3 Samoans in Papua

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Problems

From the beginning of their work in Papua, the Pacific Islands missionaries faced many problems.[1] Some were environmental, others cultural or personal. Health problems were perhaps the most serious. Many Samoans lost their lives in Papua. It is difficult to determine the exact number, but during the early period, there were such reports as:

> . . . . . Enari the senior of the party was dead and so was Ma'anaima's wife. All the others very sick.[2]

Walker in 1893 also reported that

> Toma . . . lost his wife at the close of the year . . . . . one of the new men Taleni died on 27 December, and a week later, Mata'ese who was at Killerton Is. lost a three-month old daughter . . . . . the wife of Areli who was suffering from fever gave birth to a child who only lived a few hours. This made four deaths in as many weeks.[3]

Part of the legend in Samoa is that the cannibals of Papua ate some Samoans in the early days. I have been unable to find any written evidence to support this. Perhaps it derives from stories of the Cook Islanders who were massacred at Kalo in 1881,[4] and allegedly eaten. What killed the greatest number of Samoans was malaria, to which they had no immunity. Although some of them wrote home about the abundance of mosquitoes in Papua and how they suffered from a bad rash when they first arrived,[5] they never knew that a special type of mosquito, the anopheles, which did not exist in Samoa, was responsible

for the *fiva Niukini* that they suffered from so badly.

Fortunately, the high death rate did not continue. With the discovery at the beginning of the century of the role of the mosquito in spreading malaria, people took precautions. Neru, a Samoan missionary, wrote: "There is only one rescue here — the mosquito net. There are more hours spent inside the mosquito net than outside it . . . ."[6] With the introduction of anti-malarial drugs even fewer died. More could have been saved, but they did not understand the reason for taking prophylactic medicine when they were not sick, so they waited until they were sick and then took overdoses of drugs. Sometimes this proved fatal.[7] As the idea of prophylactic drugs became more understood, and ways of reducing mosquitoes were introduced, the number of deaths from malaria dropped sharply.

Relations with white missionaries

Initially, the European missionaries seemed satisfied with the work of the Samoans. Walter referred to Ma'anaima and Filemoni as "both exceptionally good men", and he reported that Abel found a "very gratifying beginning the Samoans had made in Milne Bay", which was considered a very difficult district. The missionaries were therefore "anxious in making a new start to have thoroughly good men" and in this respect their "highest hopes had been more than realized." Walter said that Mr. Able "was struck with the spirit of earnestness which pervade the meetings. The (Samoan) teachers seem to have got a thorough hold of the people and the mission house was in each case a sign of life and activity pleasant to see."[8]

Unfortunately, glowing descriptions of their qualities became replaced by comments of despair at their limitations. For example Pearse at Kerepuna called them "bad-tempered men, who oppress the natives".[9] They were childish, disobedient and "in disgrace".[10] The relationship between the Samoans and the European missionaries took such a bad turn that by 1893 the question of sending the Samoans home was seriously contemplated. This news caused such concern in Samoa that the Rev. J. Marriot, a teacher from Malua Institute, was despatched to Papua to investigate. He visited the Samoans to hear their grievances and as well held meetings with the European missionaries. Marriot supported the view of the European missionaries that much of the misunderstanding would be avoided if there were a European missionary who could speak Samoan.[11] Mr. A.E. Hunt who had worked in Papua before going to Samoa, a "strong and vigorous missionary" therefore returned to Papua from Samoa in 1895 to supervise the Samoans.[12] The Samoans who were under Mr. Dauncey in the Kabadi district were placed under Mr. Hunt, and the ones in the Torres Strait gradually moved under Mr. Hunt when replacements for them were

found. However, those at the 'East End' were to remain under the care of Mr. Abel.[13] This seems an unfortunate decision because the relationship between Mr. Abel and the Samoans deteriorated so badly that by 1906 Mr. Abel "had conceived a horror of employing them",[14] and the last Samoan, Peniata was described by Abel as "a man I shall be glad to dispose with".[15]

A number of things about the Samoans irritated, upset and worried the European missionaries. One was what the Europeans called the Samoans' "haughty and somewhat overbearing manner especially with the natives".[16] They "looked down"[17] on the Papuans and "lorded over" them.[18] The Europeans tended to think of the Samoans and Papuans as being alike and regarded them all as 'natives'. They were therefore distressed by the Samoans setting themselves up as superior to the Papuans. This attitude of the Samoans can partly be explained by their pride in their *fa'a-Samoa*. They must have found the Melanesian egalitarianism rather strange after their own close-knit, hierarchical society. Because the *faife'au* in Samoa had status equivalent to that of the *matai*, they naturally assumed the Papuans would accept them as such. As well, the Samoans had been Christians for over half a century, and had adopted western material goods, especially clothing. Compared with the Papuans of the early days who were still 'heathens', who could not read or write, had none of the western material wealth and had practically no clothing, it must have been easy for the Samoans, who had come to value these things as signs of 'civilized' men, to feel superior to the Papuans.

