similar themes.

I am bringing to this study my identity as a N.Z.B.S., my many years of experience working for the Pacific Islanders Presbyterian Church as a secretary, youth worker and

youth leader and my time as the national youth co-ordinator for the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand. I also bring my time working as a tutor and lecturer on behalf of the Council for World Mission (formerly London Missionary Society L.M.S.), the United Reformed Church of the U.K. and the Baptist Missionary Society. I also bring my experience as a poet and a writer to this study and my understanding of my role in relation to who the participants were, and within the context of the reality of their social and cultural environments.

Significance of this study to the people and community

- Samoans always refer to themselves and are described as a religious faith-bound community. The place of spirituality and individual faith and worship within a diaspora community over three generations.
- Provide data to help understand the fast-changing context of New Zealand worshipping expectations and the patterns and trends of its members.
- Also questions such as, what are some of the consequences for Samoan people in N.Z. – given that spirituality has been so central to the *fa'asamoa* and the heart of family life? Does this also represent a loss of the *fa'asamoa*?
- What will happen to the generations of Samoans who no longer find the Samoan church relevant for them today?

It will contribute to the Samoan/Pacific church in New Zealand and N.Z. research. It will also contribute to the wider pool of knowledge about migrant behaviours and in addition the place of the church within these migrant communities globally

Regarding its contribution to global research, it is important that this research will also be a resource not only for the churches but also for diaspora churches globally.

Working definitions

The following provides working definitions of the varying categories and descriptions used in this research project.

Church

In this research church is defined as the body of Christ, the ecclesia, the gathering of people. The church in this context is both a building but also the main gathering place

where people meet to fellowship through worship together, community events and celebrations.

Within the *fa'asamoa*, the church is equivalent to a marae in Maori settings. It is the centre of community life and the place where every occasion is celebrated throughout one's life. It is also the institution where the religious traditions of history are practised through liturgy and worship and it is the gathering of the people of God for fellowship.

Traditional Church

Within the context of this research “the traditional church” refers to the mainline churches i.e. P.I.C., Congregational, Presbyterian, and those following the “Reformed/Protestant traditions.” Traditional church is also the Pacific Islander's Presbyterian Church (formerly) Congregational, the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa C.C.C.S. also known as E.F.K.S. and its American Samoan equivalent E.F.K.A.S., the Congregational Union of New Zealand C.U.N.Z. P.I.C.C./P.I.P.C. Newton.

First-Wave Church

This is the Pan-Pacific Pacific Islander's Presbyterian Church (formerly Congregational) within the context of this research. The Presbyterian multi-cultural church can also be regarded as a first-wave church.

First-Wave Multi-cultural Church

This church is both Pacific and *palagi* in the context of this research. The Pacific Islander's Presbyterian Church P.I.P.C. includes multicultural Pan-Pacific churches which also have ethnic-specific language services, as opposed to the multicultural Presbyterian Churches which have predominant *palagi* members within them and are only conducted in the English language.

Second-Wave Churches

Refers to ethnic-specific churches and to the breakaway churches which emerged as the result of a schism e.g. Congregational Christian Church of Samoa.

Third-Wave Churches

In this context refers to Contemporary, Pentecostal and emerging churches.

Contemporary and Emerging Churches

These terms refer to the newer churches outside the mainline denominational churches that tend to be more Pentecostal in style and tradition. Some of these churches emerged out of the traditional church and others from the Assemblies of God (A.O.G.) churches. In this study the contemporary church and emerging churches refer to Life, Equippers and Christian Life Centre (C.L.C.) and Community Christian Fellowship (C.C.F.) to name a few. C.C.F. would define itself as a contemporary church rather than being in the Pentecostal tradition.

Pentecostal

The term “Pentecostalism” itself is one with shortcomings, but despite its inadequacy refers simply to churches with a “family resemblance” that emphasize the working of the Holy Spirit, especially in the use of such “gifts of the Spirit” as healings, prophecies and speaking in tongues (L. Sanneh & M.J. McClymond, 2016, p.653).

Evangelical

Bebbington notes four specific hallmarks of evangelical religion: conversionism, the belief that lives need to be changed; activism, the expression of the gospel in effort; Biblicism, a particular regard for the Bible; and “crucicentrism,” a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross (Bebbington D, 1993, p.3). The sole purpose of Christianity is to witness to humanity to save souls.

Diaspora

According to Wan, the term “Diaspora Missiology” is descriptive of people’s residence being different from that of their “place of origin” without prejudice (Wan, 2007 p.1). Safran’s definition of diaspora is more descriptive of the context of this research; “expatriate minority communities” (1) that are dispersed from an original ‘centre’ to at least two ‘peripheral’ places; (2) that maintain a “memory, vision, or myth about their original ‘homeland’”; (3) that “believe they are not – and perhaps cannot be fully accepted by their host country”; (4) that see the ancestral home as a place of eventual

return when the time is right; (5) that are committed to the maintenance or restoration of this homeland; and (6) whose consciousness and solidarity as a group are “importantly defined” by this continuing relationship with the homeland” (Safran, 1991, p.83).

Culture

For this study I use the UNESCO’s definition of culture, as it provides a succinct description.

Culture comprises the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or a social group. It includes not only the arts and letters but also modes of life, fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs (Voi, 2000, p.217).

Culture is not static; it is forever evolving and changing. It comprises behaviours, traditions, language, spirituality to name a few. It is unique to a particular group of people. When Samoans say that they choose spirituality over culture in a church it needs to be noted that even the spirituality of that church is a culture in its own right because it is owned by a group of people who have similar behaviours, beliefs and values. In the context of this research culture refers to the *fa’asamoa* and everything associated with it.

Thesis organisation

This thesis is organised into ten chapters.

CHAPTER 1 – Background and context of the study

This chapter has outlined the focus of the research, aims and questions and processes. The research aims and key questions are outlined along with key working definitions and set the personal stance of the researcher as cultural ‘insider’.

CHAPTER 2 – Literature review

This chapter gives an overview and description of Samoan religious belief and worldview, the *fa’asamoa* and spirituality. It explores global research on diaspora, religious institutions and its impact on immigrant communities and the Samoan church in the diaspora. It also looks at New Zealand research on Samoans and the church and church practices impacting identity, language, tithing, concluding with identity in New Zealand.

CHAPTER 3 and 4

These two chapters set the study context in the homeland of Samoa and in New Zealand.

CHAPTER 3 - History of Mission in Samoa

Chapter 3 provides the context in which the church emerged within Samoa and its consequential impact and influence on the Samoan church in New Zealand and globally. It highlights the arrival of the Christian faith to the shores of Samoa with particular emphasis on the London Missionary Society's influence. It explores the structure of the church, the role of the pastor and the structure of the congregation as well as authority in Samoan ministry. You can't understand anything to do with the Samoan church in N.Z. unless you understand its origins.

CHAPTER 4 – The development of the Pacific Islander's Church in New Zealand

In this chapter I present the development of the church in Aotearoa, New Zealand from the Pacific Islander's churches' perspective highlighting the P.I.C. as the first-wave church for Samoan migrants to N.Z. This chapter describes and reviews the movement within the P.I.C.C. in New Zealand including the merger with the P.C.N.Z. in 1969 and other movements. It describes the first break-away schism and subsequent schisms over its 50-year history. More specifically the role of the Samoan church in maintaining cultural security or the relationship between the church and inter-generational challenges.

CHAPTER 5 - Research Design & Methodology and methods of data collection

This chapter presents the theoretical and methodological framework of this study which is underpinned by a Samoan perspective and a Western-based one. First, the philosophical worldview assumptions are discussed within which the *Fono-fale* holistic model of health is explored. This is the framework under which this study was based and looks at collective versus individual paradigms around faith and people. The qualitative methods are presented including a (a) Western-based existential phenomenological approach, organizational effectiveness framework and (b) Pacific/Samoan-based method of *talanoa* methodology. It explores the data analysis process and the ethical considerations for the research and reflections on the research process are discussed.

CHAPTER 6 – Patterns of Movement

This chapter explores research question 1) Are Samoans leaving or staying at a particular church and what are the emerging trends and patterns associated with it? Who is leaving and why are they leaving, what are the factors? It provides a breakdown of the three generations and families involved. It also provides a short critique of the churches they moved to.

CHAPTER 7 – Why did people leave their churches?

This chapter responds to the second research question Part 1 “What are the dynamics underpinning these trends and patterns? It also examines the emerging themes of power and abuse, accountability, competition, gospel and culture and new expressions/conceptualisation of spirituality. Part 2 explores why people stayed at the same church and part 3 looked at factors that were outside of their control and wanting more than what was available.

CHAPTER 8 – Does any movement between churches signal a strengthening or an erosion or weakening of the *fa’asamoa*?

For this chapter I explore Samoan language competency level and identity and the participant’s views on what makes one Samoan and how does one measure their identity. It looks at the intergenerational process of Samoan language and culture and the impact it has on its proceeding generations. How different is the first generation’s appreciation of the *fa’asamoa* language and culture and the effect this has on generation two and so forth?

CHAPTER 9 – Discussion and recommendations

This chapter summarises the findings that emerged from the research and its contribution to the knowledge base of three-generational Samoan families, the place of the church in their lives, and the impact that Samoan culture and language play in their lives. It explores some recommendations for the Samoan traditional church as well as Presbyterian churches and what might need to happen to retain future generations within the church.

CHAPTER 10 - Conclusions

This chapter looks at the conclusions to this research study. The impact of the domino effect on language competencies amongst the second and third generation N.Z.B.S. It also explores the future of the church and what percentage worships where and gives a

summary review of this study as well as looking at a new way forward and new ground. It concludes with the limitations of this study.

Chapter 2 Literature review

This chapter presents the literature reviewed in order to explore the research questions:

1. Are Samoans leaving the church and if so what are the emerging trends and patterns associated with this?
2. What are the dynamics underpinning these trends and patterns?
3. Do any movements between churches signal a strengthening or weakening of the *fa'asamoa*?

Much of the early written research on spirituality and family in Samoa is from oral accounts passed down by generations and recorded by Samoans. However, in the last 20 years there have been significant discussion in this field by Samoan and other Pacific researchers. Global research on the church-going journeys of other migrant groups such as the Koreans sets a valuable comparative baseline. Identifying or defining a correlation between 'spirituality' and 'church-going' is an added complexity to this study.

This literature review will be divided into four parts:

1. Spirituality
2. Global research on migrant communities and
3. The Samoan church in the diaspora
4. Samoan Identity

1. Spirituality

Bluck defines spirituality as, the art and craft of nurturing this soul that we all have and must care for in order to be whole people. Spirituality is in no way the preserve of the religious or the good and the pious. It's a condition of being fully human that is pursued in the secular world, as well as the sacred. To quote Father Neil Darragh 'spirituality is the whole combination of beliefs and practices which animate and integrate people's lives' (Bluck, 1998, p.12).

Classical definitions of spirituality contain the theme of integration and wholeness: 'the lived connection of body, mind and spirit', 'the harmony of all that is within and without', 'the gathered response of a whole life to the inner call of God', 'the capacity to go out and beyond oneself (Bluck, 1998, p.12). Spirituality encompasses all things, it is in everything, an all-encompassing, growing, perfect God, everywhere present

containing everywhere within himself (godself sic); and the reality of oneself and others, freely deciding within God, responding to God's overtures in the process of co-creation" (Alan Anderson, February 1997, website.com/Alan/pan.htm). This understanding of spirituality is not restricted to worship in the church building.

For many, contemporary spirituality has been confined to the smallness of individual Christian salvific experience, negating the traditions and rituals of both religious and secular culture and history that have moulded and shaped the faith stories of their ancestors and parents.

Samoan spirituality

Defining spirituality is not an easy task in universal terms and within the *fa'asamoa* it is even more difficult. In Samoan mythology the many islands that make up the Samoas have been described as the stepping-stones of the giants. Myths and Legends (*Tala o le Vavau*) and *talafaasolopito* (also translated as history, in English) provide us with stories of some of Samoa's past. The gods and the spirits ruled the islands and the people looked upon their world as both natural and supernatural.

Samoans believe their culture had a divine origin. This concept is consistent with their belief in God as their Creator. According to the people, their culture is not exclusively a human achievement because its origins were from god *Tagaloa*; it was he who gave them direction for organising and living life...through its structures and rituals its preserves and perpetuates the core values of society (Kamu, 1996, p.36-37).

Aiono describes Samoan spirituality as;

What maintains unity between man and God, the unity between the material and spiritual; the unity between physical and psychic; the unity between the social-political and economic; the unity between the practical and aesthetic; the unity between the female and the male; is of absolute importance (Aiono, 1996, p.31).

Aiono continues to say that;

the word for culture in Samoan defines this unity. *Aganu'u* speaks of nature and nurture in the same breath; for *aga* is the essence of the nature of things while *nu'u* represents the sum total of man's learned experience (Aiono, 1996, p.31).

According to Niuatoa, "*fa'asamoa* (cultural values) and spirituality (religious values) are inseparable. Spirituality within the *fa'asamoa* has always had a central place.

Samoan spirituality is non-existent without the *fa'asamoa*" (Niuatoa, 2007). One cannot

talk of one without the other. *Fa'asamoa* encompasses the way of life of the Samoan people, their behaviour, the way of living, being and becoming. It acknowledges the sacredness of the morning and the evening and acknowledges creation and its creator and gives thanks for everything in time and space. Spirituality perhaps can be described as *fa'a-le-agaga* things of the spirit. In Samoan theology everyone and most things have a spirit. When we think about things of the spirit Samoans talk about “*mea fa'a-le-agaga*, which usually refers to the matters pertaining to the Christian faith and church.

Samoan spirituality could be described as pantheism “all is in God”. Tamasese, Waldegrave and Peteru in their publication “*Ole Taaeo Afua*”, describe Samoan peoples as: “a relational self, having meaning only in relationship to others.” It is “a total being comprising spiritual, mental and physical elements which cannot be separated’ deriving its ‘sense of wholeness, sacredness and uniqueness from its place of belonging in family and village, genealogy, language, land environment and culture” (Tamasese, Peteru, Waldegrave & Bush, 2005).

As stated by Saada, Samoans define ‘religious’ as a state of being spiritually, mentally, and physically involved in one’s church. Every part of life is connected to religion (Saada, 2008, p.7).

The *fa'asamoa* and spirituality

Anecdotal accounts suggest that in the Samoan worldview the “personal” ownership of religion did not exist, as belief and faith was a collective process and not something that an individual could own or possess for themselves. The personalisation of the faith is something that emerged during the revival period in the late 1830’s.

The *fa'amatai* (chiefly realm) is God-given and sanctioned. Samoa’s main organisational unit is the extended family – all linked to the four main titles the *tafaifa*.

The chiefly links to the creator deity meant chiefly power incorporated human and supernatural sanctions and controls. As a result every aspect of daily life featured this opposing of sacred and secular elements and their complementarity. All life revolved around the sacred and the secular...for example, the chiefs were sacred, as against the ‘untitled’ who must serve the chiefs, and sisters were sacred and must be protected by their brothers. Similarly, the presence of both sacred and secular elements was essential for the success of every occasion (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1998).

The relationship between spirituality and culture

Samoa derives its name from two words, “*Sa*” meaning sacred and “*moa*” meaning centre —hence, the sacred centre. Samoa had its own cosmology of gods and etiology of creation. All life was viewed as sacred; therefore, all was worthy of being worshipped. In this regard, Samoa’s concept of life as god-given revolved around keeping the balance with the forces of nature so that life and creation would continue to nurture and sustain the existence of humanity, ecology, and the environment in a healthy equilibrium. Samoans lived in communion with nature and the environment as manifestations of the works and providence of the gods of creation. As a result, harmony existed among the realms of spirituality, ecology, and society. When this balance was broken, offerings were made to the gods and spirits to appease them in order to recreate a harmonious balance. This was known as “*ta’i le sua*,” (ceremonial offering) which continues to be practised today within both cultural and Christian context (Culbertson, P. ed, 1997, Taulealeausumai, p.216).

For Samoans there is a separation between sacred and secular or *tapu* and *noa*. Things of the world (*mea fa’alelalolagi*) were to be kept separate from things of the spirit (*mea fa’aleagaga*) and yet everything is sacred and spiritual while at the same time worldly and secular. The church and state in Samoa separated things cultural from things spiritual to the extent that a chief (*matai*) had to renounce his chiefly title on becoming a minister because you could not mix the two together. Even in dance, cultural dance was different to spiritual dance which is referred to within the church as “*fa’aevagelia*” dance to evangelise.

All things spiritual and cultural are constantly changing and being challenged; nothing is static. According to Aiono, “There is a tendency to see the culture or traditions of a people as an obstacle in the path of development, a constraint that slows down progress – and there are Samoans who have come to accept this view of development... every modern development programme introduced into Samoa is a confrontation that may result in acculturation or cultural conflict” (Aiono 1996).

2. Global research on patterns of church-going by migrant communities

A major point overarching this discussion is that migrant communities, such as the Samoans in New Zealand, face many cultural social economic and spiritual challenges in new lands. Papastergiadis (2005) writes:

Living in a foreign place disrupts the foundations of cultural authority, it also provokes a rethinking as to the inherent superiority of different value systems, and of potential forms for their co-existence. Migration irretrievably alters the idea of home and nation (Papastergiadis, 2005, p.8).

The migration experience challenges traditional value systems and cultural authority – What used to be an assumed set of expectations and cultural authority is no longer the norm in the new context. The literature emphasises quite compellingly that churches and church communities are a haven for immigrants.

Hendrikse states that “migration is a crucial process in determining cultural change. As people move to another region or country, they may seek to retain many aspects of their original culture as a way of maintaining their sense of identity in a new world. Yet over time migrant groups may also adopt and adapt elements of new cultures within their own culture. In some cases, they may even become partially or fully assimilated within the dominant culture in which they now live (Hendrikse, 1995, p.1).

Historically religion has been believed to be one factor that impedes immigrant assimilation (Allen, 2010, p.1049). Beattie writes that denominations have a big role in influencing and dictating the direction that the churches will take in cultural preservation (Beattie, 1998, p.131).

Patterns of worship

The literature proposes three patterns of worship by migrant groups. Most often also these reflect an inter-generational pattern e.g. first generation stay with first-wave church or move on to wave-two ethnic-specific churches, second generation move on to wave-three contemporary or Pentecostal churches and third generation follow their parents until they become independent and then move of their own volition.

- **First arrival**

The multicultural church has become a place where people of all nationalities may mix. For those immigrants who choose to become part of this type of community, they put aside their own traditions and cultures in order to become part of the bigger picture particularly within evangelical circles.

“The churches are more than meeting points for a religious group. “It is a place of reference for people with different cultures and nationalities who in other contexts would not mix”. This cultural blend also leads to the rearrangement of values, morals and the way they interpret their conditions. In other words, migrant

worshippers “tend to set aside traditional particularities from their cultures of origin while reinterpreting them as part of one big Christian culture; they negotiate their own social cohesion in the place of evangelical worship” (University of Basque Country, 2017).

- **Ethnic-specific**

Second, the evolution over time of ethnic-specific churches are seen as the place to retain ethnic languages and culture, that it is in this ethnic-specific church context that the new generations will learn their ethnic language and culture. It is also seen as the place to gain the knowledge of the new homeland and all the necessary information to do with employment, accommodation and matters pertaining to everyday life.

Houses of worship are powerful places to gain social capital in any society, but that power is two-fold for immigrant communities, says Pyong Gap Min, a professor at Queens College and CUNY’s Graduate School who has studied the role of Korean churches and Hindu temples in assimilation. Min believes that the most powerful function an immigrant church serves is ethnic retention – a place for the next generation to learn cultural touchstones and mother tongues (Mathew, T. 2017).

Ethnic congregations have been described as “either as a place to belong, something to replace their family, or a safe space where they were understood and welcomed” (Handy & Greenspan, 2009, p.956-982). They fulfil a dual purpose for many new immigrants, they provide a familiar cultural and spiritual environment in a new and strange setting and they provide a means for immigrants to build their knowledge and understanding of their new country through engagement in volunteer programs (Handy & Greenspan, 2009, p.956-982).

Allen proposes that “the maintenance of cultural identity is seen by most ethnic-specific churches as its main priority and so the idea of introducing the predominant cultures language e.g. English, is not an option.

Min & Kim (2005) highlights the social roles of the ethnic church as 1) source of fellowship, comfort and a sense of belonging; 2) a social service provider; 3) an institution to maintain ethnic identity and subculture; 4) an institution to designate social status (Min. & Kim, 2005). According to Park, the ethnic Religious Institution contributes to the maintenance of cultural identity (Park, 2011).

Immigrant Religious institutions are trying to reconcile the tension between the “church for all nations” and the present reality of the “church for predominantly Koreans”. Some believe that mono-ethnic Religious Institutions cripple the

evangelism of the gospel and violate the Christian worldview (Kim, S., 2010, p.103, 109, 114).

The ethnic-specific church is often the place where one's native mother tongue is learnt and taught through practice and communication and many choose to attend these churches for this very reason. It is also the place where people are able to engage with one another in social interaction with people of their own culture and race.

Immigrants give two main reasons for attending ethnic churches: 1) to learn/practice their native language; 2) to engage in social activities with other ethnic groups (Park, 2011, p.201).

- **Third-wave church: contemporary and Pentecostal**

According to Prill the New Testament churches were multi-ethnic communities and the leadership of these churches reflected not only the diverse local church membership, but also the diversity of the whole body of Christ. Leadership was based on the gifting of the Holy Spirit, not the politics of ethnicity. Mono-ethnic leadership should be avoided (Prill, 2009).

The model of the early churches in biblical times was the type of church that is often encouraged in multicultural religious institutions. For these churches unity in diversity should be seen as the norm for society and ethnic-specific churches were not encouraged as this separated the cultures from having to live and work together as the New Testament church modelled.

Van Dijk and Botros suggests that religious identity takes priority over ethnic identity.

Religious identity is more important than ethnic identity for Calvinists – based on ideological and religious principles (Van Dijk & Botros, 2009, pp.191-192).

This is of particular significance when acknowledging the place of evangelical Churches for Samoans in diaspora. As Menjivar states;

Evangelical churches promote individual spiritual discovery leading to Christian growth (Menjivar, 2003).

Given that there is no such thing as individualism within the Samoan culture, the evangelical church challenges the very core of the *fa'asamoa*. According to Menjivar, spiritual growth is for the individual, when an individual becomes a Christian there is spiritual growth. There is no room for corporate or communal religion, where inherited

faith is seen as part of spiritual growth, the ability to count heads in terms of souls saved is the priority for the evangelical churches who prioritise individual spirituality.

- **A fourth-wave: leaving the church all together**

Leaving the church altogether is an option for those who have experienced church whether that be ethnic-specific or multi-cultural first, second or third wave. It is easy for one to become disillusioned with the church when they find that they are in conflict with its teachings or beliefs.

It has been proposed that with the process of movement (rather than assimilation) from multi to ethnic-specific and Pentecostal churches there is a loss of cultural identity, including language and a separation from the traditions and culture of the homeland.

As immigrants begin to flourish, there is a process of psychological and physical separation from Religious Institutions and immigrant identity (Borg, 2006, p.193).

Immigrants are willing to give up language, nationality, and ways of life to assimilate into society, but often hold onto their “old religion” – using it as an identity marker for them and their children. Religion is an immigrant’s “comfort zone” (Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000a).

The church however, remains that place where immigrants will continue to flock to as religion itself is that glue that keeps them grounded in matters pertaining to the faith.

The Korean church

Kim found that there were many migrant churches now employing an innovative approach to creating an ethnic church that is a new third way, opposing full assimilation into Evangelical mainstream churches and also opposing the staunch distinctiveness of many first-generation ethnic churches (Kim, S., 2010).

The development of 2nd generation Korean-American Religious Institutions is a rapidly growing phenomenon in the USA. No other immigrant group has witnessed the second-generation reinventing and replanting ethnic churches at the same level as the Korean immigrants (Kim, S. 2010, p.98, 99).

For Korean migrants coming to New Zealand there is a desire for them to want to be ‘Kiwi Korean’ but because many of them are unable to get employment they find solace within the Korean church. They find their place of belonging amongst their own people.

A number of studies show that Korean migrants to New Zealand express a strong desire to participate in local community life and to 'join in with the things Kiwis do' (Lidgard, 1996: SROW, 1979: 5).

Many Korean migrants found this difficult to achieve. However, one kind of organisation that Koreans do belong to in large numbers is churches. In 2001, more than half of all Korean immigrants in New Zealand claimed to be regular churchgoers, while an even larger percentage identified themselves as Christian (Morris, Vokes & Chang, 2006 p.15-16).

...because of a lack of Korean desire to mingle: 'many Korean immigrants are indifferent to the New Zealand society and fail to build their identity as immigrants. As a consequence, the behaviours and attitudes of life that these immigrants show do not turn out to be so much different of people in Korea (Koo 2004:83) (Morris, Vokes & Chang, 2006, p.14).

The church is 'the centre of the world' for new migrants. Most Korean migrants chose to join Korean churches, because the congregations were all Korean, the Ministers were Korean, and services were conducted in the Korean language. They joined Korean churches because this was where they felt most at home. For many, the church provided a haven of Koreanness in an unfamiliar society. Korean churches provide a range of benefits beyond the spiritual, and many of the Koreans we interviewed acknowledged this. Churches provide important social networks. One man said that some migrants do not necessarily base their choice of church on questions of spirituality or theology, so much as on the feeling of community they get from being a member of a certain church (Morris, Vokes & Chang, 2006, p.23).

As reported by Koreans, they attend a church not so much for the spirituality or theology but for the feeling of community they receive from being a member of these churches.

Morris et. al (2006) observed that a small number of Koreans they had interviewed had deliberately chosen not to attend a Korean church, but to instead attend a 'Kiwi' church. They did this because they wanted to participate in and become integrated into New Zealand society, and saw joining a Kiwi church as one way of meeting Kiwis. Joining a Korean church, by contrast, would tie them into the Korean community (Morris, Vokes & Chang, p.24).

According to Morris et al. (2006) one key reason that some Koreans prefer to attend a Kiwi church is a perception that Korean churches reproduce the very social hierarchies and pressures of the Korea they are trying to leave behind... Kiwi churches were

reported as being less hierarchical, as being less demanding in terms of time and money, and as requiring less conformity (Morris, Vokes & Chang, 2006, p.24).

Within the Korean church in the Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A. the challenge for them is dealing with the “silent exodus” of second-generation from the church.

Twenty years ago Korean diasporic communities within the Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A. began to worry about a "silent exodus" of the second-generation, who seemed to be disappearing out the back door of their parents' churches on their way to college. Many worried that their children were abandoning the faith. (Warner, 2007, p.1)

The 1.5 and 2nd-generation Korean American adults who attended a Protestant church during their childhood were found to participate in a Protestant congregation regularly. Korean English-language congregations for this generation have almost entirely eliminated Korean cultural components from worship services and other socio-cultural activities. Min and Kim's research conclude that this is partly because second-generation Korean American Protestants have embraced the white American evangelical subculture (Min & Kim, 2005, p.1).

For Korean migrants in the United States of America, Karen J. Chai comments:

Of Korean diaspora churches, “to survive, they would need to de-ethnicise from a monolingual church and transform it into a multi-ethnic church” (Chai, K. 1998). ...this would, to some extent, resolve the ‘silent exodus’ of a whole generation of Korean Americans from church because of advocacy of values required to accommodate the social and religious needs of the second-generation within the Korean Protestant Church (Chai, K. 1998, p.324).

We were also told that there was competition amongst the Korean churches and each wanted to become bigger, so pastors would give sermons telling the congregation that if they gave the church ten percent of their income God would bless them. If you did not, He would not. How much money families donated was a matter of public knowledge, and even families on tight budgets would comply because they were made to feel guilty if they did not (Morris, Vokes & Chang 2006, p.25).

New Zealand research

- **Kowis - Korean Kiwis**

Hyeon Kim's New Zealand study covered 18 Korean Kiwis. She explored with her participants what it meant to transition from Korea to New Zealand and discussed the struggles of growing up in a culture that dealt with issues of parenting quite differently to Korean culture. The dynamics associated with Kowis and New Zealand-born Samoan second-generation were similar, particularly around identity and being a Kiwi. However, the similarities stopped there, given the N.Z. birth of the 2nd and 3rd-

generation Samoan participants. The struggles of identity were similar. The majority of her participants conducted their interviews in the Korean language, whereas for this study the majority of participants conducted their interviews in the English language. Thus, language for Kowis was not so much an issue as most of her participants had been born in Korea and came to New Zealand as young children having developed a proficiency in their own mother tongue.

In her study of Kowis (Korean Kiwis) Kim investigated how some youth turned to the Korean church as an escape to find support and create some breathing space when feeling desperate about trying to deal with strict parents at home. Suzan, one of Kim's Korean Kiwis, found cultural clashes with her parents were excruciating for her. As she became a teenager with a developing ego and her own worldviews, she was less and less able to accept the way her parents were. She sought support that would help her to make sense of what was going on, and found her place in a Korean church.

During my adolescence I clashed with my parents a lot because I became my own person with a new-found ego and began to see who they were. That was the time when I turned to the church. Someone who I used to talk to [about my issues] encouraged me to explore some resolution in a spiritual dimension. So I suddenly started attending early morning services (Suzan) (Kim, 2014, p.117).

The Korean church became a place for Jane to socialise with her peers away from her parents' watchful eyes. Her parents would allow her to go out only if it was to a church-related activity.

That [issues with parents] is why I became a Christian. That is why I got closer to God. I did not have any siblings and it was impossible to have any understanding from my parents. There were limits to what I could share with my friends. I could not share everything with them. Not all one hundred percent. I became a strong believer and sought after God. It was because of my frustration (Jane) (Kim, 2014, p.117).

Participants often dealt with things on their own for a number of reasons: cultural clashes, lack of communication skills, difference in personalities, and other family related issues. Sometimes, they chose friends and siblings to replace confiding in their parents. When they entered adolescence, they tended to keep things to themselves even more (Kim, 2014, p.117).

The parallels of the Korean diaspora church with the Samoan diaspora church in New Zealand both share similarities of structural dynamics and personal experience. Although Koreans wish to be Kiwi they also prefer to stick to themselves. Koreans seek

solace in their own Korean church and Samoans also seek solace in their own Samoan church but second generations of both cultures are seeking some independence from the ethnic-specific first-generation church and the cultural expectations of belonging to a ethnic-specific church community.

The Community Christian Fellowship church C.C.F. in Auckland would well be defined as a second-generation church. The second-generation children have left the traditional ethnic-specific first-generation church to form their own independent church and the result is a successful English-speaking church that is run in a contemporary fashion the way that they choose to.

- **Other Global**

According to Jeung, of Asian American congregations,

Asian American congregations have an ambiguous, if not downright ambivalent, relationship with their ancestral culture...The Asian American culture that is developing in these congregations is, then, only peripherally related to geographical Asia (Jeung, 2005, p.viii).

Rijk Van Dijk's research on gerontocracy within Malawian society revealed some interesting insights regarding the impact that 'born-again' Christianity had on Malawian culture.

Dijk observed an elderly statesman pursuing some disrespectful young men in Malawi shouting 'those boys cannot tell a "father" how to behave!' (Dijk, 1999, p.164)

Dijk's study on gerontocracy in Malawian society showed that "Religion in general, and 'born-again' Christianity in particular, played a significant role in changing the meaning of the crucial root paradigm of gerontocracy in Malawian political culture. In examining the changes in the deeper layers of Malawian culture this contribution shows that, contrary to what is usually stated, Christian fundamentalism-cum-Pentecostalism and its apparently conservative ideology can in fact be interpreted as a significant socio-political factor in the process of democratic transition (Dijk, 1999, p.167).

This is a constant theme where born-again identity takes priority over ethnic identity which I have already pointed out in Van Dijk & Botros (2009), and Menjivar (2003).

The Samoan church in the diaspora

Much of the literature refers to the Samoan and Pacific churches in New Zealand as 'the new villages'. Not just spiritual but the communication / mediation link / information

network between community and government policies/ programmes widened their terms of reference.

Saunaoa (2012) suggests,

the formation of diasporic churches reflects the pioneers' bond with their culture and traditions. The traditional social, economic, familial and spiritual milieu of the Samoan village could be nurtured and developed in a new environment which had the church as a central element of social organisation, enabling new migrants to link up with others. Moreover, conflicts over leadership and financial matters, and disagreements over church priorities have resulted in numerous group splits, which have led to the withdrawal of factions of congregations and the formation of new separate entities (Sila, 2012, pg. 205).

Hawaii

Much of the literature relates to Samoan/; wish to maintain culture. Samoans born in Hawai'i and those who moved from Samoa at a very young age lack competency in the Samoan language, especially the Samoan Language of Respect (S.L.R.). Consequently, their Samoan cultural identity is in question. Samoans in Hawai'i no longer reside in traditional villages where their language and culture can be practised daily and therefore the opportunity to learn S.L.R. is severely limited. For Samoans in Hawai'i the Samoan Christian church communities have become the last resort where language competency and cultural identity can be developed (Lesa, 2009, p.24).

Aiga and *Aiga Potopoto* (family and extended family) is central to the *fa'asamoa*.

In the Samoan home one is taught by firm discipline the right way of carrying out duties, even down to doing what one is told without questioning older authority. Young people growing up in Samoa are taught to leave decisions to their elders. For example, they have been voluntarily diffident about accepting the "foreign" idea of equal suffrage when in the realities of their environment they are taught to respect and serve their *matai*. Within a social system that offered a chance of becoming a *matai* and with it some promise of privilege and comfort at middle age, why should they rock the boat (Culbertson, 1997, p.166; Taule'ale'ausumai, 1990).

Tagomoa-Isara provides a succinct description of the *fa'asamoa* as

The social construction of the Samoan culture under the *fa'asamoa* principles means that younger people are expected to respect elders and comply with their demands. The children are not expected to question their parents and are always expected to do what they are told to do. All members of the extended family are responsible to serve the chief of their family with dignity and respect. Religiously, the church minister is regarded as the chief of the church and everyone pays the minister the same respect as they would to their family chief (Tagomoa-Isara, 2010, p.6-7).

Youth

By comparison second-generation New Zealand-born Samoans state, “We are often marginalised by the Church. Not only that, the Samoanisation of the Church in New Zealand is endangering the Church’s spiritual role. Youth are turning away from religion and away from the *fa’asamoa* as well. They are searching for alternative places of worship such as the charismatic church, where they find comfort in being treated as children of God, regardless of race, sex and culture. The spirituality offered by the Pentecostal Church is something many New Zealand-borns do not find in the Samoan Church” (Fuatagaumu, 2003, p.215-216). And so there is the emergence of a third way. This is still yet to manifest itself within the traditional church i.e. a second-generation church within the Presbyterian Church or within the Samoan Congregational Church.

Unlike the nuclear family of Western society, Samoa’s social existence is collective and corporate. Family life extends out beyond the nuclear family, incorporating uncles, aunties, both sets of grandparents and many cousins. Metge (1979) states,

therefore children are thought of as belonging not only to their parents but also to the wider kin group and, in the case of Samoans, to the village community, (Metge, 1979, p.36) inclusive of the church.

Within the Samoan family one is taught by firm discipline what one should and should not do when in the presence of one’s Samoan elders. One has to know the right way of listening and the right way of talking. As one grows up, one often hears elders repeat “*ia e iloa fa’alogo, ia e iloa tautala, ia e iloa Ava (fa’aaloalo)*,” that is, one must know how to listen, how to talk, and how to respect others. Anyone who does not know the correct way of doing these three things is not given a position of responsibility. Yet the difficulty of this protocol is that although one may be taught the *fa’asamoa*, one is not necessarily taught how to communicate this *fa’asamoa* through language (Culbertson, 1997, p.167; Taule’ale’ausumai, 1990).

In the *fa’asamoa*, “actions speak louder than words,” and if one could carry out the necessary tasks the right way, then one’s ability to speak or not speak Samoan would not come into question. However, because the majority of New Zealand-born Samoans grow up not knowing the language fluently, they are not recognized as responsible enough within the cultural set up of the *nu’u* (base community) or even the church to be given positions of responsibility. In other words, if one cannot speak in Samoan, then one’s opinion is often not heard. This is basically because there are two important rules when addressing elders and *matai*: “*ia e tautala ma le poto ua a’oa’oina oe i mea fa’aleatunu’u ma ia e tautala i le gagana fa’aaloalo ma le ava i luma o so’o se tagata*.” In English these two rules mean that if one is to address elders or seniors, then one must do so with the language of respect (Culbertson, 1997, p.167; Taule’ale’ausumai, 1990).

3. New Zealand research

I found a significant number of theses on Pacific churches. Many of these have been written by Samoan-born Samoans. These include a History of the Pacific Island Presbyterian Church (Rev. Feleterika Nokise), Methodist Church of Samoa/New Zealand (Rev. Dr. Saunoa Sila), Rev. Dr. Danny Ioka's doctoral thesis on the establishment of the C.C.C.S. church in New Zealand, and the Seventh Day Adventist Churches (Dr. Laumua Tunufa'i). The three exceptions are New Zealand-born Dr Melani Anae's doctoral research which explored one church, the Pacific Islander's Church in Newton, Auckland (Anae, 1998), and Dr Jemaima Tiatia's master's research which was conducted with predominantly second-generation New Zealand-born Pacific youth (Tiatia, 1998) and Edwin Hendrikse's M.Sc thesis on the role of Samoan churches in contemporary Aotearoa-New Zealand. Lokeni Fuatagaumu wrote an excellent article *Ugly Duckling or Quacking Swan* on the New Zealand-born Samoan journey. Dr. Terry Pouono wrote his doctoral thesis on *"Coconut water in a Coca Cola bottle" In search of an Identity: A New Zealand-born Samoan Christian in a Globalized World* (Pouono, 2016).

There has been less focus on trends amongst the New Zealand-born Samoan generation churchgoers and the reasons why some of them choose to leave the traditional mainline church whilst even fewer stay behind, including why people make the decision to move and fears or threats that come with the decisions to change.

Johnstone (2009) has proposed that in New Zealand "Church attendance for some young people is based on compliance because attendance is required by their parents rather than a free choice" (Johnstone, 2009, p.50).

Saada asked the question, "Why do Samoan people go to church?" Her respondents replied "It's a legalistic thing. They do it because it's a requirement" (Saada, 2008, p.xiv). Findings from Saada's survey in Samoa were that Samoan participants between the ages of 16 and 29 considered themselves 'very religious' compared with older Samoans. Approximately 69% of individuals in this age group – higher than the percent found within the entire survey population – classified themselves as 'very religious' (Saada, 2008, p.xiii).

Ward's mainstream research on the future of Mainline Protestant Churches in New Zealand suggests that "one of the reasons for the continuing impact of this effect

(decline) is that mainline Protestants have a less 'conversionist' understanding of their faith, less of a concern with mission in the sense of evangelism, than have other groups such as the Baptists (Ward, 2006, p.19).

A New Zealand Cook Island study by Joseph explored why Cook Island Youth left the P.C.A.N.Z.

He concluded that there was no single reason for leaving, but a variety of contributing factors around employment, relocation, language and cultural identity issues, tension with the leadership, strained personal relationships and faith needs not being met being some of the reasons (Joseph, 2005, p.87). Cook Islanders identify with and are loyal to an island or village of origin and the younger generation had not always conformed to the expectations of secular or religious institutions (Joseph, 2005, p.xii).

It is difficult to even begin comparing the N.Z.B.C.I. journey with the N.Z.B.S. journey, as the whole infrastructure of culture and identity is quite different. Anae's doctoral research explored one church, Newton Pacific Islander's Church in Newton, Auckland (Anae, 1998). Tiatia's research is predominantly with the second- and third-generation New Zealand-born Pacific youth (Tiatia, 1998).

Tunufa'i's master's thesis on the other hand explained the departure of young people from the Seventh Day Adventist church in a South Auckland church. His conclusions resonated with those of Anae, Tiatia, and Joseph.

Tunufa'i (2005) notes that the majority of studies, if not all of them, that have been conducted in the area of how the lives of N.Z.-born Samoans have been affected by the traditional Samoan churches, subjectively reflect the concern, confusion, hurt and anger of N.Z.B.S. in relationship to various aspects of their existence in N.Z. Perhaps they also face the limitation and the risk of promulgating biased views, especially in the sense their interpretation(s) of certain conceptual labels such as '*palagi*' (European) and '*fiapalagi*' (want to be palagi) (Tunufa'i, 2005, p.13).

Tunufa'i runs the risk of creating a stereotype of the New Zealand-born Samoans as all having similar experiences and beliefs by virtue of their place of birth. He takes little account of the possibility that some of his participants may espouse the traditions and cultures of Samoa as well as possessing a good grasp and understanding and passion for things Samoan regardless of where they were born. The assumption here is that those born in Samoa might possess a better grasp and understanding of culture and the *fa'asamoa* by virtue of the fact that they were born in Samoa.