It seems strange that the Europeans were appalled by the Samoans' feeling of superiority over the Papuans when they were so sure of their own superiority over both Samoans and Papuans. Frank Lenwood who was Foreign Secretary of the LMS and who was one of the deputation to the Pacific in 1916, saw the irony of the situation and commented that if he were a Samoan he would make it "quite clear that if I were not equal with the white man, I was at least much superior to the Papuans".[19] He suggested that "if the European can show that for him race does not exist, that with the Papuans . . . he emphasises his equality . . . he can remove the impulse to self-assertion from South Sea minds and go a long way to bridge over the gulf which separates the South Sea teacher from the Papuan . . . ."[20]

The Samoans' love for wearing elaborate western-style clothing irritated the missionaries and was ridiculed by Europeans generally. McGregor described Samoan wives as "great swells, big, ugly and in hats with great ostrich feathers."[21] The Samoan missionaries appeared on Sunday among pandanus-clad worshippers clad in waistcoat, neckerchief and collar, or sometimes a frockcoat and holding an umbrella. To the Europeans, the Samoans were trying to emphasise the difference between themselves and the Papuans. This may have been true, but the early missionaries to Samoa emphasised the importance of 'proper' clothing and the Samoans accepted this as part of "civilization"

and being good Christians. Also in Samoa, Samoans put on their best clothes as a way of showing reverence to God.

The Samoan's tendency to resort to violence rather than peaceful persuasion also upset the missionaries. Excessive violence was naturally resented by the Papuans and the Samoans guilty of this were sent home as being "unsuitable", but fortunately these cases were isolated. However, when the Samoans resorted to fists and sticks to stop fights and control disturbances, they won admiration from the Papuans who considered physical prowess a virtue. Rev. Miria Tamarua, a Papuan, told me the Samoans were not afraid of fighting Papuans, and were not afraid "to talk strongly to any Papuans who stood up to them".

"Immorality" cost a number of Samoan missionaries their jobs in Papua. In at least one case it was the Samoan wife who committed adultery.[22] At Pari village I met Author Vagi who claimed to be the grandson of Isa'ako, a Samoan missionary who was there at the turn of the century and who had a son and a daughter by a Pari woman. According to the Pari people, he had paid bride price for her.[23] Also in Pari village was Fauolo, another Samoan missionary who left a son by an Hanuabadan woman.[24] He was sent back to Samoa for 'immorality' in 1903.[25] The number of such cases is not surprising because when these men volunteered to come to Papua they were required to have wives. Some therefore married women who were considered suitable for the job in Papua, but whom they did not know well. When they came to Papua, they lived amongst the Papuans who they found were in many ways very similar to themselves. No wonder some of them were attracted to Papuans.

The differences in backgrounds, outlook and values of the Europeans and the Samoans made them interpret each other's actions differently. This partly explains the friction between some European missionaries and some Samoans. The Samoan, emphasis on food exchange and sharing their belongings and food with the Papuans was seen by the Europeans as the Samoans trying to buy prestige. The European missionaries felt that if the Samoans had been more frugal with their food and allowances they would not be asking for higher wages. To the Samoans, a good man does not save his belongings, especially his food, but shares with his neighbours. Christian teaching is that you should love your neighbour — what better way of showing your love than sharing your food? This is congruent with Papuan ideas about sharing food. In Papuan society, generosity is part of being a 'big man', so they thought of the Samoans not only as good men but also as 'big men'. The European missionaries were good men in other ways but they were careful to make their food and money last, so they could not share so freely with the Papuans.

Another cause of friction was status. To the Europeans the Samoans "were only the eyes and hands and ear and mouth of the European missionary."[26] When the Samoans came to Papua, they expected a different status. The *faife'au* had power almost equal to the European

missionaries since 1875 when the *Fono Tele*, the decision-making body of the Samoan church, started having as members the *faife'au* as well as the European missionaries. The *faife'au* also had full control of their work in the villages with very little supervision from the European missionaries. So when they came to Papua, Hunt said; "they very naturally expected to act and to be treated as in their own country, and they were very much indignant that the powers granted them in Samoa were not allowed them in Papua." He went on to say, "this alone for want of proper explanation to them has created considerable friction."[27] Ailaisa whose husband, Ekeloma, was a teacher at Lawes College between 1938 and 1946, recalled how her husband argued with Mr. Nixon, with Ekeloma demanding Mr. Nixon should regard him as an equal as both were ordained ministers. Vaoita, whose husband, Alesana, was also a teacher at Lawes College, also recalled her husband demanding the same from the European missionary there.[29]

The decision-making body of the Papuan mission was the Papua District Committee (PDC) which consisted of the European missionaries only, plus one representative from the South Sea Fono. The South Sea Fono was a meeting held once a year for South Sea missionaries to discuss their work and to make requests and recommendations to the PDC. The Fono representative attended the PDC meetings to submit requests from the Fono and to report back the decision of the PDC meetings. The Fono repeatedly requested more representatives to the PDC. In 1928, the PDC "appreciated the desire of our South Sea Colleagues that they should be more fully represented at this committee, but in view of the uncertainty of the continuance of the 'John Williams' (the mission ship) we deem it unwise to consider the proposal.[28] Other reasons given for declining this repeated request were that there were insufficient funds for extra fares for the South Sea missionaries to attend committee, and that the European missionaries and their island counterparts could not be all at committee together leaving their work unsupervised.[29] Because the great majority of members of the Fono were Samoans, this repeated request shows that they were not satisfied with their lack of say and sought a status in the Papuan mission comparable to that in the Samoan church. However, the number of representatives from the Fono to the PDC remained at one until the PDC was replaced by the Papua Ekalesia in 1962.

One request that appeared a number of times was for increased wages and increases in children's allowances. Sometimes the PDC members were sympathetic but restricted by the lack of funds, but at other times; they were not so sympathetic. The answer from the PDC to this request in 1912 said that generally:

> . . . . the teacher has a salary at present quite adequate to meet all his needs . . . . We would point out that several of the Samoan teachers, and some of these living in one of the poorest districts have bank accounts . . . . . we also find that there is a growing tendency on the part of our teachers to

adopt European dress and eat European food, and we feel it is largely due to this that many have found their allowances insufficient.[30]

In 1930, the PDC suggested that the Samoan church be asked if it would like to supplement teacher's salaries "in order that they may purchase some of the extras that they may have been accustomed to in Samoa".[31] Any Samoans who had bank accounts had no right to request more money, but for the European missionaries to expect the Samoans to give up European dress and food which they were used to in Samoa, I feel that was unfair, especially when the European missionaries continued to wear European dress and eat European food.