Most studies highlight the church, particularly the congregational churches, as the main domain of Samoan language use and maintenance in New Zealand. All but one family in this study attended a Samoan-speaking church, so there was an assumption that Samoan would be spoken for the majority of the time. This was not so. A significant study finding was that English was gradually encroaching into this former stronghold of Samoan language and cultural identity. For example, more English was being spoken in church groups such as the *Autalavou* and *A'oga Aso Sā*, and church ministers were also seen to be faced with the challenge of having to use English in their services to keep youth 'in' the church, rather than face the danger of losing them. An implication of this is the possibility that perhaps Samoan churches in New Zealand are changing. Will they continue to be the bastions of Samoan language and culture? Moreover, what about Samoan families who do not attend Samoan-speaking churches? This issue is an intriguing one, which could be usefully explored in further research (Wilson, 2017, p.198).

Saunonoa's research on the Methodist Churches of Samoa states that "divergences between generational groups centre on issues relating to church governance. This issue arises when the first group, which tends to be satisfied with the traditional governance of the church, alienates the second and third groups. The predominance of an older and more hierarchical governance structure, which limits the involvement of youth in the church's decision-making process, has put pressure on the second and third group's commitment to the church. As a result, these two groups recommend and seek a more individual expression of faith in which they experience a greater sense of equality and unity than they would in a more corporate inherited expression of faith" (Sila, 2012, pg.7).

Here again we see this same tension emerging and being played out between religious identity and ethnic identity.

Pouono's doctoral thesis on New Zealand-born Samoan Christians identifies N.Z.B.S. generations being caught in between two socio-cultural worlds, namely, the Samoan and the Western world. He asks the question 'Should the C.C.C.S. in New Zealand adopt a new perspective in order to be an authentic Christian witness in the global world?' He states "since the establishment of the Samoan church in New Zealand over fifty years ago, there is a reluctance by the C.C.C.S. to move beyond the indigenized gospel and spirituality even amidst the technology of the twenty-first century and the knowledge gained by the new generations. The preference is to be locked in the traditions of the past; hence changes for a liberal stance may be perceived as blasphemy (Pouono, 2016, p.84).

Major Issues raised in New Zealand research

Authority and leadership

In my 1990 research I reflected on whether a new Samoan/New Zealand theology was developing in New Zealand. The following observations were made:

The key to determining a Samoan/New Zealand theology is a spirituality that allows each group within the church to see different meaning within the same things. Just as symbols relay different messages to different people, so it is with church and faith. What the New Zealand-born young people may see as traditional and habitual within the church may be for the Samoan people an extrinsic expression of what the Spirit is saying to them within. The concepts of love, faith, and justice all carry the same meaning, but the external expression of these same words may appear differently. In this sense single concepts will take on different meanings, particularly to those who are unfamiliar or frustrated with another person's reality and expression of that reality. For example, different realities may be manifest in the role of the minister. The New Zealand person may see the minister as a powerful authoritarian figure who vetoes everything they do and say. On the other hand, Samoan-born people may see in the minister a person who provides direction and hope (Taule'ale'ausumai, 1990).

According to Ah Siu-Maliko "young people may feel that they cannot voice their concerns in the Church – especially in the mainline churches – they may view religion differently" (Ah Siu-Maliko, 1998).

In traditional churches there are few opportunities or lack of opportunities for N.Z.B.S. to participate in the running of these churches. Anecdotal evidence shows that where opportunity for leadership is offered to this New Zealand-born Samoan (N.Z.B.S.) generation in their churches they have remained, whereas in other churches without this ambitious leadership structure, potential leadership within these churches is lost. Is it possible that many of this generation will leave church altogether or move to churches that do not have generational hierarchical hegemonic accession to leadership or eldership?

Samoan language

According to Tanielu, "since full participation in Samoan social and cultural interactions require competency in the Samoan language, and especially in the *gagana fa'aaloalo*, many children and young adults are unable to function adequately in social and linguistic interactions in their Samoan communities. Many young adults feel alienated from the culture of their parents and other native-speaking adults. This is often manifested through their choice of avoidance or through exclusion by other (older)

members of the Samoan community”. Tanielu’s research places the role of the church as an integral influence in shaping and moulding the identities and competence of New Zealand-born Samoan children’s lives (Tanielu, 2004).

Regarding the use of Samoan language in the churches, according to Duncan,

the Samoan churches in New Zealand use the Samoan language to varying degrees. All services and activities in the C.C.C.S. (E.F.K.S.) and Samoan Methodist churches are conducted in Samoan. In the P.I.P.C. services are conducted in English with provision also being made for Samoan language services. When churches contain a number of different Pacific island peoples, vernacular services are scheduled for different times on Sundays in addition to the combined morning services conducted in English (Duncan, 1994, pg.48). Samoan language services are held in the afternoon within the P.I.P.C. church. The morning service is in the English language. All three generations have access to both English and Samoan language services but many only attend the English services. What implication does this have for future generations of the Samoan diaspora?

Macpherson proposes that,

People’s orientations to Samoan language, beliefs and practices reflected the various choices which people were increasingly making about elements of Samoan culture. It was possible to identify quite easily ‘traditionalists’ who valued all elements, ‘rejectors’ who valued none and ‘integrators’ who valued some but not others. The opportunities available to children to become familiar with Samoan language, world view and lifestyle also differ markedly from one household to another as a consequence of the ways in which parents were organising their lives (Macpherson, 1999, p.56).

A N.Z.B.S. who attended a Samoan-speaking church however, may be a lot more proficient in the Samoan language than a N.Z.B.S. who attended an English-speaking church. According to Anae,

Their preferred language is English although they *tautala* N.Z.-born. They are being brought up through the *papalagi* education system and are aware of two different knowledge systems which sets them apart from their parents and island-born *aiga*. They have access to two different life-styles and oscillate between the two or embrace one while denying the other (Anae, 1998, p.345).

As stated by Niuatoa “*fa’asamoa* (cultural values) and spirituality (religious values) are inseparable. Spirituality within the *fa’asamoa* has always had a central place. Samoan spirituality is non-existent without the *fa’asamoa* (Niuatoa, 2007).

- **Church related practices**

Tithing

Veitch notes when writing about the challenges of financial giving to the church:

After 1969 the Island group of congregations sought to meet their own needs in the Pacific way. There was often tremendous pressure on Islanders to provide for the family and its extensions, the needs of the local parish, and the family and Church back home in the Pacific. This led on occasion to financial problems and cultural misunderstandings with the dominant *Palagi* Church. Because of wide differences in culture and outlook from island to island, congregations did not always work easily together (McElDowney ed, Matheson, P., Breward, I., Barber, L., Davidson, A., & Veitch, J. (1990).pg.160).

According to Duncan

in many Congregational, Presbyterian and Methodist churches the weekly offerings of each family are read out publicly during the Sunday service. Similarly, should anyone give a donation towards any project or the opening of a church, that person's name will be mentioned. The pro-active nature of *fa'asamoa* requires that things are demonstrated openly. A gift which is publicly given is publicly received. *Fa'asamoa* is a publicly active culture and requires an audience at all times. This is why every gift is publicly acknowledged (Duncan, 1994, pg.142).

I believe that the freewill offering which the Presbyterian church tradition encouraged is liberating in that membership contribution is by way of numerated envelope system where the name of the giver is confidential. The Samoan congregation within the Presbyterian churches however, retained the Samoan way of monetary contribution by having one's name and contribution verbally read out during notices each Sunday. This encouraged competition amongst the families to be the highest contributor and also shamed families that did not have much money to give. It also encouraged I.O.U.'s and some families tallied up weekly debt to the churches in their bid to continue contributing even though there was no money.

Fuatagaumu proposes that

church obligations added financial stress to many of our congregation's families, many of whom had serious trouble making ends meet on a daily basis. It was not uncommon for families to compete with each other in making the highest offering in order to gain status in the church. We youth got the feeling that offerings towards the church or money for *fa'alavelave* were not always wisely used (Fuatagaumu L. (2003) ed. Fairbairn-Dunlop, P., Makisi, G. 2003, p.218).

My understanding of tithing was that although the concept of tithing was encouraged it was never specific to suggest ten percent as in the bible as other churches like A.O.G. do. Tithing was incorporated into the freewill aspect of giving under the Presbyterian envelope system but mostly ignored by the wave-two ethnic specific Samoan congregational churches and the Samoan Presbyterian churches.

Church related *tautua* (service)

A conclusion from my 1990 study was that Samoan children believed that what their parents did in witnessing their love of God and for the church, through gifts of money and daily involvement in church activities, was laborious and habitual. Furthermore, that children did not understand that for their parents, such behaviours express their commitment to God. Parents believed that these actions were significant and part of the sacrifice of their lives for God's work. Through their obedience and witness, they receive fulfilment and their families would be sustained according to their faith and by the ever-present love and grace of God (Taule'ale'ausumai, 1990, p.29). I raised the question "How can one develop a form of spirituality that is both Christian and at the same time deeply rooted in one's own culture and tradition?" (Taule'ale'ausumai, 1990, p.29).

4. Samoan identity in New Zealand

According to Macpherson the New Zealand-born Samoan is constantly caught between two cultures and is at times confused as to their identity:

Many had very limited understanding of Samoan custom and practice because the opportunities for exposure to this body of knowledge and practice occurred when the children were at school fulfilling their parents' dreams about educational and material success. Many had only limited fluency in the Samoan language and few opportunities and less encouragement to learn it. In real terms there was a gap between what parents considered the attributes of 'a Samoan' and those possessed by the children. But the children were, at the same time, being identified as Samoans by other 'significant' people such as school-teachers, music teachers, sport coaches and others in many different contexts. Thus, the classic disparity arises between in-group and out-group ethnic designation. The confusion was made worse by parents who, in different contexts encouraged children 'to be proud to be Samoan' and exhorted them to achieve, so as 'to show that Samoans can do anything as well as the *Palagi*'. Thus some of these New Zealand-born children found themselves with some significant identity issues to resolve (Macpherson & Machperson, 2001, pg.34).

In a Samoan cultural context, according to Lesa, is “a fusion of ‘Samoanness’ and ‘Other’ cultures. Thus, the new identity for Samoa involves an awareness of *fa’asamoa* and the ‘*fa’a-other*’ (non-Samoan ways)” (Lesa, 2009. p.7).

Hall notes, “Cultural identity ... is a matter of “becoming” as well as “being”. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something that already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture... far from being grounded in a mere “recovery” of the past which is waiting to be found and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity” (Hall & DuGay, 1996, p.225).

Unasa a Samoan Methodist minister states,

Any talk about Samoan cultural identity as being central to the articulation of meaning and understanding of Samoan people is highly contestable, if not problematic. The notion presupposes a pre-described Samoan cultural identity which is immune to change”. He continues to say, “Samoan cultural identity is no longer one thing or another. It is intrinsically multi-layered as it seeks to establish a ground of affinity.” He calls this the “in-between-ness” of Samoan meaning and identity or the ‘identity of undecidability’ (Unasa, 2008 pg.265-266, ed. Tui Atua).

Unasa quotes from Risati Ete junior:

Life becomes an endeavour to succeed in both social entities, but the undertaking of one often means the deconstruction of the other. It is a constant struggle of communalism versus individualism, unquestioned obedience and respect versus critique, speaking in Samoan versus speaking in English, family and church obligations versus education and work, the *fa’asamoa* (sic) versus the *palagi* way, waiting to be told what do versus acting out of one’s own initiative. It is a world of disorientation and confusion, a world of low self-esteem and frustration. Who are we? Are we New Zealanders or Samoans? Are we Samoan New Zealanders or New Zealand Samoans? We ask this because neither culture seems to embrace us unconditionally. One emphasizes (sic) our European ideologies; the other underlines our Samoan heritage. This is the world of the New Zealand-born Samoan generations, the world of the ugly duckling and the quacking swan (Unasa, 2008, ed. Tui Atua, pp.267-268).

Priority, according to Unasa, must be given to the ambiguities of being wanderers and transitionals rather than to any claim to cultural purity and autonomy (Unasa, 2008 ed. Tui Atua, 2008 p.269). This state of transition and in-between-ness that Unasa and Ete refer to is also something that Turner has phrased as “Liminal.” Victor Turner raises the phenomena of in-between-ness in his book “Betwixt and Between. He speaks of the importance of the liminal state as central to rites of passage and the transitions between various states.

Initiation as an individual is an inner process of growth and individuation. Even as the initiate in a tribal culture must relinquish former structural ties..., so the individual in our own culture must leave old ways behind, divesting oneself of ego's claims to rank and social function in order to attain a high more individuated state of growth (Turner, 1967, p.3).

Subsequently, one of the lasting legacies of the *fa'aniusila* (N.Z. way) was the loss of the Samoan language amongst post migration generations of Samoan children (Tui Atua, 2008, pg.268).

One of McAlpine Petelo's participants in her doctoral research stated

"Because you are born in New Zealand you are not quite up with the play, you're different? She asks the question "who is Samoan?"

According to McAlpine Petelo

"they spoke about the constitutive effects of Samoans labelling Samoans". Many of the participants discussed their conceptualization of terms such as Samoan, Samoan born, New Zealand born, New Zealand raised. She concluded that there is a multiplicity of understandings among the participants about their understandings of the constitutive effects of the various expressions (McAlpine, Petelo, 2003, p.135).

Susan Jones refers to New Zealand-born Samoans as 'hyphenated voices' as a context that is often devalued by both Samoan and New Zealand cultures. She says of a Samoan student choosing the scriptural passage about the Son of Man having no place to lay his head as resonating with his own situation as a N.Z.-born Samoan, not accepted fully in either the Samoan or New Zealand context (Jones, 2005, p.74).

Fuatagaumu states that

many of those born and raised in Samoa have difficulty accepting New Zealand-borns as genuine Samoans: we are sometimes called potatoes – brown on the outside and white inside. Constantly we are reminded of the hardships that "real Samoans" experience. We are condemned for our poor grasp of the *fa'asamoa* and ridiculed for articulating a broken Samoan dialect (Fuatagaumu, ed. Fairbairn-Dunlop, P., Makisi, G, 2003, p.215).

He continues to say that,

many young PIs withdrew from what they saw as a constant 'put down' at church: some sought other places of worship, others didn't bother going to church at all, while others kept going for the sake of their parents...waiting for the time when they could move out of the family home. Worse still, some became involved in drugs and alcohol (Fuatagaumu, ed. Fairbairn, P., Makisi, G. 2003, p.218).

Tagoilelagi-Leota in commenting on her findings of N.Z.B.S. notes that

“New Zealand-born parents in this study did not consider place of birth (e.g the homelands) as a major defining factor in identity. In their view, a sense of *loto nu’u* (belonging to Samoa) and *tautua* (service) were of more importance to identity security. At the same time, these parents voiced their concerns that their children develop confidence in defending their Samoan identity, and furthermore, that their children be able to communicate with their Samoan elders” (Tagoilelagi-Leota, 2017, p.153).

The N.Z.B.S. generation have grown up with all the positive and negative aspects of both New Zealand culture and Samoan culture and it could be said that they have had the choice to choose the best of both worlds in which to live their lives. Today in this 21st Century many of the second generation have chosen the Samoan culture to build their lives and futures around, especially those whose first language is English. Having tried to speak Samoan, but overtime continued to struggle to speak it, some N.Z.B.S. have chosen to acquire the “*tatau*” or “*pe’a*” the Samoan tattoo for men and the “*malu*” for women as their connection with the Samoan way or the *fa’asamoa*. Having a *tatau* says, “even though I might sound like a *palagi* I look like a Samoan.

The *tatau* has become a primary marker of Samoan identity in New Zealand today. The *tatau* is an outward sign of an inward struggle with identity. For those N.Z.B.S. who choose to have the tattoo it gives them a sense of belonging and connection to the *fa’asamoa*. It says, “I may not speak Samoan, but I have the *tatau* which proves my commitment to everything Samoan. I look like a Samoan and I have the tattoo to prove my love for my people and my culture.” Penn carried out a study on N.Z.B.S. university students at Auckland University of Technology. Here is one of her participant’s reflections:

Lisaki is New Zealand-born Samoan but he still chose to carry out this traditional Samoan custom. Lisaki and his three brothers decided to get their *pe’a* done together as a support to each other in this adult phase of life. *Pe’a* or *Tatau* (tattooing) bears a special significance for Samoan people, dating far back into Samoan history. Lisaki's decision to get a traditional Samoan tattoo was also considered and approved by his family (Penn, 2010 p.49).

Professor Cluny Macpherson states that,

As an Aotearoa/New Zealand educated generation, we can and do reflect critically on our own Samoan culture and its importance to us. At the same time, some of us will arrive at quite different assessments of our culture’s utility. As a result, some will decide to cling to it, others to abandon it, and still others to cling to some parts

and abandon others. These decisions and choices are influenced by our own personal situations and our individual analyses of our goals and the relevance of our Samoan culture to these goals (Macpherson, 1990 personal communication).

Tiatia notes,

...onerous responsibility to keep within the boundaries of Pacific Island cultures...at the same time fit into the education system and New Zealand society at large which challenges them to adopt individualism, and to think of and behave contrary to the Island habitus of their home and church environment (Tiatia, 1998, p.22).

A N.Z.B.S. minister who is fluent in the Samoan language writes:

I will always be grateful and appreciative of the great work my parents did for me, in helping me to maintain my ‘mother tongue’ – Samoan. Being born and brought up in New Zealand, it is easy to lose or not have learnt one’s own language, and it is an incredible asset to reach out to one’s own, and to be part of ‘that’ community. (Just a bit of goss – I couldn’t speak a word of English till I was five and a half years old) (Fruean, Taule'ale'ausumai, 2000a, p.22).

Since the introduction of Polyfest to Secondary School competitions in Auckland there has been a real surge in third-generation students becoming proficient in Samoan language and culture. The annual speech making competitions and the dance competitions have encouraged young N.Z.B.S. to celebrate their Samoan identity through language and dance.

Polyfest was first created by teachers and students at Hillary College, Otara, in 1976. It was created to showcase the students’ heritage and enforce pride into the students about their cultural identity and in doing this bringing cultures together in one place (Polyfest).

The second-generation did have some opportunities to learn their language and dance, through the traditional church youth groups of their parents. Secondary schools did not have much cause to teach Pacific culture and dance in the 80’s and 90’s and so the second-generation N.Z.B.S. now, is able to celebrate Samoan language and culture through their secondary school children but only where the child has chosen to participate in these Polyfest competitions. It may be that some choose not to be a part of this whereas others do.

With the introduction of social media and Facebook Samoan comedians like “*Momeachokes*” (Momeachokes) and “*Kala Ula*” (Kalaula, 2017) have emerged showing the N.Z.B.S. in awkward situations with their parents. Some examples are re-

enacted in video on YouTube and Facebook about school parent-teacher interviews, how to make excuses to not attend church, how not to do chores at home etc. These two comedians are N.Z.B.S. who are fluent in the Samoan and English languages and role play all the characters themselves, playing both parent and child in all the different scenarios. It is usually with the parent reprimanding the child in Samoan and the child responding in English. They are for entertainment purposes but at the same time highlight just some of the difficulties of growing up between the Samoan and *palagi* cultures and how it is so easy to get confused between what we know and what we do and how the two often don't agree with each other.

Summary

This chapter gave an overview and description of Samoan religious belief and worldview, the *fa'asamoa* and spirituality. It looked at the Samoan church in the diaspora and at New Zealand research on Samoans and the church and church practices impacting language, tithing and Samoan identity in New Zealand. It explored global research on diaspora challenges and global research on Religious Institutions and its impact on immigrant communities.

Chapter 3 The history of Mission in Samoa

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the context in which the Samoan church emerged in Samoa and the factors that led to the introduction and arrival of Christianity to the shores of Samoa. The spread of Christianity saw Samoan notions of spirituality challenged by the introduction of churches and the written word (Bible) as opposed to oral accounts. With this introduction came the separation of church and society and the development of parallel church and state models within the village and church hierarchies.

This chapter provides a background to the history of mission in Samoa. It is in three parts. Firstly, Samoa's social systems into which the arrival of Christianity impacted Samoa's societal makeup, the arrival of the London Missionary Society in Samoa and the subsequent development of the church since that time. It also describes the structure of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa as it evolved in Samoa and the place of authority in Samoan ministry alongside the role of the pastor within the church and village. This model set the foundation for the development of the first Samoan churches in New Zealand. The chapter concludes with a description of Samoan concepts and Samoan descriptions of the many titles for the pastor; these concepts are handed down through oral tradition. You cannot understand anything to do with the emerging church of the diaspora unless you understand the historical context.

The Samoan church forms of governance and the church context will be described, noting its history and background, and structure of accountability and leadership. The analysis of this material will help define and determine issues of authority, the place of the Samoan language and culture, leadership, economic priorities and challenges, and changes in values and personal expectations. Spirituality in the Samoan context is the essence in everything as explained in chapter one.

Part One: Societal makeup

Samoa's system of government and social accountability is structured according to *matai* (chiefs) in the extended *aiga* (family), *nu'u* (village), *pulega* (district), region, and country. The extended family is made up of one or several *matai* who in turn make up the village *fono* (council). From each village a *matai* is voted into Parliament as the village's representative to the National Council of *Matai*. *Matai* titles are of two kinds:

ali'i and *tulafale*. Prior to the arrival of Christianity the systems of chiefly rule characterised the *fa'amatai* and this was believed to be ordained by God.

Malama Meleisea describes these two titles:

Ali'i titles were those which traced sacred origins through genealogies which began with *Tagaloa-a-lagi* the creator, and are linked to major aristocratic lineages. *Tulafale* [titles] had more utilitarian associations, in accordance with their role of rendering service to and oratory on behalf of the *ali'i* [high chiefs]. The popular late-nineteenth century European view of the political power of *tulafale* groups such as *Pule* (*Savai'i* Island) and *Tumua* (*Upolu* Island), who spoke for the districts of *Savai'i* and *Upolu* respectively, was that these groups had over time usurped the rightful power of chiefs. The rank of each title can be understood only in the context of the *nu'u* (village) and district and its genealogical origins. Some high titles were specifically matrilineal, but in the inheritance of all chiefly titles, the status of both one's parents was crucial. A person with the same status on his father's side, but higher personal rank on his mother's side, would have priority also in claims to a potentially inherited title (Meleisea, 1987b, p.8).

According to Fairbairn-Dunlop the *fa'amatai* was an ideological division of status groups within the village, and the division of village tasks amongst these groups. Its purpose was to serve the *matai* and the *fono o matai* (the council of chiefs).

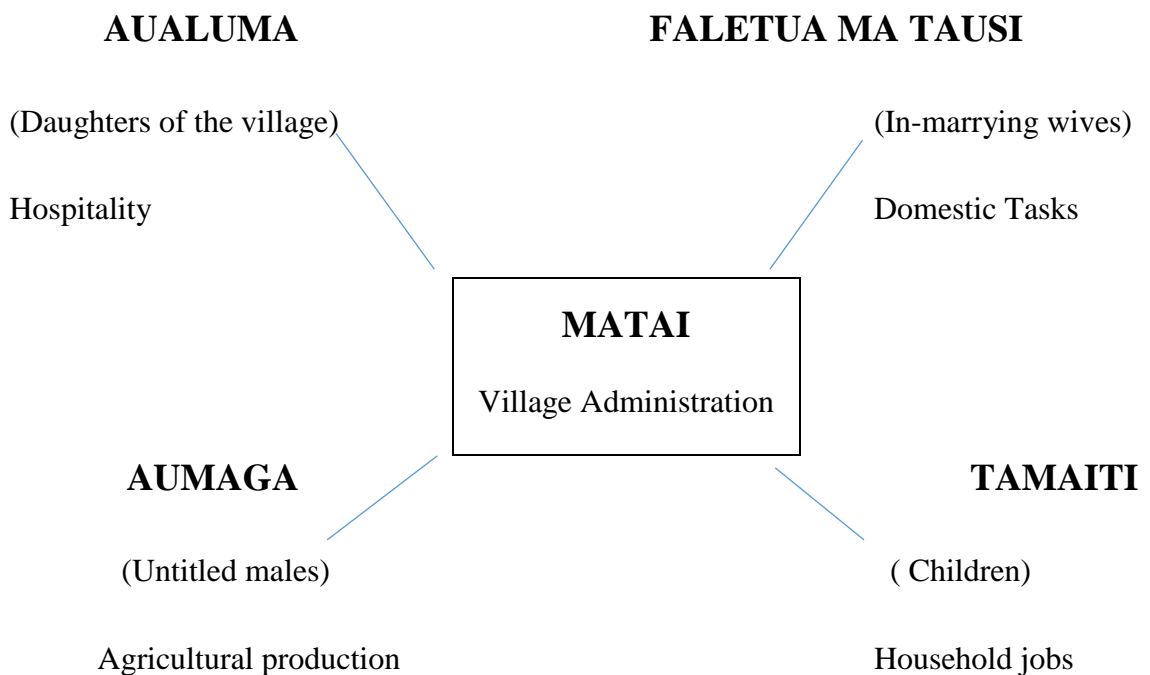


Figure 1. The *fa'amatai*
(Source: (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1991 adapted from Aiono, 1986, pg.104)

The *fa'amatai* represented a conceptual division of the village, in which women were the holders and transmitters of *mana* (sacred power) while men held the secular power, the *pule*. The bond between the two domains was symbolised in the *feagaiga* the sacred covenant between brothers and sisters which I will discuss later in this chapter (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1991, p.72). The division of roles by gender, age and status all serve the family and ensure the family good (*tautua*).

The proverb *O le ala i le Pule, o le tautua*, “the road to power/leadership and authority is through service.” The philosophy behind it is that one cannot be a good leader if he or she has not first felt the pain and sacrifice which good stewardship and service requires.

The primary task of the individual *tautua*, or servant, is to serve the needs of his or her chief. A wise servant will use this opportunity to learn all there is to know of protocol, genealogy, language and culture with all its rituals and traditions. Fulfilling this role to the best of one's ability ensures that when the time comes for naming an heir to the *suafo matai* (family title), the candidate who has performed best is usually deemed the appropriate heir. In other words, one reaps what one sows (Culbertson, 1997, pp.166-167; Taule'ale'ausumai, 1990).

Perhaps the most important element in the Samoan religious background, which contributed to the smooth transition to the new religion, was the centrality of religion in the Samoan world view. The missionaries found a people who believed that the gods were behind everything that occurs in life. The fact that they readily accepted the God of the Missionaries was perhaps an indication of the Samoans wanting to acquire the same material culture that accompanied the missionaries. According to Meleisea, old ideas and old gods were no longer adequate to explain the world or to deal with changes. As a result, Samoans were receptive to the teachings about a new God, when John Williams arrived in 1830 (Meleisea, 1987a pp.45-46)

Without the monarchical type of leadership as in the other Polynesian nations like Hawaii, Tahiti, Tonga, and the Easter Islands, Samoa had no chiefly king or queen after *Salamasina*. Samoa also did not have any carved iconography resembling gods or spirits. It may be possible that with monarchical societies, similar attempts were made to centralise religious activity around a superior god also. Hence huge carvings like those found in the Easter islands were erected; because Samoa was not monarchical there was no need to erect or carve any religious iconography.

The concept of a *tupu* monarch or *ali'i* high chief as paramount over all of Samoa - no one person ever achieved, including *Salamasina*, *Fonoti* or *Malietoa Vainuupo*

(Gatoloai Tili Afamasaga, 1999 personal conversation). There are stories to say that after *Salamasina*, the next *Tafaifa* was *Fonoti*, and the next after that was *Malietoa Vainuupo*, but he took the titles to the grave as he wanted Samoa to convert to Christianity and worship God.

This chapter is divided into two parts, Part One: The coming of the *palagi* religion to Samoa and Part Two: The organisational structure of the churches.

Samoaan concepts

Types of leadership that existed in Samoa in the period before Christianity

- *ali'i* high chief
- *ali'i paia* a sacred chief
- *ao* a chiefly title bestowed as a special honour by the chiefs of a maximal descent group
- representing a district or confederation of districts, or by a group of *tulafale* orator chief such as *Tumua* and *Pule*
- *faletua* wife of an *ali'i*
- *feagaiga* covenant between a brother and sister, or between descendants of a brother and his sister.
- *sa'o tama'ita'i* the daughters or sisters of high-ranking *ali'i* of a village who lead the *aualuma* (young women's group)
- *taupou* a title bestowed by high-ranking *ali'i* upon an adolescent female member of his *aiga*. Also means "a virgin"
- *taulaitu* traditional healer of the supernatural or spiritual realm
- *taulasea* traditional healer of the body
- *tausala* titled woman
- *tausi* wife of a *tulafale*
- *tupu* an *ali'i* who was recognised as being paramount in a particular region or over all the islands of Samoa. Sometimes translated (incorrectly) in English as a "king" (or queen)

A host of highly organised rules and regulations were to be observed to support the *fa'amatai* and each village had their own protocols, e.g. If a person crosses the *malae* holding a leafy branch or coconut leaf over his head, and fails to take it down and carry

it in his hand, he shows lack of respect and will receive a beating (Steubel & Bro. Herman, 1976, p.180).

Village customs

Samoa's system of chiefly titles did not remain with one sole holder. Every village and family had its own high chief and supporting orator, and in some cases chiefs were both high chief and orator (*tulafale-alii*). The concept of royal titles, used to describe the leadership roles e.g. "king and queen" are Western concepts used by the writers of history to describe and explain leadership patterns in the Pacific. This did not do justice to the nature of Samoan leadership and accountability. Even though there were leaders within the various villages, these roles were not hierarchical but more horizontal where everyone had a significant role to play towards the smooth running of the village and daily life. The honours and respect given to chiefs of villages were referred to as "*tama ma a latou aiga*" or "*aiga ma a latou tama*". In other words the chiefs of the various villages received the goods and gifts on behalf of the village but the term used to describe them can be literally translated as "the boy/child and his family" or "the family and their child/boy". This description shows humility and a sense of commonality with the people at the grass roots.

Part Two: The coming of the *palagi* religion to Samoa

Samoa's introduction to Christianity was by European sailors shipwrecked on Upolu several years before the first missionaries arrived. In order to ensure their good treatment, the captain advised his crew to 'turn missionary'. He and his crew members built several churches and established numerous congregations until forced to give this up by the arrival of 'real' missionaries in 1830 (Holmes, 1980, pp.471-489).

The London Missionary Society

The London Missionary Society (L.M.S.) was the first official missionary movement to arrive in Samoa, because it came from Tahiti the church that was established became known colloquially as the *lotu Taiti* (the church from Tahiti). The formal name for the established L.M.S. church became the Congregational Church of Samoa C.C.C.S. also known as E.F.K.S. *Ekalesia Fa'apotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa*. The first missionary to arrive in Samoa was John Williams who arrived with a group of Tahitian and Rarotongan teachers to help with the missionisation of Samoa.

The London Missionary Society was established in 1795 against a background of religious awakening which motivated people to share the good news throughout the world. The L.M.S. was established by a group of London congregational ministers who met in a coffee shop in Holborn, London. Among the first missionaries was John Williams who travelled the Pacific with the gospel. The L.M.S. also established the minister's seminary at *Malua* and as well as the *Malua* Printing Press where the Bible was produced.

Even after the various mission and sailor introductions of Christianity to Samoa, attempts were made to Samoanise or indigenise Christianity. Joe Gimlet (gimlet being a type of drill known as *vili* in Samoan) founded the *Siovili* (so named after himself Jo Sio Gimlet *vili*) cult which took advantage of the technological and material gains which seemed to accompany the missionaries with their Christianity. *Siovili* saw the corresponding economic and educational advantages which could result from all this, not only for the community but also for himself. From this he would receive increased power, prestige, and status. Evidence shows that he was attracted by European materialism. His interest was to secure material wealth in order to gain power in society (Kamu, 1996, p.72). *Siovili* saw that everyone would benefit if he could hand back to the Samoan people that part of their own true nature which he believed had been halted by missionary influence. The *Siovili* cult was an attempt to return to an indigenous religion and culture uninfluenced and unhindered by the European imposition (Taule'ale'ausumai, 1990, p.28).

Popular history of the genesis of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa records the arrival of Christianity in Samoa as that of the London Missionary Society in 1830. The less popular history is that the Wesleyan mission known as the *Lotu Tonga* (the church from Tonga) arrived before the London Missionary Society. Wesleyanism began in Samoa in 1828 through a Samoan chief, Saiva'aia, who had come under Wesleyan influence while on a prolonged visit to Tonga (Latukeyu S, 1996, p.20). Late in 1828 or early 1829 he returned to Samoa in a double canoe and soon persuaded two villages in *Savai'i*, *Tafua* and *Salelologa*, to accept Christianity and to worship according to the Wesleyan pattern he had found in Tonga. Some Tongan Wesleyan converts accompanied *Saiva'aia*, and others followed. *Satupa'itea*, a leading village in *Savai'i*, became the headquarters of the Wesleyan movement before any European missionary came to Samoa. The Methodist Church in Samoa today looks back to 1828 as the

beginning of Christianity in their country and attributes its coming to the Tongans, and those of their own people who had first learnt the Gospel in Tonga.

How Samoa came to be a predominantly L.M.S. territory and Fiji and Tonga Wesleyan territories, is the result of a casual agreement that John Williams purports to have taken place on July 8th 1830 at the home of Nathaniel Turner. Only Turner's wife was present during this conversation. According to John Williams, Samoa, or the Navigator Islands as it was known, would be left to the L.M.S. and Fiji having a more difficult language to understand would become the responsibility of the Wesleyans. The interesting thing is that neither Turner nor Williams considered this so-called agreement important enough to document. Neither one of them even noted the conversation in their journals even though mention was made of the dinner and meeting and more trivial matters were recorded. In his personal narrative, Turner, in his own defence, makes the following statement:

This friendly conversation at which no one was present but my wife was to be unaccountably construed by Mr. Williams into a friendly conference held between myself and Mr. Cross on the one part, and Mr. Barff and himself on the other; at which, in accordance with our wish, they consented to occupying the Navigators' Islands, leaving us to bend our attention to Fijis (Wood, 1975, p.257-258).

The debate was eventually settled for the interim period by Williams stating that although he did not arrive in Samoa until July 1830, his intentions to missionise the island went back as far as 1824. He declared in his *Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Seas* that: "My mind had for some time been contemplating the extension of our labours to the Navigators' Islands and the New Hebrides, and as far back as 1824 I wrote to the Directors of the Missionary Society upon the subject" (Williams, 1838, p.121). The fact that Williams' intention predates Nathaniel Turner's similar intention and correspondence to the Wesleyan Mission in London, gave the benefit of doubt to the London Missionary Society. The claim was that Williams had made a comity agreement in Tonga with the Wesleyans. The Wesleyans did not settle in Samoa in 1828.

Eventually, however, the Wesleyans after initially retreating from Samoa during this period of conflict returned in 1835 under the leadership of Peter Turner, his wife, five Tongan teachers and fifteen others who arrived in Samoa on 18 June. Turner was the first resident European missionary to Samoa as the L.M.S. did not send any European missionaries until 1836, after the Tahitian missionaries had laid the ground work. Even

though their initial mission was done with the best of intentions and with due sensitivity towards the Tahitian teachers, they were accused of making sad havoc among the native teachers (Wood, 1975, p.274). Buzacott an L.M.S. missionary claimed that had they not arrived when they did, it is not unlikely that the Navigators would have shared the same fate as the Tongan islands (in 1799).

Surely the Christian public will never sanction such unhandsome grasping of proselytes to a party, for the teachers inform us that the whole of the villages he (Turner) now claims as his people were, previous to his coming, professors of Christianity through their instructions (Wood, 1975, p.274). Eventually they were asked to leave Samoa to the L.M.S. missionaries much against the protestations of Turner and the Samoan Wesleyan chiefs and converts. Finally, on 23 May 1839, Turner and Wilson left on the Camden for Tonga. Wilson wrote in his journal on the parting day that Turner and he “were torn from the people”. On the day they sailed, weeping crowds went into the water so that the boats could hardly push off from the shore, and many swam alongside for some distance, still imploring them not to leave (Wood, 1975, p.281).

Some historians suggest that the initial attraction and appeal of Christianity was materialistic as well as technological. The Samoans’ amazement at the huge ships which the missionaries sailed the ocean on led them to conclude that, if the God of the missionaries could provide them with this sort of technology, then the Samoans too must embrace the missionaries’ God for themselves. Literacy and biblical knowledge and education was also what attracted the Samoans to the Christian religion and by adopting this religion they were able to access the written word and literacy.

Fifteen years after the arrival of the London Missionary Society (L.M.S.) in 1830, the whole of the New Testament had been translated into Samoan and was eagerly read by the converts. Ten years later, there was a Samoan Bible. The L.M.S. set up local printing presses at Malua, which prepared textbooks in the vernacular for use in the church schools, and other denominations, such as hymn books, bibles, tracts, newspapers and study materials were produced by the churches in the following years: the main purpose, conversion and retention (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1985, pg.43).

According to Taase,

Perhaps the most important element in the Samoan Religious background which contributed to the smooth transition to the new religion, was the centrality of religion in the Samoan world view. The missionaries found a people who believed that the gods were behind everything that occurs in life (Taase, 1995, p.68).

Christianity was associated with wealth and power. The Samoan people assumed that by accepting Christianity they would have access to the God who seemed to have blessed Europeans with wealth and power (Kamu, 1996.; Lesa, 2009, p.179).

Du Plessis and Fairbairn-Dunlop, agree that Christian belief systems appeared to merge seamlessly with the customary ways, but in other times and places were diametrically opposed to indigenous practices (Du Plessis & Fairbairn-Dunlop 2009, p.111).

The association with the power amongst the high chiefs was crucial to the early missionary movement's success. Dr. Fanaafi Le Tagaloa Aiono states that when the missionaries arrived in *Sapapalii*, *Malietao* the high chief welcomed the missionaries to the status of the *Tamaitai* (lady) or the *Feagaiga* (sister). Both these female roles were honorific roles within the *fa'asamoa*, the highest status above any *matai* title. "By giving the *faifeau* (minister) this place within the ideal social organisation of the *faa-matai*, that our ancestors also gave the responsibilities of the *Tamaitai/Feagaiga* to the *faifeau* and priests of the new religion/*tapuaiga*. For the *Tamaitai/Feagaiga* is the *Faioa* (maker of wealth) the *taulasea* (healer), the *ositaulaga* (priestess), the *Tausala* (redeemer), the *Pae ma le auli* (peacemaker), the *teinemuli/taupou* (virgin) and *Feagaiga* (covenant). "*E fai oe ma au Faafeagaiga*: you will be like my *feagaiga*; you will be like my sister" (Aiono, 1996).

The missionaries introduced a European model of ministry and church: '*ekalesia*'. The type of ministry that evolved was an elite vocation for scholars, the ultimate goal of academic and educational success. The biblical ministry of the word and sacrament within Samoa became the goal of every family for their sons, and for their daughters by marriage to a minister, and the Samoan church responded by developing training schools to prepare young men for the ministry and young women as pastors' wives.

New leadership roles which emerged within the church almost in parallel with the leadership roles within Samoan society. The concept of *fa'afeagaiga* (covenant maker) was the new title adopted by the Christian church in place of the *feagaiga* (sisterhood) within the *fa'a-Samoa*. *Ao fa'alupega*, originally reserved for the high chiefs, now transferred to clergy along with *toeaina* ruling elder, *Susuga* another title used to address ministers or people in positions of respect, and *Faifeau/auauna* servant, or person with a message. Many of the honourable titles were transferred to the church as a place and position of respect and authority.

According to Bernard Thorogood,

the London Missionary Society was not an imposition from London. At its foundation a fundamental principle had been adopted that it was not to send any

particular form of church government but simply the gospel, and that those in each place who became Christians should choose for themselves whatever form of church government ‘appeared most agreeable to the word of God’. Since the missionaries came mainly from one tradition and had great influence, it was their ecclesiology which was chiefly carried forward. It was a modified independency because the local churches were linked by the authority of the missionaries themselves (Thorogood, 1995, p.11).

In the 1830s the model of church in these burgeoning years, in the words of Bernard Thorogood, can be compared to that of a “backward English village” (Thorogood, 1995, p.12).

The missionaries, although reluctant to admit the pioneering work of the sailors in some areas of Samoa, built upon the foundation already laid. Like the first resident missionaries of 1836, the sailors employed a missionary method which suited the context of the time and the people they ministered to. When the missionaries arrived, the Samoans had been already enlightened about the ‘magic’ of the new *Lotu* faith (Setu, 1988, p.23).

Several other factors helped facilitate and make this introduction of the missionary movement to the Samoa islands successful including the death of high chief *Tamafaiga*. The London Missionary Society arrived at an extremely opportune time, as the most feared chief *Tamafaiga*, recorded in William’s journal as the devil king, had been killed in battle.

Fauea, the Samoan who accompanied John Williams and Charles Barff to Samoa from Tonga, was a major influence on the success of John Williams’ mission. Had it not been for Fauea’s oratorical skills, the London Missionaries may not have received such a friendly welcome from the Samoans. On learning of the death of *Tamafaiga* he shouted “*ua mate le devolo, ua mate le devolo*,” (Williams, 1838, p.327). “The devil is dead, the devil is dead! Our work is done: the devil is dead!!” (Taase, 1995).

Without a leader to dictate over the people, John Williams now had power to negotiate, as it would take some time before the villages and chiefs of Samoa would elect a new chief. The chief whom they had sought out in *Sapapalii*, *Malietao Vaiinuupo*, had been away avenging the death of *Tamafaiga*. Eventually he would succeed to this new chiefly status which was created on the death of *Tamafaiga*. *Vaiinuupo*, however, was still at war and could not assume this role until he was certain of complete victory. On the arrival of John Williams and his team, *Vaiinuupo* issued instructions for their stay

and arranged hospitality for them until he returned. It would be on his return that he would accept this God that they brought with them.

Williams and Barff of the L.M.S. sought out high chief *Malietoa Vainuupo* from the village of *Sapapali'i Savaii* to begin their conversion of the Samoan people under the guidance of *Fauea*.

John Williams and Charles Barff had hoped that the protocol of seeking out the paramount chiefs and kings adopted in Tahiti to assist the easy acceptance of their mission would also prevail in Samoa. Their approach towards conversion was first to the chiefs. In Tahiti, Pomare I and Pomare II were regarded as keys to establishing Christian influence; in Rarotonga, Makea and Kainuku; in Samoa, Malietoa...In making their initial contact this way the missionaries achieved much; acceptance as residents safe from violent attacks, an entrée into the most influential families, an opportunity for learning the island's culture, and ultimately the conversion of chiefs leading to the conversion of their tribes (Thorogood, 1995, p.7).

It was their expectation that Samoa was similar to Tahiti and had a high chief or king like "*Papeiha*" (the king who welcomed and accepted the missionaries in Tahiti) who could accept the Gospel on behalf of the whole country. They assumed that the islands of the Pacific had similar hierarchical leadership and accountability, and operated under a similar monarchy to Tahiti. However, the chiefly system they encountered in Samoa was quite different as there was no paramount chief as such nor any individual king or queen or royal family. High chief *Malietoa Vainuupo* was head of his village and his constituency, but not of the whole of Samoa.

Rules and expectations

Christianity went hand in hand with an attempt to introduce the trappings of European civilisation. All those who assisted the missionaries in teaching were given shirts to wear that set them apart from the village people. Slowly, work associated with the missions became a vocation to aspire towards as material benefits in the form of attire became desirable.

The acceptance of the church *Lotu Taiti* involved a change of dress. Initially this was simply a matter of distinction. Gradually, however, it became a rule laid down by the traditional leaders of the groups who had embraced the *Lotu* faith (Crawford, 1977, p.297).

Later on, when official training of candidates for the ministry was established, John Marriot, an assistant tutor at Malua, made it his aim to ‘Christianize without Anglicizing’ and to prove ‘that a South Sea training college would be reared on the lines of Polynesian communal village life’ (Goodall, 1954, p.357). Missionary work became a vocation.

Samoa society changed dramatically in a number of ways as a result of the missionary church; there was strict Sabbath observance on the Sunday and each evening, families offered devotions to God together with their village. The dress code for Sundays was white as a sign of purity and women in accordance with the Pauline texts covered their heads with a hat. Ministers adopted the blazer (jacket) in a manner after the missionary fashion, although England was a much colder climate, and their wives wore the Imperial dress (Holly Hobby style) *mu’umu’u* with no waist and ankle length. Their hair was always kept pulled back off the face and neatly wrapped in a bun. These fashions came from England and were the style the missionaries themselves were comfortable with, but for the Samoan people this style of dress was associated with Christianity and good pure morals and cleanliness. Even the English tea service which the missionaries indulged in became reserved for the Christian pastor, as a sign of mission. English etiquette and fashion were seen as part of the Christianisation process. If one was truly converted then they would adopt the language and dress associated with the church.

It is possible that the initial years of missionary activity in Samoa instilled a piety and faith modelled on physical attributes and performing right and correct duty. Hymn singing and praying, tithing and adhering to the law of the Ten Commandments, and weekly sermon instruction would have been the spiritual makeup and menu of the Samoan people. It was a few years later during the outbreak of the first “Revival” that the power and movement of the Holy Spirit brought about a spiritual awakening in the hearts of many Samoan church folk. This was called the great Samoan awakening of 1839. “The awakenings showed a remarkable formal similarity to eighteenth and early nineteenth century revivals in England and America” (Daws, 1961, pg. 326). This was where the internalising of the spirit and faith began and provided a new model of faith and ministry for the church which was a spontaneous revelation and movement that lasted two years.

Giving

Apart from the introduction of new fashions, a formal church language and the English tea service, the Samoan church also adopted as two other British cultural traditions, the May festival known as the *faiga Me*, and the March Event, known as the *fa'a Mati*. These two traditions became ingrained in the Samoan church annual calendar as the opportunities for supporting the missionary work of not only the overseas L.M.S. missionaries but also the growing team of Samoan ministry that was emerging from the Samoan Mission Seminar at Malua.

The odd thing about the May festival, according to Forman, was that

it had its source in neither the normal church calendar nor the traditions of the people. It derived from the old May meetings that were held in London by the various philanthropic and missionary societies connected with the British evangelical movement during the early part of the nineteenth century... its origins were little known, and it was often not even held in May. (Forman, 1982, p.82).

The *fa'a Mati* became an annual occasion which called for the inspection and renewal or replacement of household effects of the missionaries or ministers within their homes. The women of the churches established this occasion as their annual contribution to the work of the missions eg. Replacement of furnishings etc.

According to Elder Minister Rev. *Tuamu Ainuu of Vaitoomuli, Palauli* the *fa'a Mati* is predominantly concerned with the tasks of the women of the village. The elder deacon travels the region to inspect and record the work that needs to be done within the minister's home and church. This is presented to the village for them to organise over the next twelve months. For instance, if the minister's house is not up to scratch then it is the role of the congregation to correct this. If he states that the minister needs a whole new house, then the congregation will have to oblige. No task is too big or too small for the village. Over the ensuing twelve months the women will begin weaving mats and crocheting new bedspreads and table cloths for the church manse more commonly known as *fale o le galuega* (house of the ministry). Visual cleanliness is just as important as spiritual cleanliness.

The *faiga Me* (the May Offering) is the annual financial commitment for the mission work of the church, both nationally and abroad. It is also a time when monies raised are set aside for the refurbishment and upkeep of the manse (minister's house) property. This annual financial obligation from church families has become an occasion to be

feared by many, but nevertheless fulfilled to the best of one's capabilities, and other family financial obligations take second place in the order of priorities. In some churches the *faiga Me* has been moved to October, as this gives families more time to save toward their annual contribution.

Traditionally, the *faiga Me* – May harvest or the May pole celebrations – were a pagan festival which related to the spring harvest celebrations in England. The English missionary agencies saw this as an opportune time to collect contributions and raise funds from the harvest profits for their missionary work abroad.

There is much that the Samoan church still practises that was initially part of a Victorian piety which has long since died in England, but is unfortunately still alive and well in the Samoan churches, simultaneously locked into the 19th century. The “Good News” needs to be reviewed, inculturated, and contextualized in order to liberate the church structures and the people from these foreign traditions and practices. A process of the weeding-out of English and antique Victorian cultures would be a good starting point. At the present time, it is still difficult at times to distinguish between what is Gospel and what is English culture.

The May festival (*faiga Me*) was at the centre of the financial operations of the church. With the move from the missions' dependency on London to financially sustain the work of the missions, the L.M.S. called for the missionaries to begin considering becoming a self-supporting mission. In 1860 George Pratt, a missionary to *Savaii*, introduced the plan of writing down all contributions (with the result sixpenny and dime contributions vanished, according to Gilson), to seek the favour of God and the respect of men in the volume of their sacrifices (Gunson, 1978, p.308-309). Howe notes that the missionaries exploited the Samoans' competitive spirit by publishing lists of contributions together with the amounts offered. Samoans went all out to get their names at the top of the lists (Howe, 1984, p.242). Giving as a result became a form of taxation rather than spontaneous giving. It was very liberal giving induced by competitive spirit (Gilson, 1970, p.308).

Forman has an example of this with respect to the *faiga Me*:

The amount of the contribution would be announced publicly to the assembly, which would often respond with loudly expressed appreciation. In some territories opportunity would then be given for friends to come forward and augment the family's contribution by additional offerings to be put down as part of the family's

gift. As might be expected, there was much competition among families with the village, and then among the different villages, as to the size of the total offering collected (Forman, 1982, p.82).

In trying to understand the missionaries' deliberate attempt to exploit the Samoan people's spirit, it is possible to deduce that in keeping with Samoan cultural tradition and the announcement of food and gifts by donors, the missionaries induced the monetary church giving in a similar fashion. Therefore, the Samoan concept of *ailao* (proclaiming with loud speeches the gifts of the people) was transferred from the village setting of the *fa'asamoa* into the Samoan church structure.

Gilson suggests that in the use of the term *taulaga*, the contributions made at the missionary meetings (*Me*) were assimilated into the offerings traditionally made to *aitu* (spirits) (Gilson, 1970, p.294).

As with church buildings, however, motivation associated with competition intervened. It was early recognised, and resisted on that account, that titleholders used the *Me* as another way of working out economic rivalry, success being measured by the size of the donation. In the end, however, the *fa'asamoa* won the day: in the early 1860s the L.M.S. missionaries agreed to allow the principle of competition full play, and consequently, Dyson, too, found that when he introduced "*Me*" among Wesleyans, they made it a condition that the public announcement of contributions be practised. It is clear, also, that though Brown was critical of the explicit competition that operated, in this case, between some L.M.S. districts, his own meetings gave free play to the motivation of shame in inducing the making of contributions. In many of the speeches that he reports, the parallel between miserliness in the sharing of food, and withholding money from the church is emphasised (Gilson, 1970, p.295).

According to Anae, some anthropologists and others have justly accused some missionaries of attempting to sweep away as rapidly as possible all vestiges of traditional cultures in the name of Christianity and progress, yet changes rarely if ever occurred as quickly or completely as the missionaries would have liked or intended (Anae, 1998). She continues to write an apologetic regarding missionary practices and states that "missionary bashing" can be largely attributed to Gunson's work in the 1950s, and Binney's *Legacy of Guilt: a life of Thomas Kendall* (Anae, 1998, p.86). However, Duncan states: they represent part of the study of colonial culture...to varying degrees; they represent missionaries as people who acted in ways that were logical and

appropriate to their own class and cultural milieu (Duncan, 1994). The term “missionary bashing” that Anae uses would depend on whose perspective one is advocating.

L.M.S. missionaries came from societies which honoured rank and title... therefore confirmed the existing social organisation... found themselves elevated to chiefly status although none of them had occupied any high-ranking position in England (Garrett, 1982, p.7).

A church born into a chiefly society and itself imitating that society is poorly equipped to challenge the status quo. It runs along traditional lines, avoiding any clash with authority. It is essentially conservative. What then happens to the prophetic note of the gospel? It is muted, domesticated. This has been a serious matter for the churches of Polynesia where issues of justice and truth have required a more radical voice than they have been trained to provide. Corruption among chiefs and politicians, economic oppression by external business, violence to women, sexually transmitted disease – on such matters the Polynesian churches have largely been silent and have offered little leadership (Garrett, 1982, p.7).

It is probable that at the time there was no realistic alternative to the chiefly approach. It is not a ground for criticism from this safe distance. But theologically the weakness is that the Church was born from above and was handed down, rather than rising out of the salvation experience of the poor. So the rapid growth of the church in Polynesia, which was a cause for thanksgiving to God, came at a cost.

There emerged a church which was more of the ‘parish than the gathered’ type. In the same setting there gradually took place a change in community leadership which had an immense effect upon the indigenous ministry of the church, its status and strength. This was the enlargement of the pastor’s authority over the general community, with a corresponding diminution of the chiefs’ supremacy. Meanwhile from being moral and spiritual advisers to local chiefs, pastors became the more significant leaders of the local community, until in the eyes of the people the rank of chieftainship became secondary to pastoral status. “No chief or heir to chieftainship could become a candidate for the ministry without renouncing his chiefly status”. This was to guard the Church from becoming the tool of the chiefs, but it soon set a premium on the status of the ministry as an office which could only be won at such a price. There was never any dearth of candidates for ministry; on the contrary, the problem was how to discourage too many applicants and to deal with an ever-increasing number of ‘stickit ministers’ (Goodall, 1954, p.366).

Today there are few parts of the world church which have such a consistent supply of pastoral leadership (Thorogood, 1995, p.11).

As Daws reports

the adoption of the new religion by ruling families and formal observance by the common people had made superficial changes in the way of life of the islanders

without affecting the essential nature of their society. Congregations were large, church membership small. Outward conformity to Christian social practice was widespread, inward conviction not nearly so common (Daws, 1961, p.326-337).

Between 1830 and 1860 the relationship between Samoa and the L.M.S. in London remained one of mutual dependence. The missionaries were dependent on England for financial assistance, and the church was dependent on the L.M.S. for missionaries. Villages in Samoa were not content to have Samoan teachers; many sought foreign missionaries as this added prestige and importance to their village. The significant contribution of Samoan teachers as well as Tahitians has been played down in writing the history of the early missions.

Fa'atulituli Setu claims that the written accounts of missionary activity in Samoa have generally neglected this point about Samoan generosity in participation in the mission. Simple activities and courtesies have been underestimated yet they are very significant in the history of Christianity (Setu, 1988, p.29).

However, by 1860 the L.M.S. directors in London began to press for the formation of independent congregations (Forman, 1982, p.127).

Part Three: Organisational structure of the churches

The traditional Congregational Church of Samoa has maintained its structure and its model inherited from the pioneering missionary days. The Samoan Congregational Christian Church has become a very dominant and successful church. In 1961, 53.5% of Samoa's population were affiliated to the C.C.C.S. compared with 42.6% in 1991. Its members have been exposed to many of the new religious movements that have arrived within the 188 years since its establishment but still it remains a strong force on its own.

The structure of the C.C.C.S. (E.F.K.S.) Church in Samoa

As stated earlier the structure of the Congregational Church in Samoa is closely based on the social structure of Samoan Society. For instance, the *aulotu* (local congregation) is based on the village, thus a village church.

The sub district *Pulega* is a grouping of all the C.C.C.S. churches in a particular district. Then there is the *matagaluega* which is the regional district. It is here that matters from sub-districts are channelled (when they are approved by the *Tofiga Tele* (district meeting) to the General Assembly, welnown as the *Fono Tele* or General Assembly.

The General Assembly or *Fono Tele* is the Supreme Council of the Church. Its officers are the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer. When the year of the office of Chairman is finished, the Vice-Chairman succeeds to the office of Chairman.

The General Assembly is responsible for the general legislation of the Church, but the detailed business of the Church is carried out by the following Committees

Table 1. Church committees

<i>Komiti Au-toeaiina</i>	Committee of Elders
<i>Komiti Fe'au 'Ese'ese</i>	General Purposes Committee
<i>Komiti Tupe</i>	Finance Committee
<i>Komiti A'oga</i>	Education Committee
<i>Komiti Atina'e</i>	Development Committee
<i>Komiti Fa'a-Misionare</i>	Overseas Mission Committee

Apart from the Committee of Elders, each District has its own representative to these various committees (Tuimauluga, 1977 p.43-47).

The minister's wife *faletua* took on the role of *fautua* - advice giver. She had her own responsibilities within the ministry and was seen as the backbone of industry. A minister could not be ordained into ministry unless he was married. Their ministry was viewed as that of a partnership where both had their specific roles to play.

The establishment of the role of clergy within the Samoan church

Ministers over the years became known under several different titles: *susuga*, *aofa'alupega*, *fa'afeagaiga*, *toeaina*, *faifeau* and *auauana*. The first two titles already existed in pre-Christian Samoa, and the latter two titles refer to the concept of messenger and servant taken from the Servant Image of Jesus' ministry.

How were these first titles transferred from Samoan culture into church culture?

Susuga

This term literally means "wet". The origins of this title go back to the day when *Malietoa* and *Su'a* went to *Pulotu* to seek the help of *Nafanua*. When they arrived there,

they asked *Matuna* and *Matuna* for *Nafanua*. They went to call her by rubbing fibres together to call her from the underground. When she surfaced up from the water, *Matuna* asked her “*o fea le mea ua e susuga mai iai?*” Where did you get yourself wet? *Nafanua* on hearing this question thought to herself, *susuga*, that is a good title. When *Malietoa* and *Su’a* came to her to seek her power centre she told them “*tali i lagi se ao a lou malo*”, wait on the heavens for the head of your government, but take for now this new title *susuga* for you to use”. *Malietoa* was formally addressed as *Afioga a Malietoa* but from then on he became known as *Susuga Malietoa*. This title was then transferred to John Williams when he came to Samoa and to *Malietoa* on his death bed; he vowed that there would be no more royal titles. Ministers of the church would instead become the new *susuga* that the people of Samoa could respect and honour in place of him, and to this day that is the case.

Aofa’alupega

“*Ao*” is literally translated as head; “*fa’alupega*” as genealogy. *Aofa’alupega* therefore means the highest of all titles. Traditionally this title was reserved for the high chiefs, ‘*ali’i*’ of the villages. However, the minister who represented a God beyond this earthly world must somehow have higher honour than earthly chiefs, so this concept was duly transferred to the clergy and they became the holders of the highest titles, enabled and empowered by their Godly pursuit of the Gospel mission.

Feagaiga vs Fa’afeagaiga

Feagaiga, is the relationship between the sister and the brother, and emphasised the sister’s special role within the family and the special powers that she possessed as *feagaiga*. The literal English translation of *feagaiga* is covenant; however, the Old and New Testaments of the Bible are known as *le Feagaiga Tuai*, Old Testament and *le Feagaiga Fou*, New Testament. Marriages are often referred to as *Osiga o Feagaiga* where two people meet to form a contract sexually; after Christianity the contract of marriage adopted this term and *Osiga Feagaiga* came to be regarded also as a legal marriage contract. Within the church the minister’s new relationship with the congregation becomes a covenant whereby both parish and minister establish a covenant relationship and he becomes the covenant maker known within the *fa’asamoa* as the *Fa’afeagaiga*.

When a Samoan minister is called to a Samoan parish they enter into a covenant and a type of marriage takes place between the minister and his family and the parish. An

exchange of gifts is reciprocated and often a large fine mat a symbol of the *feagaiga* (covenant) is exchanged between the minister and the parish as a symbol of the making of a new covenant. This is where the term *fa'afeagaiga* comes from as it indicates that the minister is in a covenant relationship with the parish. This covenant confirms their desire to love and minister to the people, to be accountable and trustworthy in all their dealings and relationship with the people and the parish. When the *feagaiga* is breached the covenant is broken and the *feagaiga* is severed this is often referred to as “*ua tatala le feagaiga*” the covenant has been released. This term can also be used when a minister leaves his parish.

Dr. Fanaafi Le Tagaloa asserts in Samoan ‘*Ua fao uma a e le faifeau nafa ositaulaga o le tamaitai. E o'fo'i a i le tauosia o le lagi ua I ai a ma le faifeau*’ (Aiono, 1996). This literally means that the pastor has robbed the *tama'ita'i* (young woman) of her priestess role and responsibilities (Ah-Siu Maliko, 1998, p.24). Unfortunately the demise of the female role and responsibilities of the *feagaiga* was due to the missionaries themselves believing that no human should have such powers as to bless or curse another (in the case of the *feagaiga* having the power to curse or bless her brother). The missionaries believed that God alone had the power to bless and curse and they as God's representatives here on earth therefore should be the new covenant makers.

Today on the surface Samoa appears to be a patriarchal society. Historically however, women held significant roles as goddesses and priestesses and Samoa has really had only one Monarch, in the 15th Century a female, *Salamasina*. The advent of Christianity in many ways usurped and dismantled the matriarchy of Samoan society. But underneath that surface today the matriarchy is still very much alive. In fact, Samoan society and the church is held together by the women. The wife of the high chief, the *ali'i*, and of the minister, the *faifeau*, is known as the *faletua*. *Faifeau* and *Auauna*

I have kept these two titles together because they are similar in how they are applied to ministers within the *fa'asamoa*. *Faifeau* has two meanings. The first literal meaning is, the one who does the work (*fai* to do *feau* work). *Feau* also means message, so it also means the messenger, which can be compared to the ministry of John the Baptist, the one who prepared the way and preached the coming of Jesus. The term *auauna* literally means servant, the one who serves, and this fits in neatly with the Samoan proverb, ‘*O le Ala I le Pule o le Tautua*’, the road to leadership and/or authority is through service. One must begin with humility and as a servant.

Toeaina

Traditionally the term *toeaina* was reserved for old men and is a polite way of addressing the senior men of the family and village. Within the church the term *toeaina* is given to the elder minister of the *pulega* - district, who oversees the work of all the ministers of his constituency. It is an honourable title and does not necessarily refer to age, but to status. To become a *faiifeau toeaina* (equivalent to a bishop) is a goal and honour sought after by the clergy. The Samoan church president is often referred to as *faiifeau toeaina*. The lay *toeaina* is referred to as the *tiakono toeaina* which translates as the ‘elder deacon of all the deacons’ and is almost on a par in terms of status with the *faiifeau toeaina*.

“The institution of *faiifeau* replaced the ideological justification for attributing great powers to a few great chiefs and redefined chiefly power as a secular political authority, reducing the crucial distinction between *ali’i* (sacred chief) and *tulafale* (orator/political chief), which became more ceremonial than actual (Aiono, 1996). In an effort to bring about some separation of church and state and the local congregations, and independence from the influence of *matai*, it was decided that pastors could not simultaneously hold *matai* titles (Ah Siu-Maliko, 1998).

The deeper theological significance of the missionary movement was to develop over time as God in Christ became more accessible to the people of Samoa. This accessibility, however, was dependent upon those who were called as pastors to fulfil this purpose. Their tasks consisted of preaching the gospel and providing pastoral care.

Richard Baxter’s ‘The Reformed Pastor’ provides an apt description of the role of the pastor as it was introduced and as it continues to be practised within Samoan society. “The Pastors, as leaders of the church, all eyes are on them, they are examples of Christ and of the Gospel. Therefore, their example should not contradict their doctrine. You have many eyes upon you, and there will be many to observe you fall” (Baxter, 1963, p.5). He continues to describe the role of the Pastor as one which is involved with visiting the sick to careful oversight of families. That the manner of their oversight to the flock must be with a deep sense of their own insufficiency and of their dependence on Christ. He concludes with the use of humiliation on account of their not seriously,

unreservedly, and laboriously laying out themselves in their work by (i) negligent studies and (ii) by dull, drowsy preaching” (Baxter, 1963).¹

Baxter attempts to define the essence of a good pastor. His expectations were absorbed into Samoan society through the missionary enterprises of the 1830s onward. It is important to note that although Baxter was writing in the 17th century and his instructions were an inspiration of his time, much of what he has to say still remains relevant within the context of the Samoan culture today. Unfortunately, this role—along with its gender restrictions and constraints—remains virtually unchallenged even in the midst of a growing awareness of feminism and the validity of lay ministry within the priesthood of all believers.²

The minister’s pastoral care within the Samoan village is one of being available to families as requested. Ministers will often be called upon to celebrate births, anniversaries, coming of age ceremonies, and weddings, and to attend to sickness, grief and death. At a rite of passage event, the minister is often the first consideration; in the event that the minister is not available at the appointed time, celebrations will be delayed until he becomes available. In the event that there is no minister available to lead the celebrations, elders or senior members of families will preside, except in the case of funerals or weddings. At such events, the role of the minister is one of offering prayers of thanksgiving, Biblical instruction, and pastoral words of guidance and comfort. As far as the families are concerned, the minister’s blessings are a blessing from God and convey providence and good fortune.

The structure of the congregation

A congregation is always divided into age and gender groups. In order of seniority, the *faifeau* (minister) would be followed by the *a’oa’o fesoasoani* (*lay preacher*) *tiakono*

¹ It is possible that Richard Baxter’s book ‘The Reformed Pastor’ may have been significant for the Samoan ministry training school of Malua because it was a challenge for the ministry candidates to remain focused on the priorities of the call to ministry. The essence of Baxter’s writing lay in one’s oversight of the individual, that one is able to look and reflect on their own personal practice to avoid the pitfalls of bad practice in ministry. Baxter is primarily concerned about the students and ministers living out what they preached and not expecting from their congregation that which they don’t do themselves

²A doctrine of the Protestant Christian Church: is that every individual has direct access to God without ecclesiastical mediation and each individual shares the responsibility of ministering to the other members of the community of believers
[https://www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/priesthood of all believers](https://www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/priesthood%20of%20all%20believers)

toeaina (senior deacon) and then the elders' session made up of men, and of women who continue the work of their deceased husbands. Most of the elders would also be *matai* within the village; next to them would come the wives of the elders and chiefs known as *faletua ma tausi*, who make up the women's fellowship, followed by young families who are communicant members known as *matafale*. The term "*matafale*" also refers to all families within the church. The *autalavou*, literally translated as "the youth group," follows the young couples and families in ranking, but is not restricted to youth. In most churches, the *autalavou* (youth group) involves the whole congregation, regardless of age. The Sunday School holds the lowest rank within the church hierarchical structure.

Another group involving all the adults and youth is the *aufaipese* - choir. It is an important aspect of church life and worship. Where people sit in church on Sunday is determined by the voice part they sing. This is often not selected by quality of voice but by age. For instance, the young girls will make up the alto section, the young boys will sing the tenor, the mothers will sing soprano, and the fathers, bass. There are, however, exceptions, particularly when choirs compete with other choirs at festivals; then some quality control is put into effect.

The role of the women's fellowship is crucial in the life of the church and village community. Within the Congregational church, this group is referred to as *le mafutaga a tina*, literally translated "women's fellowship," and in the Methodist church as *le auso*, translated as "the sisterhood." These women's groups are responsible for providing pastoral care in matters pertaining to women's issues and the practical day-to-day running of the church, the village, and the family. In the event of family disputes, the minister often mediates.

Family life within the *fa'asamoa* is based on the *aiga* (extended family), comprising grandparents, parents, uncles, aunties, cousins, nephews, nieces, in-laws, and children. Children are responsible and accountable to all parties more senior than them, including older siblings. The concept of respecting one's elder is a very important principle within the *fa'asamoa*, and one is reminded of one's duty and responsibility at all times without the opportunity to question. The individual, regardless of age, is never free to live for him or herself. Independence is not a Samoan concept, and individualism through Western influence is only just beginning to threaten the communal nature of Samoa's

framework. Success is a family concept, not an individual goal; academic success, sporting prowess, or whatever the victory belongs to the whole extended family.

Authority in Samoan ministry

While the path to leadership for *matai* is lifelong, the pre-requisites for entering the ministry of the church are not so. Training for ministry in Samoa requires four years of the novice's life, in which he will be submitted to physical, intellectual, and spiritual challenges. During his four years in training, he will be presumed to have equipped himself for a status of leadership among his colleagues.

The old English schoolboy practice of “fagging” (similar to the military hierarchy of subservience) is alive and well in theological colleges. In this case, first year students are subservient to students in years 2, 3, and 4, second year students to years 3 and 4, and so on. Every year he survives, the individual will have worked his way up to a more senior position, particularly in anticipation of the power of a year 4 student.

Unfortunately, this only serves to teach the student that he has “earned” his rights to leadership and authority just by surviving the first three years of theological college.

Today the first year students are known as *taulealea* (untitled men), the following year they are promoted to *tulafale* (orators or talking chiefs), the third year they are known as *vasega lagolago* (class which people depend upon), which is the 3rd year class whom year 4 rely on to fulfil the major tasks and work of the college, and finally when they arrive at the fourth year they become *ali'i* (high chief). The interesting thing here is that whereas Christianity advocates a servant model for ministry, this theological training model advocates that one is a high chief on graduation and not a humble servant. This has major implications for ministry and the impact their type of leadership has upon the congregation over time.

But what of his obligation and service within the village, community, and church prior to passing his entrance examinations? Within the *matai* structure, this concept of *tautua lelei* (good service) is a lifetime obligation that does not end once one has received a title. A good servant will not think he has ever finally “arrived”. The model of service advocated by Christ is one of service and humility by those in positions of leadership and authority.

By the time he is ready to graduate at the end of the fourth year, the student as a new pastor will be ready to take on the challenges of parish ministry, provided of course he

is married. In the event that he is not, he is given time to find a partner for life. The same rule applies to ministers who have been widowed: after the official period of grieving is over, the minister is given a period of time by the church in which to find a suitable replacement partner. In the event that this is not possible, he is sometimes asked to leave the ministry until he has re-married. Today, one or two elder ministers continue in their parishes even after they have been widowed.

Gendered roles in the Church

In the new church system, the wife of a minister took on the role of *faletua*, which literally means “house at the back.” Without the skills she brings to her husband’s ministry, he is unable to function on his own. I would prefer to translate the word *faletua* as the “backbone of industry,” because without her everything would collapse. She is the spine that holds the body upright.

Reciprocal relationship

A reciprocal relationship between ministers and chiefs developed whereby one became accountable to the other. The hierarchy of the church was structured in a way that confined the role of women to matters pertaining to women and children. On the one hand, the voice of women in the decision-making processes of the church courts is excluded in matters pertaining to finance and day-to-day running of the faith and doctrinal matters, and is very much limited to practical, domestic activities except for their own women’s fellowship governance. However, on the other hand, the *faletua* (the minister’s wife) has become very much a leader among women and presides over matters within her jurisdiction.

The C.C.C.S. Church in Samoa developed a structure which parallels that of the village:

Table 2. Comparison of village structure with church structure

Village Structure:	Church Structure:
<i>Tu'ua</i> (high chief)	Minister
<i>Matai</i> (chiefs' council)	Elders session
<i>Faletua ma tausī</i> (wives)	Women's fellowship
<i>Taulealea</i> (untitled)	Young families
<i>Aualuma/aumaga</i> (young women/men)	Youth group/Autalavou
<i>Tamaiti</i> (children)	Sunday school

It is claimed that the village structure deals with matters pertaining to *mea fa'a le lalolagi* (things to do with the world), while the church structure deals with *mea fa'a le lagi* (things to do with God). However in practice the two jurisdictions merge on the occasion of *fa'alavelave*, funerals and weddings or disputes. Disputes among *matai* that cannot be resolved by the *matai* council are sometimes mediated by the minister. Similarly, in disciplinary cases where ministers overstep their boundaries, the *au toeaina* (elder ministers) and the council of *matai* of each village is responsible for seeing their ministry terminated.

Much of both church and society in Samoa is structured around the assumption that each individual knows the boundaries. One is expected to keep to the area in which he or she is experienced. When one oversteps the boundaries in any situation—whether child, parent, *matai*, or minister—one is reprimanded and told to keep to his or her side of the boundary. In Samoa, this is known as *aua le to'ia le va*, “Do not step over the gap.” Everyone is presumed to know his or her position within the family, and thus within the community. “If all keep to their place, then there is peace”; *Ia e iloa lou tulaga*. This complex network of authority, boundaries, and obedience is one of the basic values of the *fa'asamoa*, which is founded on the motto “*ia e iloa ava ma fa'aaloalo*,” that you give respect and do so with humility.

Today, in all villages throughout Samoa, there are sacred times, rituals, and protocol to which all must adhere. Modes of dress and ways of walking, talking, and carrying out the basic chores of daily life revolve around strict codes of behaviour. Sunrise is greeted with prayers and thanksgiving for the new day; all meals are preceded by a grace of

thanksgiving to the Christian God and at sunset the villages come alive with the sounds of clustered households carrying out devotions offering praise and thanksgiving to God

The church is at the heart of Samoan life and is represented as such geographically within most Samoan villages. Christianity is central to the faith and witness of Samoan people. With the arrival of Christianity to Samoa, Samoans didn't throw the baby out with the bath water when it came to replacing one religion with another but assimilated Christianity into a culture which merged Gospel and culture alongside each other so that they were complimentary and not in opposition. The church became the place for the expression of things spiritual and religious things of God. *Matai* (chiefs) attended to matters pertaining to village and culture and *Faifeau* (ministers) attended to matters pertaining to the church and spirituality.

Summary

This chapter provided the context in which the Samoan church emerged and the factors that led to the introduction and arrival of Christianity to the shores of Samoa. It also described how, with the introduction of Christianity, came the separation of church and society and the development of parallel church and state models within the village and church hierarchies and the expected role the pastor has to play within the church model. Finally, this chapter looked at Samoan concepts as handed down through oral tradition. It is necessary that this chapter provide the context for this research in order to see the reality of the church at the coal-face here in the Samoan N.Z. diaspora and be able to provide a background within which the participants can be placed.

Chapter 4 The Development of the Pacific Islanders' Congregational Church in New Zealand

In this chapter I explore the development of the church in Aotearoa New Zealand from the Pacific Islanders' church perspective. This chapter provides the background in which the church emerged in Auckland. This research helps us understand the various challenges that people were faced with when addressing the different conflicts and struggles that arose within the emerging churches. It describes the first schism when a Samoan group left the P.I.C.C. church to form an independent Samoan congregation. Historical letters have been included in this chapter to provide an account of those events which I believe, has not been documented anywhere else. I have focused on schisms within the Pacific Islanders' church over a 50-year period because it was out of these situations of conflict and dissension, that the different churches evolved and the subsequent wave-two ethnic-specific churches were born. You cannot understand anything to do with the emerging church of the diaspora unless you understand the historical context.

In the 2013 census 83.4 percent (113,739 people) said they affiliated with at least one religion. Those born in New Zealand were less likely – at 76.3 percent and 95.2 percent, respectively (Census ethnic group profile Samoan www.stats.govt.nz 2013). In 2006, 86 percent (105,903) of Samoans affiliated with a religion. Of those Samoans who affiliated with a religion, 98 percent (104,190) affiliated with a Christian religion. (<http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/about-2006-census/pacific-profiles-2006/samoan-people-in-new-zealand.aspx>).

Samoans began migrating to New Zealand in the late 1940's predominantly after World War II, many for education via scholarship programmes. There was an open-door immigration system in place during the 1950's and 1960's, particularly for the cheap labour force option that Samoan migrant workers were able to fulfil. The textile industries and car manufacturing along with freezing work and forestry options were jobs that were readily available during this time.

New Zealand Government policy initially favoured young, single migrants whose presence, at least in the short term, cost the state least. However, the Samoan population increased rapidly as those migrants established themselves and started their own families, resulting in the steady growth in the proportion of N.Z.-born and educated Samoans in New Zealand (Macpherson, 1991, p.67).

Soon after the first arrivals it was not long before churches were established within the districts and suburbs close to places of employment. For instance, in Tokoroa around the Kinleith Forestries the Tokoroa Pacific Islanders' Presbyterian Church evolved. In Invercargill around the freezing works the Invercargill Pacific Islander's church was established. In Wellington, Porirua and Petone, Pacific Island Presbyterian Churches emerged around Todd Motors and Government Print. Faith went hand in hand with industry and for the individuals the church provided an opportunity for Samoans to give thanks for employment and educational opportunities. It was also the place where Samoans could congregate for fellowship and was their N.Z. village away from home, an opportunity to replicate the *fa'asamoa* and practise their faith within a worshipping community.

The First-Wave Church

Time-line of the establishment of the Pacific Islanders Congregational Church in New Zealand

Dr. Melanie Anae provides the following timeline of the establishment of the P.I.C.C. in New Zealand.

1947

Congregational Union of New Zealand Church (C.U.N.Z.) requested the Rev. Challis to undertake work with the three Pacific Island congregations at Beresford St. Church – Niueans and Cook Islanders who hold services in the hall next to the Church and the few Samoans who meet in the basement of the hall.

C.U.N.Z. agree to establish a P.I.C.C. Church rather than a church just for the Cook Islanders, on acceptance of the call by the Rev. Challis – Pastor Tariu Teaia to be appointed as full-time minister also:

“We understand that there are at present about 700 islanders in Auckland and about 500 in Wellington. A request has been received for the formation in Auckland of a church to serve the Cook Islanders group, but we feel that the whole position with regard to all of these folk has to be considered before the requirements of any one group are met”.

1948

Palagi Parish of Newton Church who only have one service a Sunday offer premises every Sunday evening for Niueans (6pm) and Cook Islanders (7pm) to hold their services in November.

The Revs. Robert Lyle Challis and Tariu Teaia are formally inducted to the work of the PICC church at Newton, which marks a new beginning.

The Pacific Islanders' Congregational Church was the first to be established in Auckland in 1948 at Beresford Street and later moved to Edinburgh Street where they are today. It was a Pan-Pacific church. The London Missionary Society (L.M.S.) had sent Rev. Robert Lye Challis, (referred to by the Samoan congregation as "*Salesi*") an Cockney from London, England to Auckland to minister to the many Pacific Island families who had emigrated from their homelands. The P.I.C.C. church in Edinburgh Street, Newton, known as the P.I.C.C. (Pacific Island Congregational Church) at the time, was the only church available for Congregational Samoan worshippers to attend. Most Samoan families and Pacific Islanders chose to attend P.I.C.C. on arrival in Auckland.

1949

Prime Minister of New Zealand Peter Fraser approves welfare grant (450 pounds) recognizing not only the spiritual work of the church for the Pacific Island migrants, but also the pastoral and secular care of its members. It was also in this year that Peter Fraser attended a P.I.C.C. service at Newton Church.

In August – separate service for Samoan people begins at Newton.

1957

November – The Rev. Leuatea Iusitini Sio ordained and inducted into P.I.C.C. at Newton.

The first Samoan minister ordained to work with the Reverend Challis at the Edinburgh Street parish was the Reverend Leuatea Iusitini Sio who was ordained in 1957 after training at the Mt. Eden Congregational Theological Seminary. Life in those early days in New Zealand was not easy. For many Samoans who arrived in Auckland, the English language was foreign and as a result communication was difficult. Rev. Sio recalls how his role as minister not only involved preaching on Sundays but also attending to immigration matters and being a social worker, lawyer and accountant. In the early days of his ministry, he would travel out to the airport whenever there was a flight from Samoa. Many Samoans arrived at Auckland airport looking lost and bewildered. Rev. Sio was always there to offer them a bed and food before sending them on their way to a new life in New Zealand. Many of these Samoan workers would arrive in Auckland

having travelled on a one-way ticket with no other money on them. Thinking they had arrived, they were soon dismayed to find that Auckland was only their transit destination; many of them were employed to work in the freezing works in other parts of New Zealand. Some of them had contracts to work in Invercargill at the bottom of South Island, yet their air tickets were only paid up as far as Auckland. Rev. Sio would pool the resources of the extended family to scrape together enough money to pay for their tickets, no matter how far away it was (Sio, 1992, personal conversation Tirohanga).

1962

The P.I.C.C. becomes the largest church in the C.U.N.Z. Building and opening and dedication of new Newton church built beside the original Newton Church. The new Church is opened by Stuart Ennor, Chairman of the C.U.N.Z. at the time. The new church seats approximately 700 people.

1963

November – schism of Samoan group from Newton establishes first E.F.K.S. (C.C.C.S.) branch in New Zealand (Fuimaono, Fonoti, Ieriko)³.

(Adapted from Anae, M., Newton PIC The First 50 Years, 1998b, pp 1-8)

First major schism within the Pacific Islanders Congregational Church

According to Anae and Macpherson, a group of Samoans had broken away from Newton, because Newton was “not Samoan enough” (Anae, 1998b) and established the first branch of the E.F.K.S. or C.C.C.S. in New Zealand. This denomination grew rapidly and became known in Samoan as the Ekalesia Fa’apopotoga Kerisiano Samoa (E.F.K.S.) also referred to as the C.C.C.S. in English (the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa) (Duncan, 1994, p.18). Some of the breakaway members expressed the inadequacy of the P.I.C.C. multicultural worship highlights not so much the churches inability to create worship that met the needs of its diverse congregation but the breakaway group’s desire for a homogenous church (Anae, 1998a, p.131). Ioka continues to highlight the inadequacy of the multicultural church context of the P.I.C.C. to accommodate the full impact and requirements of Samoan Christianity, and also its

³ These were the names of the leaders who lead the breakaway group to form C.C.C.S.

tendency to compromise and to undermine the holiness of Samoan worship. Of utmost importance was the assertion of the right and authority for self-determination in relation to religious life, religious development and religious future in New Zealand (Ioka, 1998 p.iii).