The Samoan missionaries were also worried about the children they left in Samoa. Originally the LMS discouraged the island missionaries from bringing their children to Papua. The missionaries were naturally anxious about their children and wanted the PDC to ensure that allowances were paid so that their children could attend good schools back home.

Another common complaint from the Fono to the PDC concerned accommodation for the island missionaries on ships. During the early years when livestock was carried on board the *John Williams* to be killed for food during the voyage, the Samoans complained that they were expected to share the deck with the livestock without proper enclosure for the animals. The PDC members were "unanimous in (their) support of that complaint" and requested the Ships Committee to deal with the matter.[32] In 1929 the Samoans requested the PDC that they be given cabin accommodation in the *Papuan Chief*, and were told that this would be arranged "if the cabins were not used by Europeans first" [33]

There was less clash where the Samoan and European missionaries were not working closely together. Dr. H.A. Brown, whose work involved going on patrol much of the time, regarded the Samoans he worked with as fellow missionaries and told me they were responsible men who carried out all the duties the European missionaries did in the stations where they were left in charge. He said many of the clashes occurred when the European missionary had a paternalistic attitude and did not give the Samoans enough responsibility. Rev. N.F. Cocks in a report following a visit to Papua in November 1953 said, "The best work is done by pastors who had been entrusted with the care of all churches in large areas of the districts where they were serving, or with considerable responsibilities in other forms".[34]

Many Samoan ex-Papuan missionaries told me they felt that European missionaries were jealous when they (the Samoans) got close to the Papuans. Some European missionaries must have felt a threat to their power and authority when they saw the Samoans' growing popularity. However, Mrs. H.A. Brown told me how she admired Levuana's (a Samoan woman teacher) ability to sit and talk for hours

with the people in the village. She said whenever they wanted to know what was going on in the village, they just asked Levuana and she always knew.

Relations with Papuans

Early missionaries wrote of the Samoan's superior attitude towards their fellow teacher, both from other Pacific Islands and the Papuan teachers. In 1915 R. Lister Turner wrote: "The relationships between the teachers of different nationalities is not altogether satisfactory, and I do not think that we ought to expect that it will be".[35] H.M. Dauncey, after years of experience concluded: "Relations between the Samoans and the Cook Islanders never have been satisfactory and never will be till after the Resurrection".[36] Most missionaries held the Samoans responsible. It was alleged that they tended to look down upon their South Seas colleagues and in particular the Papuans.[41] Perhaps the early European missionaries were too pessimistic in their predictions for relations between the Samoans and other pastors did improve over the years. All the ex-missionaries I talked to in Samoa denied that they felt superior to their fellow teachers and Miria Tamarua, a Papuan pastor, said he did not feel any feelings of superiority towards himself from Sulu, Faiva and Fiti, Samoans with whom he had worked. It must be noted though that these missionaries of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s had more progressive ideas about the Papuans than the earlier ones that Lister Turner and Dauncey were talking about.

Relations between the Samoans and the Papuans with whom they lived and worked were, on the whole, close and warm. The Samoans were not like the European missionaries who visited the villages for short periods and then returned to the stations. Instead, the Pacific Island missionaries lived in the villages. In spite of the number of differences between the Samoans and the Papuans and between their different customs, there were also a number of similarities which helped create harmony. For example, the foods and living conditions in a Papuan village are very similar to those in a Samoan village. Also a number of customs concerning food exchange are similar, and the love of ceremony, feasting and dancing is common to the Samoans and their Papuan hosts. Many Papuans have fond memories of Samoans who lived and worked amongst them and all ex-missionaries I talked to in Samoa spoke with warm feelings about their work in Papua and about the love they had for the Papuans they worked with.

However, there were also misunderstandings and causes for friction between some Samoans and Papuans. Mr. John Baure told me how frustrating it must have been for the Samoans who left their easy life at home to bring the good word to the Papuans, but found the Papuans preferred their old heathen ways. He said, "It is no wonder the

poor Samoans lost their tempers and used force on the Papuans who worked on the Sabbath, danced heathen dances, and worshipped idols!" It is also easy to see how the Papuans would resent being punished and dominated by the Samoans. Albert Maori Kiki resented being beaten by the Samoan teacher when he failed to persuade his parents to attend Sunday evening service.[38] Thousands of weapons were discovered while being prepared by the Kumukumu people to carry out a raid on Fetui's (a Samoan missionary) station at aird Hill in 1914.[39]

My Papuan informants were very reluctant to tell me of any difficulties they encountered with the Samoan missionaries. They probably felt that because I was Samoan I would not like to hear these. Even when I pressed them for incidents when they disagreed with, or resented actions by Samoans, they insisted they could not remember any. All they claimed to remember were the good things about them. Miria Tamarua was the only one who said that although he did not encounter any such example, he knows of a tradition in the Urika area, of a "bad Samoan" named Mose who used to pinch people on the stomach when he got very angry. However, D. Wetherell, not being a Samoan, collected examples from Papuan informants of what they resented in some Samoans. B. Lohia told him that "dissident villagers were pulled out of their gardens, slapped and kicked in order to be bent to the Polynesian will", and spoke with resentment of "The Samoans (who) were the big boss when they were in the village. They could take anything they like from people's gardens".[40] Another one of Wetherell's informants told him:

> If a village man disagrees, Samoan man . . . . goes straight to his house and hit him, pull him out of his house and bang him. Sometimes he only talk, sometimes he hit him . . . . All the people were afraid of him and whatever words he say the people do it quickly.[41]

These examples show that there were troubles between some Samoans and their Papuan congregations and show how the Papuans resented the Samoan's high-handedness. They support what some European missionaries referred to as the Samoans "lording it over" and "dominating" the Papuans. The Samoans were acting as they would have with congregations in Samoa, where their actions would have been accepted as part of the relationship (discussed above) between a *faife'au* and his congregation. As the Papuans had no such relationship with the Samoan missionaries they naturally resented some of the Samoans' actions.