The 1963 reformation-type schism was mainly because of a desire to be able to conduct worship in the Samoan language, along with being able to practise the *fa'asamoa* and all things cultural as true indigenous Samoan people, particularly being led by a Samoan person rather than a *palagi*. In the first schism in 1963 there was a concern by some that the melting pot of assimilation was inappropriate. I have included historical documents i.e. letters, as these have not been documented elsewhere. They explain the schism in the words of those who were there. During my research I found these letters which have documented the schism from the perspective of the people at the time. I have not been able to find reference to these letters elsewhere. These defectors believed that their cultural security was being threatened by forced assimilation into a melting pot of multiculturalism. Their choice to break away from the Pan-Pacific church was in order to salvage the Samoan language and culture which they believed was being compromised and was surely at risk of becoming lost. Their move wouldn't be seen as segregation as this was a choice that they had made and would be better categorised as separatist which is a deliberate attempt to be exclusive for the sake of the retention of language and culture in the guise of the *fa'asamoa*.

The idea of the Pan-Pacific church, to these breakaway leaders, was becoming too much of a compromise of Samoan identity and values. These men could be categorised as reformers of their own rights as they set about to change and to reject what had gone before them to return to the familiar model of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa in terms of worship style, content and polity. It was a return to an earlier ideal. This can be compared to the 15th century Protestant reformation, a movement away from the Roman Catholic Church.

One of the questions that the issue of Reformation brings up is the character of change. The term "reform" has within it the implied idea not only of change but of change for the better, by some sort of return to an earlier ideal (Holder, 2009, p.8).

The period of the reformation was a period of change. Whether they understood themselves to be in the midst of a continuation of movements that were already active in earlier centuries, or a rejection of what had gone before, the people in the era of the Reformation were quite conscious of religious change. There were new options to consider. It did not matter that some options were not acceptable. For the

first time in centuries, Christians in Western Europe had religious choices to consider (Holder, 2009, p.8).

Second-wave church

The formation of the C.C.C.S. was a reflection of the desire to retain traditions and language of the homeland and to preserve indigenous forms of Christianity (Macpherson, 2001). According to anecdotal evidence, many of these former leaders were disillusioned with the multicultural setup as it did not give time nor do justice to the Samoan way of doing things the *fa'asamoa*. They felt that an hour once a week was not enough time to fellowship in their own language and carry out the cultural aspects of the *fa'asamoa*.

Many in the C.C.C.S. wanted an indigenous celebration of what it meant to be Samoan both in language and culture. For many of them the P.I.C.C. approach or multicultural approach was a watered-down version of the *fa'asamoa* and quite offensive, particularly with a *palagi* minister at the helm; they wanted to be led by their own Samoan people.

Bible and Hymns – *Papalagi*, Niuean, Rarotongan and Samoan. What Samoan can understand all these four languages? What can you make of it while listening in times of worship to God when these four languages are used in the same service? Our ears go deaf. We use foul languages of others (in our worship). Others use our foul language in theirs. A Samoan is taken aback to say certain words. There is absolutely no reverence and holiness in such kind of worship. Sometimes there is laughing during worship. One does not criticise. But the words and language used are not good and pleasant for the worship of God. It is difficult to familiarise oneself with such kind of worship. When it is over one cannot feel anything that might to oneself give a sense of meaningful worship (Ioka, 1998).

The first breakaway group left the P.I.C.C. Samoan group led by *Fuimaono*, *Fonoti* and *Ieriko*. Rev. Robert Lyle Challis the senior minister of Newton P.I.C.C. expressed his disappointment in a letter to the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa on 28th November 1963:

To the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa:

We the Pacific Congregational Church gathering in one fellowship, people from the L.M.S. family of the Pacific, write to you in sorrow and deep concern because of what has been done in the name of the Congregational Church of Samoa by the *Savali* in New Zealand.

They recognized the breakaway group of *Fuimaono* without any consultation with our people.

This has brought dismay and strong feelings amongst the several thousands of Samoan under our care in many parts of New Zealand.

It breaks into the close relationship and fellowship over the years between the C.C. of Samoa and the P.I.C.C. and the C.U.N.Z. We recall that the C.U.N.Z. being the family in New Zealand of the L.M.S. founded the P.I.C. in consultation with the approval of C.C. of Samoa.

To-day the Christian emphasis over the whole world is on integration – the working together of Christian people – this break away is an act of segregation – helping the people of Christ apart because of racial or national association.

We remind you that the P.I.C.C. is a member of the C.U.N.Z. and seven of her members serve on the Executive Committee of the C.U.N.Z.

No one has attempted to give any reason for this break away – we emphasise again – what we have said many times – the way into our fellowship is open.

We are concerned at the continued attempt of leaders of the *Fuimaono* group to persuade our people to leave us. These are people who were shepherds with us, and are attempting to draw away the flock of the Church of Christ.

It has been said that if the Samoan Church gives the lead those who have left will return.

We appeal to you to give this strong and deeply Christian lead to the Samoan people – that the glorious Missionary tradition of the Samoan Church may be maintained in the midst of this European community of New Zealand.

Yours in Christian fellowship,
R.L. Challis
On behalf of the whole fellowship.

The above letter highlights the euro-centric emphasis on church polity. It negates the Samoan breakaway leaders' rights to establish an indigenous fellowship based on Samoan language and culture by reminding them of their obligation to pursue unity in diversity. They are choosing segregation over multicultural unity. As part of the attempt to reform the Samoans into their own way of thinking and worshipping, there was not the conscious desire to segregate by the Samoan breakaway group but their attempts to reform the Samoan church became perceived as a separatist movement and therefore a blemish on the overall desire towards unity in diversity/multiculturalism.

The founding vision also reflected the assertion of the right for self-determination and the authority for the sole control of religious life, religious development, and religious future in New Zealand which included the preference for the E.F.K.S./C.C.C.S. to be the sole authority to exercise jurisdiction over the C.C.C.S. This reflected the increasing assertion of the authority of Independent indigenous Churches of the Pacific and indigenous leadership against the traditional authority and leadership of missionary societies (Ioka, 1998, p. iv).

The breakaway, from the perspective of the Rev. Robert Challis, had been received as a negative move and there was no attempt by the *palagi* to consider the possible truths behind the need to seek indigenous autonomy for the sake of self-determination, freedom of religious practice and belief.

Fuimaono, the leader of the break-away group, wrote letters expressing the inadequacy of the P.I.C.C. multicultural worship highlights, not so much the churches inability to create worship that met its diverse congregation but *Fuimaono's* desire for a homogenous church. The tone of both *Ioka* and *Fuimaono's* views suggest that Samoan attitudes and values are "the only way", therefore, everyone else was rude and disrespectful.

Fuimaono critiques the P.I.C.C. combined worship during the morning and does not mention the 5pm Samoan service in the evening which would specifically cater for his spiritual and cultural needs and concerns. *Fuimaono* was offended by Challis' treatment of Reverend *Tapeni Ioelu*, the then chairman of the C.C.C.S. in Samoa who came to visit. *Fuimaono* expected *Ioelu* to be invited to preside at the Holy Communion service at the morning service. Instead *Ioelu* was invited to lead the afternoon service at 5pm. *Fuimaono* saw this as a demotion and insulting. According to *Fuimaono*, Challis was "lacking in respect for a man of such high standing in the church and this lack of respect extended to many other Samoan ministers who visited New Zealand" (*Ioka*, 1998, p.186).

The *palagis* from within the Congregational Union of New Zealand also responded by way of correspondence. Note, that the chosen medium for communication was through letter writing which was the dominant *palagi* medium, whereas the Samoans would have been more content with face to face dialogue placing them on an equal footing with the dominant culture. Here the *palagis* believed that because worship was already being conducted in the Samoan language, the idea of indigenous recognition was taking place. The *palagi's* understanding of Samoan sovereignty and integrity seemed misplaced and the token practice of a one-hour service on a Sunday was to them sufficient recognition of things Samoan.

Breward suggested that,

Worship and spirituality have not been areas in which New Zealand Christians have excelled. The flat colourless language which passes for a means of communication

among many Pakeha is unlikely to provide a basis for beauty of language in worship (Colless, 1980 p.69).

A letter from the C.U.N.Z. Secretary Bruce Shearer was written to the C.C.C.S. General Assembly expressing the following:

The Standing Committee is very grieved at the decision of the *Fono tele in Malua* in May.

The Standing Committee reminds the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa that “worship conducted wholly in the Samoan language” already takes place in the Pacific Islanders Congregational Church throughout New Zealand.

The Standing Committee repeats its view that the breakaway from the P.I.C.C. by *Fuimaono* and by *Fonoti* was wrong. This opinion was given by Mr. S.C. Ennor and the Rev. H.G. Nicholas to your *savali*, before *Poasa* and *Etene* encouraged the breakaway group with an act of recognition.

The Standing Committee cannot affiliate into the Congregational Union of New Zealand a group which broke fellowship with one of the Churches of the Union (C.U.N.Z. letter from Secretary Bruce Shearer, 7th August 1964).

In a report by the C.C.C.S. Mission to New Zealand the reasons for the breakaway were sought. The following is an excerpt from that report.

During the welcoming ceremony, we informed *Fuimaono* of the purpose of our mission and that we would like to meet with all the Samoans who have left the P.I.C.C. *Fuimaono* then told us to wait until evening as most of the Congregation are at work. At 6.00pm that evening, we met with a crowd of 200 Samoans. I led the Service. We bowed our heads before God in prayers and asked for His Holy Spirit to be with us and to show us the right path to take. After the prayers, I then asked the Congregation why they left the P.I.C.C. The answer they gave was they wanted to do what they felt was right. They went on to say that they did not just left like, to coin a phrase a shoal of fish at night, they resigned properly and all the dues they had earned on the dedication of the P.I.C.C. new church building, they left them all with the P.I.C.C. for its future development. They went on to say, that they wanted to worship like their forefathers did and what their brothers and sisters do in Samoa. I gave them a fatherly advice and I asked them to reconsider if what they are doing is what they really want. We did not reach a decision that night and we ended our gathering with a prayer offered by the Secretary, *Etene Saaga*.

On 22nd October 1963, we again met with the same crowd at the same time in the Hall where they held their church services. I again led the service and we prayed for the Holy Spirit to make the right decision for us. After the prayers, I again asked the Congregation to tell us the real reason why they left the P.I.C.C. The answer they gave was none at all. I again asked – How is your relationship with the Samoans in the P.I.C.C. since you left? The answer they gave was – our relationship is good and we are respecting one another. I asked how is your relationship with Rev. Challis and *Leua*?

Answer: When we left the P.I.C.C., *Leua* was in Samoa. We still kept in contact with him since he returned. However, Rev. Challis had started to show signs of disappointment to us. This is evidenced by the fact that he refused our request for a Pastor to conduct our services on Sundays. Our request was based on the understanding that he has Pastors *Siaosi*, *Tavita* and *Fareti* to spare and one of them could easily be appointed to conduct our Sunday Services. Now you have arrived, Rev. Challis has not yet agreed to send someone to conduct our Services. I asked: who is conducting your Church services on Sundays? Answer: We have been looked after by the Ministers of the Methodist Church. Now that Rev. *Peteru*, *Ekepati*, *Fogavai* and *Ropeti* are here, as you can see, they take turns in conducting our Sunday Service.

The exact reasons for the breakaway church is explained in the following excerpt from the same letter above:

We would now wish to inform the mission of the real reason we broke away from the P.I.C.C. Firstly, we would like our services to be conducted solely in the Samoan language. It is true that an hour is allocated for the Samoans in the P.I.C.C. for this purpose but we feel this is not enough. This may be enough for just an ordinary service but for any other special service etc., they give no allowances for those. For these reasons, we feel that it would be in our best interests to establish a branch of the C.C.C.S. in New Zealand to make use of the services of our own ordained Pastors and at the same time, allow us an opportunity to send our own monetary donations direct to our mother church in Samoa for its development. I, *Fuimaono* and my family should not have left the P.I.C.C. because we had donated so much in the development of that Church but that did not stop me from doing what I feel is best for our people in New Zealand. I bear witness before the Mission this was the only reason. This was the reason why we wrote to the Mother Church in Samoa to recognize the Church we have now established. On the question that we should return to the P.I.C.C., our testimony before the Mission, we shall not return to the P.I.C.C. If the Mission should decide not to approve our petition, we would consider other means as we have been looked after by the Methodist Ministers up to this point in time....

(report by *F. Poasa FT* (Leader of Mission), *E. Sa'aga* (Secretary).

Translation by *Utumakatona Nofoa Petana*, Chief Translator of Legislative Assembly of W. Samoa).

Obviously, the movement away from P.I.C.C. in 1963 was a major move based on the need for guaranteeing cultural security and ensuring that the Samoan language and culture was made a priority for the first and second generation to follow. The breakaway started a deluge of similar C.C.C.S. churches being established throughout N.Z. and up until now has exceeded the number of P.I.P.C. churches by about 10 to 1.

The spirit of Samoan independence is another contributing factor. Samoa had recently gained its independence in 1962...A pride in independence which the Samoan migrants brought with them also shaped a desire to form Samoan communities independent of former colonial authorities in New Zealand. Eventually, this led them to form autonomous Samoan churches where they could

worship as they preferred and maintain their *fa'asamoa*. In other words, the Samoans had had enough of the New Zealand governance and opted for institutions governed by their own people as a way of retaining both their identity and Samoan faith, expressed in their language and cultural values (Sila, 2012 #327 p.83).

Ioka suggests that the reason behind *Fuimaono*'s motives of establishing a C.C.C.S. in New Zealand was that the P.I.C. was "too Europeanised". "There was a need for a church to be totally Samoan, so that Samoan identity and cultural values are preserved" (Ioka, 1998).

This threat of Europeanisation spilled over to society also. On the one hand *Ioka* speaks highly of the economic benefits of life in New Zealand and the move away from dependence to independence, and yet on the other hand he feared the young men and women would become "too drunk with the cup of freedom". *Ioka* even went on to suggest that,

The evil of too much social freedom in the mind of elder migrants was the reasoning that such a form of freedom is only satisfied with much spending and extravagant life style. Memory would become short, migrant vision blurred, and the Samoan would become rootless in heart, heartless in mind, and he or she is no longer a Samoan (Ioka, 1998, p.175).

Over the subsequent years more breakaway groups occurred within the P.I.P.C. after the Congregational Church merger with the Presbyterians between 1968 and 1969.

1968 – The Congregational Union of New Zealand merger with Presbyterian Church of New Zealand

In 1968, twenty years after the P. I. C. C. had been established in New Zealand, with parishes in Invercargill, Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington, Tokoroa, and Auckland, the then Board of the Congregational Union of New Zealand met with the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand and agreed to a merger of the two churches. With the merger of the P.I.C.C. with the P.C.N.Z., the P.I.C.C. became known as the Pacific Islanders' Presbyterian Church P.I.P.C. of New Zealand. In 1968 a national union of sorts took place – 28 ministers of the Congregational Union voted to join the Presbyterian Church. All Pacific Island congregations from the Congregational Union joined except for seven parishes. This was referred to by staunch C.U.N.Z. members as a so-called Congregational Union of New Zealand merger with the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand. The staunch Congregationalists today however debate that a merger ever took place but more a take-over and assimilation of the P.I.C.C. occurred. Seven

churches within the C.U.N.Z. remained independent and did not join the so-called merger. Bryce Morris a Congregationalist states clearly the events of that time.

At the 1968 C.U.N.Z. Assembly the Pacific Islanders' Congregational Church with some other Congregational Churches sought leave to resign from the C.U.N.Z. and were admitted into membership with the Presbyterian Church. This premature action taken during a strong movement towards the formation of a Union of the Anglicans, Associated Churches of Christ, Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian denominations, culminating in the vote for Union conducted in 1972 when all sectors except the Anglican Bishops agreed, was effectively a message of support for Union with a larger denomination. The rest is history.

The Pacific Islanders' Church had a number of congregations throughout New Zealand and were an important part of the C.U.N.Z., and their fondly-regarded "Bishop" Rev Bob Challis convinced those ministers to join the Presbyterians and I believe no vote of the church members was undertaken. There was much disappointment among the people of those churches over this decision (Morris, Bryce personal conversation).

The existing Congregational Union was shattered but those remaining within its structure resolved to continue to work for a wider union involving the remaining partners. There were two advantages from this union with the Presbyterian Church. It joined the Council for World Mission, the successor to the London Missionary Society, and so began relating to a family of reformed churches, and it gained its Pacific Island identity. It was, however, to be many years before Pacific Islanders felt at home in the much larger Presbyterian Church and were able to stand tall and contribute to its thinking (Ioka, 1998, pp.178-179).

The perspective of the C.C.C.S. on the merger of the P.I.C.C. with the P.C.N.Z. was -

What began as a natural assertion of the right for self-determination by the C.C.C.S. turned out to reflect the increasing assertion by independent indigenous Churches of the Pacific with their indigenous leadership, of their authority against the traditional authority and leadership of Missionary Societies. The inseparable issues of the appropriate form and manner of Christian witness and ecumenism explains best the opposition by the Samoans who remained in the P.I.C.C. against the beginning of the C.C.C.S. In the final analysis, the broadminded and accommodative ecumenical approach by the E.F.K.S. in solving the complex issues arising from the controversial beginning of the C.C.C.S., because of its founding vision, had more merits than the narrowly construed and culture dismissive ecumenical approach by the P.I.C.C. and the C.U.N.Z. (Ioka, 1998, p.168).

Although this was not considered a potential problem at the time, the merger opened the door towards the ordination of Pacific Island women. This was something that the Pacific Island church had not anticipated. Being Presbyterian meant that the rules of the

General Assembly and the acceptance of women into the ministry of the Word and Sacrament was something that all Presbyterians could aspire towards including women of the Pacific born in both the Pacific Islands and in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Third-Wave church

Pentecostal and Charismatic movement influences

The Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements within the para-church were attracting many Pacific youth. I believe the main attraction lay in the contemporary music, informality, and lack of liturgy or ritual. One of the liberating aspects of the charismatic movement is the concept of individual salvation and a personal one-to-one relationship with Jesus, versus the collective inherited faith of the family. The sense of freedom, the lack of formality, the emotion, and the recognition and acknowledgment that this church provides for young people is for them “an answer to prayer” and a legitimate form of escape. As far as they are concerned, “surely if God is so important to their parents, then they shouldn’t mind when their children say they love God too,” the only difference being that they want to worship God in a church of their own choosing.

Not only does the third-wave Pentecostal/Charismatic church affirm their individuality, it also assimilates their Samoanness into a melting pot of cultureless, look- and act-alike community of faith. The *fa’asamoa* and the diverse relationships within it become discarded as a burden to one’s individual and spiritual growth. In this way the individual is freed to make life decisions and choices for him or herself, at the same time that they may be alienated from their biological ties and responsibilities and sometimes from their relationships with parents and extended family.

The evangelical movement in New Zealand has a very colourful history full of dissention and disagreements over doctrine and belief. It struggled with issues over baptism by water and the Holy Ghost as well as the debate over using the Trinitarian Father, Son and Holy Spirit names versus Jesus Baptism which simply, by saying “in Jesus Name”, effectively covered all three parts of the trinity.

The interesting introduction of aggressive evangelism was something that one of the original instigators named Wheeler initiated, but later came to deplore himself. Even the Pentecostal churches refused to be associated with this style of worship. Some referred to it as “warfare praise.” The conflicts and disagreements that emerged had to do with whether these were of “God” or man-made.

The media had field days during many of the evangelistic campaigns, particularly when reporting on 'healing ministries' and describing 'tooth-filling, blind healing, lame-walking' miracles that were taking place. It was even purported that dental records were sought to prove or disprove these events. Opposition to these led to tape recordings being taken into homes, denouncing the Baptism of the Holy Spirit as demonism. People were warned not to come as this was of the devil (Revival News, October 1962 p.3).

Manfred Ernst considers the new evangelical-right movements as perpetuating the "black skin, white masks" concept, the reproduction of western orientated values and ideas. He states that "it is well known that the lower classes or oppressed especially who are longing for social advance, orient themselves according to values and standards of the ruling classes" (Ernst, 1994, p.279). Missionaries were always considered the ruling classes in Samoa; they were much more accepted within the villages than their Samoan counterparts. They represented new knowledge and wisdom compared to the local knowledge and wisdom of their Samoan ministers.

⁴Youth challenges within the P.I.P.C.

Another development of this time was the "Y.W.A.M. (Youth with a Mission) phenomena which many of the Newton P.I.C. young people were instantly attracted to. The new expression of worship and song and dance was the main attraction and the message of personal salvation and individual faith seemed to challenge the inherited faith of church and family that these young people had grown up with.

These two influences alone presented the P.I.P.C. with a huge challenge, to accept these trends or the challenge to ostracise and risk losing these young people. The Newton Church chose to accept these new challenges. As a result, today many of these young people are now leaders and ministers of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand who have been theologically trained at the then Knox Theological College in Dunedin and have been ministers for over thirty years.

⁴ The majority of this chapter has been recorded as a result of my work as Secretary and youth worker within the P.I.P.C. church, and so much of this anecdotal and is not referenced as it is my recollection and analysis of the way things were.

What of the migrant churches and the role they have to play in New Zealand? Perhaps we might say that the further away something is, the more precious it becomes. The fear of losing something dear to one's heart results in one choosing to cling to it more tightly. The *fa'asamoa* has achieved this status in New Zealand, the United States, Hawaii and recently Australia. The place where the *fa'asamoa* continues to thrive is in the Samoan churches of these migrant communities. In New Zealand alone, over one hundred Samoan churches have been established within the last fifty years. Although these churches claim their roots in Samoa, many of them have adapted to the demographic, economic, socio-political expectations and demands of the New Zealand lifestyle. Samoans in New Zealand have moved from an open house with no walls to a private, nuclear, and insular culture. Obviously, the preceding generations were going to develop understandings and values different from those of the homeland, coupled with implications of what it meant to be a migrant in a first-world society.

The Bible class and young people of Newton P.I.C. were free to express their faith with contemporary music and had a monthly youth service on Sunday nights to which youth groups from all over Auckland were invited to attend. They were ahead of the times in terms of breaking away from the tradition and cultural constraints of worship Pacific Island-style. Some of the suburban churches, particularly the one that I attended, forbade their young people from attending these youth services as our minister believed that the charismatic theology expressed by these young people was a bad influence on their youth.

According to Reverend Leuatea Sio, the early Pacific church here in Auckland was a haven for many Pacific islanders coming here for work away from their families in the Pacific.

“We did not exclude anyone for any reason and we allowed ourselves to be open to the societal changes and cultural conflicts that our people were confronted with to build our ministry upon. Never in my history of ministry did I ever discourage my young people from exploring new forms of ministry and mission. The Youth with a Mission flourished from our parish in the early 70's. Other P.I.P.C. ministers and their churches frowned on our young people because they were allowed to express themselves openly and freely as charismatic believers” (Sio, 1992 personal conversation Tirohanga).

Establishment of (P.I.C.N.Y.C.) Pacific Island Church National Youth Committee

In 1980 the First Pacific Island Church National Youth Committee (P.I.C.N.Y.C.) met; it was made up of all the Pacific Island Presbyterian Youth Groups throughout New Zealand with its working operations administered by Auckland youth groups. Its main purpose was to have an annual camp or gathering during the time of the National Conference of the adults and to ensure that youth groups around the country were supported and resourced. It had no power or means to resource groups financially but encouraged youth groups to fundraise throughout the year to attend the national camps. It also existed to encourage the gathering of youth groups around Auckland and its sister churches regionally to meet regularly for worship and sporting activities.

One of the first moves that the P.I.P.C. Auckland churches made in 1990 to support the work of young people within their church was that the P.I.P.C. Auckland Ministers' Association and the Pacific Islanders Committee of the P.C.A.N.Z. agreed to employ a Pacific Island Youth Co-ordinator to work with the Pacific Island young people in Auckland. The Reverend *Muamua* Strickson-Pua was appointed. The following year I was appointed to the position of National Youth Coordinator for the P.C.A.N.Z. Together with Rev. Strickson-Pua and the 1991 National Youth Workgroup under the guidance of *Luamanuvao* Winnie Laban, To'aiga Su'a-Huirua, and Tepatasi Tafili (the Samoan members of the National Youth Workgroup we developed a Training Needs Analysis Workshop and Leadership Training Program, to train our youth workers and youth leaders in the churches. We took this training workshop throughout the main cities of N.Z. Our training was culture-specific and relevant to the socio-economic contexts from which these young people came. Our efforts concentrated on the high unemployment, poverty, and low socio-economic reality that these youth and youth workers lived in and aimed to equip leaders to work effectively within this reality. The main emphasis of our training was not only to teach them skills in Christian education, but more importantly, life skills and awareness programs that equipped them for living. We hoped to encourage pride of national identity and involvement in issues of social justice and empowerment.

The emergence of the Polynesian Panthers

In the 1970's, when jobs began to become scarce, Pacific Islanders were unfairly targeted as over-stayers and were unjustly treated through the early morning Dawn Raids upon Samoan families. Samoans were stopped in the streets to provide

identification and passports; some were arrested and thrown into prisons and others deported home to Samoa.

The 1970's and 1980's was the period of discerning and discovery for the many of this post-war baby-boomer Pacific generation. Within the Newton P.I.P.C. amongst the youth, two major social developments began influencing the way that these young people began to experience life.

Firstly, there was the emergence of a new culture in search of social justice and reform, the Polynesian Panthers. Social support groups like the Polynesian Panther movement emerged at this time in support of Pacific Polynesians but also in protest against the many injustices that they faced within the community. The Polynesian Panther Party was a revolutionary movement founded by New Zealand-born Polynesians on 16 June 1971. The party was explicitly influenced by the American Black Panther Party. Its work – political activism, running food co-ops and homework centres, advocating for tenants and promoting Pacific languages – has been credited as a forerunner for much modern-day community activism (Radio N.Z. 18th June 2016 2.34pm).

The social stereotype casting of their families as “over-stayers”, introduced by the Muldoon-led National Government and the injustices that these young people witnessed and experienced first-hand, either as individuals or to members of their families and church family, gave rise to the Polynesian Panthers out of necessity during this time to try to address some of these injustices. It was often misunderstood as a “gang” but in fact was a social action group created to give voice to the situation of the Pacific people who were often misunderstood, misquoted and mistreated both in the public and private arenas.

The establishment of the Pacific Island Synod

When the Pacific Island Synod was mooted as a new way forward within the P.C.A.N.Z. where ethnic-specific Pacific Island groups would have their own independence there were mixed feelings amongst many Presbyterians as to whether it would be a step backwards towards cultural captivity or a step forward looking for new ways of being. It was originally piloted by the Presbyterian church, and after two years was launched as a Synod in its own right, with the same powers of a Presbytery. At the 2018 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, the

Synod made a recommendation that they now be regarded as a Pacific Presbytery and no longer a Synod. This was voted on unanimously.

The Pacific Island Synod's Mission

To equip and empower Pacific peoples in Christian worship and Christian principles so they are enabled to promote, encourage and coordinate Christ's mission in New Zealand.

The following recommendations were taken out of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand Book of Order 2012.

Recommendations

That the General Assembly, recognising its commitment to the embodiment of the bicultural and multicultural Church within the Presbyterian Church and the unity of all Christians, take steps to give the Pacific Island Synod the powers of a court.

That General Assembly nominates a special committee to implement the recommendation that the Pacific Island Synod become a court of the Presbyterian Church and recommend to General Assembly 2012 any subsequent changes that may be necessary to the Book of Order to provide the Pacific Island Synod with the required powers to work effectively as a court of the Church.

That the General Assembly, in appointing a special committee, should include people from within the Pacific Island Synod.

The Pacific Island Synod is a recognized national body of the Presbyterian Church, a strand, within the wider mat of the Presbyterian Church.

“We are a weaving together of five constituent groups that continue to grow and develop in its mission to serve God as Pacific people, wherever we have been placed. Each ethnic group is unique and has its own character. We rejoice in the richness of our cultural diversity. In attempting to make our vision practical, as well as keeping in mind the overall mission of Synod – that of ‘equipping and empowering Pacific peoples in Christian worship and Christ’s mission in New Zealand, the Pacific and globally’. The Pacific Island Synod values and encourages each ethnic group to organise themselves and take charge of their strategies to true unity amid diversity and unity without uniformity. This is a gift Synod celebrates.”

The five constituent Synod groups are: Samoan, Niuean, Tokelau/Tuvalu, Cook Island, English Speaking Group (E.S.G.) (since 2015, E.S.G. no longer part of the P.I. Synod).

The decision to stay with Presbytery or become a PI Synod minister or church

Pacific Island Presbyterian Churches and ministers were given the task of considering whether they wished to remain Presbyterian or to come under the auspices of the Pacific Island Synod. This was a difficult decision for many churches to make. Some were suspicious of the Pacific Island Synod and many felt uncomfortable, that it was like taking a step backwards. So the choice to remain in the Presbytery or join the Synod was done democratically for each Pacific Island parish. Surprisingly some of the larger Pacific island churches voted not to become part of the Synod. Their ministers, on the other hand, had to make a choice to follow the parish or make an individual choice. Most ministers followed the will of the parish. For those Pacific ministers serving in *palagi* Parishes it was up to them which Court they would join. Many of these ministers opted to stay with the Presbytery. It is possible to attend both Presbytery and the Pacific Island Synod but one would not have voting rights at the other.

The dynamic of the English-speaking group

The English-Speaking Group (E.S.G.) originally was established in Newton P.I.C. for the purpose of providing a voice and an active role in the Pacific Island Church (P.I.C.) for the members of the P.I.C. generation (many of whom were the first-generation New Zealand-born children of immigrant foundation members of the Church). Many of this generation grew up in a proudly Pacific Church but increasingly communicating in the English language, socialising and worshipping in the context of people in Aotearoa New Zealand. It has through the years become increasingly bi-lingual as new generations of Pacific youth have begun learning their mother tongue.

When the mother church in Newton in Auckland opted not to become part of the Pacific Island Synod, the English-Speaking Group was deleted from the Synod as a group; although it was meant to be represented nationally by the other churches, only Newton managed to find members from within their own group. As a result of Newton not becoming part of the Pacific Island Synod, the English-Speaking Group disappeared from within the Pacific Island Synod as none of the other ethnic groups had E.S.G.'s within them. Many of the ethnic groups feared that the E.S.G. group would hinder the continuity of ethnic languages amongst the second and third generations. The fact that this group had a forum to voice their opinions also meant to the ethnic groups the "death" of their native languages for future generations. So, unfortunately, it was discouraged and it is the reason why E.S.G. groups did not emerge from the various

parishes and ethnic groups. As a result there are now only 4 constituent members of the Pacific Island Synod - Samoan, Cook Island, Niuean and Tokelau/Tuvalu. This is a great loss to the E.S.G. and ultimately to the Synod as a whole but I am not sure they are actually aware of this loss. When the E.S.G. was in full operation it was a force to be reckoned with and many professional Pacific Island members who were members of the E.S.G. played prominent roles in the running of the Pacific Island Synod.

Schisms

The term schism within the context of this chapter can be defined as 1: division, separation; also: discord, disharmony a schism between political parties. 2a: formal division in or separation from a church or religious body: the offense of promoting schism (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/schism>).

Later schisms within the P.I.P.C. church occurred for different reasons, not so much for the retention of culture but more to do with economic injustices felt by those who left. For the people of the first-wave Pan-Pacific churches who experienced a type of reformation by way of schism, they had not necessarily deliberately sought to look for new options to consider. It was not a conscious decision to end their relationships with their existing church but grew out of a necessity to vote with their feet as a stand against their understanding of what was inconsistent or corrupt within the church. They did not seek to change for the sake of reformation but change for the sake of ridding themselves of unjust and corrupt practices within the church. In some ways this can be compared with Luther's publication of his Ninety-Five Theses considering indulgences on October 31, 1517. Each of Luther's theses represented a scholarly claim that challenged the validity and effectiveness of papal indulgences (Kittelsohn, 2016, p.66).

(Thesis 37) Any true Christian whatsoever, living or dead, participates in all the benefits of Christ and the church; and this participation is granted to him by God without letters of indulgence (Kittelsohn, 2016, p.68).

People were making a stand against economic practices within the church which put works ahead of God's grace, that someone was saved by the amount of work they carried out rather than just saved by the grace of God alone. The Pan-Pacific churches struggled with this idea that one's faith was measured by economic contribution and not by faith and faith alone. When clergy overstepped their boundaries and made economic decisions affecting the local parishioners, without first seeking their opinions, a sense of moral injustice prevailed as a consequence. Reformation evolved out of a sense of justice and new churches were formed from these schisms that sought to replicate the

“ideal” church but over time continued to struggle with the same issues they sought to free themselves from.

Samoan etiquette revolves around *fa'asamoa* the Samoan way of life. Even when a group of people become a church, even though they may be worshipping with other cultures and ethnic groups, the *fa'asamoa* is inherent in their being. When a Samoan minister challenges the status quo it is common for a group of parishioners to support him in his stance regardless of whether he is right or wrong. When Samoans become unhappy with the way things are governed or occurring they will freely express themselves as to the way they would like to see things happen. Often as a result a split may occur and two opposing sides will emerge. When the split cannot be reconciled a schism occurs and a breakaway group is often the outcome and people leave, voting with their feet when there is no way forward.

The Pacific Island church both as Congregational and Presbyterian experienced five main schisms over its 50-year history.

According to Berry regarding Acculturation strategies,

most clearly, people may sometimes choose the Separation option; but when it is required of them by the dominant society, the situation is one of segregation. Similarly, when people choose to Assimilate, the notion of the Melting Pot may be appropriate; but when forced to do so, it becomes more like a Pressure Cooker. In the case of Marginalisation, people rarely choose such an option; rather they usually become marginalised as a result of attempts at forced assimilation (Pressure Cooker) combined with forced exclusion (Segregation); thus no other term seems to be required beyond the single notion of Marginalisation (Berry, 1997 p.10).

Second Schism

One of the newly established churches out in South Auckland enjoyed many years of harmony and friendly fellowship. With the change of minister, new ways of operating and different ideas around accountability appeared which were not acceptable to the whole congregation. Samoan congregations operate on a consensus type of governance, the concept of “*soalaupule*” where everyone has an opportunity to express their views during meetings and discussions. All matters pertaining to finance were brought to the meetings, were discussed openly, then voted on, and where consensus could be met without a vote taking place, this was also an option.

This particular schism came about when the new minister entered into a private conversation with another member from the mother church in Newton and an agreement was made over a sum of money that the new minister pledged on behalf of his congregation towards a fund-raising venture. No consultation was carried out with his own congregation. Some of his congregation were surprised at this and expressed their disapproval. What eventuated is that some people sided with the new minister, whereas others vehemently disagreed and a stand-off occurred whereby each stood their ground on their particular stance. The tension escalated and the congregation could not reach a resolution. As a consequence, the dissenting side were all stripped of their eldership roles. Presbytery was called in to seek a resolution, and in the end, they handed the matter back to the church to seek resolutions from within their own groups. The outcome that the resolution reached was that the two groups go their separate ways as a mutual resolution to stay together was not forthcoming.

The final outcome was that the dissenters, representing almost 50% of the congregation, would leave with their own minister and form their own church outside of the present church building and fellowship.

This represented a second-wave of movement away from the traditional Samoan church of a suburban Pacific Islanders Presbyterian Parish. The breakaway group partnered up with another parish and co-shared their facilities until such time as they decided they were financially stable enough to pursue their own independent church-building project. The Cook Islanders who had left with this group did not feel able to contribute to such a major project so did not go with them but stayed behind at their new church.

The project the breakaway group had entered into was a million-dollar venture at the time and one which they did not necessarily have the funds for. However, they stepped out in faith and put a million dollar winning bid on the auction to purchase a whole school complex complete with church and classrooms and expansive land. They established a weekly community-driven bingo night and within the timeframe given by the bank, they were able to eventually pay off the mortgage they had committed themselves to.

They have established themselves as a wave-two South Auckland Pacific Island Presbyterian Church in their own right and have become well established.

Third Schism

Within the mother church a new minister had taken up residence and enjoyed a successful ministry with his new parish. However, a few years later he was accused by two women of sexual assault. Two church commissions were conducted and he was tried by the Presbyterian Church Court. His group of supporters were adamant regarding his innocence and so supported him throughout the whole process. At the end of the two separate commissions the minister was found guilty on both charges and as a result was defrocked and expelled from the Presbyterian church. He was no longer allowed to practise as a minister. He took this to mean as a “Presbyterian minister” and went his own way and established an independent church that had no accountability to any other church governance. A substantial group of followers who were strong and active leaders within the Samoan congregation left in protest with him and they went on to form this new independent church for themselves. This group consisted of a number of elders and strong members of this church and their departure was felt greatly by the parish. Another schism has occurred within that breakaway fellowship.

Fourth Schism

A union parish working under the umbrella of the Methodist and Presbyterian churches employed a Samoan minister to replace the outgoing minister who had retired from the parish. The retired minister served over twenty years within this parish but was employed under a separate contract to that of the union parish contract which would normally employ a minister for up to 7-10 years within that parish. The new minister thought that he too was employed under a similar contract that did not have an expiry date of up to 10 years. When his 10 years were up the union questioned his wanting to stay on. His group of Samoan supporters rallied behind him and took the matter to the church. The outcome was in favour of the union and he was asked to leave and vacate the parish. He did so reluctantly but took almost 50% of the congregation with him in the process. They did not go quietly and sued for 50% of everything including church buildings, chattels and equipment. In 2016 they lost the court case and appealed this decision which they lost again.

In this schism, one half of the multicultural church is working through their dilemma leaning on the Presbyterian Book of Order to assist them, whilst the other half, the Samoan breakaway group, is waiting to gain access to 50% of everything. In 2018 this

group finally left the premises and now worship at another Presbyterian church as a ethnic specific Samoan group.

One of the second-generation participants comments:

“Taking a while for things to unravel. 303 members 70 families, they say they are entitled to the other half of this church. We have asked for reconciliation talks and every time they have said no. 3 people got up to speak on behalf of the 70 families. We started to see things disappearing, the whole catering room is empty, plates 300 dinner plates all gone. Mini lectern that is used for communion and sound cables all gone. Changed locks upstairs but kept downstairs as it belongs to them. When locks got changed called their lawyer and two weeks later a court order was slapped on us. Court order demands that they have full rights to this church. They won’t comply with the book of order. It’s not about ownership it’s about putting things right. People coming to church on an anger basis but not from a God basis. Split down the middle is the loyalty a fighting cause or a God cause. *Failauga*’s (lay preachers) have stepped up to lead services.

“There are families here that are split, sisters and brothers are split. When our service went on a bit longer the other group were banging on the window, our mum got head butted. They were yelling at us to hurry up. The minister who was leading us that day got down on her hands and knees and begged them to stop, and prayed for peace.”

Fifth Schism

Moving from worshipping as a wave-one Presbyterian Congregation to becoming a wave-two Samoan Pacific Islander’s Church.

Many Pacific Island churches merged with the Presbyterians in 1969. However, after a time many split away and became independent Pacific Island parishes. One parish in particular broke away from the *palagi* congregation to worship as a Samoan congregation due to theological differences; the tension between the two ministers was obvious when worshipping together in combined events. The *palagi* parish had moved from being a traditional conservative worshipping community to a very charismatic congregation and encouraged baptisms in the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. The Samoan congregation, in particular the Samoan minister, struggled with their theology and eventually encouraged a split away to form their own separate congregation whilst remaining on the same premises.

This theological difference is a common reason for dissent amongst church groups.

When one moves from a collective faith to an individual faith focussing on oneself this goes against the collective nature of being Samoan or Pacific as there is no “I” in collective family ownership or responsibility. When one is encouraged to enter into an

individual relationship with Jesus Christ and have a personal encounter with the Holy Spirit then one becomes responsible for oneself and accountable only to God. How an individual continues to express that faith will have implications for their families and their on-going relationships, given that anyone believing outside of this dynamic will be judged accordingly, in that a collective faith lacks authenticity in salvific terms. In other words, unless one has a personal intimate relationship with Jesus Christ one is not really saved; salvation can only happen when one enters into this intimate relationship with Christ. One cannot believe on behalf of a family. Each individual has to experience that salvation for themselves.

Every church that experiences a schism often results in pain and struggle and both the groups that depart and those that stay are left with unresolved issues and also emotional feelings. In this particular case families split and reconciliation between the two parties was not forthcoming. When the minister is directly involved with one of the factions there is no pastoral care and oversight for one of the parties and this can be very difficult and painful.

Summary

Within this chapter I explored the development of the church in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand from the Pacific Islander's church perspective. It provides the background to the context in which the church emerged, giving a better understanding of the dynamics and various challenges that people were faced with when addressing the different conflicts and struggles that arose within the churches. It also described the first schism, the merger of the Congregational church with the Presbyterians to become the P.I.P.C. It looked at the dynamic of youth within the P.I.P.C and then went on to describe subsequent schisms within the P.I.P.C. church over time.

Chapter 5 Research Design and Methodology and Methods of Data Collection

This chapter introduces the research design and methodology used in this study in the gathering and analysing of data.

As noted there is little research on the topic of Pacific or even Samoan churches and the movement of peoples in and out and between different churches and denominations. Even Western-based research models only tell part of the story and not necessarily from a Pacific perspective. So this research is pioneering both in taking a three generational perspective thus seeking to unearth the dynamics associated with the transitional movement from the Samoan Congregational/Presbyterian ‘first-wave’ church of origin.

A qualitative approach through a Pacific worldview was the best for this study as it allowed the participants to share their perspectives whilst sharing their journeys.

This chapter is divided into three parts. First the researcher’s philosophical worldview is outlined looking at the Pacific worldview as captured in the *Fonofale* model. Secondly qualitative research design is detailed followed by part three, where the data collection method is explained concluding with some specific reflections. This chapter will be divided in to three parts.

Part One: Pacific world-view

Given that this is a Pacific/Samoan research project, it is important that the study elaborates and applies both a Pacific World view and methodological approach. The Samoan world-view embraces both pre-Christian and Christian perspectives. The monotheistic God Tagaloa and the Christian God Yahweh are interwoven in the Samoan understanding of the aetiology of creation.

Elements of Spirituality – The Creator God/ Social – People and Land Creation

Tagaloa created through the power of his word, and by the mediumship of his son and daughter. He began with the world, the land and sea, the living things, and then humans both men and women whom he endowed with souls, affections, wills and intelligence. He also erected the lesser gods as his agents in the world (Taase, 1995, p.85).

The Samoans believed that the *agaga*, “the soul” or “spirit” would leave the body when a person passed away. If a person died of unnatural causes, the *agaga* would

remain wandering on earth, haunting the living until it was freed by rituals performed by the living. The souls of those who departed naturally, however, immediately embarked upon their journey to the land of the spirits at *Falealupo*, on the western end of *Savaii* (Taase, 1995, p.63).



Figure 2. Pacific World View Indigenous Reference, 2017

Relationship between the elements of the Pacific World view – Harmony.

Building relationships is essential to undertaking successful Pacific research. The essence of *Va Fealoaloa'i* recognizes that people are sacred. Protocols and etiquette define how relationships between people are to be conducted to ensure that personal and collective well-being is maintained.

To understand the 'Samoan self' is to appreciate its core relational nature. According to Tamasese et al.,

The nature of the Samoan person is that of a relational being: It is difficult because there is no such thing as a Samoan person who is independent (of others). You cannot take a Samoan out of the collective context. I cannot say that I am a person, just me; (because) then I will be nothing without my other connection.

The idea that a person can be an individual unto him/herself is a new concept which was introduced with Christianity. Christianity introduced the notion that one looked to oneself first. The Samoan belief is that in need, we look to each other. You cannot prosper on your own, by yourself. The self is identity and *tofi* [responsibilities, heritage and duties]. The Samoan self was described as having meaning only in relationship with other people, not as an individual. This self could not be separated from the 'va' or relational space that occurs between an individual and parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles and other extended family and community members (Tamasese, K., Peteru, C., Waldegrave, C., & Bush, A. 2005).

***Fonofale* model – A Samoan holistic world-view**

The *Fonofale* model was created by Fuimaono Karl Pulotu-Endemann as a Pacific Island model of health. The concept of the Samoan *fale* or house is used as an image to describe a Pacific view of important factors in healthy development.

I have chosen to use the *Fonofale* model as my theoretical research framework because it best captures the holistic view of the nature of the *fa'asamoa* and how it is woven into the fabric of Samoan society not only as a metaphorical *fale* but also as a metaphorical person. The *Fonofale* model best acknowledges, captures and integrates the distinctive elements characteristic of an over-arching Pacific worldview.

All components of the *fale* integrate to form a continuum that is metaphorically connected physically as well as mentally and spiritually. This model clearly represents the nature of the *fa'asamoa* and its relationship with the person, the family and the village. All is connected and linked to one another, one cannot exist in totality without the other. The roof cannot exist without the *pou*'s, the foundation needs the shelter of the roof, to construct a *fale* without one of these elements would be unbalanced and incomplete.

In the *Fonofale* health research model the Samoan *fale* is used to symbolise the holistic nature of the research process. The middle post of the *fale* represents the person, individual or group. However, the individual does not stand alone but is grounded in the family which in turn is sheltered by the cultural values and beliefs comprising the spiritual, physical, mental and other dimensions. The values are symbolised by the four posts (*pou*). In addition, the family sits and is influenced by the wider contexts of environment (resources), concepts of time (the past, the present and the future) and space (location) (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2017, pg.84).



Figure 3. The Fonofale Model

The roof represents cultural values and beliefs that are the shelter for life.

The foundation of the *Fonofale* represents the extended family.

The *pou* (poles). Between the roof and the foundation are the four *pou*, or posts. These *pou* not only connect the culture and the family but depend on each other. The *pou* are:

- **spiritual**

This dimension relates to the sense of wellbeing which stems from a belief system that includes either Christianity or traditional spirituality relating to nature, language, beliefs and history, or a combination of both.

- **physical**

This dimension relates to physical wellbeing.

- **mental**

This dimension relates to the health of the mind, which involves thinking and emotion as well as behaviours expressed.

- **other**

This dimension relates to variables that can directly or indirectly affect health such as, but not limited to, gender, sexual orientation, age, social class, employment and educational status.

The *fale* is encased in a cocoon whose dimensions have direct or indirect influence on one another. These dimensions are:

- **environment**

This dimension addresses the relationships of Pacific people to their physical environment. The environment may be a rural or an urban setting.

- **time**

This dimension relates to the actual or specific time in history that impacts on Pacific people.

- **context**

This dimension relates to the 'big picture': the where/how/what and the meaning it has for that particular person or people. It can include factors like the socio-economic or political situation the person is in.

- ***va***

This dimension is the sacred space, the boundary of sacredness. It could perhaps also be viewed as the place of spirituality being sacred as it encompasses the complete context of the *fale* and its surrounding environment. The concept of *va* “the space between not space that separates but space that relates’ has been included. *Va* is the space that connects people with each other, with all other living things, the cosmos and the gods.” It is the way the Pacific people see the world and their lives and how they see the construction of their own reality. Spirituality within the *va* holds it altogether, embraces everything (A Pacific Model of Health: The Fonofale Model, Pacific Cultural Guidelines pp.3- 4).

Pulotu-Endemann refers to the collective (the family) having precedence over the individual and that being part of a collective is a strength. A qualitative investigation into Samoan perspectives on mental health, ‘*O le Taeao Afua*’, stated that the nature of the Samoan person is that of relational being. It is difficult because there is no such thing as a Samoan person who is independent of others. You cannot take a Samoan out of the collective context (Tamasese, Peteru, Waldegrave & Bush, 2005).

The collective reciprocates by supporting and taking care of its members and being able to fulfil one's responsibilities and obligations which impacts on well-being. Where these are able to be met there is a sense of fulfilment but when that is not possible there is a feeling of failure and worthlessness.

The other beauty of the *Fonofale* model is that it takes into consideration Cameron & Quinn's organisation effectiveness framework.

Organizational effectiveness framework

Such a framework includes expectations, collective memories, and definitions that represent a sense of "how things are done around here" that convey to members a further sense of identity within the group (Quinn & Cameron, 1983). In short, organizational culture is the DNA by which an established group operates.

Engaging in this approach was vital for this research for within the context of this research no two churches were the same. Each church had its own rules and regulations and sets of guidelines to do with church, governance, leadership, baptism, death and marriages. There are also general standards and guidelines on what one must do within each of the churches in terms of procedures to maintain these rules and regulations. Some are more formal than others.

Some Pacific Island Presbyterian churches, although they are Presbyterian in name, still operate under the Congregational model today.

Collective versus individual faith

The Pacific world view raises questions of individual versus collective faith. From the perspective of collective faith versus personal faith what and how one believes will determine how one comes to terms with one's collective responsibility and obligations to the family. Traditional church worship is collective and in families a sense of belief and world-view is predominantly shared. The researcher acknowledges that a key vulnerability of using this model is when one wants to explore the "personal faith" outside of the traditional church and enters into a Christian culture which believes that Christianity is an individual and not a collective commitment, then it could lead to thinking that this could mean failure and feelings of worthlessness for the believer if we follow the *Fonofale* model.

When one ventures outside of one's cultural security and pure form world-view, then one will inevitably be inviting new challenges and new cultural ways of thinking and being. The *pou* of the spiritual dimension suggests that Christianity and traditional religion are the two realms within which one may believe spiritually. In my view "other faiths" may also be added as Christianity and traditional religion are no longer the only two religious options that people are exposed to nowadays. It may well be that traditional religion is best characterized as organized religion in the current post-modern context.

Spirituality and the self

Prior to the arrival of the 'good news', Samoa had her gods; each island had its gods; there were gods of districts, gods of villages; families also had their own gods.

In Samoan culture, gods were traditionally embodied in the environment in which people lived and genealogical ties could always be traced back to a god. Despite the change in emphasis following the arrival of Christian missionaries to Samoa, a person's relationship to land, sea, ancestors and God remain central to the Samoan sense of self (Tamasese, K., Peteru, C., Waldegrave, C., & Bush, A. 2005).

Va Fealoaloa'i

The Samoan phrase "*aua le to'ia le va*" means "to maintain the relationship do not step over the boundary of respect between all these multi-layers of hierarchy." The "*va*" literally means invisible gap or boundary which separates. When one unknowingly steps over this "*va*" by speaking when not given permission to, then one is immediately reprimanded with the words "*aua le to'ia le va*". Knowing where the invisible boundaries are is all about knowing one's place within the *fa'asamoa*.

Protocols and etiquette define how relationships between people are to be conducted to ensure that personal and collective well-being is maintained.

Part Two: Research design

In line with my philosophical approach from the Pacific world view, I have used two approaches in my research design: (a) Qualitative approach, (b) Existential Phenomenological approach.

Qualitative approach

A qualitative research study was chosen as the most appropriate research approach for this study because I wanted to ensure the people's voice, their views of their experiences, was recorded. As noted by Sofaer, qualitative methods help provide rich descriptions of phenomena and also capture people's individual views and experiences. Such an approach enhances an understanding of the context of events as well as the events themselves. Thus, qualitative research not only serves the desire to describe; it also helps move inquiry toward more meaningful explanations (Sofaer, 1999, p.1102).

As Rubin and Rubin suggest:

Qualitative researchers focus on depth rather than breadth: they care less about finding averages and more about understanding specific situations, individuals, groups or moments in time that are important or revealing (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p.3).

Qualitative research has been broadly described as:

An approach that allows you to examine people's experiences in detail, by using a specific set of research methods such as in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, observation, content analysis, visual methods, and life histories or biographies (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2011, pp.8-9).

Giacomini commented that qualitative research:

Explores and describes social phenomena about which little is presumed a priori. It interprets and describes these phenomena in terms of their meaning and helps to make sense of these meanings (Giacomini, 2011, p.4).

The qualitative approach I have chosen is the:

Existential Phenomenological approach

Existential phenomenology concerns itself with the experiences and actions of the individual, rather than conformity or behaviour. The individual is seen as an active and creative subject, rather than an object in nature; in other words, the existential person is not merely passive or reactive, subject to environmental influences, but also a purposeful being who has inner experiences and can interpret the meaning of his or her existence and relationships with others in a social world (Jong S. Jun 2008 p.93).

Collingridge and Gantt's (Collingridge & Gantt 2008) existential phenomenological approach fitted my research. This approach as the above quote states, aims to know and experience the way that the participants know it, to understand the meanings they attach

to their experiences, and to capture the essence of a phenomenon as they experience it. Such an approach will be combining with *talanoa*, i.e., face-to-face interviews.

In the study of the phenomenology of religion, “the starting point of phenomenology is the viewpoint of the believer: to interpret and penetrate the inner meaning and the reality of the religious phenomena as understood by the believers themselves. These phenomena had to be grasped in their own authentic significance and value” (Duncan, 1994, p.5).

Research method

I decided on individual interviews because I wanted to hear their stories.

I chose to use Bogdan and Biklen’s in-depth unstructured interviewing approach which align with *talanoa* using open ended questions. Open ended questions allow the participants to answer from their own frame of reference rather than being confined by the structure of pre-arranged questions (Bogdan, 2007. p.114). This enabled informants to express their thoughts more freely

The *talanoa* model gives voice to the participant’s personal opinion and perspective.

Talanoa

Talanoa can be referred to as a conversation, a talk, an exchange of ideas or thinking, whether formal or informal. It is almost always carried out face-to-face. *Tala* means ‘to inform, tell, relate and command’, as well as ‘to ask or apply’. *Noa* means ‘of any kind, ordinary, nothing in particular, purely imaginary or void’ (Vaiote, 2006, p.23).

According to Flores-Palacios who used this method in her Samoan village study:

Talanoa allows for the co-production of knowledge. Participants’ knowledge and experiences are presented in a more authentic way because *talanoa* allows people to tell their stories and incorporate emotion and spirituality. As a researcher, it is essential to be aware, not only of participants’ cultural values and beliefs in sharing and giving, but also to have in-depth knowledge of the norms, practices and custom of the Pacific societies (Flores-Palacios, 2016, p.90).

Sensitiveness of sharing

These many strands of *talanoa* carry with them different expectations around protocol as described in the “*va fealoa’i*” within the *fa’asamoa*. *Talanoa* within the parameters of academic research for this study will carry with it the same expectations of knowing the appropriate times and languages of respect to use when carrying out *talanoa* within

the various church communities, and with the various hierarchies of people that the researcher will be interviewing by age and by gender

Sacred and non-sacred are able to be shared; within the *va fealoaloa'i* there exist *tapu* and *sa* (sacredness) which define by way of etiquette how one ought to relate to the other. There exist such relationships for example between *matai* (titled heads of families and villages) and between brothers and sisters. These relationships are especially sacred (Tamasese, K., Peteru, C. Waldegrave, C., & Bush, A (2005) p.7).

Ah Siu-Maliko highlighted difficulties she had encountered in her research because of the *va fealoa'i*. “In the beginning of this session the two younger women find it hard to have an open and honest discussion because of the presence of the two older women whom they look at as mothers and elders...The older women dominate the discussion without knowing it”. (Ah Siu-Maliko, 1998 p.47)

Within the physical and spiritual domains, there are *tapu* (sacred) areas, the purpose of which is to ensure that human wellbeing is protected and (given prominence, through its sacred nature. For example, a basic premise of cultural protocol is, that it is forbidden (*sa*) to stand in the presence of people (while they are seated). There exist protections around Samoan wellbeing because of the relational arrangements with others (Tamasese K, 2005 p.7).

Each generation separately

Each generation was interviewed separately where desirable, to allow individuals to express themselves freely without the presence of others to hinder their expression.

In order to capture the essence of language and the nuances to do with culture and observation, the use of *talanoa* is the desired methodology for the interview process. Vaioleti advocates that,

participants in a *talanoa* group will provide a challenge or legitimation to one another's stories and shared information. Because *talanoa* is flexible, it provides opportunities to probe, challenge, clarify and re-align. It should create and disseminate robust, valid and up-to-the-minute knowledge because the shared outcome of what *talanoa* has integrated and synthesized will be contextual, not likely to have been already written or subjected to academic sanitization (Vaioleti, 2006, p.26).

I used two iPhones to record the interviews (just in case one malfunctioned) and an open-ended questionnaire which was used as a guide to direct our interview process (see

Appendix C). The participants responded from their own frame of reference and were not limited to the scope of my questioning as the questions were open-ended and they controlled the direction of the conversation. Individual interviewing is synonymous with *talanoa* within the context of this methodology.

Soalaupule (consensus sharing in decision making). Leaders who conduct themselves along the lines of *soalaupule* make decisions after a lengthy process of *soalaupule* which means to debate and share until consensus is arrived at. Implicit in it is the idea of consensus which underpins *matai* systems. Should participants prefer to *talanoa* together then I would apply *soalaupule*.

Sampling

As noted my study focus was Auckland based families across three generations:

Purposive sampling (Teddie & Yu, 2007). My first-generation participants were to be Samoan families who migrated to New Zealand in the 1950's and 1960's. Their children would be the second generation and their grandchildren were the third generation. So it was imperative that I gain the first-generation families.

Recruitment would be through the churches. I would send emails and ask if I could present to churches as appropriate.

I followed the Health Research Council's guidelines in terms of appropriate protocol:

- understanding my role in relation to who the participants are, and within the context of the reality of their social and cultural environments.
- observing the etiquette of language and behaviour appropriate to the place and the participant community.
- working with and seeking advice from members of the participant community on how best to establish and maintain meaningful and functional relationships;
- ensuring that identified points of consultation and feedback are met in a timely and appropriate manner, and
- ensuring that communication enables reciprocation. (HRC, 2004, p.20).

My sample started with what I term first-generation families seven families in total. From there, aims are for a *talanoa* with one of their children and then their children.

Each of the three generational interviews were predominantly carried out separately so as to ensure confidentiality etc.

Following this process I got seven families.

Interview *Talanoa* guidelines prepared

Questions were prepared drawing on the literature review.

Based on the *talanoa*, one-on-one interview model with open-ended questions was used. This enabled the participants to respond freely and to add to the conversation as they felt necessary. The questions were piloted and refined according to discussion shared.

Most of the participants were interviewed in their homes or at mutually convenient places. The interviewer had a set of questions but began by asking the participant to tell their story from the beginning of when they arrived at their first church, or what the earliest memories were that they could recall of their membership in a church.

Areas of enquiry were explained before the interview. Issues of confidentiality and their right to stop the recording should they wish to were also discussed.

Every *talanoa* involved a meet and greet at the beginning and most of the sessions involved a cup of tea and some food prepared for the researcher on arrival. We began with light conversation and then I introduced my topic of research. It was important to bring the participants on board with my research project and introduce a relaxed atmosphere for them to feel safe and comfortable in. In this way any strangeness of the situation was effectively removed. The first question on the questionnaire asked them to begin by sharing their first memories or faith journey story from the beginning, and afterwards I then subconsciously followed the questionnaire as a guide.

Most first and second-generation participants did not need prompting in their responses. However, the third generation did need some prompting and encouragement to respond to the questions asked. This was mostly because of their age. The younger third-generation basically answered the questions asked and didn't really elaborate on their thoughts. One third-generation participant was mono-syllabic and sometimes shrugged his shoulders when he didn't know the answer to a question.

At the end of the interviews all participants were given a *mealofa* (gift) and thanked for their participation and contribution to my research. This was an acknowledgement of

the time, energy and knowledge they shared. The *koha* or *mealofa* were in the form of gift vouchers.

Confidentiality of all participants in this study is maintained by using pseudonyms.

Actual recruitment

- I began by contacting a number of churches to meet with and discuss my research.
- I sent initial emails to four churches and received a reply from two churches. One of the pastors of one church felt that he did not want to participate in my research and did not give reasons. The interesting thing is that two families from his church who had left his particular fellowship were keen to volunteer their participation in my study and so I invited them to participate in this research. In the end I received volunteers who chose to participate in my study, some of whom were from the four churches initially contacted and others who had had former connections to some of these churches but had moved on to worship elsewhere.
- The first families that were invited and who freely volunteered were traditional church goers. Six of these families attended the first-wave church.
- The final sample comprised seven families totalling 27 participants in total. All participants were Samoan, the first generation being born in Samoa along with three second-generation participants and all the rest of the second generation and third generation were New Zealand-born.

AUTEC

Ethics (see appendix)

AUTEC ethics approval was gained and an interview framework was developed and piloted with a family member and adapted for use. A *talanoa* guideline interview schedule was developed.

Data interpretation

Reflexive triangulation

This took place all the way through. The use of reflexive triangulation was the desired approach for my field research. This involved the comparison of data relating to the same phenomenon but deriving from different phases of field work, different points of respondent validation, and the accounts of different participants involved in the setting.

In the case of this study it was hoped that my field research would focus on three specific groups of people to achieve this triangulated approach: (i) First-generation parents, (ii) Second-generation parents, and (iii) third-generation individuals.

Triangulation allows the ability to corroborate to see whether these themes resonate with others. First-generation reflections on church attendance varied markedly from second-generation and third-generation experiences. They were all different in that age, gender and cultural identity separated them. All three generations were able to talk about the church and the impact on their lives, but they differed in terms of talking from a sociological point of view or a theological perspective. First-generation discourses consisted of a lot of tangible examples of what it meant to be a church member, whereas some second-generation discourses had intangible examples which required one to think theologically or spiritually.

Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese states that in Samoan culture there are three perspectives: the person at the top of the mountain; the person at the top of the tree; and the person in the canoe who is close to the school of fish. In any big problem, the three perspectives are equally necessary. The person fishing in the canoe may not have the long view of the person at the top of the tree, but they are closer to the school of fish (Tui Atua, 2008).

The Samoans have always done things the *soalaupule* way (consensus). When the three different perspectives are heard, then a more accurate picture can be attained. One perspective is often not enough. Within this study I have three perspectives of one family and their journey.

Thematic analysis

The data analysis followed Collingridge's methodology by creating a textual representation of the data, identifying themes and patterns and creating a narrative account that describes the people, places, and important objects and social events that define them and give it meaning.

Part Three: Reflections on the research process

Recruitment

This was challenging. I emailed a number of churches and received two responses to my emails: one was a positive response inviting me to attend church on a certain date; he gave me ten minutes to present my study to the congregation. The second response was

a negative answer with no reason, just that he had thought long and hard about my request and felt that this was something he did not want to do.

The first church that gave me time to present my research proposal resulted in three families from that church volunteering to be part of my research, 12 people including two couples. These three families had diverse family histories and backgrounds so provided different perspectives and realities. The other four families were approached purposively to provide a comparative balance between church attendance and experience of all three generations.

Interest

The first generation were quite honoured to accept my invitation to participate after they had volunteered and enjoyed this opportunity as a time to reminisce and reflect on their lives. There was a lot of emotion expressed as people remembered the past and some of the struggles they encountered along the way.

Language

In the Samoan context, the nuances of the Samoan language hold the key to understanding the meaning of important cultural concepts. As well as being the vehicle by which beliefs and values have been transmitted from generation to generation, a person's first language houses their sense of belonging and identity and best explains their world view (Tamasese, Peteru, Waldergrave & Bush, 2005, p.2).

In order to gain a comprehensive view of their experiences, participants were given a choice of language, Samoan or English, and the interviews were conducted in the participant's preferred language. Five chose to speak in Samoan, two in both English and Samoan and nineteen in English. Both English and Samoan languages were used in interviews. This provided opportunities for participants to speak freely in both languages. It provided the researcher with first-hand information in both languages for accurate recording of data in terms of understanding the culture and background of the participants.

All 27 participants were interviewed in the language of their choice, either English or Samoan or both. One advantage of semi-structured interviews is the use of open-ended questions and probing which gave participants the opportunity to respond in their own words. This method was useful because open-ended questions have the ability to elicit

responses that are meaningful, unanticipated by the researcher, and rich and explanatory in nature.

I had intended to do individual interviews but some couples preferred to be interviewed together. It felt appropriate as the couples felt more comfortable sharing their stories together rather than separately. This also happened with some second-generation couples. These interviews can be considered as *talanoa* group interviews as there was more than one person. As already mentioned the concept of *soalaupule* was used here when the couples needed to find a consensus during their interviews with me.

For the first generation most of the interviews were conducted with couples who were free to express themselves both individually and collectively. There was only one situation where a third-generation person was interviewed with her father present because they had both arrived home late at night, and she said it was acceptable for her father to stay and listen.

Translation

Samoan language interviews also posed some challenges in the analysis as the researcher was not always familiar with certain words or phrases that were used by the first-generation speakers as, at the time, the participants were unable to provide the researcher with an equivalent English translation to these phrases. For instance, a participant talked of “*pulepule tu tu*”. This translated as “lack of consultation and/or accountability”. The researcher was not sure which of the two words were more accurate and so used both in the translation. In the context of this situation, the minister involved did not seek the advice of the church when he made a decision involving money. This was not within his jurisdiction but he nonetheless proceeded to involve himself in the church’s financial matters. This crossing of boundaries resulted in a schism within the church where two sides were formed and one side left *en masse* in protest against this *pulepule tu tu*. Translations were provided afterwards when the researcher made enquiries about these terms with a third party. When Samoan interviews were translated into English, this, at times, changed some of the meaning. Sometimes it was noticed that nuances of words that were significant in Samoan, were lost.

Data

I collected the data manually and post-data collection field notes were written within an hour after the interviews. Field notes were an important part of supplementing the interview transcripts in this study. They helped to preserve highlights of the conversations and personal impressions of the participants and their verbal and non-verbal communication in the interview. Listening to the interviews gave varied impressions. Most participants were happy to be involved whereas some third-generation younger participants were happy to oblige and participate after encouragement from their parents. Some of the participants were very animated when sharing their *talanoa* whereas others were quiet and I had to strain my ears to ensure that I heard every word. The Samoan speakers were comfortable and at ease when sharing their accounts. The Samoan-born participants who chose to speak English during their interviews may have been more comfortable speaking Samoan but because they chose to speak English their English language was basic and simple.

Most of the participants were eager to talk and sometimes we flowed in and out of the subject matter with a few distractions here and there. It was interesting interviewing second-generation participants because as a second-generation person myself, I could relate to a lot of what the participants had to say and sometimes it brought back many reminiscences to me.

Due to the fact that I also grew up within the P.I.C. church I knew or had heard about some of the incidents that participants talked about over the years, and so in some ways it was also walking down memory lane for me as well as enlightening me on the actual events that emerged over the years that had been just rumour to me previously.

All in all, the interview processes went well and I believe they were a reflective time for most of the participants.

Table 3. Participants by 7 Families

	Generation 1		Generation 2		Generation 3	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1 Avondale	A1		A2	A2a		A3
2 Kelston		K1	K2			K3
3 Mt Roskill	MR1		MR2			MR3
4 New Lynn		N11	N12	N12a	N13	
5 Glendene	G1	G1a	G2	G2a		G3
6 Newton	N1	N1a		N2	N3	
7 Otara	O1	O1a		O2	O3	

13 Males and 14 females

Example: G1 and G1a = couple. In each case the “1” is the husband and the “a” is the wife.

As noted three families of generation one and two families of generation two preferred to be together. Generation three were all individual.

There was one *talanoa* by generation. The families selected who was to participate from generations two and three.

Language of *Talanoa*: All first generation was conducted in a mix of Samoan and English language, second and third generation were all conducted in English.

At the time of the study each of the generations seemed happy where they were and were not thinking of moving on to another church.

Summary

This chapter has described the research design and methodology used in this research. I have described the Pacific world-view and the *fono fale* theoretical framework as the basis which underpins this whole research. The chapter explained the choice of process used to collect data and analyse it, and it also described the *talanoa* processes that happened with each participant and how the data from these interviews was then used within this research.

This worked well with my participants both Samoan-born and New Zealand-born. All participants approached their interviews humbly and respectfully and appreciated the line of open ended questions presented to them. Once the first question was asked there was a continual flow of information from then on. The participants seemed to enjoy this opportunity to reflect and remember their early days within the church. In retrospect I

could have included questions on their age and length of time in New Zealand but felt at the time that this was not necessary.

The process of data collection and analysis was a privileged journey. It was a powerful journey listening to the narratives and stories of the participants and then trying to incorporate these stories into the text of my research whilst at the same time retaining the integrity of their stories and experience. It was important to honour the voices of the participants in this research.

Chapter 6 Patterns of Movement

The next three chapters, chapters 6, 7 and 8, each present findings to the three research questions. This chapter presents responses to question 1.

Are Samoans leaving the traditional first-wave church and if so what are the emerging trends and patterns associated with this?

This chapter presents participants' movements if any beginning with the first generation through to second and third generation. As noted this data was collected through one-on-one face-to-face *talanoa* where participants talked openly about where they had worshipped in New Zealand. As noted, there was one *talanoa* per generation and families selected who would *talanoa*. Notably, *talanoa* were carried out in both the Samoan and English language and a mix of these.

This chapter focus is on movement. Factors influencing movement (question 2) and the dynamics of movement are presented in the next chapter. As noted, when they migrated to New Zealand the first generation of all the study families began worshipping at a traditional first-wave Pan-Pacific church, namely, Newton Pacific Islanders Congregational Church P.I.C.C. (six families) and the New Lynn Congregational Union church (one family). For this study I have labelled both the Newton P.I.C.C. church and New Lynn Congregational Union church together as first-wave churches.

The chapter is in three parts. In part one I present patterns of movement by generation and by church followed by family case studies of these movements in part two. The chapter concludes with a short critique of the churches participants moved to.

Part One: Patterns of movement

This sets out the total patterns of movement by family and by generation across the three waves of church namely Wave-One, Pan-Pacific/traditional; Wave-Two, ethnic-specific; and an open category movement, Wave-Three, which represents contemporary and Pentecostal churches. The length of time participants stayed at each church is presented in part two of this chapter.

Table 4. Movements by Generation

Families	1st Generation	2nd Generation	3rd Generation	Movement by generation, by wave
Glendene (5 talanoa)	Moved 3 x	Moved 4 x * #	Moved 2 x *	Wave 1 to wave 2, wave 1 Wave 1, wave 2, wave 3, wave 3 Wave 3 to wave 3
New Lynn (4 talanoa)	Moved 5 x	Moved 4 x * #	Moved 3 x #	Wave 1, wave 2, wave 2, wave 2 back to wave 1 Wave 1, wave 2, wave 2, wave 1 Wave 1, wave 3, wave 4
Mt Roskill (3 talanoa)	Moved 2 x	Moved 3 x #	Moved 3 x *	Wave 1, wave 2 Wave 2, wave 3, wave 3 Wave 2, wave 3, wave 3
Otara (4 talanoa)	Moved 3 x	Moved 3 x #	Moved 2 x *	Wave 1, wave 1, wave 2 Wave 1, wave 2, wave 3 Wave 2, wave 3
Kelston (3 talanoa)	Moved 4 x	Moved 4 x #	Moved 2 x *	Wave 1, wave 1, wave 2, wave 1 Wave 2, wave 2, wave 2, wave 1 Wave 2, wave 1
Avondale (4 talanoa)	Moved 5 x	Moved 2 x	Moved 2 x #	Wave 1, wave 2, wave 2, wave 1 Wave 1, wave 1 Wave 1, wave 2
Newton (4 talanoa)	No move	No move	No move	Wave 1

Note that in this table

*Indicates that generations two and three moved with their parents and so they may not have been directly involved in the decision to move.

#Indicates that generation moved independently from parents

A reminder: as noted, all of the first generation were Samoan-born participants, three of the second generation were also born in Samoa and arrived in New Zealand at an early age and married N.Z.-born Samoan partners. The partners of all participants were Samoan apart from one being married to a Niuean. The rest of the second-generation participants were New Zealand born. All the third-generation participants were single apart from one being married and all were born in New Zealand.

Patterns of movement by the 27 participants

One can see from table 4 that there was movement in five of the six families which began worshipping at the first-wave church and across the different generations. The Newton family are the only family not to have moved and they still worship at their first-wave church.

Of the actual participants interviewed 23 of the 27 participants had moved. However, eight of the total participants who had moved at some time, returned to a wave-one multicultural church similar in nature to the Pan-Pacific church. One participant, NL3, no longer attended church at the time of the study and two others shared an uncertainty about whether or not they would move (MR3 and O3).

The most movement was by generation one which moved from wave-one Pan-Pacific to wave-two ethnic-specific churches. The next was generation two which moved from ethnic-specific wave-two churches to wave-three contemporary and Pentecostal churches.

Brief review of factors influencing movement by generation

Notably, some of this movement from the central-city wave-one was a result of families moving out from urban Auckland (where most of them landed) to suburban areas.

Another factor influencing movement was a family member being clergy.

For the first-generation participants in New Lynn and Avondale, both moved churches five times, and both had aspects of their moves which were determined by a family member being in the ordained ministry and therefore being called to move on or going to support a family member by attending the same church as them. Generation two of Kelston moved four times and in his *talanoa* he stated that this was because his father was a minister and he moved to support him in his ministry.

Three second-generation participants moved four times each and this was largely due to the fact that they had married and moved to join their partners in their church or left with their non-Samoan partner to find a neutral church of their own.

Third-generation first moves were with their parents. They were the participants who moved the least, but this was mainly due to their age. They were not directly involved in the decision of the parents to move the first time as they were too young. The most moves for the third generation were three times. For example, MR3 moved from wave-

two traditional ethnic specific C.C.C.S. to a wave-three contemporary church to another wave-three home church, NL3 moved from wave-one Presbyterian church to wave-three high school para-church to wave four which represents no church. G3 and O3 have ended up in wave-three Pentecostal churches, having moved with their parents. K3, A3 and N3 have remained in wave-one P.I.P.C. and Presbyterian churches.

The third generation came into their first churches by virtue of their birth and they moved with their parents for their second moves except for NL3 who moved to a Pentecostal para-church (Morning Star) while still in High School. Due to a bad experience at Morning Star para-church, NL3 left this church – he is the only one of all 27 participants who no longer attends or affiliates himself to a church.

Of the seven families interviewed six of the first generation began their faith journey at the Pacific Islanders Congregational/Presbyterian Church in Newton. Only 1 family (New Lynn) went straight to a suburban C.U.N.Z. church on arrival from Samoa in 1967.

Part Two: Family case studies

The majority of the first generation *talanoa* were in Samoan while second and third generation *talanoa* were in a mix of Samoan and English

1 GLENDENE FAMILY: (3 moves) *talanoa* conducted in both English and Samoan language. First-generation husband and wife. Two generations of one family began worship at traditional first-wave Newton P.I.P.C. in the 1970s then moved out to the suburbs when they purchased a new home and left Newton to attend a church close to where they lived. This was a Presbyterian church which eventually became a wave-two ethnic-specific Samoan P.I.P.C. church. After a number of years the first and second generations moved back to a wave-one multicultural Presbyterian church where the service was conducted in the English language. They moved due to an unresolved conflict with the minister of their wave-two ethnic-specific P.I.P.C. church.

According to G1a their second son was the first to leave the traditional wave-one church for a wave-three contemporary youth church. Their eldest son (G2) stayed with his parents at a wave-two church until he married then moved, independently of his parents, to a wave-three contemporary church, C.C.F. Community Christian Fellowship.

The second generation (4 moves) *talanoa* conducted in English (G2, G2a) family stayed at the wave-three church for about twenty years then left for another wave-three contemporary church as they felt they wanted more for their children. The wife (G2a) worshipped with her parents in a wave-one multicultural Presbyterian church until the Samoans left to form their own wave-two church where she stayed until she married (4 moves). They do not speak Samoan but understand the language and wish they had more proficiency in the Samoan language to pass it on to their children. They are passionate about Samoan language and culture and hope to develop better language skills over time.

Third-generation daughter G3 was born into the wave-three C.C.F. church and her second move to another wave-three Life church was with her parents. She still worships with her parents and has become a leader amongst the youth within their church. She does not understand the Samoan language because her parents were unable to teach her. The fact that her grandparents also speak English means that she has not had to try to understand the Samoan language (2 moves).

In summary, for the Glendene family the movement went from a first-wave traditional Pacific Islanders' church to another wave-one bi-cultural church of *palagi* and Samoan congregations. This church eventually became a wave-two ethnic-specific church as the result of a schism; it split separating the *palagi* into one congregation and the Samoans into another. It became known as a P.I.P.C. even though it was only a Samoan congregation. When the first-generation parents (G1, G1a) left this wave-two church they went back to a wave-one Presbyterian multicultural parish which had mixed ethnicity and they remain there today. Their son moved on to a wave-three contemporary church C.C.F. and stayed there for twenty years before moving with generations two and three to another wave-three Pentecostal church, "Life". They are still there today.

2 NEW LYNN FAMILY: (5 moves) *talanoa* conducted in Samoan language. The first-generation mother, NL1, was the only family from seven who did not begin worship at Newton P.I.C. She established her family in a wave-one suburban Congregational church on arrival from Samoa and moved to another wave-one Presbyterian church after the C.U.N.Z. and P.C.N.Z. merger in 1969. Her second-generation children stayed and worshipped with parents until the parents left to join a

traditional wave-two (C.C.C.A.S.) ⁵E.F.K.A.S. church to support their son who had become a minister within the E.F.K.A.S. After her husband died and after an unresolved conflict with the minister, NL1 moved on to another wave-two E.F.K.A.S. She stayed there for a short while, then moved on to yet another E.F.K.A.S. After unresolved conflict with this minister, she decided to go back to a wave-one Presbyterian church which was a multicultural English-speaking Presbyterian church.

Second-generation – (4 moves) *talanoa* conducted in English. NL2 arrived with his parents from Samoa at a wave-one C.U.N.Z. church and moved with them to another wave-one Presbyterian church which went on to become a wave-two traditional Samoan-speaking church P.I.P.C. He met his wife (NL2a) at this church. A few years later NL2a left the church with her mother after an unresolved conflict with other members of the congregation and moved back to a wave-one Presbyterian church in the suburbs. Later on, NL2 married NL2a in suburban church and left the traditional church to join his wife in her new church. They stayed there for a few years then left to join another wave-one multicultural Presbyterian church closer to their home after their family, who were attending this church, invited them to come and join them, which they did. NL2 having been born in Samoa, speaks Samoan fluently, but still wonders how much better he would be in the Samoan language and culture had he stayed in Samoa with his other two siblings. Wife NL2a understands Samoan but, being New Zealand born, understands only spoken Samoan but is able to respond in English.

Their third-generation son was born into the suburban wave-one Presbyterian church and left the Presbyterian church for a wave-three church after being converted at a high school para-church fellowship, Morning Star. He attended Morning Star for a while then left after becoming disillusioned with the youth leadership. He no longer attends church so has moved to wave four (no church). He does not understand or speak the Samoan language (2 moves).

In summary the New Lynn family began in a wave-one Congregational Union of N.Z. church which was bi-cultural i.e. *palagi* and Samoan. After the C.U.N.Z. merged with the Presbyterian church, they went on to join the same wave-one Presbyterian church as the Glendene and Kelston families. This church eventually became a wave-two Samoan

⁵ E.F.K.A.S. Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Amerika Samoa, also known as C.C.C.A.S. in English, translates as Congregational Christian Church of American Samoa.

congregation. NL1 moved onto to another wave two E.F.K.A.S., which is an ethnic-specific American Samoan congregation, and afterwards moved on to another E.F.K.A.S. then came back to wave-one multi-cultural Presbyterian and remains there today. Generation two moved with generation one from wave-one C.U.N.Z. to wave-two P.I.P.C., then on to another wave-one English-speaking Presbyterian church. They then returned to a wave-one multicultural Presbyterian church and remain there today.

3 MT. ROSKILL FAMILY: (2 moves) *talanoa* conducted in Samoan language.

MR1 First-generation father has passed away since this interview was carried out.

Family began worshipping at first-wave P.I.C. Newton, then when a second-wave C.C.C.S. congregation was established close to where they lived, they left and began worshipping there. He came from a traditional C.C.C.S. village in Samoa which did not allow any other denominations into their village. He would have liked to attend an C.C.C.S. church on arrival in N.Z. but one had not been established and so his only option was to attend wave-one Newton P.I.C. He became a leader in the wave-two C.C.C.S. church all his adult life

Second-generation (3 moves) *talanoa* conducted in English. MR2 was born into the wave-two C.C.C.S. church and worshipped with his parents until he got married. He left to attend a wave-three contemporary church first with his wife and the children followed later. They stayed there for about twenty years then left to join his brother's wave-three house church and he has become a leader within that church which is based within their home. He speaks fluent Samoan because he was brought up speaking Samoan and parents taught him from birth. He went to primary school not knowing any English.

Third-generation daughter. (2 moves) MR3 was born into the wave-three C.C.F. church and has now moved with her parents to their wave-three house church. Not being sure where she wants to worship, she is looking for somewhere she is comfortable. She does not speak or understand Samoan. Her mother is not Samoan so English is the main language at home. Samoan is spoken by her grandparents and devotions at home are conducted in the Samoan language in which she and her siblings participate but do not understand. Their grandparents have been trying to teach their grandchildren the meaning of some words and phrases after their nightly family devotions.