Many Papuans however, respected the leadership of the Samoans. Sere Isaiah, a teacher at the Waigani Primary School, told me that he was grateful to Sepania and Matatia, the Samoans who taught him at his village school. Although he was beaten very hard at times, the Samoans pointed out where he was wrong and showed him how to mend his ways. He wishes he could use similar disciplinary measures to control

children today, who, he said, no longer have the respect for others that he had as a child. The question of discipline is a matter of great debate, but many Samoans who were in Papua told me they saw nothing wrong with using corporal punishment as it is part of the Samoan discipline. Afato Tuatagaloa said:

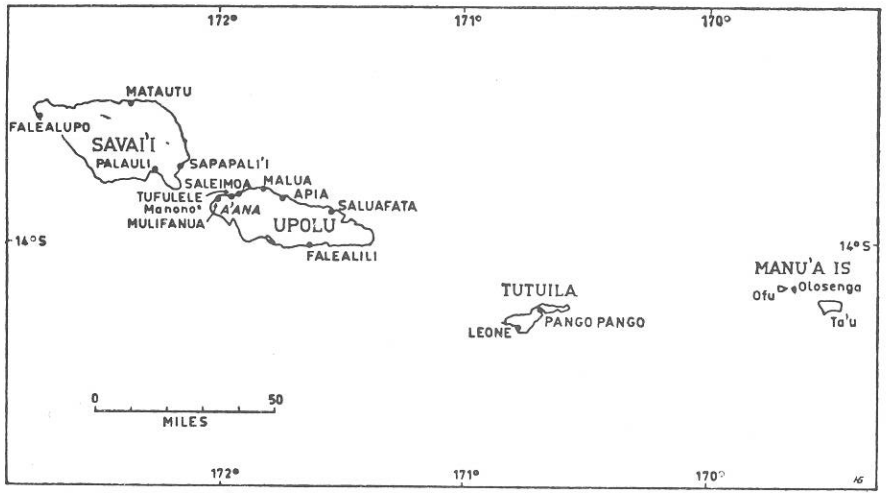
> Of course we beat the Papuans, but it is because we loved them and thought of them as our children. We do not beat and correct the ways of strangers we do not care for, because we are not worried what sort of people they develop into. So we were hard on the Papuans because we loved them and wanted them to be good people.

Dr. Percy Chatterton told me that although there were Papuan villages who would have nothing to do with the Samoans, some villages preferred them and would not have a Papuan pastor for a long time. Kapakapa village paid their Samoan pastor themselves rather than have a Papuan pastor paid for by the church right up to 1971.

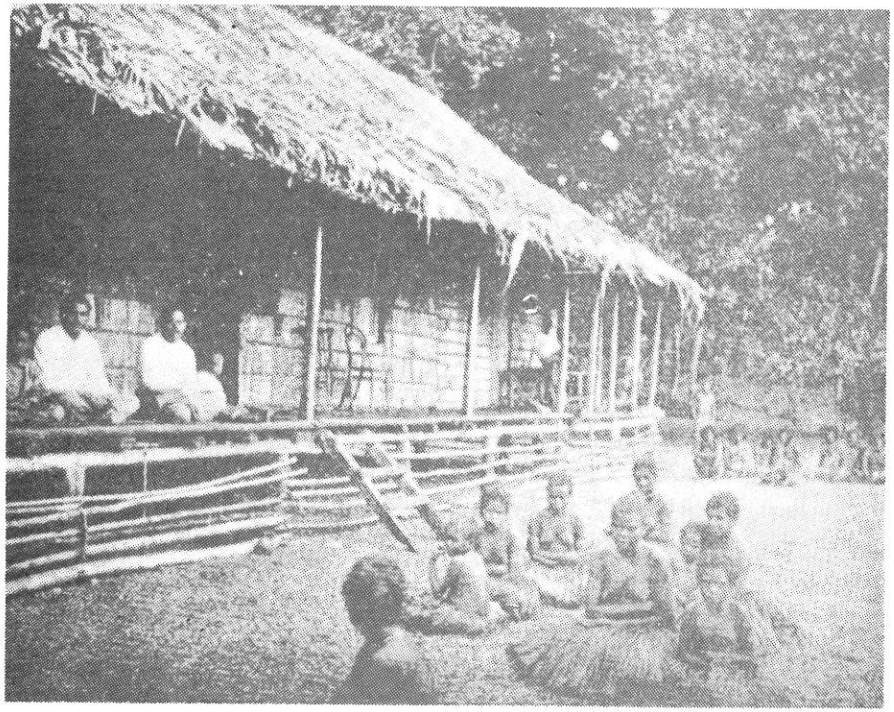
Samoan impact on Papuan religion and philosophy

Their most important task was, of course, to convert the Papuans to a new religion, and in this their impact was considerable. For the Papuans to accept the new God, the Samoan missionaries were expected to break down traditional religious ideas. Some tried to achieve this by destroying the idols the Papuans worshipped. The ways and vigour of doing so sometimes worried some European missionaries, but these Samoans were following the methods, and ideas of the Evangelical piety of early missionary thinking which had been instilled into them during their training at Malua.

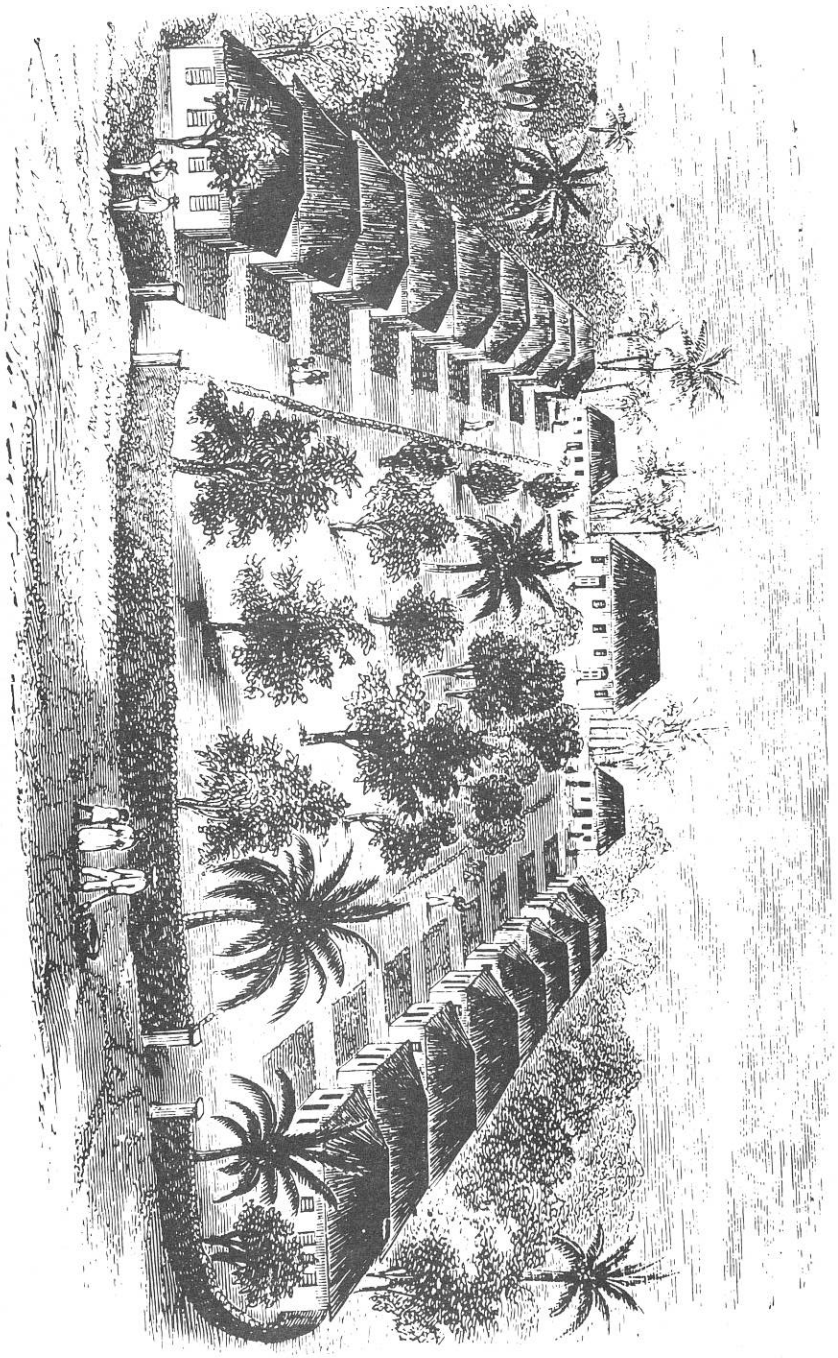
Tautala, who was with her husband Samuelu at the Torres Strait between 1905 and 1914, told me how Samuelu had heard that the people believed that rain and thunder was brought on when their 'King' Ma'amuse tapped the rain-god. He told the people this was false and he set out to bring the stone to his house. The people told him he would be killed, and were amazed and frightened when Samuelu carried the stone god to his house. Samuelu later confessed to his wife that he was frightened, but he told himself that he must not be afraid of a stone, because God would protect him while he was doing God's work. So he lifted the heavy stone (which was very shiny because the people oiled it every day and decorated it with flowers) and carried it to the village. He placed the stone just outside his front door where it was used as a step. When the 'King' Ma'amusu was invited into Samuelu's house, he stepped on his god stone while entering the house, and when Samuelu asked Ma'amusu how it was he stepped on his god, Ma'amusu said he just kept it because his foolish people believed in it, but he knew it was not a god because he had found the true God.