In summary, Mt. Roskill first generation began at a traditional wave-one Pacific Islanders' Congregational Church in Newton then, when a wave-two C.C.C.S. was established in his suburb they moved there and remained there until his death. His wife continues to worship there. His children went on to wave-three C.C.F. and then back to another wave-three house church where they remain today.

4 OTARA FAMILY: (3 moves) *talanoa* was conducted in Samoan language.

First-generation parents began worship at traditional first-wave Newton P.I.C. and stayed there until they moved to the suburbs. They were given a letter of introduction to their new church by their minister to take to their new minister. They stayed there for a long time but then left as a result of Church schism. They didn't attend any church for four years during the split. The break-away group eventually established a new wave-two church and both O1 and O1a became leaders in that church, even till today. Wife O1a has passed away since this interview was conducted.

Second-generation daughter (3 moves) O2 was born into wave-one P.I.P.C. and worshipped with her parents until she moved with them during the schism. Once established in a new wave-two break-away church she decided to move to a wave-three Pentecostal Life Church, a more contemporary church, after her son survived a terminal illness. She understands Samoan but is not fluent in the language.

Third-generation son (2 moves) O3 was born into the wave-two ethnic-specific P.I.P.C. church and moved with his mother to wave-three Life church. He attends church with his mother but prefers to direct traffic in the carpark instead of going inside. He doesn't really have any thoughts about his own faith or spirituality, and thinks the Samoan language is important, but does not speak it. Was mono-syllabic during the interview.

In summary, Otara first-generation parents attended traditional first-wave Newton P.I.C. church then later moved on to another wave-one multicultural P.I.C. church and their second-generation family were born. The church experienced a schism and the family left along with other families. They were in a state of limbo until a new wave-two church was formed by the break-away group. This church was an ethnic-specific Samoan church and the first-generation father remains there today. Their second-generation daughter moved on to a wave-three Pentecostal church with her son and they remain there today.

5 KELSTON FAMILY: (3 moves) *talanoa* conducted in Samoan language. The first-generation mother attended first-wave Newton P.I.C. where she met and married her husband. They attended Newton until they moved to the suburbs and then attended another wave-one church C.U.N.Z. a multi-cultural Congregational church. When Congregational and Presbyterian churches merged in 1969 they moved to another suburban Presbyterian church which eventually became a wave-two ethnic-specific church, they stayed there for over 35 years. In this suburban wave-two P.I.P.C. there was conflict between the son and the minister so the family left the Samoan church and went back to a wave-one multicultural, English-speaking Presbyterian church.

Second-generation son-in-law K2 (4 moves) *talanoa* conducted in English. He was born in Samoa, so speaks Samoan fluently. He attended wave-two C.C.C.S. with his parents on arrival. His father established a new C.C.C.S. church and he attended to support them. After marrying his wife he joined her wave-two ethnic-specific P.I.P.C. church with her parents. He attended church with his parents-in-law until conflict arose with the minister, then left to go back to a wave-one multicultural Presbyterian church with his family.

Third-generation daughter. (2 moves) *talanoa* conducted in English. She was born into the wave-two P.I.P.C. Samoan church with her parents, then left with them. She continues to worship with her parents at a wave-one multicultural Presbyterian church and is a youth leader and active member of the church.

In summary, the Kelston first-generation mother began her journey at wave-one Newton Pacific Islanders Congregational church, then moved on to another wave-one church the C.U.N.Z. with her husband. They stayed there until the Presbyterian merger with the C.U.N.Z. then joined the bi-cultural *palagi*-Samoan church until the schism when they became a wave-two ethnic-specific congregation. K2 joined them when he married into the family and K3 was born. After a family conflict with the minister, K1, K2 and K3 left and moved back to a wave-one multicultural Presbyterian church where they remain today.

6 AVONDALE FAMILY: (4 moves) *talanoa* conducted in both English and Samoan. A1 has died since interview was carried out. The first-generation father attended traditional first wave Newton P.I.C. as a lay preacher, then was seconded by P.I.P.C. to establish a suburban church; this church was a Union of Methodist and

Presbyterian and also a wave-one church. He ministered in first suburban church until an ordained, fulltime minister was called. He moved on to a second suburban wave two parish and was eventually ordained there. Afterwards he retired and then returned and worshipped back in the wave-one Union church that he had established. He left there for a short time when conflict with a new minister arose. He moved to a wave-two C.C.C.S. church for a while then returned reluctantly to the wave-one Union parish because his family had stopped attending church altogether. He stayed and eventually died there.

Second-generation (2 moves) A2 and A2a *talanoa* conducted in English and Samoan language. A2 was born when her parents were at first-wave P.I.C. Newton. They moved to a suburban wave-one Union church that her father was called to establish and minister in. As an adult she married Samoan-born A2a and they continued to worship at the wave-one church her father had established. She and her husband continued to stay on during family conflict with the minister and took on the responsibility of legal battles during church schism.

Third-generation daughter A3 (2 moves) *talanoa* conducted in English. She was born into the wave-one Union parish of her parents. She attended church with her grandparents and parents and only left for a short period during church conflict but eventually returned. She has since moved to a wave-two P.I.P.C. Samoan church after marrying the P.I.P.C. minister's son. She now worships with parents-in-law. She understands Samoan and is learning to speak it.

In summary, Avondale A1 and A2 began at first-wave Newton P.I.C. then moved to another wave-one Union Parish made up of Methodists and Presbyterians. The parish has a Samoan congregation and an English-speaking combined service on Sunday mornings and a Samoan service in the afternoon but is still considered a wave-one church because it is multicultural. The Samoan group experienced a schism and two congregations emerged out of that conflict, a wave-one and a wave-two church. A1 has since passed away. A2 and A2a continue to worship in the wave-one Union/Samoan church. A3 has married and joined her husband in a wave-two ethnic-specific Samoan P.I.P.C. church.

7 NEWTON FAMILY (no moves): *talanoa* conducted in both English and Samoan. First-generation husband, wife and children began worshipping at the first-wave Newton P.I.C. church 65 years ago and have remained there ever since. All are

actively involved in the church and have a pastoral care ministry to the sick and elderly in hospitals and rest homes. They have never left.

Second-generation daughter N2 continues to worship with her parents and her children at wave-one Newton. She is a Sunday School teacher and leader in the church, who does not speak Samoan but understands it. She has never left this church (no moves).

Third-generation son N3 who continues to worship with his parents at first-wave Newton, was a child in *Leuina Aoga Amata* (Newton's Samoan Pre-school). He teaches year 7-9 Sunday School. He does not speak Samoan but understands it enough to get by in a conversation and is very proud to be Samoan. He was confirmed at a Catholic school and took part in Catholic Eucharistic ministry which involved serving the Eucharist. Is very comfortable to remain here. Has never left the church and has no desire to (no moves).

In summary, Newton N1, N1a, N2 and N3 began at first-wave Newton P.I.C. and continue to worship there today. They have never moved.

Part Three: A short description of the Waves One, Two and Three churches

Wave-One:

Wave-one churches are the traditional churches which has more than two different cultures and has English as one of its main languages i.e. The Pacific Island Presbyterian church, the Congregational Union of New Zealand, Avondale Union, and the Presbyterian church.

Multicultural/Pan Pacific Wave-One Churches.

The multicultural Presbyterian church referred to within the context of this research is a suburban church with a mixture of ethnicities, Samoan, Cook Island and European. The only language of worship is English even though the majority of worshippers are now Samoan. A monthly Samoan language service has recently begun. It has been met with some resistance by the majority of Samoan families who attend this church as they do not see the need to worship in the Samoan language as a priority. G1 and G1a attend this Samoan service.

The Union church is a partnership of Methodist and Presbyterian churches. Their ministers are called for a maximum of 7 years or so, depending on the nature of their

call and the direction of the church. It is overseen by both churches and Methodist and Presbyterian ministers usually alternate after each 5- to 7-year ministry phase. There is an English-speaking service in the morning and a Samoan language service in the afternoon. There are very few, maybe a handful, of *palagi* members who still attend.

The Congregational Union of New Zealand is a small group of 14 churches. Each church is autonomous. There is no hierarchy or head office as each church is responsible to run itself. With the merger with the Presbyterians in 1969 those who refused to merge remained as the C.U.N.Z. even though their numbers had decreased immensely. There are Samoan-speaking and English-speaking congregations. There is a total of approximately 250 members nationwide. Within the context of this study the C.U.N.Z. is seen as a wave-one church.

Wave-Two— Ethnic-Specific

The Pacific Island Presbyterian churches referred to in this research, in the suburbs are ethnic-specific i.e. they are Samoan-only fellowships. Six families moved from the traditional first-wave Newton P.I.P.C. an English-speaking church (which also had the availability of Samoan-language services in the afternoon) to suburban ethnic-specific Pacific Island Presbyterian Churches. After the Presbyterian merger with the Congregationalists, in one of the suburban churches in West Auckland, many of the Samoan families, although they had theoretically joined a *palagi* congregation did not actually attend the English-speaking services in the morning but opted to attend mainly the Samoan-language services in the afternoon. This church is referred to as wave two. One of these suburban P.I.P.C. churches eventually became independent from the *palagi* church and became wave-two ethnic-specific Samoan. Even though many of these churches carry the “Pacific” name they are “Samoan” and no other Pacific islanders worship there and they therefore are known as wave-two in this study.

The Congregational Christian Church of Samoa in both Samoa and American Samoa are ethnic-specific; they are only Samoan-speaking churches and are governed by the *Au toeaina* (Elder ministers) and the *Fono Tele* General Assembly in their respective

countries in Samoa.⁶ They are referred to as wave-two churches in this study. The full description of this church was provided in chapter 3.

It is interesting to note that many of the P.I.C. Pacific Island Churches outside of Newton P.I.P.C. are not necessarily multicultural but are wave-two ethnic-specific i.e. Samoan only congregations.⁷

Wave Three – Contemporary and Pentecostal Churches

Community Christian Fellowship is an independent church, completely autonomous and has no sister parishes or governing body outside of its own fellowship. They stand alone and so have no accountability to any overarching Ecclesial body or sister church. It is a multicultural church and is only English-speaking although it consists of predominantly N.Z.-born Samoan members. They are evangelical and their music is contemporary.

Life church is a Pentecostal church enjoying contemporary music and evangelical by nature. It belongs to an Australasian-wide Christian community.

Morning Star para-church movement recruited their members by attending high schools and encouraging the young people to join. It is not a church as such but a campus-ministries movement.

Seven of the 27 left the traditional church for Pentecostal/contemporary churches, one of those churches being a home church which two attend. Sixteen participants have stayed in their second church, eight left the wave-two Pacific Island Samoan churches for wave-one multicultural Presbyterian churches and remain there. Four remain within their traditional wave-one church and have never moved. Only one from the 27 participants no longer attends church regularly; the no-church category is wave-four.

Some chapter reflections

The desire/commitment/passion/need to speak Samoan in church is determined by one's capability and ability to speak. Where one finds the Samoan language difficult the need

⁶ The interesting point to note is that where the Pacific churches are multicultural and multilingual and conducted in the English language the majority of the New Zealand-born generations struggle to speak their native language. Whereas in the ethnic-specific Samoan-only speaking churches, some of the NZ-born generations are reasonably fluent in the Samoan language.

⁷ P.I.C. and P.I.C.C., P.I.P.C. are actually the same church. P.I.C. is the abbreviation which is the generic term for both P.I.C.C. and P.I.P.C. P.I.C.C. is when the Pacific Island Church was Congregational and P.I.P.C. is post 1969 after the merger of the Congregational Church with the Presbyterians.

to hear it during worship is not a necessity. Those born and raised in Samoa and now attending wave-one English-speaking multicultural Presbyterian churches do this out of choice. They know that if they wish to attend a Samoan-language service there are many churches in Auckland they can attend where they can hear the Samoan language, but their decision not to go there is mainly based on the fact that the multicultural church does not have the baggage that comes with wave-two ethnic-specific Samoan culture and the *fa'asamoa*. They have deliberately chosen a church free from the expectations of *fa'asamoa*. There are occasions within the multicultural Presbyterian church where funerals of Samoans take place and it is very difficult at these times for the Samoans to ignore the *fa'asamoa* expectations and so they will continue to collect money from individual Samoan families and give a gift to the bereaved families. The *palagi* families are not expected to participate in this gift giving.

Anecdotal evidence shows that Samoans within the multicultural Presbyterian churches do struggle with their identity from time to time, particularly when a Samoan gift-giving ritual occurs unexpectedly during the course of the church event. The problems become: do they need to respond? And if so, who gets to respond to the gift-giver? And is it done in the *palagi* way or does the expectation of a *fa'atau* (debate) take place where the Samoan chiefs seek a speaker from amongst all the gathered chiefs? No matter how far away one may think they are from the *fa'asamoa* Samoan culture, as soon as it is re-introduced, it is so easy to switch back into the Samoan mode of thinking and acting.

This chapter showed the patterns of the participants' movements between churches beginning with the first generation through to second and third generation. It highlighted why people moved, how many times and where they have settled today. It also gave a short description of the churches they moved to. As noted, one family did not move.

Chapter 7 Why did people move church?

This chapter presents the findings relating to research question number two below; What are the dynamics underpinning those trends and patterns?

As noted in chapter 6 almost all of the families had some movement – although the Newton family did not move.

This chapter is in two parts. first is a focus on factors influencing the movement by members of the six families which had experienced movement, and this is followed by a review of the responses of the seventh family which had remained worshipping at the wave-one church. For this chapter responses are grouped together according to the themes which emerged in the *talanoa*.

Notably however, most of the *talanoa* was marked by considerable heartbreak and grief. There were emotional times when the researcher sensed sadness and some unresolved grief especially when participants had left their churches involuntarily. Many participants did not have closure at the time of their leaving, while remembering served to open up some old wounds. Our *talanoa* also created an opportunity for them to talk these through.

Participants were remembering people and loved ones who had passed on, as well as re-living the pain and heartache experienced at the time.

In this chapter Samoan interviews are presented together with the English translation as the Samoan words on their own are quite eloquent and the English translation and paraphrase do not do justice to the Samoan language.

Intergenerational dynamics within the family

While the stories of the participants varied from family to family most of the first-generation parents were very supportive of their children in whatever decisions they were to make and likewise the second-generation parents to their third-generation children. There was a real mutuality of care between the three generations; one did not speak ill of the other. Given that these were three-generational family clusters, each generation spoke with pride of their children and also the children of their parents. Even in the midst of adversity when challenged by church and culture, each generation chose to support the view of their children or their parents no matter how difficult their

decisions were, particularly when it came to leaving the family church and moving on to another church.

Mixed marriage also influenced where people chose to worship. Both husband and wife needed to be able to understand the language spoken in church and so neutral ground had to be found.

MR2 explained,

“because my wife was not Samoan I wanted to worship somewhere in English so she could understand. We chose a more contemporary English-speaking church where our friends attended. It was not easy for my parents to accept this change but the bargaining tool for us was our children. We continued to send our children with their grandparents to C.C.C.S. until such time as we established ourselves then made the transition away from C.C.C.S.”

Part One: Why people left/moved from their churches

As will be seen, there were many inter-related reasons for moving by family and, by generation. However, five broad themes emerged and are discussed: While there is a relationship between factors influencing movement, these have been separated for ease of discussion.

- 1) Differences with church practices.
 - Location
 - Clergy families
 - Church merger and unresolved conflict
- 2) A wish to worship in an ethnic-specific church, their own language.
- 3) Organizational factors
 - Parents want more for their children
 - Disagreement with church practice
 - Accountability
 - Financial
 - Not abiding by the rules
 - Pastoral care
 - Competition
 - Handling of conflicts
- 4) A search for spirituality
- 5) Gospel and culture.

1) Differences with church practices

Location

Five generation one family moved from the traditional first-wave church at P.I.C. Newton to the outer suburbs where they had purchased new homes. They began worshipping at the new P.I.C. churches which had opened up in those areas. In theory then, these families continued worshipping in a first-wave church and were now established in their new residential areas.

Clergy families

Three families from the first generation A1, K2, NL1 were clergy families and moved in association with their calling. A1 was initially a lay-preacher whilst worshipping at Newton P.I.C.C. and later became a Presbyterian minister. K2's father was a minister of the C.C.C.S. and later L.M.S. independent church. NL1's son is a minister in the E.F.K.A.S. church. A1's family moved with him to Avondale, their new mission field. K2 moved wherever his father was called to until such time as he married and joined his wife's church. They now worship in a wave-one multicultural church. NL1 moved from a first-wave church to a wave-two church in support of her son being a minister within an ethnic-specific church; she eventually ended up in a wave-one multicultural church although she continues to support her son's wave-two E.F.K.A.S. church through her grandchildren whilst she remains at her wave-one multicultural church.

Church merger and unresolved conflict

Other reasons for moving had to do with churches merging e.g. from Congregational to Presbyterian, moving due to unresolved conflict within the church, sometimes with other parishioners and sometimes with the minister himself. Some moved through general lack of understanding by their minister or because they believed that he lacked accountability and so they decided to move out.

2) Ethnic-specific church:

For those that left in the first schism their reasons were regarding cultural security; they wanted to be self-determining in terms of their Samoan identity and language. Some families changed churches due to a wish to worship in their own Samoan language and in their own way. They were not happy to be

governed by non-Samoan leaders. Some of them left but did not necessarily have anywhere else to go and so stayed at home until such time as they found a church to attend that they felt happy in.

Some that left *en masse* with others established new ethnic-specific churches.

However, eight out of 27 participants chose to attend multicultural churches where English was the spoken language and there was no Samoan language service. One of those churches decided to offer a monthly Samoan language service but only two of the eight participants accepted the invitation to join this service.

- It must be said that the emerging trend was that people's choice to move on to a new church was not necessarily to seek another Samoan fellowship, but to either stay with the groups they had left with and form their own church or to join new churches that did not necessarily have the Samoan language or cultural component attached to it.
- Any moves thereafter from this generation-one were due to disagreements or conflicts within the church.

3) Organisational factors – Disagreement with church practices

Parents wanted more for their children

Some second-generation parents wanted a place for their children to be actively involved in the youth community by taking on leadership at a young age. These parents wanted a more Bible-based fellowship based on the Word and a worship community that they felt they lacked in their fellowship. They wanted something that was free from the constraints of tradition and Samoan culture. It is interesting that this is how they articulated this, as all churches would perceive themselves to be Bible-based fellowship focussed around the Word of God. Obviously, for some this was not so apparent.

- For some of the third generation, most could not speak or understand the Samoan language, as their second-generation parents struggled and as a result were not able to teach their children to speak or understand it. Many were familiar with the cultural expectations around doing "*feau*" chores but did not necessarily understand why things had to be done in a certain way.

- There was only one incident where a father G2 walked in on my interview with his daughter G3 and she said it was acceptable for him to stay. When she talked about her cultural incompetencies with the Samoan language, there was a sense of guilt on the father's part for not being able to instil the Samoan language and cultural aspects into his daughter's life.

For one family, the son asked his parents' permission to leave the church and go and worship in a more contemporary church, "the Potter's House", with his friends. The parents agreed, but this was seen by the minister as a weakness on the part of the parents, allowing their children to do what they wanted rather than being directed by their parents on what was right and wrong. When one family's son left the church to worship elsewhere rather than talking face to face with the family the minister addressed the issue from the pulpit and this caused a lot of hurt for the family involved.

Glendene G1a stated that the minister would preach on his topic and then after about 20 minutes he would steer his sermon towards

"our children that they are worshipping over there and everywhere. Everybody in the church know that my son is doing that. My heart was broken".

She continued,

"I remember it was the cricket final and my son was the bowler that the team was dependent on for that game and he came to me and said, I'm baptised today. He didn't turn up for the game. We lost the game that day. That was the only time the minister and I had words during the church about this incident with my son. I said he had to do something and that's why he didn't turn up. This was on Sunday; I didn't say it was to do with baptism. But the minister and I had words. I didn't say anything but I just got up and said, 'my son had to go somewhere.' We lost the game, that makes it worse."

G1a recalls;

"it was one evening when my son said to me 'Our church is alright but I don't feel anything. Is it ok if I go with my friends to the Potter's House'. It's really funny how these feelings came to me. I thought to myself, who the hell am I? I can't tell my son you can't find God there. Who am I to tell my son that? I said 'go son, go for it' and I'm so glad. I saw the change in him. He started to talk to us about God and that sort of thing and the good thing is that we never questioned him. I believe we *toto* (plant) we plant something in their hearts now they're teenagers, they know who they want to go with. They're very hungry for that spiritual feed and I thought, if the kids are not getting it from there, then who am I to stop my children and this is exactly what we teach the children to grow up and stay with God. If they couldn't find it there, then if they find it somewhere else then good on them."

MR3 made a comment.

“My parents have always said, ‘you know this is the church that we go to but if you feel that you want to go somewhere else or you don’t even want to go to church that’s up to you’. I was given the option to stay but I don’t want to. It’s a personal decision for myself, nothing to do with my parents but they have always said, ‘wherever you want to go that’s up to you’.”

One pair of the first-generation parents were extremely supportive of the choices their children made, whether they agreed with them or not. Rather than stay at church and face the judgement of their peers, they chose to leave their home parish without another church to go to, but they were heartbroken and felt that there was no attempt at reconciliation from the minister for them to stay or return.

Disagreement with church practice

Power and abuse comes in many different forms, be that in the church or in families and in society. When one becomes a victim to someone more powerful than oneself and is confronted in ways that cause trauma and pain and hurt, then that is abuse. An imbalance of power relationships and exploiting that power to wield it over another is abusive. The church is not exempt from dictators and people who breach the boundaries of respect and trust and it takes much courage for an individual to report such abuse and to stand up against members of the clergy, particularly in a Samoan cultural context. The concept of shame is great and even though an individual steps out in courage to report their violation, they still stand to be judged and stigmatised by their church. Some church members had great difficulty in believing them or seeing that a minister could be capable of such outrageous behaviour.

In the context of this research there were a few cases of abuse of power by a minister. In my themes on heartbreak and grief and lack of accountability there were examples of power and abuse in them, but in the following instance the theme of power and abuse can be seen as violation of one’s safety and personal space.

This is the instance of one minister who, as a result of his actions was defrocked and expelled from being a minister in the church. In this particular case, the minister had been tried at a Church Court in the form of a Commission for the sexual assault of two women. The cases were tried separately but consecutively. He was proven guilty of the two incidents.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that there was much speculation by people in the parish when the commission into these two incidents occurred. People were in disbelief that such a thing could happen to a member of their church and by their own minister. Some believed it to be untrue and others supported the minister blindly, refusing to believe he was capable of such behaviour.

According to N2,

“he was like a tyrant, he was so changeable, he may have been a little like Donald Trump when I think about it, but weird with it. We heard there’s this court case, it was kept under wraps as is often done with the Samoan group. There was this protection of the minister to the detriment of the Congregation. It came out in due course, gossip cannot be stopped and then it was very clear that there were sides. Unfortunately a lot of that was decided in ignorance of the facts. There was a group of people that just couldn’t accept the judgement. Clearly after a judgement like that you would need your minister to move on. But there was just this group that refused to accept that and come hell or high water they were going to do what it takes. Maybe there was pride we can’t admit that we got it so wrong, so we just have to go down with the ship and take the church with us. They were just staunchly not going to give in. The split happened after the commission. At the time the people that left were some of the most committed, the most staunch. A lot of the strong ones left. It was ugly, the open kind of aggression between parishioners, the conflict and the tension. It was an unhappy place to be.”

N2 continues,

“Oh my Lord, what an interesting character he was. He was a bizarre person. Having grown up with a person who is sociable and relatable and a people person that was interesting. I think our generation is pretty strong. For the E.S.G. (English Speaking Group) we entered into Eldership young and when we went to session we were subjected to a lot of to-ing and fro-ing and conflict, it’s held us in good stead. I don’t know if we would have dealt as well with succeeding ministers if we hadn’t been prepared to fight and battle.”

A few of the participants experienced church conflict within their churches between the minister and the congregation. For three of the families interviewed, churches split over factions that developed within the church, as a result of the conflict.

“There were lots of fights; Presbytery would be called (commission to try and remedy the situation). The conflict was resolved by a resolution resulting in church splitting into two churches. One half left with one of the Cook Island ministers to form a new church. We had court cases, with the court suggesting to take the issue back to the congregation to seek their own

resolutions. During the split all the deacons lost their roles as deacons but were reinstated once we had established our new church.

“Once we established our new church we went and purchased land for the new church. Cook Islanders couldn’t afford to be part of this so Samoans went on their own. The land we bought at the time was very expensive \$1 million at the time, many struggled to contribute to this new church. So we began Bingo every week to help pay off the mortgage. It took between 2-3 years to pay off the debt. Bingo raised at least \$1,000 a week.”

Samoans are used to carrying financial stresses and to entering into large fund-raising projects. Sometimes their strong faith to achieve unrealistic goals and expectations financially takes precedence and where there is a will there is a way. The choice to hold weekly bingo although it is not legally supported by the Presbyterian Church became the best way forward for this church to raise the necessary funds. This Samoan church being ethnic-specific, the Presbyterians (who view gambling as illegal) turned a blind eye to this fund-raising option. Over time the debt was paid off. However, the church has continued the weekly bingo and as a result continue to move from strength to strength financially.

Unfortunately, violence, whether that be physical, psychological or verbal, also played a part in some of these conflicts. This was not probed but if you take the stories together there is a hierarchical violence by those in power or leadership.

Growing up as a child within a conflict riddled church and being witness to many physical assaults has been an eye-opening experience and an experience that one almost becomes immune to over time. For me it had almost become a normal way of life as our church was renowned for its battles. Many of these disputes remained irreconcilable and the role that the minister has to play within these crisis situations is absolutely crucial. When the minister chooses sides then this causes major problems, but where the minister sits on the fence this also causes problems as it is his role is to remain neutral and he should be available to offer pastoral care to both aggrieved sides in the hope of reaching a reconciliation. For me as a researcher I recall from my younger days walking into a huge physical fight in the church. People were punching each other and there were ripped clothes and blood everywhere. The minister entered the church in his preaching

regalia and put his hand up to stop the fighting and one of the aggrieved party went up to him and said, “this is all your doing”. The *palagis*, who had just finished using the church building for their service, just stood in shock and watched saying that someone should call the police. The session clerk cancelled church that morning, but the minister disagreed and thought it should carry on regardless. So they managed to stop for a time of worship and we sang redemption songs. The minister invited the two women who had started the fighting to come forward and shake hands to make a truce. Instead of a handshake one woman slapped the other and the fighting began all over again. I’ve witnessed too many of these fights in church some people coming with machetes and weapons to really cause damage. I used to wonder so many times, why am I going to church. I feel worse after attending church than I would if I stayed at home. What was the point of God talk and peace when this is always simmering in the background and people walk around scared to speak out of turn or say the wrong thing in case it turns into another fight. I think a lot of us children from those days probably suffered from P.T.S.D. (post-traumatic stress disorder) but didn’t know it, due to being exposed to such violence and in a church.

Accountability

When a Samoan minister is called to a Samoan parish they enter into a covenant and a type of marriage takes place between the minister and his family and the parish. An exchange of gifts is reciprocated and often a large fine mat, a symbol of the *feagaiga* (covenant), is exchanged between the minister and the parish as a symbol of the making of a new covenant. This is where the term *fa’afeagaiga* comes from as it indicates that the minister is in a covenant relationship with the parish. This covenant confirms their desire to love and minister to the people, to be accountable and trustworthy in all their dealings and relationship with the people and the parish. When the *feagaiga* is breached the covenant is broken and the *feagaiga* is severed, this is often referred to as “*ua tatala le feagaiga*” the covenant has been released. This term can also be used when a minister leaves his parish.

The lack of accountability in this section gives some examples of such breaches. Some participants disclosed anxiety about having a minister who lacked accountability and who did not consult with the people of the parish when it came to making important decisions, particularly to do with money and gifting of money to other churches. In this

particular instance the covenant in this relationship was not severed as the minister was retiring and in the eyes of the congregation he had not done anything wrong apart from his outrageous request to be given the church manse as a personal gift for his retirement. The people of the congregation did not know how to say “no” and so gave him the manse as a gift. This left the church with a dilemma of where the new minister would live and that they had to come up with the money to buy a new house for the new minister. Most church properties are held in trust and cannot be sold or given away as gifts. To attempt to do so would require permission from the Church Trustees who have very strict rules and guidelines to safeguard the assets and properties of the church and the people. For a minister to make a request for the gifting of a manse on his retirement was extremely inappropriate and put the parishioners in a very awkward position, especially given that they did not want to offend and felt that to deny him this gift would bring misfortune upon them. The minister used his power inappropriately and the people of the parish were put in a very untenable and vulnerable position.

Glendene G1 reflects,

“I wasn’t angry I was just disappointed I was thinking along the lines there’s got to be a lot more, now we got to get another house for the new minister, it’s forever like looking for money, that sort of stuff it’s unfair to me. I thought it was unfair, I wasn’t angry I was sad at the way it was going. I’m never angry at things like that I was just sad and disappointed and stuff like that.”

Samoans sometimes make unrealistic gestures of kindness out of a desire to please, without considering the implications and consequences associated with these impulsive gestures of goodwill. The congregation in this particular situation gifted the manse to the minister. Unfortunately, he died not long after and so the manse was left to his wife. She became terminally ill and subsequently died. The manse was then left to the only daughter. She in the end took out many loans using the manse as collateral and the manse sadly became the property of the bank and a mortgagee sale meant that the manse was sold. The Presbyterian Church Property Trustees exist to ensure that these situations do not occur and are never allowed to take place but when church parties take matters into their own hands there is no guarantee that people will honour their commitment to acts, or in this case gifts, of goodwill.

This congregation subsequently called a new minister to the parish not long after the manse was gifted and so they were left with the task of having to find funds to purchase

a new manse immediately to accommodate the new minister and his family. This put a lot of unnecessary financial stress and burden on the parishioners.

The next dispute arose within a union parish of Methodist and Presbyterian members. The governing rule was that all ministers would have a tenure up to seven years and a maximum of ten years. After that, the alternating denomination would then call a new minister. The previous Samoan minister did not abide by this rule although his multicultural counterparts did and recognised the fixed term contract for their *palagi* minister. When a new Samoan minister was called to replace him on his retirement, the new Samoan minister believed that he was entering into a similar contract as the retired Samoan minister so when his time was completed, he refused to leave. The church split in two creating two sides with supporters for and against his staying and hence a new schism was born. According to A2a,

“There was the dispute about the minister’s tenancy in the church. At the end of 10 years the minister could not extend again. The problem was he signed the agreement but then refused to leave. One side argued we have already gone through the process, *faamavae ae ua uma ona saina* (resigned but had already signed the contract). The minister said “when I go I will make sure I bring everyone down with me”. He left in August but his contract ended in June. Two members of Presbytery had to come down and hand him his papers to leave.”

When the banks and legal proceedings took over things became more difficult and the people had to abide by whatever the proceedings were at the time. G1 comments,

“There were all these fights about the bank standing in front of the church to change the locks of the church and that’s how they called an urgent *fono* (meeting) that night. So weird, so weird. Yeah it’s now when those things happen and we heard about where this money go and that money go then we know that’s why they told us to move because they see the problem before we see it.”

Financial

Another reason for leaving was disappointment over unrealistic decisions eg. to buy the minister a new car on hire purchase and to gift him the church manse on his retirement, even though the church families themselves could not afford to financially support these unrealistic expectations.

One first-generation participant mentioned the minister offering money to another church on behalf of the church without consulting with anyone first. This action caused

a schism which resulted in a split of approximately 50% of the congregation walking out in protest. O1 states:

Faafitauli na o le pulepule tu o le faifeau ma le aulotu. Sa masani a ai lona valaaulia na alu o i Toma nofo a ia ma ofo tupe ave ia Toma, faafitauli mea tau tupe pule tu ai le faifeau tupe.

The problem is lack of consultation or accountability of the minister to the congregation. He offered money on our behalf to Toma, that's the problem things to do with money no accountability of the minister when it comes to money.

Not abiding by the rules

Another first-generation participant NL1 indicated concerns about her minister stepping over the boundaries and rule books when it came to retirement. Her minister in particular refused to retire at the age of 70, even after he was farewelled along with other retiree ministers at a special celebration event in American Samoa. He was going against the recommendation of the General Assembly and the church constitution. He wanted to form an independent break-away congregation with his parish so that he could stay a minister in that church. This caused concern for NL1 as her son was an elder minister within this church and she felt that his decision as an elder minister was being over-ruled. Some people left the church that day and have never returned.

Faaali sa'o a lo'u manatu na. Ia a o isi la tagata ua faamavae ai le aso lena e le toe o atu i le lotu. Sa tatau na faaali i le fono le lagona o mea nai tatau ona iai
I spoke straight to the point. Other people left on that day and have not come back to church. He should have expressed his opinion to the Assembly about what he was wanting to do.

This church within the Congregational Christian Church of American Samoa eventually broke away from C.C.C.A.S. and became an independent church. The minister continues to minister there even today, and he and they are accountable to no other church or general assembly. They are completely autonomous.

Pastoral care

There was also the issue of the lack of pastoral care from some of the ministers. One first-generation participant NL1 shares the reasons she left her church. Had the minister visited her she would not have left.

“I cleaned the church on a monthly basis. I retired as I didn't have the energy. When I didn't go, the minister didn't come and visit me or ask why I wasn't continuing to do my duties. Even up until the day he never came and sought my opinion on why I was retiring. He wasn't pastoral towards his sheep. I would have returned. It felt

like in my own mind that the minister wasn't thinking about me. He should have come and visit and talk and I would have clarified. In the end my daughter and her family stopped going as well."

For the Otara first-generation family, when their church split after a conflict they stayed home for four years. They saw other families joining new churches and wondered whether they should follow suit, but decided to wait until the way was clear for them to return when the dust had settled over the church crisis.

"It was four years we didn't go to church because it was not good and so we just stayed away. The children would look at us and wonder why we didn't go to church."

A first-generation mother K1 talks candidly about her son and the minister having a dispute which affected her family directly and as a result the family left the church. The mother continued to worship there for as long as her husband was alive as this was their family church and they did not want to be pushed out. The mother continued to attend church and occasionally her husband was able to join her in his wheelchair. She felt heartbroken that her children had chosen to leave. They left but did not find a church to worship in for nearly a year.

"Ua ma'i lo'u toalua. E iai si mea sa faaletonu totonu i le Ekalesia ma a'u ma le faifeau uiga I le na mea o la'u tama ma le va feagai ma le faifeau. O nai mea na e le lelei ona faasoa e le faifeau ua ala ai ona matou o ese."

"My husband was sick. Something unfortunate happened in the church with the minister and me and my son in terms of his relationship with the minister, the minister was not good at sharing the reasons. That is the reason why we left."

For one second-generation couple A2 and A2a, even in the midst of the church splitting in two, and a legal court battle, they chose to stay and take leadership for their multicultural parish and pursue it through to the end of the court case, and hopefully a new beginning for them and their family and church.

"At the end of 2016 they won their court case but are now awaiting the result of an appeal by the dissenting side."

One first-generation minister A1 said

"there's no accountability for ministers these days, in the old days we had our Wednesday ministers' gatherings to talk things over. Now everyone does their own thing. Ministers have no accountability".

In recent years he was deeply hurt and disillusioned with the parish that he chose to retire in. His second-generation daughter A2 recalled how her dad was really angry when the minister and some of the elders sold the church house to build the *aoga* (school). Her father quit the church for a time and the only reason he returned was because his grandchildren were beginning to scatter.

He said he would return if we returned, not back to the minister but back to God.

“He was heartbroken because he would see we weren’t in church. Mum stayed home and none of us attended. No one went to the *palagi* (European) side. We felt totally lost, we would come here and people would look at us like we were outsiders. He really didn’t want to come back. He said “don’t wait for me to go to church, go for yourselves and God and not for me. God is everywhere. You need to go and find a place where you can find God and be comfortable there”.

It is possible to surmise that when Samoans are angry with something they often tend to vote with their feet by leaving when they have no other alternative place to go. They will go and stay home and await pastoral care from the church/minister that has aggrieved them. When this doesn’t happen then both parties end up suffering in silence and sometimes as a result no one is prepared to take the first step to resolve the conflict.

Ministers are encouraged to abide by the rules and regulations of their General Assembly. When ministers are given a retirement age they are expected to retire at that age. The only way one can ignore the rule of the church is to go independent or break away from that church. In the case of this particular situation the church property was not held in Trust by the church but in the independent name of the minister which enabled him to freely break away from the C.C.C.A.S. and take the church building and properties with him. Often when one is aggrieved this raises other incidents of unresolved conflict that have occurred over time and the culmination of grief often results in that family or individual moving to another church, often to a non-Samoan church to ensure that they are no longer prone to further abuse and disappointment.

For those who moved on from their traditional church to more contemporary churches these moves were made because they were seeking a different spiritual and theological emphasis. They were looking for non-hierarchical leadership, more “word-based” biblical teaching and more modern worship. They believed that God and Christianity were not necessarily found in the church building or setting but wherever there was a movement of the Holy Spirit. The traditional church for them was more ritual and habit,

rather than the liberating movement of the Holy Spirit to freely minister to the individual rather than being restricted to the spoken word of the clergy.

Competition

Samoans thrive on the competitive nature of inter-church challenges for drama, singing and so forth. They are happy to compete if this is carried out fairly. One of the second-generation couples, A2a, became disillusioned with the church when their Sunday school entered the *Autalavou* (Samoan youth) drama competitions and instead of losing fairly they lost by a fraction of a point which they struggled to believe was possible.

A2a,

“we lost the drama by $\frac{1}{4}$ point, I don’t know how that happened. When the score came out and the explanation people thought “why bother it’s never gonna be done right.” I felt like giving up and so did my husband. We just want it to be marked properly. How does that $\frac{1}{4}$ point work? That just destroyed some of the passion that you bring to serve. It may be little to others, but we couldn’t draw the youth in after that nobody wanted to sign up.”

K3 reflects on her own conflict incident:

“I remember it was after a church service I was playing outside and my mum came running outside and she told me I had to run and call my nana’s house. My uncle came and went into the church. There was a lot of yelling, and my uncle went up I didn’t understand what was happening. I was scared cos I didn’t understand the language.”

Handling of conflicts

For some families, issues of conflict were not handled directly face to face but often became the subject of sermons where the minister indirectly addressed the issue from the pulpit rather than pastorally on a one-to-one level. This option was often extremely hurtful to the people and families directly affected. They would have been much happier with a personal and discreet face-to-face approach, but felt that they were singled out and humiliated publicly in the process.

4) Spirituality

The second-generation moved churches in search of something more spiritual and personal, so the move was from traditional to wave-one church on to another wave-one multicultural church or to a wave-three Pentecostal/contemporary church. Some of these wave-three churches recognised their leadership and they did not have to go

through any rigorous or legalistic process into eldership or leadership positions. eg. C.C.F.

Of the seven people who moved on to Pentecostal/contemporary forms of church, their desire to worship away from the traditional church has come about as the result of their wanting to develop and encourage a personal individualised faith and to encourage that personal faith relationship with Jesus Christ for themselves and their children. The fact that their churches do not have a Samoan-language component has not been an important nor a deciding factor in their choice of church, as the choice of which church to attend was not made from a cultural perspective but from a spiritual and faith-based perspective. Asked whether there was the option to attend Samoan-language services within their churches, they said there was not. It was not seen as a priority. As far as they were concerned, culture was who you are and whatever ethnicity or nationality people were. The main language for communication was English within their worship setup, there was no need for ethnic-specific accommodation as it was not sought after nor necessary.

5) Gospel and Culture

One of the main discussions which emerged, particularly amongst the younger generation, was the merging/conflating of culture and the gospel. The younger ones seemed to be searching for a new spirituality and seemed skeptical about the relationship between church and culture.

Within the *fa'asamoa*, Gospel and Culture are often seen to go hand in hand. The *fa'asamoa* is made up of both Gospel and Culture, to take one away would not represent the *fa'asamoa* as it is today. Obviously in pre-missionary times the *fa'asamoa* did exist without the Gospel, but it also had in its place the religious rites and rituals of pre-Christian Samoa contained within it.

Anecdotal reports are that many ministers struggle with their role within the *fa'asamoa*; some are not sure whether it is just the Gospel they are representing and when it comes to gift giving as part of the *fa'asamoa* should they also be involved in this. Samoan culture is reciprocal; one cannot just receive, one must also reciprocate. However, the dilemma for some ministers is that even if they don't give gifts they will still receive gifts in return. So, do they therefore give gifts to be reciprocated later or contribute nothing? One participant articulates

this dilemma, and believes that in giving and receiving, the reciprocity is both crucial, but that the place of the minister within the *fa'asamoa* remains very important.