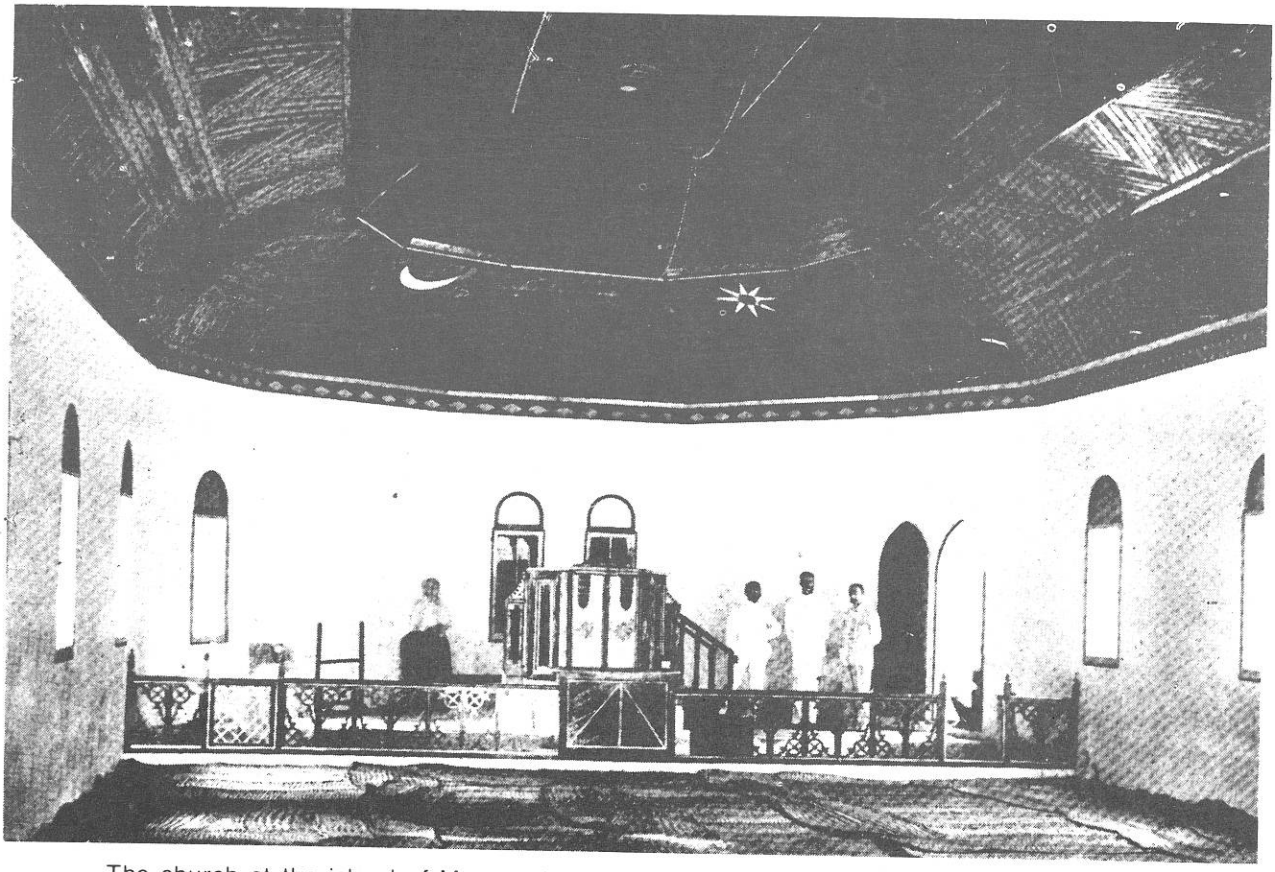
SAMOA
Showing some of the main early mission stations.



Morning worship at a Samoan teacher's house on the South Coast of Papua.



The Malua Theological College near Apia, Western Samoa in its early years.



The church at the island of Manono in Samoa built by the local community last century.

Pacific Islands missionaries (then known as "South Seas" missionaries), from various islands of Polynesia and the Loyalty Islands, in Papua in the 1880's.

Samuelu later had the young men break up the stone with axes and used it in a village mumu they had to celebrate Christmas.

Papuan songs and dances, partly because of their sexual connotations and partly because of their associations with spirit worship were harshly suppressed by the Samoan missionaries. Afato Tuatagaloa told me how he tried to scatter a group of villagers who had started one of these heathen dances while he was at Kapakapa in the 1960s. Some village people agreed with him that it was a bad dance and must be stopped, but when he tried, he was opposed by those who wanted the dance to go on and who accused him of trying to suppress their culture. So the dancers went ahead. Afato tried to stop it because the women and young girls danced bare-breasted, and one of the actions involved the men putting their hands on the women's chests, which he said was "a bad thing". He said he could not explain other parts of the dance to me because "they were too ugly", but that the worst point was that the dances went on all night, during which men and women disappeared in pairs, often a man with another man's wife or an unmarried girl. Fights often resulted because some men became jealous of the other men's associations with their wives. Afato said this particular dance which he had tried to stop resulted in a father trying to kill his young daughter because she eloped with a young man from the mission station during the dance. Afato had to pacify the irate father.

Records by Europeans give interesting examples of the way some Samoan missionaries instilled the fear of God into Papuans in the early days. A.C. Haddon the English anthropologist said that Finau, the Samoan teacher on Murray Island "... often preached loudly against native dancing and consigned those who attempted a little of it to hell, where, he informed them they would be burnt".[42]

Another example of Finau's churchmanship was given to Haddon in a letter by John Bruce, the European teacher and magistrate on Murray Is.

> On Sunday I went to church as usual. At the close of the service Finau told all the people to remain, as a special service was to be held; so I remained along with the rest.
>
> After a short interval Finau told them about the comet, and that a very wise man had written in the newspaper that the world was shortly to come to an end. This was true. He then read from the Gospel of Mark Chapter XIII, from which he proved that this was the time all these things were to happen, because this wise man said so in the newspaper.
>
> He kept on until he had all the people in a proper state of fear. Then he directly referred to me: that I knew it was all true and would happen. I said 'No'. He took no notice, but told them that in three weeks' time, on the 5th November if God did not hear their prayers, they would all be destroyed.

> After praying he invited anyone to stand up and pray and speak on the subject of the comet. Many spoke on the destructive powers of the comet and finished up by saying, "Oh, it's true! That wise man said so in the newspaper".
>
> After they had all had their say, which occupied nearly two hours, Finau told them from that day until the 5th November there were to be more special prayers, asking God to rebuke the comet and make it go another road away from earth. They would all know in three weeks' time whether God had heard their prayers. If he did not destroy the world then, that would be a sign that He had heard them, and was pleased with them, but if the comet destroyed the earth on the 5th of November, then they would understand that God was angry with them, and wished to destroy them as a punishment.

Bruce tried to counteract Finau's threat for fear of people getting sick from worry, but they took no notice of him. "The 5th of November came round, and nothing extraordinary happened. So Finau appointed the 6th to be a day of thanksgiving to God because He had heard and answered their prayers by turning the comet away from the earth".[43]

Bruce tells of another example where a 'South Sea man' had asserted that a hurricane was sent by God because "some unregenerate nigger had the impiety to play on his concertina" while the 'South Sea man' was praying. Bruce very astutely remarked:

> That is the kind of God they like to have described to them and no other. Really the South Sea teachers know the kind of God to depict to the native far better than the white missionary does; his God of love is beyond their comprehension ..... you find the God of wrath is their ideal of what God is. He takes the place of Bomai (local god) etc, which they have lost.[44]

Perhaps Bruce has a point there, after all the South Sea people were recent converts themselves. They could remember their own conversion and what of the new faith appealed to them. By stressing these aspects they got the Papuans to accept the teaching more readily than if the faith was presented in a more doctrinal form. But perhaps the more rigid doctrine of the Europeans was less intelligible to the Papuans than the simpler doctrine preached by Samoans who translated it in terms of cultures closer to the Papuans own. Doctrinal teaching could come later when the people were more familiar with the new faith.

Cultural influences

The Rev. Susannah Rankin, a retired LMS missionary when paying tribute to the Polynesian missionaries said, "We cannot ever over-

estimate the worth of the contribution of these people from the South Sea Islands . . . . They brought not only the gospel . . . . but with it they brought their skills".[45] Because they lived in the villages, their everyday activities and ways of living, as well as their work as missionaries, had significant influence. The ways in which they kept their houses clean, washed themselves and their clothes regularly, cooked their food, gardened, fished, built canoes and houses, made artifacts for everyday use, were followed by the villagers.

Because the raw materials of Papua such as pandanus, coconut leaves, coconut fibres, and wood were familiar to the Samoans, they were able to introduce other ways of utilising these raw materials. The weaving of mats for seating and bedding was taught by the Samoan women to the Papuans. In some areas these are still called Samoan mats. Weaving coconut leaf fans for cooling was also taught by these women. Mrs. H.A. Brown recalled to me the days when in the Ela Church in Port Moresby there used to be a pile of these fans for people to pick up as they entered to use during the service. The pandanus baskets that many Papuan women now sell on the roadside are of the designs taught them, their mothers or grandmothers by the Samoan and other Pacific Island women.

The Island missionaries also influenced the Papuan diet. They not only introduced new and interesting ways of cooking, eg. use of coconut cream for cooking, but they also introduced new varieties of edible plants from their home islands. They nursed, during the long voyage on the *John Williams,* seedlings of their favourite food plants which were not growing in Papua: different varieties of bananas, yams and breadfruit (some of which are known in Papua as 'Samoan breadfruit') etc.

They also played a part in bringing the Papuans into the cash economy. Because they accepted European goods as part of being Christian and "civilized", they were eager to get the Papuans involved in cash-making ventures so they too could be "civilized". They encouraged Papuans to be more industrious and to work hard, growing, apart from food crops, more coconut palms to make copra to sell. They were encouraged to donate some of the cash to the mission collection.

Education

Miss Camilla Wedgwood estimated in her report on the state of education in 1944, that 80% of the population were literate.[46] She decided on this after going to church services all along the coast and seeing men, women, boys and girls all reading in their own vernaculars.[47] Much of the credit for this high percentage of literacy must go to the efforts of the Pacific island missionaries. The *faife'au* were not trained as teachers, and had no classroom experience, yet

when they came to Papua, they were expected to run schools. The rule of faith was believed to be found in the Bible, so it was essential that prospective converts should be able to read it themselves. It was also thought that the ability to read and write would help "civilize" the Papuans. Schools were started as soon as a missionary established in a village. Apart from the lack of training and experience, there were language difficulties, particularly during the early periods. Papuans were slow to realise the advantages of reading and writing. They were apathetic and lacked motivation or time to send their children to school. Albert Maori Kiki tells how he hid when missionaries came to Orokolo to bring children to school, but he was "discovered and carried — screaming and kicking — to the school".[48] Although the missionary told them that school was far more important than the *eravo* or men's house, his father told him the *eravo* was much more important, and he "needed little persuasion to swop school for *eravo* for months on end".[11]

Reading, writing, basic arithmetic and geography were taught. Elementary English was introduced later, when the administration put pressure on the LMS by giving subsidies only to the mission schools that taught English. Skills such as sewing and weaving were taught to the girls by the Samoan missionaries' wives. Often the running of the village school was left to the wife while the missionary was away conducting services in villages without missionaries.

At the mission head stations, slightly more advanced education was given under the supervision of the European missionary, but his assistants were Pacific Islanders. Often the whole responsibility of the school was left to the island missionary while the European missionary was away on inspection tours or furlough.

Industrial schools came into vogue towards the end of the century. The purpose of these schools was to teach the Papuans who were considered to be "slow", "lazy", and "never thorough", "the dignity of labour".[50] Useful trades such as boat building, engine maintenance, lace-making, sewing, cabinet making, smith-work etc were taught at these schools.[51] The missionaries who went to Samoa in the previous half of the century also thought many Samoans were "slow, lazy and never thorough", but the *faife'au* and their wives were trained in institutions based on similar principles to these industrial schools, so they valued industry and held ideas about "lazy" Papuans similar to those of Europeans.