O1 one of the first-generation participants spoke very positively about the relationship between culture as the *fa'asamoa*. The following are some of the statements O1 made about Gospel and Culture:

- There are specific times when culture is appropriate within the church.
- Culture should not impede church, and church should not impede culture.
- Culture protects (*pui-pui*) the church.
- Those who say culture is bad do not understand culture well.
- The church (spirituality) baptises culture.
- Culture does not take precedence or dominate the church.
- The minister is God's representative on earth. When the minister receives gifts it honours God.
- It has often been said that culture is very expensive
- At the end of the day don't blame the culture because ultimately it is your own choice.
- You weigh the pros and cons and make a decision based on best practice going forward. How does your action/decision impact on your family?
- When families are in need, all they want is the minister and his Bible, nothing else. The only thing they want is the message of God.
- People of the world would expect minister to bring money, whereas people of God just appreciate the compassion/comfort that the minister brings with the message of the Holy Spirit.
- It is not the job/place of the minister to take gifts as part of their ministry. Only the Word of God.
- All these worldly possessions rot.
- The minister is called to preach the message of God not take gifts of money and material things to families.
- It is not about material possessions, but that church lives together in peace and harmony.

In order to do justice to this participants' thoughts on Gospel and culture it is important to include the Samoan interview together with the English translation as the Samoan words on their own are quite eloquent and the English translation and paraphrase do not do justice to the Samoan language. This participant O1 is the *Sa'o o le nu'u*, the high chief of his village in Samoa and lives alternatively between N.Z. and Samoa throughout the year. His thoughts are quite profound and he attempts to sum up what Gospel and Culture mean to him. I'm including his insight as I believe it will help those who read this, to better understand Gospel and Culture from a Samoan perspective.

O1 reflects,

“le va o le aganuu ma le lotu. Aua ne'i afaina le lotu I le aganuu aua foi ne'i afaina le aganuu I le lotu.

“Ae malamalama I le aganuu o le aganuu e puipui ia le lotu puipui le lotu ina ia ola le lotu ia ola le lotu I le filemu. Ae le faapea le aganuu pule le lotu leai, o le lotu e papatisoina le aganuu.

“Ae le faapea le aganuu e alu atu pule le lotu leai. Ua sese ai a le mea lea tulaga lea iai. Aua ua tasi lea mea o lea masani ai le tele o isi foi faifeau e avatu faaaloaloga faa le aganuu ia te ia ai tatau ona tetei.

“O le fesili ia, e le o avatua lea ona o le a, tasi a le tui mata'i a le aganuu o le Atua, o le faifeau fai ma sui o le Atua o lea ua a lai na fai iai o le aganuu.

“O le faaeaea o le aganuu I le Atua lea. E tatau o le faifeau ona to'a malie lona mafaufau ma faataua, le le mea ua faaeaea ai ia? Faeaea ia, aga leai ua faaeaea ona o le finagalo o le Atua.

“E fai foi la iai mea sili a le tagata o le aganuu pei o le mafuaaga le na. aua o le tele le mea iai nei le fevevesei iai le tuaiga lea ua fai mai ua tele naunau mea ua faaalu I le aganuu.

“E le pule le aganuu faapea soona faaalu nei mea, e pule a oe, pule a a'u ia pe fai se aganuu pe leai.

“Ia ai le faapea le aganuu fai ma, fai le mea lea, fai le mea lea e leai. O lea ua foai mai le Atua ia oe le tofa ma le faautaga ma le faakerisiano ma le vaai lelei o lou aiga o a mea uma a.

“ona fuafua po fea tonu la le mea e fai. Aua ne'i oia le galueaga o le Atua. Ia pei o mea lena tatau ona mafaufau lelei ai le tagata lotu.

“O le aganuu e pau a le mea naunau I ai aiga foi ia ua puapuagatia o le Tusi Paia a le faifeau, aua ua mafatia le lotu a le aiga ua leai seisi mea.

“E le faapea a alu atu le faifeau ma le selau tala ona malie ai lea lou lotu pe alu atu ma se sii tau I fea, pau a le mea ga I ai na’o o le feau a le Agaga Paia mea lei mo’omia ai le aiga, aiga Kerisiano ou te talanoa ai.

“A o le aiga a le lalolagi e mana’o e alu le faifeau ma tupe ma a.

“O le aiga Kerisiano e le mana’o pau a le mea e moomia o le fia oo atu le faifeau se’i vaai le faifeau foi lele se’i avatu lana faamafanafanaga. Pau a le mea moomia e le tagata Kerisiano ia. Aua ua faaluafesasi le tagata Kerisiano ina ua mafatia a, e le mafai ini tupe ona faalelei le tagata Kerisiano na pau a le mea na’o o le faifeau a ma le Tusi Paia o le tulaga e tataua ona iai. Afai la o tagata le kerisiano ia ona manao loa lea alu atu le faifeau ma ni mau mea e fia. E leai e leai se tofi lena a se faifeau e alu atu avatu ni mea fai ai ni faalavelave.

“O la’u la ga ola FaaKerisiano, ou te le mana’o foi lele, pau a le mea ou te manao ai sau le faifeau sau e fai le lotu. Sau ma talatalanoa faalelotu foi lele aumai lana faifeau foi lele ua mafaia foi lele. A o nei mea naunau ai tagata, mo tupe ma mea o mea ta’u foi o mea pala, e le o ni mea ono naunau fua e ai seisi aua foi e pala.”

English translation:

“There is a space (va) between culture and church. Do not let the church be compromised by culture nor culture be comprised by the church.

“If they understand the culture, that culture protects the church and church protects itself so that it will grow and grow in peace. But that is not to say that culture dominates the church, no, the church baptises the culture.

“But that does not mean that the culture dominates the church, no that is wrong. One thing that is common of most ministers, they receive gifts from the culture for themselves when they should actually reject them.

“The question is, this is not given because, the one main fact of the culture of God, the minister is God’s representative, which is why the culture is practiced on him.

“The uplifting of the culture to God. The ministers’ thoughts should be calm and appreciate the reasons why they are held in high esteem. They are held in high esteem because they are the fulfilment of God’s will.

“If this is the priority for people the culture, then it will be troublesome and they will say that too much is wasted on culture.

“The culture doesn’t control itself to waste things, you are the one in control, I’m in control whether I do the culture or not.

“Culture doesn’t dictate to do this or to do that, no. God has gifted us with the tools and the faith and good vision for your family for all these things. Then it’s up to you to decide what to do. Do not disturb the work of God. These are the things that church people need to consider well.

“Culturally, the only thing that a suffering family want from the minister is the Bible because they are hurting spiritually as a family, nothing else.

It doesn't mean that if a minister goes to them with \$100 that will fix them, or if they go with gifts unending. All that is needed is the minister to take the message of the Holy Spirit, these are the things that are needed by the family that is Christian families I'm talking about.

"Worldly families that want things would expect the minister to bring money and so forth.

"A Christian family does not want material things, the only things they need is for the minister to come and see and bring comfort. Don't confuse the Christian person who is in need of comfort, money cannot make them better just the minister and the Bible this is the way it should be. However, if they are not Christian people then they would want the minister to come with many material things. No, this is not the calling of a minister to go and give them things to pay for their problem.

"That is my Christian upbringing, the only thing that I want is for the minister to come and do the worship service. Come and talk about things of the church and bring his ministry. But if it's about unnecessary things like money and things, all these things will rot, they should not be things to long after because in the end they all rot."

Gospel and culture in the context of this participants monologue is split between things of God and things of the world, spirituality and materialism. He is of the opinion that one shouldn't confuse and mix the two together particularly when it comes to the role of the minister. He should not be concerned with giving gifts of money and fine mats to the people because ultimately they are not interested in seeing him come with these things. All they are interested in is that he comes to offer prayers and words of encouragement and to bring the peace and love of God through the Holy Spirit to the family. When he comes bringing gifts, this will obviously mean that these gifts will need to be reciprocated, the family will already have prepared a gift for him to take home in the form of food and an envelope of money and so whether he brings a gift or not is irrelevant. However, for the minister he will be thinking that he will receive gifts on his departure therefore at least on his arrival he can somehow offer a contribution to the family. Both have valid reasons for giving but in the context of the guidance given by the high chief above, the minister should not worry himself with having to provide any gifts for families as his priority is in providing them with spiritual food not physical food.

The wave-one Presbyterian church, be that multicultural or ethnic-specific, is still seen by many Samoans who worship in wave-two C.C.C.S. Samoan-language and -culture churches as a *palagi* church even though there may not be any *palagi* worshipping there. The Presbyterian church is governed by the Presbyterian General Assembly; it is

not indigenous and self-determining in things Samoan. For some Samoans this is seen as a compromise and sacrifice of one's Samoan identity.

Ola reflects,

“a ma te mafaufau foi ga ai ese a pei a e tumau mai ia ta ita talitonu a I le lotu a lea PIC aua o le lotu foi a lea sau a ia lea I le latou aiga I nai ona tei foi na sau I ai o nai lolotu ai a I tai a la. Ia ou te sau foi ta ita I lea foi ua lolotu ai le vaega lea. E fai mai ia foi isi tagata fai mai ua o tou te lolotu I ga palagi? E leai ni lotu a palagi o lotu a le Pasefika tagata Pasefika uma.”

“When I think back what remains for me in my belief is the P.I.C. church, the church which my family arrived and all worshipped at. I also attended because my family were there. People used to say “why have you gone to worship with those *palagi* (Europeans)? It's not a church for Europeans it is a Pacific church for all Pacific people.”

Another participant N1a who stayed in the same church for the past 65 years remarks:

“They shouldn't be doing these things (culture) I suppose because they enjoy it. That's their fellowship, but that kills the spirit of the church. I love the *fa'asamoa* but I think they overdo it and that kills the other children thinking the *fa'asamoa* is no good. It's good for our children to grow up with the *fa'asamoa* because of our identity.”

One second-generation participant N2 who has not moved churches at all says that she never saw the church as a cultural agent – that was not its chief purpose.

Reflection on Part One

Most Samoan people have a strong faith in God and the Christian ministry. They believe and trust in the minister as being God's messenger as chosen and called by God. Some movement was due to the inability of a minister to meet face to face with a family he has hurt, who chooses instead to preach about this problem from the pulpit; this is a common criticism. Violence, whether physical or psychological or verbal, can be very damaging and when people particularly children are exposed to this in a church it can have a lasting effect on the child/individual. People may forgive but may never forget hurtful situations within the church.

Unrealistic gifting of a house to a minister by working class, retired people needs to be challenged. Samoan people are unable to say “no” to a minister. Saying “no” to a

minister is equal to refusing a request from God and is often accompanied with the words “*te’i ua malaea seisi*” lest we are cursed. Even though they are aware of the unrealistic request and the resulting economic difficulty they are prepared to shoulder the responsibility, even if it means going into debt as a consequence. Pride comes before a fall. In the words of G1 “it’s forever like looking for money”.

When high chief *Malietoa Vainu’upo* died in the 19th century his departing words were “there will be no more kings, treat your ministers as your kings...” Hence Christian ministry has become equated with “royalty” in that it is the most sought-after vocation amongst Samoans. The problem with ministry being regarded as “royal” is that there can be an element of elitism where the minister becomes almost out of touch with where the people are at, and often as a result become very demanding even if they are aware of the economic struggles of those in the pews.

Part Two: Why did they stay?

In this three-generational study only one family, the Newton family, have stayed on and been at their present church for over 65 years since arriving from Samoa in 1951. I interviewed them together and they say there were times when they thought about leaving and going to another church, but they saw a real need within the church that was not being attended to by the minister – for example, pastoral care of the sick and elderly. They stayed on at their home church because they feared that no one would attend to this if they left. They have stayed to fulfil an obligation and service. N1a says,

“we stayed because that was our home. We stayed there to worship the Lord not anybody. We went to both services for many years until the kids stopped paying attention at the Samoan service. I did think I want to move somewhere else and I thought what about other people? If I stay I can try to do something to change, to me I think a lot of people need help in our church. A lot of people struggle and so many things they are involved in.

N1 reflects,

“if you go to church now very empty. Sometimes we don’t go to church because we go and do work in the hospitals by pushing people to church (chapel). We visit old people who have no family. I think if we do these small things might be better for us and important for other people.”

N1a,

“sometimes when you go elsewhere and hear the word you feel refreshed. You can be routine but the message is what your listening for. Sometimes I wondered whether English being the second language hinders them.

“It never occurred to me that any of my children would move on, there was no voice about it. Even though you are disenchanted you still go because that’s your home it’s your church and my daughter says that’s where she’s meant to be. It’s not that they’re not happy, if they disagree with things that doesn’t cloud them to serve the Lord that’s what they are there for. My church is dear to my heart.”

The English-Speaking Group (ESG) was established with Newton P.I.C. in the early 70’s to cater for the non-Samoan-speaking population. This group consisted of intermarried couples and the New Zealand-born generation within Newton PIC. It was the brainchild of Rev. Leuatea Sio and continues to be a strong group within the church. According to Anae, the E.S.G. was set up in the early 1970s by Church leaders to meet the needs of NZ-born Pacific Islands’ children whose first language was English, to keep these young people who had left Bible class involved with the Church, and to accommodate the few *palagi* members and spouses (Anae, 1998 p.137).

N2 reflects,

“I honestly don’t know if I would still be at church if there was no E.S.G. because I would not have chosen to submit myself to the structures of being involved in the Samoan group I don’t think. I stay because of a sense of purpose and calling to P.I.C. Newton. I believe that God has a calling and mission and a vision for the church which is unique and I believe that that’s what I’m meant to be a part of and that’s gone through some pain, some struggles and challenges throughout the years. But in these times I’m feeling like a renewed sense of enthusiasm for what I’m called to do.

“I cannot over emphasise the impact of Rev. Sio, the more I think about it the more I think about where our church is going and where our P.I.C. church as a whole is going. I do lament a lack of visionary and courageous leadership that was so open to new things, had such a strong love and passion for the people and the culture but was not tied to traditions really. He’s unique. It’s sad because for me we grew up with a leader like that so it’s been a difficult challenge to then deal with people afterwards who are not of the same calibre. He was our champion, I hope that he reaped the benefits of having us still involved in the church and that’s because of what he did. So many of Newton tithe to the church, continue to have faith and I believe show themselves to be in leadership. I marvel at him, he was amazing. We had immense respect for him he knew the people of his congregation, he knew what I was up to, he knew not just the old people and our parents, he was interested in what our children were doing once they were born, he followed with interest what they were doing in different spheres. He would want us to be involved and he would

come and look for us and say can you do this or do that. When he retired that was the end of an era. I don't know that we really grieved the loss of him."

This family spoke openly about some of the problems they have seen with the lack of pastoral oversight by the minister to his flock. As a consequence they feel the obligation to make up for this lack of pastoral oversight by taking up some of the responsibilities that they feel they are in a position to fulfil, eg. taking home communion to the elderly and unwell at homes and in hospitals, for example.

N1 and N1a reflect together,

"there's no pastoral care, we never see any minister. We never been visited from our minister. I don't believe there is pastoral care because we take communion to them on Sunday to people we notice have not come to church. Unless your children are involved in the church the minister doesn't know who you are. The people we take communion to I don't even think the *faifeau* (minister) knows where they are. We ask the families if they have received communion and they say no, unless you involved in the church then you don't. If you are getting old the minister doesn't know who you are. Our minister doesn't know his parish he doesn't do his homework. People have their funeral here because it is their home church but our minister hasn't done his homework he doesn't have anything to say about these people. The older people are just falling down along the wayside. A lot of our people are in hospital now and a lot of our people are getting dementia and we saw people there and we give them communion and they never been visited."

Factors outside of control and wanting more than what was available

The main reasons people moved from their churches were due to location, factors to do with the church ministry and organisation and also wanting to worship in an ethnic-specific church and a search for something more spiritual.

When matters got outside of their control ... they did not like to stay in a church environment that compromised their positions or values. If no effort was made to reconcile the differences and conflict, then people voted with their feet.

Matters outside of control varied from being forced to choose a side when schisms in the church erupted splitting families in two, to witnessing violence within the church and seeing the effect this had on family members, to having to tolerate people's anger and disappointment over a decision made by a member of the participant's family. Finances and corruption and misappropriation of funds was another area which caused grief along with unreasonable and unrealistic expectations around fundraising and gifting of money. Lack of pastoral care and oversight of participants during their time of

need was another example of matters outside of one's control which resulted in people leaving their church.

Summary

Within this chapter I have described why people moved, in particular the first wave of Samoans who left the mother church of Newton for geographical reasons. I also described some of the family dynamics and the supportive relationships between the generations. This chapter also looked at the themes of heartbreak and grief, power and abuse, and disagreement with church practice; it explored how people reacted to a disagreement with some aspect of church organization, or with other members of the congregation or, in some cases, a lack of financial accountability. There was also the search for a new spirituality by some second-generation participants and a search for a change in the way of being the church and worship.

Chapter 8 The Church and the Fa'asamoa

This chapter discusses question number three below:

QUESTION 3: Does any movement between churches signal a strengthening or an erosion or weakening of the *fa'asamoa*?

It took me a while to answer this question given that there are many issues of identity around what it means to be Samoan. As noted I drew on the findings of the participants. I used language because there was definitely a sense of pride in identifying with being Samoan for the second and third New Zealand-born generations and also a sense of regret that they were not able to speak the Samoan language. All the second generation understood the spoken Samoan language but many were not able to respond in Samoan, although some were able to speak broken Samoan.

“The biggest factor was the language, growing up, whilst you understand everything that’s going on with the youth and why things are done in a certain way, you didn’t really have any involvement with any of the decisions made and anything as to what you’re being taught, why you’re being taught it and on Sundays you have no idea what you’re learning if your Samoan isn’t that great like it was for me.”

In my literature review Wilson notes that:

Most studies highlight the church, particularly the congregational churches, as the main domain of Samoan language use and maintenance in New Zealand. All but one family in this study attended a Samoan-speaking church, so there was an assumption that Samoan would be spoken for the majority of the time. This was not so. A significant study finding was that English was gradually encroaching into this former stronghold of Samoan language and cultural identity. For example, more English was being spoken in church groups such as the *Autalavou* and *A’oga Aso Sā*, and church ministers were also seen to be faced with the challenge of having to use English in their services to keep youth ‘in’ the church, rather than face the danger of losing them. An implication of this is the possibility that perhaps Samoan churches in New Zealand are changing. Will they continue to be the bastions of Samoan language and culture? Moreover, what about Samoan families who do not attend Samoan-speaking churches? This issue is an intriguing one, which could be usefully explored in further research” (Wilson, 2017, p.198).

Noting at the same time, that most often the cultural and language learning takes place outside of the church.

This chapter is in three parts

- 1 Preferred language for *talanoa*
- 2 The church and language
- 3 Language and identity

1 Preferred language for *talanoa*

As noted, the *talanoa* were to be carried out in participants' preferred languages.

Talanoa with four first-generation participants were carried out in Samoan, as that was the language they were most comfortable with and as one noted they struggled a bit with the English language. Other first generation were fluent in both English and Samoan, sometimes shifting between the two languages in the same sentence. All the second-generation *talanoa* were in English as this was their first language apart from three Samoan-born fathers who had migrated to New Zealand when they were young. For the non-Samoan-speaking second-generation participants who identified with not being able to speak the Samoan language when recalling their parents' advice in life, some were able to repeat these words in the Samoan language.

I asked the third generation if they understood the Samoan language; most did not understand Samoan fluently and so all their interviews were conducted in the English language.

2 The Church and language

The first-generation family from Glendene (G1 & G1a) remembered the words of their minister when they left Samoa for New Zealand,

“Don't forget you're not only taking your suitcases to New Zealand, you are carrying your Christianity, you're packing your Christianity as well as your culture”.

Sometimes lessons were learnt where the N.Z.B.S. made mistakes in communicating, and often those mistakes made it difficult to continue the learning process for fear of making another mistake and risking shame and embarrassment.

O2 states,

“One time when we were meeting with the church parents my father spoke to me in Samoan and thinking I was being respectful tried to respond in Samoan. Unfortunately, I chose the wrong response. I replied “*o le a?*” which I was quickly reprimanded for by another father who said to me ‘that is just as bad as saying

“what!” to your father and that is disrespectful.’ I felt ashamed as that was not my intention. It was just the wrong choice of words that I did not know was disrespectful at the time.”

A third-generation participant from the Kelston family noted,

“Church was definitely in Samoan, however, there was a lot of it that was in English. Youth was on a Friday night and youth service on Sunday night. They were in English and I was heavily involved in that and quite engaged in that when that started up.”

N1 and N1a Samoan family took their children to the Samoan-language service in the afternoon but after a few years, as the children got older, they noticed that the children were not paying attention and were losing interest in the service because they did not understand the language. Rather than trying to encourage them to learn the Samoan language, they opted to stop attending the Samoan service.

I asked another third-generation participant a similar question: “How important is your culture to your faith?” She responded:

“Culture doesn’t have anything to do with my faith, it’s more one on one. Now that I’m older and more mature it has kind of put me off going to a Samoan parish cos it kind of confirms that whole dodgy works.”

I asked a first-generation parent, “did the language matter to you or just the fellowship?”

“The language was no problem but we took the children (second-generation) to the Samoan service and I began to see that they weren’t interested maybe they were lost in translation.”

On the subject of re-introducing a monthly Samoan service in an English-speaking multicultural Presbyterian church, these second-generation participants say:

“I was really shocked that that had come up again. When it first came up I said, I don’t know how that came about but our Samoan people moved away from traditional churches and now they want to reintroduce the same thing again and why are we? We still have other Samoan churches that they wanted to connect with at Samoan services. Why couldn’t they just go in the afternoon for the Samoan if they want to connect with the Samoans. At the moment things are going really really well with the way it is right now, have that combined service where everybody is. So I couldn’t see why they wanted to re-introduce something that they got away from in the first place and so that was really hard, that was my input into when they asked about the church and I said why reinvent the things that we already been there and done that before.”

“I get enough from what we get in the morning” (at the English-speaking service).

A second-generation Mt. Roskill participant states,

“Regarding the *fa’asamoa* I rejected it. Probably typical of most New Zealand-born Samoans and then you go to Samoa and you get called a *palagi*. So you get called a coconut here and then you go to Samoa you don’t fit with them either regardless of whether you speak Samoan fluently. They probably mock you under their breath and still call you a milky bar. In any crisis as a young fellow you sort of had resentment. Now that I’m older, yeah I appreciate the stuff and old enough to appreciate certain things.”

A third-generation participant recently moved back to the traditional church of her new husband and his parents.

“They have cultural and language classes where they teach you about the *fa’asamoa* so you have a bigger understanding of not only your faith but also your culture, because within the church they’re sometimes intertwined. Yeah, you’re not there to worship the church, the church should be there as a tool to help you with your personal relationship with God.”

Reflections on the language

Many New Zealand-born Samoan participants, particularly of the second-generation, longed to be able to speak the Samoan language fluently but struggled. It is a lot harder to learn a new language when you are older. Although many grew up listening to Samoan they seldom learnt to reply in Samoan. They said some parents used the English language with their children in order to learn English themselves. Given the choice to hear in one language and respond in another gave the N.Z.B.S. the option not to speak, and as a result many now struggle to speak in their parents’ mother tongue.

A second-generation Mt. Roskill participant said,

“I can speak Samoan fluently. It was only when I worked for the government that I used to speak Samoan with my Samoan clients. The only time I practise it here is with friends that speak Samoan and my cousins that can’t speak English. I speak to my parents in Samoan. My parents speak both but prefer to speak Samoan. They speak English to the kids. They speak English fluently.”

A second-generation person from an Otara family states,

“Growing up my parents would speak to us in Samoan and we would reply in English. They learnt a lot of their English from their children. Sometimes they would use words that I did not understand and I would have to ask them what they meant and they would laugh because they took it for granted that we would somehow know all these words.”

The ability to speak Samoan is often used to measure one's Samoanness. If you can speak Samoan, then you are more Samoan than those who cannot. N.Z.B.S. struggle with this classification as they believe they are Samoan whether they are fluent in the language or not as one's identity is not necessarily tied up in language competency but in one's biological makeup. The N.Z.B.S. finds this categorising offensive and judgemental. K3 reflects,

“in my grandparents' church I was always told off because I didn't speak Samoan and had people say, 'you're not Samoan if you don't know the language'. So from that point of view it is really important. I feel less Samoan when I'm with my grandparents because I can't speak the language whereas somewhere else I feel more Samoan because to me I don't identify being Samoan as solely speaking the language even though I do think it's important that I should learn it, yeah so it does change, depending on where I am. My grandparents speak it at home but I only understand parts. Now that I'm older and more mature it has kind of put me off going to a Samoan parish. I get my dose when my grandfather's here but I wouldn't go to his church by choice.”

If the parents had not been fluent in the English language this may have had a different outcome as both generations could communicate with the other fluently in English and so there was no urgency to learn the Samoan language. According to Amituana'i,

The use of the language is seen to be in decline in secure language “domains” such as in churches, during cultural observances, at schools, and most importantly in the home. Lastly, a growing number of parents fail to teach the language to their children (Crawford, 2007). These challenges echo the findings of an extensive analysis of linguistic assimilation conducted in the United States in the 1980s, which concluded that in North America all languages other than English would gradually die out, with the possible exception of Navajo (Veltman, 1983).

The *Fa'asamoa*

For NL3 and G3, two third-generation N.Z.B.S., they believe Samoan language and culture is important however,

“I only understand the basics, some basic phrases. I can understand, but when we get into sentences I'm a bit lost.”

“I feel like that’s important I mean like um I don’t like it when we go to our grandparents’ house and they pray. We don’t really know what they are saying or when we sing the songs that they sing we don’t know what the songs are about or what we are singing about we know the words um I feel it’s important to know that um because it’s your culture and that’s a part of who you are, also something that you know you’re connected to and its really I feel like it’s important. It’s quite embarrassing when you don’t know. But being a Christian and having a strong faith is important and whether you know Samoan or whatever, is that crucial to your faith, culture and language? Maybe not! I’m thinking I should know my culture!”

Three second-generation participants who were also parents reflect. MR2 reflects,

“understanding our culture you know we teach so many things, identity and who you are and things like that and the craziest thing about it our culture makes who our identity is that it wasn’t an accident that we are Samoan and Pacific Island. So I realise too it’s been like even more recently that I’ve really come back, there seems to be even now today a renaissance cos there’s been a movement of a lot of our generation that are wanting to learn our *aganu’u* there’s now a lot of our generation people who are now starting to teach it outside of the four walls of home. But there’s actually some bold very well versed young people who are saying “I’m going to teach this, this is part of our calling and I’m going to save our culture.”

G2 commented

“so for me the whole journey and understanding while I discover more who I am I can connect with our parents. When *fa’asamoa* really started to happen we were at church and we would be looking for the door and get the *pusa’s* (boxes of food) ready. Now its understanding the oratory and something that I’ve been embracing a lot more and so our heart is really to pass it on to our children. Probably the biggest thing for them learning that has been their grandparents having a big part in learning that both my wife’s parents and my parents continue to talk to them.”

“As I discover a lot more of this I have the desire to teach them a lot while we are at home so that when they do go to their grandparents their grandparents are not having to talk to them in Samoan especially G2a’s parents and our kids are standing there going “grandpa, nana I didn’t understand what you were saying...” (G2).

“Before we weren’t even confident to converse even just a conversation was quite challenging, so now coming back has been a real journey. It is important because it’s part of our identity and I think for me seeing our children not understand not know who they are, what their culture is we explained it to them in English, but I think understanding the culture and understanding the language will help in their journey of culture, of identity, of who they are, make it a lot more better” (N2).

Third-generation question: “What do you think of *fa’asamoa*?”

“I think it’s good, I think biggest experience is with funerals and weddings. I kind of enjoy it, doing things your ancestors have done before even with a modern spin. I don’t understand it all the time.

“I think language is an important part and I do struggle a bit with that. A lot of it to do with service to your family and God and putting that before your own needs. Sometimes people do it to their detriment. Following the old traditions and a lot of it is respect for your elders.”

3 Language and identity

While the third generation may not be able to speak Samoan, they still believe that they have a strong affinity with being Samoan. It is not dependent on them speaking Samoan, to be a real Samoan. The basic principles of the Samoan language of respect are a given. All Samoan families will encourage these principles regardless of the ability to speak Samoan. The home has not necessarily become the best place to practise for the third generation as most second-generation parents are also unable to speak Samoan. Although they do not attend churches that speak Samoan or practise the *fa'asamoa* culture there is a longing to want to know more about their identity. Where they practise their faith in church they believe that it is not necessarily the place to practice Samoan language and culture.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the first generation that left traditional wave-two churches for non-traditional wave-one churches chose these churches because they were multicultural and non-Samoan-speaking. It was a deliberate choice on their part to attend a non-Samoan-speaking church. This deliberate choice was to literally remove the heart-ache and struggle and unresolved conflict they had experienced in the Samoan-speaking church and so a multicultural church that was English-speaking was seen as the preferred option.

Only one third-generation participant went back to a traditional Samoan-speaking church and this was because she married the traditional minister's son and he was attending his parents' church and she went to join with him as a couple. It is her hope that she will become fluent in speaking Samoan like her husband.

The main findings were that:

Finding 1 - My findings indicate that for the second generation there is an erosion or weakening of the *fa'asamoa* and a further dislocation is evident by the time it reaches the third generation. However, Samoan identity remains strong regardless of one's ability to speak or understand protocol.

Finding 2 - The desire to re-connect with the *fa'asamoa* does not occur within the confines of the church, except for those who choose to return to the traditional roots of their parents or grandparents. Anecdotal evidence shows that for those who have left the traditional church, the cultural learning is now either within the home of their parents or at Pacific Education learning centres or similar institutions.

Finding 3 - For some of these second-generation church-goers, who have now moved away from the traditional wave-two church, their new church is not seen to be the platform from which to develop their language skills or cultural knowledge. They viewed Church for religious and faith purposes only and not necessarily the place to develop Samoan cultural and language competencies.

There is a desire to keep language and culture alive which exists among the second generation, but the reality of actually achieving this goal continues to be a struggle. Therefore, there is likely to be a gradual erosion of culture and language but their identity as to who they are as Samoans remains strong. The leaving of Samoan-speaking churches shows an erosion of the *fa'asamoa*. In answering this question the participants all strongly self-identified with being Samoan though they lacked competency in language and cultural skills.

There is still a lot of work to be done in the area of ministry to Samoan young people, but the hope remains that the youth of Samoa, whether they be New Zealand-born or Samoan-born, will be proud of who they are and not be afraid to remind the churches of the issues of suicide, unemployment, racism, sexual abuse, disempowerment, and justice, to name but a few. These are issues that the church itself is called to respond to. The task before the youth of today is for the church to recognize the gifts and ministries that they bring to the life of the church, and that ministry for them can be expressed in so many other ways that do not necessarily have to lead to ordination. Through their gifts, they help open wider the eyes of ministers and parents alike to the problems and inconsistencies that exist not only within their homes and families but within the church. These are often symptoms of wider socio-economic problems.

The pioneering nature of the Pacific Island Synod at its initial beginnings welcomed a new 'ethnic' group made up of non-Pacific Island-speaking adults; it was called the English-Speaking Group E.S.G. Later when churches were forced to vote on whether they were to literally join the Synod or stay in the Presbytery, some of the bigger Pacific

churches opted to stay out of the Synod much to everyone's surprise, and the E.S.G. died because their parish did not join the Synod and there were no E.S.G. from other churches to keep this group active and alive within the Synod. This is seen by the N.Z.B. Pacific generation as a major loss to the Presbyterian church and Pacific Island Synod.

Summary

This chapter responded to the research question: "does any movement between churches signal also a strengthening or a weakening of the *fa'asamoa*?" According to this research both second and third generation were proud of their Samoan identity. Being Samoan was something that you're born with and a biological fact proven through blood-ties and not dependent on language and cultural competencies. For some of my participants, church was seen as a place for religious and faith purposes only and not for the purpose of developing Samoan language and cultural competencies. Where first-generation people moved on to Samoan-speaking churches, they held on to Samoan language and cultural maintenance with Samoan children's White Sunday services and other cultural practices. For those who left Samoan-speaking churches, a lot of anecdotal reports say they are leaving the church because they don't want to practise the *fa'asamoa*.

This chapter also highlighted the differences between the three generations and how a lack of language competency for generation-two results in the inevitable loss of language for generation three. It is interesting that for most of generation-one the desire to move to a Samoan-speaking church was not apparent and the desire for an English-speaking multicultural church was their preferred final choice. The question of identity was an important point of discussion. For instance, how do you define what it means to be identified as a Samoan? How do you measure your Samoanness and what tools do you measure it by? Although the desire to identify with being Samoan is strong, the reality of not being competent in language and culture suggests that there is a weakening or erosion of the *fa'asamoa*, particularly when it gets to the third generation.

Chapter 9 Discussion, Recommendations

This research study explored and looked for any patterns of movement by church for seven three-generational Samoan families. Six of these families began their worship journey at the P.I.C.C. church in Newton and their stories covered a time span of over 50 years. This study sought to answer the following questions

- 1 Are Samoans leaving the church and if so what are the emerging trends and patterns associated with this?
- 2 What are the dynamics underpinning these trends and patterns?
- 3 Does any movement between churches signal a strengthening, erosion or weakening of the *fa'asamoa*?

This chapter is in two parts. First is the discussion of church where I look at the movement and factors influencing church life. This is then followed by part two, my recommendations.

As a reminder, in this chapter I use the term 'traditional' to refer to the first-wave and second-wave ethnic-specific churches.

Discussion

In this section I discuss the following points which emerged in my findings to do with movement, spirituality, leadership, financial considerations, and impact on culture. I conclude with a discussion on the relevance of the church today in the lives of the Samoan diaspora families in Auckland N.Z. and thoughts for consideration for the future.

Movement

My study showed that there was a steady pattern of movement by the generations from the first-wave church P.I.C.C. Newton to wave-two Samoan ethnic-specific churches then back to wave-one multicultural churches and then another movement to wave-three contemporary and Pentecostal churches. Over time generation two moved of their own volition on to wave-three churches once they reached an age of independence. Generation three, however, moved with their parents as they were still dependant.

The dominant pattern of movement indicated the desire that those who moved to wave-two ethnic-specific churches wanted the Samoan way of worship. They wanted the

hymns and tradition and the whole Samoan culture of the church and the Samoan language. The ethnic-specific church they attended was an attempt to replicate the structure of the church in Samoa.

As already mentioned children from generation two followed their parents initially until they became independent and could decide for themselves when the time was right to move for their own reasons. These reasons were not for reasons of conflict but more for theological and spiritual reasons, they were looking for the type of church that would be a right fit for them and their children. Three second-generation parents moved their families from wave-two traditional ethnic-specific Samoan church to wave three, a more contemporary church, two of the families moved to a wave-three contemporary church made up of second-generation peers, Community Christian Fellowship (C.C.F.), and the other to a Pentecostal church.

Drawing on my findings, I noted that most of the reasons for moving had to do with organisational differences, and this resulted in people choosing to leave once they became disillusioned.

Redding (2011) proposed that there was a decline of the mainline churches offset by a proliferation of independent churches, many of which associate themselves with the Pentecostal movement. This was not a finding in my study. The main movement was to form ethnic-specific churches of their own. A small number went to Pentecostal churches and a larger number went back to a wave-one church. Of the total sample of the 27 participants, six participants from generation two and three left wave-two ethnic-specific churches to join wave three contemporary and Pentecostal churches - families G2 and G3, MR2 and MR3 and O2 and O3. This represents just under 25% of my participants leaving wave-two ethnic-specific churches for wave-three contemporary and Pentecostal-type churches. Redding did not take into account or consider the ethnic-specific churches or the significance of a minority group wishing to worship in their own language.

At the conclusion of my study, fourteen participants were worshipping in a wave-one Pan-Pacific multicultural church, seven were in a wave-two ethnic-specific church and six were in a wave-three contemporary and Pentecostal church.

The Ebaugh and Chafetz' models looked at the future of Religious institutions and how they may evolve over time.

The 3 stage model for ethnic Religious Institutions (RIs):

- 1 strong leadership from 1st generation with cultural and linguistic distinctiveness providing immigrants with motivation to start Religious Institution;
- 2 bilingual religious leaders conduct service in English and native language to provide a bridge between the first and second-generations;
- 3 ethnic Religious Institutions morph into multi-ethnic Religious Institutions as structural assimilation occurs and services are in English only (p.433).

Within my study stages one to two of the Ebaugh and Chafetz model had occurred whereas stage three did not occur in my research. Stages one and two are indicative of wave-one churches under the P.I.C. model of church and these did not morph into number three.

Ebaugh and Chafetz note also,

The 6 stage model for ethnic Religious Institutions:

- 1) parents and children speak the native tongue;
- 2) and 3) children demand Sunday School and services in English;
- 4) 2nd-generation young adults (English-speaking) develop leadership skills;
- 5) 2 parallel congregations with equal power and influence are developed;
- 6) 1st generation withdraws and the Religious Institution becomes a primarily English-speaking entity with a foreign language department (Ebaugh, & Chafetz, 2000a, p.434).

This six stage model is representative of the wave two church. Number one occurred, number two and three occurred in wave-one Pan-Pacific churches. Number four occurred in the wave-one and -two churches and instead of number five occurring participants from wave-two church moved onto a parallel second-generation wave-three independent church (C.C.F.) outside of their denomination. Number six occurred in the wave-one Pan-Pacific church.

Both models suggest that English becomes the primary language of the two models and thus the traditional ethnic-specific church is lost and native language services give way to assimilation. In the case of my study, the fact that some families moved from wave-two ethnic-specific Samoan churches to wave-one multicultural churches where only

English was spoken shows that although the pattern did not develop or morph from within the wave-one Pan-Pacific church, people from wave-one of the church moved with the intention of establishing wave-two ethnic-speaking churches initially and later when the time came to move on again they chose to move back to wave-one English-speaking churches. Of the eight that moved from wave-two church back to the same wave-one multicultural church, the foreign language department for them was by way of monthly Samoan language services. This was attended by only two participants, G1 and G1a. The other six participants chose not to attend the Samoan-language services. They did not want to change wave-two church but moved back to wave-one. As noted earlier in chapter eight the following monologue highlights this dilemma:

“I was really shocked that that had come up again. When it first came up I said, I don’t know how that came about but our Samoan people moved away from traditional churches and now they want to reintroduce the same thing again and why are we? We still have other Samoan churches that they wanted to connect with at Samoan services. Why couldn’t they just go in the afternoon for the Samoan if they want to connect with the Samoans. At the moment things are going really really well with the way it is right now, have that combined service where everybody is. So I couldn’t see why they wanted to re-introduce something that they got away from in the first place and so that was really hard, that was my input into when they asked about the church and I said why re-invent the things that we already been there and done that before.”

The second model by Ebaugh and Chafetz is for future reference for the wave-two Samoan ethnic-specific churches. Numbers four and five provide the clue for the future direction of the traditional church. As such there is not the leadership development skills on offer but the possibility of developing an emerging second parallel congregation with equal power and influence would be the future way forward for the traditional church. Taking the concept from the Korean migrants in the U.S.A. a second-generation church is emerging from within the traditional Korean church. This is an interesting development which is yet to occur within any New Zealand-Samoan diaspora church. This is a solution of sorts which would cater for the needs of second-generation Samoans, to give them the freedom to develop a church for themselves within the traditional set up but following one of the two models by Ebaugh and Chafetz (2000a) for migrant Religious Institutions.

Although no wave-two Samoan ethnic-specific church has an emerging second-generation church, C.C.F., although an independent church, is made up of second-generation members who have all left the wave-two ethnic-specific church and joined a

wave-three contemporary church. This is the closest thing to a second-generation church emerging from an ethnic-specific background.

The danger of course for them is number six, the withdrawal of the first-generation and the religious institution becoming a primarily English-speaking entity with a foreign language department. If this is the global model for R.I.'s it is probable that this could become the future model for the traditional church. It is possible that this in actual fact will come to represent the wave-one Pan-Pacific church which already exists.

It is interesting to note however, that even though the first-generation were all fluent speakers of the Samoan language, they were not all dependant on needing to attend Samoan-speaking congregations to maintain this connection with language and culture. In fact, most were content to attend church in English-speaking congregations along with other non-Samoans. It seems that those who had been fully immersed in ethnic-specific Samoan churches and had moved away, due to unresolved conflict were less likely to want to return to the same type of church demographically. Removing themselves from a Samoan church was like removing themselves from the conflict that had been the cause of their departure in the first place.

Spirituality

Spirituality for some people was a factor in their choices of churches to worship in when they chose to move. As mentioned in my literature review in chapter two, Aiono (1996) referred to the spirit as that, what maintains unity between man and God, the unity between the material and spiritual. Tamasese K et al (2005) described Samoan peoples as "a relational self, having meaning only in relationship to others". When this is set up alongside the *fono fale* model in chapter five there is a harmonious synchronisation that mental, spiritual, physical, other and family are united through the collective relationship of family. When spirituality becomes an individualistic thing and people move from wave-two ethnic-specific churches to wave-three contemporary churches which promote this individualism of faith as personal choice, then the *fono fale* model becomes vulnerable because the corporate or collective nature of the *fale* becomes weakened. The author of the *fono fale* model, Pulotu-Endemann, refers to the collective having precedence over the individual and that being part of a collective is a strength. With the second- and third-generation moves to wave-three individualistic-type churches and faith the very core of the *fono fale* model is threatened. In some ways the *va*, the sacred space that encompasses the *fono fale*, has been breached and the

Samoan phrase “*aua le to'ia le va*” of not stepping over the boundary is compromised. All things spiritual and cultural are constantly changing and being challenged; nothing is static. According to Aiono (1996) every modern development introduced into Samoa is a confrontation that may result in acculturation or cultural conflict. In this case this can be seen as cultural conflict.

In my study N.Z.B.S. have gone in search of a faith that fulfils their individual spiritual commitment, placing individual salvation at the forefront of their spirituality and faith expression and not Samoan language and culture. Samoan language and culture have now been relegated to night classes and part of the extended family expressions at times of *fa'alavelave* (family obligations, funerals and celebrations). The main distinction now is the choice between an individual mind-set over the collective mind-set where one's personal faith takes precedence over one's collective responsibility to the church and the cultural aspects contained within that collective traditional mind-set.

The issue of finance in the diaspora Samoan church

Finance is an issue which requires a great deal of commitment from the members of the traditional Samoan church. Every Sunday the people's donations are read out aloud for all to hear, although this produces problems for those who are unable to give large amounts. I believe this practice has evolved over time as a way of accountability more for the treasurer than for the congregation. People would sit in the pews and calculate for themselves the total offerings received each week and know when there were any discrepancies in the accounting. The present system has to change to allow families to prioritize their finances in order that they may give to the work of the church out of their own free will, rather than competitively and out of a sense of fear, pride, shame or embarrassment.

As to the clergy, depending on whether you are from an C.C.C.S. church or a Presbyterian church, your income will vary. The C.C.C.S. uses the congregational model whereby each parish is responsible for paying the stipend of the minister according to the giving of the people, and that will vary from week to week when they have their *alofa* (love offering). Some are living just above the poverty line, their small incomes supplemented by food products given by families. Others are quite well-off, earning more than most professional people in the medical and legal fields. Unfortunately, for some clergy, their call to minister in particular parishes may be determined by the amount of money a church is able to generate. For others the call to

work anywhere is their main reason for entering the ministry. Within the Presbyterian church all ministers receive the same stipend regardless of the size of their parish and this was one of the tensions when Samoans within the Pacific Islanders Presbyterian church wanted to plant new churches. The Presbyterians would not allow them to plant churches that could not sustain a stipend for their minister and so the growth of new Pacific Island churches stagnated. The C.C.C.S on the other hand could establish a church from only a handful of families and if that minister had to go out and work to earn his salary then so be it. As far as they were concerned, a church could be planted by faith and it was not dependent on them being able to sustain a minister's stipend. As a result the growth of C.C.C.S. churches was extremely fast compared to P.I.P.C. and now they have a church in almost every city and town of New Zealand.

Why move – what were they seeking?

In Tunufa'i (2005) and Joseph's (2005) study, young people were leaving the church for a mixture of reasons, mostly because they did not have a voice and were often misunderstood. Both the Samoan Seventh Day Adventist and the Cook Island Presbyterian youth experienced similar reasons for leaving the church. They also left because they were "born again" and had entered into a personal individual relationship with Jesus Christ, doing away with the inherited faith of their parents. They sought wave-three contemporary churches which recognised their new spirituality and allowed them the freedom to express their faith on their own terms.

Leadership

Lack of leadership opportunities and a disagreement with leadership styles were main reasons generations two and three chose to move on from wave-two ethnic-specific church of their parents. Some young people within my study left due to lack of leadership opportunities and wanted to move onto churches that would recognise their gifts of leadership. Due to the hierarchical ascension to leadership through eldership within the wave-two ethnic-specific church namely, Samoan Congregational and Samoan P.I.P.C. models, generation two and three felt the need to seek church communities that accepted their gifts of leadership without having to become an elder first; this was found in the wave-three church. The ethnic-specific wave-two model is out-dated and young people will continue to leave the wave-two ethnic-specific church not only because they lack leadership opportunities but also because it does not recognise their gift of youth and their ability to lead.

The wave-two ethnic-specific churches are replicated models from Samoa; their organisational systems are hierarchical and there is less participation by youth in roles of leadership.

Financial Expectations

Regarding financial expectations, in my literature review I explored the issue of tithing and finances and it was highlighted that some of the reasons people left their churches were due to conflicts over finances, particularly issues where the minister became involved with matters pertaining to money.

According to *Fuatagaumu* the church was seen in a negative light particularly when it came to giving money to the church. To recap he said:

Church obligations added financial stress to many of our congregation's families, many of whom had serious trouble making ends meet on a daily basis. It was not uncommon for families to compete with each other in making the highest offering in order to gain status in the church. We youth got the feeling that offerings towards the church or money for *fa'alavelave* were not always wisely used (Fuatagaumu, 2003, p.218).

The ethnic-specific wave-two church and some wave-one Pacific Island Presbyterian churches continue to have their offerings read out verbally; this is causing the rise in competition amongst the church members but also disillusionment amongst the younger generations and they are beginning to question these sorts of practices. They believe that the confidential envelope system is much more conducive to giving from the heart. It is not anticipated that this practice of verbally reading out people's monetary contributions will stop as it is believed that this way creates transparency and everyone is aware of how much funds are raised each week through the verbal announcements.

G1 and G1a talked about the time when their wave-two ethnic-specific church got into a huge debt and couldn't afford the repayments to the bank for the church building debt, and the only solution at the time was to choose six privately-owned homes of church people to use as collateral for the bank. G1a offered their family home without the consent of her husband G1 and when she told him his reaction was, "ok, then you go with your children and live on the street," referring to her action as being equivalent to rendering them homeless should the church default on the bank loan. Their family in Samoa had cautioned them at the opening of the new church; for example their uncle in Samoa said

“o loa su’e sese lotu tou te lolotu ai, ua uma ona togi le lua ma’a i galuega a le Atua, o loa su’e sese lotu, now it’s time to repair your spirits from all this time and toe teuteu tou agaga. And we were very surprised, because why did we build that church so we can all go and die in that church. But here they are telling us to move on and we said e le’i uma on togi le falesa (we haven’t finished paying for the church) but he still said move on.”

“Go and find another church to worship in. You have already added your stone (contribution) to the work of God, go and find another church, now it’s time to repair your spirits...But here they are telling us to move on and we said we haven’t finished paying for the church, but he still said move on.”

So the wave-two ethnic-specific Samoan church was a reminder for them of difficult times both financially and emotionally. The choice to attend a wave-one non-Samoan-speaking church in their case was deliberate because according to their family in Samoa it was time to take a break and repair their spirits from all the heartache they had experienced within their wave-two ethnic-specific Samoan church.

The traditional wave-two Samoan church that evolved out of 1830’s Samoa was transplanted on to N.Z. soil. Unfortunately, it hasn’t adapted to the challenges and changes of its environment and continues with its hierarchical structure which is alienating for second- and third-generation N.Z.-born Samoans. In order to keep generations two and three in the second-wave ethnic-specific church, the church will have to adapt its existing ways and look for new inclusive ways spiritually and culturally that meet with the challenges of today.

Gender

Very little was found in the literature on the question of gender. Three of the mothers in generation-one were quite assertive and were major influences in their families moving away from their church. Like the youth, the place of women in leadership roles varied. In the wave-one church there was an opportunity for women to take on leadership roles. However, in the wave-two churches the women played major roles in the domestic upkeep of the church but could only take on eldership on the death of their husband. One of the issues raised by one particular participant is that her work in the church i.e. the cleaning of the church was not acknowledged by her minister,

“I cleaned the church on a monthly basis. I retired as I didn’t have the energy. When I didn’t go, the minister didn’t come and visit me or ask why I wasn’t continuing to do my duties. Even up until the day he never came and sought my opinion on why I was retiring. He wasn’t pastoral towards his sheep”.

Although chapter three on the history of mission to Samoa outlined the different roles of gender within the village and the church this study did not look specifically at the issue of gender. The whole area of gender within the Samoan church warrants further study.

Impact on culture

Did changes in church impact on the Samoan language and culture? This study has shown that in the struggle for the second generation to learn to speak Samoan has impacted on the third generation's ability to understand the basics of Samoan language and culture. What can be identified is a decline in the *fa'asamoa* inter-generationally over time.

All generations within this study had a huge amount of respect for their parents, children and grandchildren who participated. There were no conflicts or problems between any of the generations.

Even though the Samoan language was a challenge for the second and third generations this did not stop them from understanding who they were as Samoans. They identified as Samoan and were proud to be so. At the end of the day it's about culture and identity and about who one espouses to identify with and have an affinity with. Lesa however, took a differing viewpoint;

“Since full participation in Samoan social and cultural interactions require competency in the Samoan language, and especially in the *gagana faaaloalo*, many children and young adults cannot function adequately in social and linguistic interactions in their Samoan communities. Many young adults feel alienated from their culture of parents and other native speaking adults. This is often manifested through their choice of avoidance or through exclusion by other (older) members of the Samoan community” (Lesa, 2009, pp.72-73).

However, for my group of participants there was not the alienation that Lesa speaks of but more a sense of a connection with the *fa'asamoa* and being Samoan through one's biological connection. The fact that all the third-generation N.Z.B.S. within this study could not speak Samoan did not mean for them that they were not real Samoans but just that they were Samoan by virtue of their birthright and inheritance.

As a N.Z.B.S. this research advocates for the N.Z.B.S. and believes that the majority of N.Z.B.S. are proud of their Samoan identity. In fact it is often the Samoan-born Samoan who can sometimes be in denial of their Samoanness and it is the N.Z.B.S. who can at times be more Samoan than the Samoan-born. There is a multiplicity of understandings

of the constitutive effects of the various expressions and so it is not wise to place judgements on the many different expressions. Each description can be unfairly judged by another and be an assumption, an incorrect perspective which is being made by one on another.

Only a N.Z.B.S. can understand the prejudices and discrimination which they are often unfairly labelled with and judged upon. Just because one does not speak Samoan should not deny one their identity. Too much speculation around the N.Z.B.S.' abilities or inabilities tend to be made by competent Samoan speakers who unnecessarily judge the non-Samoan speaker for their inability to speak Samoan. In fact there are many different reasons why they are unable to speak Samoan. The reality is that many will have tried to engage and speak Samoan but find it is difficult to pick up the language as an adult and even after many attempts at learning and speaking, somehow, it still remains a difficult language to master even over time. To be competent and fluent is a dream many N.Z.B.S. aspire to but the reality is that they still find difficulty in grasping the language. The practical aspects of the *fa'asamoa* are not so difficult to learn and so they are able to immerse themselves in the culture and protocol of the *fa'asamoa* as far as understanding and fulfilling cultural protocol without the ability to speak. This should not diminish their Samoanness.

Data collected suggests that the role and place of the traditional Church in the lives of Samoan people has changed. It had a place of prominence but is now becoming hybridized with mixed values that come with living in New Zealand, and the influence of Western and contemporary spirituality. It also shows that Samoans do not necessarily choose their place of worship because it is Samoan. It has identified that many Samoans choose their church for reasons of spirituality and theology rather than language and cultural reasons. For some of the participants in this study the presence or absence of Samoan language and *fa'asamoa* was irrelevant for them. Many are aware that there are other Samoan-language services and churches they can attend within their communities but these participants choose not to worship there.

Bedford (1999) suggested that the relationship between the *fa'asamoa* family systems (the main organizational system in the *fa'a-Samoa*) island identities, traditional culture, language, values and beliefs may be lost by the fourth generation. This research has questioned this hypothesis as all but one A3 of the third generation in this study is learning to speak Samoan and as third-generation N.Z.B.S. they also know only a

limited amount of *aganu'u* (culture) or *fa'asamoa*. On occasions such as the Samoan *lotu tamaiti* also known as children's White Sunday anecdotal evidence suggests that generations three and four are participants within this celebration but the question is to what immersion level is the Samoan language and culture taught and practiced beyond this occasion? Is it enough to sustain Samoan language for the future? Will these generations continue to pursue the Samoan language and culture over time? Bedford's question was written almost twenty years ago; according to my study those second and third generations who participated in *talanoa* continue to struggle with the Samoan language. However, their identity and values and beliefs of the *fa'asamoa* remain strong.

From my study it appears that the cultural identity for Samoan diaspora communities is becoming watered down as generations become more established within inherited and adopted migrant countries. I would argue that this a consequence of a movement, away from the wave-two ethnic-specific Samoan churches which have been the cultural and language stronghold, back to wave-one multicultural churches or the newer wave-three contemporary and Pentecostal type churches or to wave-four no church at all. This statement however, needs revisiting.

Is the Samoan church still relevant today?

If the Samoan church is the place where identity, cultural values and language is attained, what will happen to the generations of Samoans who no longer find the Samoan church relevant for them today? This study explored this question and concludes that two participants – MR1 and O1 – still find the wave-two Samoan church relevant for them today. The participants N1, N1a, N2, N3 who stayed at Newton P.I.P.C. for 65 years, chose to attend the English-speaking service and not the Samoan service. They attended Samoan-language service when their children were young. According to them they do not find the Samoan church relevant for them today. Christian commitment and one's faith journey is more important than Samoan culture and language.

Spirituality has been central to the *fa'asamoa* and the heart of family life for Samoan people in N.Z. Conflict and misunderstandings for the majority of families has resulted in them leaving their wave-two ethnic-specific Samoan church. When they opted for the wave-one English-speaking multicultural church their choice was in deliberate defiance to the unresolved conflict they had experienced. They opted for the wave-one English-

speaking multicultural church where they were confident that the negative aspects of the *fa'asamoa* could not harm them.

Wilson in her study on the use and value of the Samoan language in Samoan families in New Zealand says:

Most families spoke very positively about their church as being 'strong in the *fa'asamoa*' which, to them, meant language and culture. The children enjoyed going to church, particularly for the social interaction with other young people in church-related activities such as the *Autalavou*. However, a highly significant finding was that English is creeping into the Samoan church; the young people are seen as the reason for this development (see also Wilson, 2010). Four families indicated that their church Minister translated key points of his sermons into English. This was to keep the youth engaged and aware of key messages (Wilson, 2017, p.180).

She continues,

Perhaps Samoan churches in New Zealand are changing. Will they continue to be the bastions of Samoan language and culture? Moreover, what about Samoan families who do not attend Samoan-speaking churches? This issue is an intriguing one, which could be usefully explored in further research (Wilson, 2017, p.199).

The fears that Wilson talks about are echoed in the reality of what my research has confirmed. Samoan language and culture is not necessarily an option for all Samoans when choosing a church to worship in. For some second- and third-generation Samoans the possibility is that people will choose a church based on their faith and belief rather than their ethnicity.

As mentioned in my research methodology the participants within this research were purposively selected and the range of church experience has been within the first-wave Pacific Island Presbyterian/Congregational models, wave-two ethnic-specific churches and the subsequent wave-three Pentecostal and contemporary churches that the second and third generation eventually moved to.

The seven families who participated in this study were all different and although they were all Samoan, they each had their own individual uniqueness about them. However, they are diverse in terms of composition, socio-economic status, and length of time in New Zealand.

The future

My research would indicate that fourth generation N.Z.B.S. will be unlikely to aspire to *fa'asamoa* and language. This will require further research. The priorities of an individual's identity and where they place Samoan language and culture will also determine whether faith and spirituality are part of that same journey. It is hard to find a contemporary church steeped in the *fa'asamoa* and language that has not compromised an aspect of either spirituality or the *fa'asamoa* in the process. The second-wave Samoan ethnic-specific church may not remain relevant beyond the third generation for many of the participants of this study. First- and second-generation people who still attend ethnic-specific Samoan-language services will probably continue to do so.

If the church wants to continue to remain relevant to the three generations then it has to reconsider what aspects are important to incorporate into church community life and worship, a life that feeds the spiritual and cultural needs of its members. If first-generation people choose to worship at English-speaking congregations because they have chosen to move away from wave-two ethnic-specific churches and the language and cultural expectations of the *fa'asamoa*, then this shows that church for them is not necessarily a cultural experience. Church for them is a multicultural experience based on one's choice to worship God in English and in a multicultural environment.

Churches moving to accommodate this second generation with compulsory Samoan-language services may struggle as many of them are wanting the spiritual component of Christianity and not necessarily the cultural aspect.

For generation three some may choose not to attend a church at all. In this research three generation-three participants are already in states of limbo moving towards wave four of no church affiliation.

Reflection

In chapter four I detailed the reasons for the first schism within the P.I.C. Church being a question of cultural security and that the Samoans were wanting a church that retained both their identity and Samoan faith expressed in their language and cultural values. The first major move away from the P.I.C.C. was for this purpose. Having established this new C.C.C.S. church as the second-wave church, movement from this church to a third-wave contemporary church was experienced by MR2 and MR3. The reasons behind this particular move was to do with being married to a non-Samoan spouse and

therefore they needed to find an English-speaking church for them both to participate in. Subsequent moves from the P.I.P.C. have been for reasons of relocation, clergy families following a call and unresolved conflicts within the church.

Given that no two families were the same, it is important to note that every family and every generation proudly identified with being Samoan. What makes one Samoan has been explored in this research and the following points emerge for consideration:

- One's Samoan identity is not dependent on one's competency with the Samoan language. Some may argue that if one does not speak Samoan, one cannot identify with being Samoan (Lesa, 2009). Even though the second and third generations of Samoan families struggle to keep the Samoan language alive within their families, there is still the desire to want to be identified with being Samoan, and still a passion to learn and know more of the language and *fa'asamoa* regardless of individual abilities. Learning the language is part of the struggle and part of the journey, and cannot be denied.
- There is not one single identity within which one can describe the New Zealand-born Samoan individual. Every individual is unique and each individual carries with them their own sets of values, customs and competency in Samoan language and the *fa'asamoa* as well as their own sense of belonging.
- The research showed that some first-generation Samoans left their wave-two ethnic-specific churches due to unresolved conflicts. The inability to acknowledge or recognise the issues surrounding the conflict with an accompanying lack of accountability and pastoral care were the main reasons for their leaving.
- Spirituality was an aspect of the individual's belief that determined where they preferred to worship. Churches were chosen for their theological makeup and spiritual content. Second and third generations moved to wave-three contemporary and Pentecostal-type churches, because of the emphasis on individual salvation over inherited faith. They also used terms like "Word" (Bible) being an important aspect of their church choice. The fact that these churches were not Samoan-speaking churches was irrelevant at the end of the day, as they were not looking for Samoan language or cultural maintenance, especially given that they were not fluent in either in the first place. Spirituality was their priority not culture or language.

- Too many assumptions are made as to why and where people choose to worship. This study shows that people moved for reasons of relocation, because they belonged to clergy family, because of some unresolved conflict, and for seeking leadership opportunities for their children and a more relevant contemporary spirituality. Every individual has their own theory on what is most important to them both culturally and spiritually and where their Samoan identity fits into this equation is an individual choice.

Recommendations to the church for consideration

This study recommends that the Samoan wave-two ethnic-specific churches realise that their attempt to instil the Samoan language amongst its second- and third-generation members continues to be a struggle. However, second and third N.Z.B.S. generations may no longer see this as a priority for them as some are wanting a more wave-three contemporary spiritual experience, and are seeking to move away from the wave-two ethnic-specific church, to wave-one and -three more multicultural and contemporary church fellowships. It is therefore recommended that, to avoid losing them, perhaps the wave-two church needs to embrace the new reality of what it means to be church, and allow some of the contemporary aspects of church worship to become a part of everyday worship experience, including bi-lingual sermons and worship, which can be easily understood by the second and third generations, if it seeks to retain them.

The emergence of a third way.

A new second-generation church within the wave-one Pan-Pacific multicultural church and wave-two ethnic-specific church may be the new way forward. It is important for the church to open up opportunities for the second generation to be given space to build a church for themselves without having to leave to join another church.

Leadership.

Within the ethnic-specific wave-two Samoan church one becomes a leader once one is ordained as an elder or deacon within the church. The different groups have a youth leader, a choir leader, a leader of the *Autalavou*, but apart from the youth leader most of the leaders are elders or deacons. Young people cannot become an elder whilst their parents are still elders within the same church, so there is little room for the possibility of second or third generations becoming leaders. It is therefore recommended that the wave-one Samoan traditional church

(a) needs to create different types of leadership which are not dependant on ordination to eldership or deaconship. The reality is generations two and three can only step up to leadership on the death of their father; sometimes the wife can become an elder first and upon her death then her child can step up. Where there is hierarchical leadership our young generations are not going to want to wait around for a parent to die before being able to become a leader. New ways of leadership need to be developed if the wave-two ethnic-specific Samoan church want to retain generations two and three.

(b) That those in church ministry need an increased awareness that people need pastoral care. This is particularly important when they feel they have been aggrieved within the church community. This research recommends that the wave-two ethnic-specific Samoan churches set up a Samoan conflict-resolution process, so that reconciliation can happen.

Identity.

N.Z.B.S. believe that they are Samoan even though they do not speak the Samoan language fluently, that their identity as Samoan is based on their biological ties and not on their language or *fa'asamoa* competency. It is recommended that further research be done on Samoan identity. What does it mean to be Samoan in New Zealand today?. What is the place of the church in reinforcing Samoan identity?

Recommendations for further research

- This study could be replicated with other Samoan denominational church groups or Pacific Island church groups in New Zealand within the diaspora.
- Further research be undertaken to explore issues around N.Z.B.S. identity and what makes one Samoan.
- There needs to be further study on gender-based issues within the Samoan church.
- That there be a study on how the Samoan church sees their role in New Zealand today.
- There needs to be a reclaiming of pastoral care.
- I am recommending that the church look at the second-generation church based on the Korean model.

- The church needs to reconsider its calling. In these structures has the spiritual been lost?

This study has filled the research gap on the documentation of Samoan people choosing particular churches to worship in and reasons why they stayed there or why they may have also chosen to move on at a later stage. It showed how much of people's decisions to move from one church to another was based on reasons of relocation, clergy families and also spurred by conflict situations, change in theology or was based on a desire to move from wave-two ethnic-specific churches back to wave-one or on too wave-three multicultural worship communities. It also looked at reasons why some people left due to matters pertaining to cultural security. Apart from census statistics little or no research had been carried out on mapping the patterns of people's movement between denominations and their reasons for changing and moving. This research has mapped these patterns and documented the movement of three generations of Samoan families from first generation to third generation from within the Pacific Islander's Presbyterian Church in Auckland, New Zealand.

Chapter 10 Conclusion

This qualitative study set out to explore the dynamics of the Samoan diaspora church in New Zealand using a case study of three generations of Samoan families (who had started their worship over 50 years ago) within the Pacific Island Congregational Church in Auckland. It has mapped the journeys and patterns of 27 participants within these seven families, recorded the emerging trends, patterns and themes, along with the various narratives that emerged from their *talanoaga*. The three research questions were:

- 1 Are Samoans leaving the church and if so what are the emerging trends and patterns associated with this?
- 2 What are the dynamics underpinning these trends and patterns?
- 3 Does any movement between churches signal a strengthening, erosion or weakening of the *fa'asamoa*?

Question 1: Are Samoans leaving the church and if so what are the emerging trends and patterns associated with this?

Firstly it is important to note that members of all seven families were attending a church at the time of the study except for one third-generation participant who at the time of this study said he was disillusioned with the church. Secondly, while there had been movement in six families one family had never moved and all three generations of this one family were still worshipping together at this first-wave church, P.I.P.C.

The main pattern of movement was from the Pan-Pacific first-wave church to a wave-two ethnic-specific church and back to a wave-one multicultural church and for some on to a wave-three multicultural/contemporary church. Notably, most of this movement took place in the first and second generation. Findings were that the third generation were still dependent on any movement by their parents. Some of the movement was determined by family groups but for three of the second-generation participants it was their independent decision to move away from the family church.

Three generation-one families moved on from wave-two ethnic-specific churches back to wave-one Pan-Pacific/multicultural churches. Two out of seven families remained worshipping in wave-two ethnic-specific Samoan-speaking congregations.

**Question 2: What are the dynamics underpinning these trends and patterns?
What were the main factors?**

The main movement was convenience or relocation of families – for example into the growing suburbs of Auckland, here they started their own congregations. A second dynamic was a desire to worship in their own way and reasons for moving included the fact that these second movements were to wave-two ethnic-specific churches.

The reasons for moving initially had to do with relocation from the inner city to the suburbs. Two families that moved for other reasons were the Mt Roskill family and the Avondale family. The Mt Roskill MR1 attended Newton when he arrived from Samoa; at that time his own denomination had not been established in N.Z. When this was eventually established he left to join an C.C.C.S. congregation. The Avondale family left Newton as missionaries to plant a new church in Avondale. Thereafter some families left due to conflict situations that went unresolved. These conflicts manifested themselves in the form of schisms and also individual disagreements with clergy or church members. For the one family that stayed at their church, the need to move was never an issue for them. They have stayed at their church for 65 years and their second- and third-generation children are happy to remain there also.

Three second-generation families left the traditional church of their parents, to pursue opportunities in newer wave-three contemporary and Pentecostal churches. Here they found freedom to worship outside the constraints of Samoan language and culture – G2, G2a, G3, MR2, MR3, O2, O3. The factors leading to their departures were to do with theological differences, particularly around inherited faith versus individual faith, and being able to worship God in the English language.

Question 3: Does any movement between churches signal a strengthening, erosion or weakening of the *fa'asamoa*?

As expected this was a much harder question to answer given the many ideals and practices associated with and embedded in the *fa'asamoa*. As noted also, I used Samoan-language speaking as a marker for cultural security or the endurance of the *fa'asamoa* in this study.

First findings were that two of the seven families remain and prefer worshipping

in a wave-two Samoan-speaking church. O1, MR1 of the first-generation.

A significant amount of movement in the first wave was from Pan-Pacific to wave-two Samoan ethnic-specific church; this signalled a wish to retain Samoan language and culture.

Some of the youth of generation three were unsure of where their commitments lay regarding following the worship patterns of their parents. They were beginning to question the validity of their faith as opposed to their parents' faith. The youth had a view that they didn't need the language but still considered themselves to be Samoan.

For the first generation, the basis of movement also revolved around the differing perspectives on what the minister should or should not be getting involved in. One participant was very certain that the minister had a pastoral role to play and should not be involved in anything to do with money particularly around finances. An example is whether they should be fulfilling Samoan protocol when it comes to *fa'aaloaloga* (gift giving) towards the families being visited. i.e. should they be taking gifts with them or should they be merely the recipients of the families' goodwill and gifting. What should their role be? The chief from O1 made his view very clear – the role of clergy, within Samoan gospel and culture, is to share the gospel of good news, not worrying themselves with obligations to the Samoan cultural expectations around *fa'aaloaloga* gift-giving.

Domino effect

My findings suggest that (I believe) the second generation have the desire to strengthen their language and cultural competencies but are finding it difficult to pick up these skills, and so there is a weakening and erosion of the *fa'asamoa* and language as a result.

This weakening I saw to be part of the process of intergenerational dynamics, what happens in generation one determines the impact on generation-two and three. The fact that the parents of generation-one learnt their English from the children of generation-two determined generation two's proficiency or lack of proficiency in speaking the Samoan language. Generation-two were educated in NZ schools and were not so proficient in the Samoan language, they could understand Samoan but were not called upon to respond in Samoan. Therefore, generation-two could understand Samoan but were not able to respond in Samoan. This has had a domino effect on generation-three

in that they did not learn the basics of Samoan language from their second-generation parents and as a result many third-generation cannot understand the spoken Samoan language or culture. This results in a further weakening and erosion of the *fa'asamoa* and language particularly by the time it reaches the fourth generation.

The majority of second- and third-generation participants have had opportunities to learn but have struggled to pick up the language fluently and not through lack of trying. Families as first teachers is too late as their children are now growing up without the Samoan language and culture because of their second-generation parent's inability to instil this in them. It is highly likely that the *fa'asamoa* will be almost non-existent by the fourth generation or a very watered down version will exist in its place. Bedford's suggestion that the relationship between the *fa'asamoa* family systems, (the main organizational system in the *fa'a-Samoa*), island identities, traditional culture, language, values and beliefs may be lost by the fourth generation,' (Bedford, Macpherson & Spoonley, 1999) within the context of this study shows that although there is an erosion of language ones identity in being Samoan remains strong. The fact that some of generation-two and most of generation-three do not speak Samoan shows the weakening in the Samoan language; the *fa'asamoa* and cultural aspects are desired by these generations but a proficiency in understanding and executing it remains a struggle. This however, does not diminish the fact that even without the language skills, these participants continue to aspire and pride themselves in their Samoan identity.

I support Wilson's findings that concluded in her research that:

Samoan churches must also recognise the influence that English is having within the church domain, and make deliberate efforts to find ways to encourage young Samoans to use the Samoan language at church services, programmes, and church activities. Further research should therefore concentrate on addressing the paradox Samoan churches currently face in sustaining language and their need to keep their Samoan youth engaged and in the church (Wilson, 2017, p.204).

My study suggests that the generations are leaving the wave-two ethnic-specific church and going back to wave-one and on to wave-three churches. My research concludes that third-generation Samoan young people do not necessarily view the church as a place to learn a language but as a place to worship God and be in relationship with Christianity.

Church is not necessarily the place where youth choose to go out of their own volition. In my study the third-generation all attended church because they went with their

parents. Only one out of 27 participants no longer attends church; he made this decision as a grown adult. Two third-generation participants attend church, but reluctantly and are unsure of what they will do once they have the independence to decide for themselves. It is possible that three of the third-generation of this study will probably no longer attend church in the foreseeable future.

Of the second-generation, Otara, Mt. Roskill and Glendene have moved to wave-three contemporary and Pentecostal type churches and Kelston, New Lynn, Avondale and Newton remain in wave-one English-speaking churches. So one can ascertain from this study that for second-generation Samoans 25% have left the second-wave ethnic-specific church for wave-three contemporary and Pentecostal type churches.

Future dynamic

Even amidst the technology of the twenty first century and the knowledge and education received by the new generations, the Samoan church continues to refuse to move beyond an 1830s mentality and spirituality. Somehow it remains locked in the traditions of the past in a way that suggests that any change would be sacrilege. In the process, people are opting for the freer forms of worship and more liberal expressions of spirituality that the third-wave multicultural and Pentecostal churches are offering. Their appeal to the younger generation is growing, for they see such churches as more up-to-date and synchronized with the reality of the world. On the one hand, the traditional church refuses to budge when it comes to ritual and protocol but when it comes to money and resources it is prepared to go outside the protocol. Eg. accepting money from lottery is usually not acceptable but remains a source of income for some churches.

This evidence is not conclusive but it does indicate that the church today is also partly to blame for the draining of resources of families and villages, both financial and physical, in Samoa and in the Samoan diaspora churches. The effects of this are being felt in the gradual exodus of young people from the traditional church to either the multicultural, Pentecostal-type church, as well as to no church affiliation.

The dynamic of financial obligation versus family expectations, of suicide and the breakdown of family communication are some of the crucial issues which the church needs to address now. The real task is to get the leaders of the church to talk about these problems and own them as the church's problems, rather than something that belongs to

the village or *aiga potopoto* extended family. The church appears to choose when and when not to involve itself in family and village matters. A selective ministry which chooses its battles also chooses when to be vulnerable. The church cannot alienate itself from what is happening in the world because it is part of the world. God's mission is not exclusive to the church; in fact, if the church ceased to exist tomorrow, God's mission would still be alive because God's mission is to the world in which the church is called to act.

All these are pastoral care issues which are dependent on the clergy responding and involving the whole church in addressing them. The church runs the risk of being too complacent when it is not shocked into action at the appalling socio-economic situations in which its people live. The church is often too quick to lay the blame on bad parenting rather than looking at the role it has played in the breakdown of communication in families. The church must become the catalyst of change in order for change within the Samoan community to occur. It needs to stop looking at the symptoms of problems and to begin looking for the cause. Could it be that the church is afraid of what it will find?

Another way in which pastoral carers can be catalysts for change within the culture of the *fa'asamoa* is in the reciprocal nature of giving and receiving. Although giving generously and with goodwill, the money involved in the ritual of "*ta'i le sua*"—giving lavish gifts at special family and church events—needs to be challenged. In the event of a family bereavement or wedding, friends and family will come from near and far to contribute money and fine mats to the family who is in need of assistance. In the case of death, families will turn up at the home of the deceased bringing with them a few fine mats, one or two much larger mats called "*tofa*" or "*ie o le mavaega*", and some money to help the family pay for all the associated costs of the funeral, including gifts to the clergy who attend the funeral.

The dilemma I have with this type of giving is that ministers often receive two-fold back from the bereaved family because they are ministers. For instance, I as a minister may take a gift of ten fine mats plus two large mats and five hundred dollars to the bereaved family, and argue that I do not wish to receive anything back in return. Often the family will acknowledge my gift and accept my word as final. However, at the wake I will receive back from the family ten fine mats plus two large fine mats, a box of corned beef (value approximately \$175), and a monetary gift varying between \$300-\$500 or even more. If I do not attend the wake, they will deliver the gifts to my home.

The dilemma for me is that on the one hand I want to acknowledge the family's bereavement by way of monetary donation; on the other hand, if I don't, my actions may be judged by my culture as inappropriate or offensive. The bereaved family may think my absence means that they are not worthy for me to pay my respects through a visit. I have tried on many occasions to quietly hustle a donation and fine mats through the back door, but these are still reciprocated via my home whether I attend the funeral or not. Whatever I decide to do, I believe my actions, my presence as a minister of the church, creates more debt for these families. The challenge is to find a new road that will address both the family's needs and the minister's dilemma.

Obviously, every story has two sides to it and it must be noted here that exploitation, whether accidental or part of cultural captivity, is universal. It exists throughout all societies. There are those who remain loyal and dedicated stewards of resources and those who choose to misuse and abuse, in the same way that the ascension to the titles of chiefs and positions of responsibility in government, politics, and private enterprise are also not exempted.

Samoa now needs to stand back and assess the state of the nation over the last one hundred and eighty-eight years. In the process of missionization, what are the benefits that Samoa has gained? What has it lost as a consequence?

My Reflections

This has been an important and valuable study which has explored the faith, cultural and spiritual journeys of three generations of Samoan families.

It has concluded that while the *fa'asamoa*, may be an important aspect of one's identity, a desire to maintain and practice the *fa'asamoa* does not necessarily influence the selection of one's place of worship. For the first generation, Samoan language maintenance was not and has never been an issue – as first migrants to New Zealand they were fluent in the Samoan language. For their children however there have been and are issues with Samoan language competency. However, none of this second and third generation apart from A3 see the church as the best place to learn the Samoan language. Church for them in the most part is for spiritual nurturing and not for learning the Samoan language or culture. And what of the third generation? Drawing on this study, I can only say that the *fa'asamoa* and Samoan language may no longer be seen to be a priority for some third-generation Samoans. It may be possible that as they age, a

resurgence of interest may occur in culture and/or language amongst second-, third- and fourth-generation Samoans.

This investigation has broken new ground in that it is the first study that has been undertaken of three generations of Samoan families around patterns and movements of church attendance and worship, and the impact of these movements on the *fa'asamoa*.

A greater understanding has been gained in that the movement from wave-one and wave-two churches to wave-three contemporary churches is steady and not rapid. Although there is a decline in the church attendance overall people are remaining within the church, but moving between different expressions of church. Their choice of church is determined by what level of Christian teaching, pastoral care and oversight they will receive from their new church.

It also serves as a starting point for further research about the diaspora minority communities, the impact of second and third generations on church worship practice and the impact the place of worship has on language and cultural competencies within their communities.

Question arising from the research

The following question may be asked and require further and more in depth study.

Is there a new way forward yet to be discovered that can do justice to the Samoan language, culture, and faith, as well as cater for the newer forms of contemporary faith expressions of the 21st century?

I have yet to discover a church that is doing justice to the Samoan language, culture and faith as well as catering for new forms of contemporary spiritual expressions in the 21st century. Where the churches thrive spiritually they seem to be culturally devoid, where they thrive culturally there seems to be an absence of spirituality. It is difficult to find the perfect match where all three – faith, language and culture – thrive mutually together.

If this research had been conducted within an interdenominational framework incorporating other denominations, and with a greater number of families, it is possible that the outcomes would differ; however, given that this study has been carried out amongst a small group of Samoan families these are the conclusions arrived at. It is

possible that if this study had been carried out within the Samoan-speaking traditional churches (C.C.C.S.) the outcomes to do with language and culture would vary and it may very well be that the conclusions would be more positive in terms of the retention and survival of the Samoan language and culture. This will warrant further research in the future.

The final outcomes and conclusions may not shine a positive light on the future and retention of the Samoan language and culture within the N.Z.B.S. community. It does highlight that New Zealand-born Samoans do hold their identity as an important aspect of who they are. Samoan language and culture is important and crucial to one's identity but one's ability to speak and practise this with confidence and fluency will obviously vary with each individual. This should not be the deciding factor in determining or judging one's identity as a true Samoan.

My study design

I believe my study designed worked well and I would not do things differently. A three-generations study was very hard work: for example, finding participant families that were willing to participate in the study and the *talanoaga* and interview process and planning was very intensive. However it was very valuable. I was very flexible when it came to how they wished to carry out their interviews. It was extremely important to catch the importance of the first generation especially since a number have since passed away during this study. It is important to understand the trends and patterns of movement and aspects of language and culture within the one family and the dynamics associated with it.

Limitations

A contextual limitation on this study is that, given that this was exploratory, there is no comparable local research with which the findings can be compared to help substantiate the results, nor is there a well-established body of international literature relating to three-generational Samoan family dynamics, specifically around church worship and movement.

The focus in this study is on first-, second- and third-generation Samoan families and their own experiences of church attendance and their perceptions of the influence these churches have on their families.

Although participants were chosen from within the Auckland region where most Samoans reside, Samoans who reside elsewhere may have different experiences and perceptions from the participants in this study.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics Application



AUTEC SECRETARIAT

20 May 2014

Peggy Fairbarin-Dunlop
Faculty of Culture and Society

Dear Peggy

Re Ethics Application: **13/351 New Zealand born Samoan Diaspora and the trends and patterns that have emerged in the area of culture, language and the Fa'aSamoa within the church and spirituality.**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 19 May 2017.

As part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to AUTEC:

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 19 May 2017;
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 19 May 2017 or on completion of the project.

It is a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTEC approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to obtain this. If your research is undertaken within a jurisdiction outside New Zealand, you will need to make the arrangements necessary to meet the legal and ethical requirements that apply there.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, please use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at ethics@aut.ac.nz.

All the very best with your research,

Kate O'Connor
Executive Secretary
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: Feiloaiga Taule'ale'ausumai fijit61@gmail.com

A u c k l a n d U n i v e r s i t y o f T e c h n o l o g y E t h i c s C o m m i t t e e

WA606F Level 5 WA Building City Campus

Private Bag 92008 Auckland 1142 **Ph:** +64-9-921-9999 ext 2316 email ethics@aut.ac.nz

Appendix B: Consent Form

05 May 2015

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Consent Form

For use when interviews are involved.



Project title: New Zealand born Samoan Diaspora and the trends and patterns that have emerged in the area of culture, language and the Fa'a Samoa within the church, the Christian faith, spirituality and beyond.

Project Supervisor: Professor Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop

Researcher: Feiloaiga Taule'ale'ausumai

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated dd mmmm yyyy.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature:

Participant's name:

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on type the date on which the final approval was granted AUTEK Reference number type the AUTEK reference number

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Appendix C: Participant Interview Questionnaire

TALANOA GUIDELINES PARTICIPANT'S INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Greeting... Samoan, English
2. Reason why I am researching
3. Permission to record interview: is it ok to record
4. How many generations in your family?
5. Tell me your story from the beginning...
6. What were you looking for when you were looking for a church to worship in?
7. Were these met?
8. How did you find it?
9. What were the pluses and minuses?
10. Strengths and weaknesses?
11. Did it allow for flexibility?
12. For you?
13. For your children?
14. What were your hopes for your children in the church you attended?
15. Were these met?
16. What impact did your choice have on them today?
17. Did you see the Samoan language and the fa'asamoa as part and parcel of church life?
18. Have things changed for you over the years?
19. How?
20. What does faith/church mean to you?