The education provided by the LMS missionaries, both Europeans and islanders was limited. Chalmers wrote, "Not until our South Sea Island people are better educated and schools more thoroughly worked, need the Society ever expect to find a strong independent Christian people. Preaching is very good, but I am fully convinced we need more school work".[52] And Lawes complained of the teaching techniques: "The teacher shouts and storms, scolds and whacks the desk with his stick until the poor little mortals are half-frightened out of

their wits. One cannot wonder that they don't care to come to school, the wonder is that they learn anything at all".[53] It was not until 1960 that the PDC asked the Samoan church for qualified teachers to come to teach at Moru Girls school and the Koaru Boys school.

Although the general opinion of the European missionaries was that the Samoans and other Pacific Islanders made poor classroom teachers, some were considered successful. For example, Ma'anaima who taught at Kwato, — the most advanced of all early LMS schools — was considered "exceptional". MacGregor ordered 100 trade boxes from Ma'anaima's class and 100 police uniforms sewn by Ma'anaima's wife's sewing class.[54] So the Samoan missionaries had schools, which were often not too good, and sometimes on the harsh side, but nevertheless, children learnt to read and write their own vernaculars. Now that the village mission schools have gone, calculated guesses are that the percentage of literacy in the vernacular along the Papuan coast is nowhere near the 80% estimated in 1944.[55]

Recreation

Apart from the formal subjects taught by the Samoans in their schools, they and their wives also introduced other forms of recreation. As singing and dancing is part of village life in Samoa, and because the Samoans considered Papuan songs less tuneful than their own, and Papuan dances "heathen", the Samoans introduced their own songs and dances which had been stripped of their own "heathen" elements. Some of these are still danced by Papuans complete with the songs in Samoan.

Various sports were also introduced, the main ones being football and Samoan cricket — which is still being played in Papuan villages today. This form of cricket is much more lively and enjoyable for villagers than the English version. The number of players on each side is unlimited, so the whole village can play. The fielding side is kept alert by doing comical exercises led by a village clown to the beat of a drum or tin, while the batting side sings and dances while awaiting turns to bat. Friendly matches were arranged between villages (some of which were traditional enemies) often during the Christmas and New Year holidays. These sometimes ended in fights, but more often with feasting and dancing. Such activities provided a good substitute for traditional warfare.

The Samoans also contributed to the Papuan hymn singing. Dr. H.A. Brown told me that he and Pita Uo (a Samoan) worked together to improve the hymns in the Moru area. The early missionaries there had not done much about fitting the Papuan words to the hymn tunes, so that some tunes were finished off with humming as there were no words to fit in. He and Pita also organized singing competitions. He was

impressed with the time and energy that Pita put into singing practices, and said the standard of singing was much improved. The music master at the Sogeri National High School in 1976-77 was Faiva Sa'aga, the Samoan who was the United Church Chaplain for the school.

Health

The Samoans also made a contribution to health in Papua. They are particular about personal cleanliness. Living in tropical conditions and on small islands with high rainfall, everybody has easy access to a stream or the sea, so bathing and swimming is a favourite pastime for everybody every day. Samoans are also particular about keeping the floors of their houses swept and the grounds outside their houses free of rubbish. By carrying out these activities daily and by encouraging Papuans to do the same, the Samoans improved personal hygiene, sanitation and the appearance of the villages.

The Island missionaries were issued with very basic medical supplies for their own use and for villagers who came to them for medical care. No Samoan men missionaries had any medical training but a number of their wives were qualified nurses. Aialaisa Ekeloma was one, and she ran the clinic at Lawes College while they were there. When she went with her sick husband to the mission hospital on Kwato Island a patient was being brought in. The bed had not been made up, so she made it. When the doctor saw the bed he knew it had not been made up by his Papuan nurses. When he found out that Aialaisa had done it and that she was a trained nurse, he instructed his nurses to learn this skill from her.[56] Ianeta Saroa, another trained nurse who came to Papua with her husband as missionaries, helped to deliver babies and gave advice on child care to village women. From 1949, a number of qualified single nurses were sent by the Samoan Church, at the request of the PDC to work at Gemo hospital and later at Kapuna hospital.[57]

Political influence

Politically, the Samoan and other Pacific Islands missionaries made a contribution which was recognised by the Administration. One official wrote:

> "They are the channels of communication between European ideas and native superstition, and their usefulness from a political point of view is very considerable. To their devotedness and zeal is due the fact that Europeans are able to go with tolerable security into places which otherwise must have remained sealed to any but armed forces."[58]

J.W. Lindt considered that the Mission had succeeded, "not merely in opening up communication with the natives along nearly the entire littoral of the Protected Territory . . . . . but what is more important, they have inspired those natives with confidence".[59] Government agents took some of these men as guides and interpreters when they went on patrol, and while the administration officers did their jobs the missionaries preached their message. Rev. Ta'eleipu Ai'onoo, who was in the Western District between 1951 and 1958, said he used to do some of these administrative tasks himself during his patrols, but his main job was to convert people to Christianity.

The nature of the Samoan's work also affected the politics within and between villages. Their efforts to stamp out idol worship and sorcery meant a decline in the power of sorcerers and big men who were the keepers of the gods and through whom the wish of the gods was communicated to the people. Also, the introduction of new ideas prompted many to question traditional ideas and beliefs, which eroded the authority of the elders. In many Papuan societies, secret traditions were often associated with grotesque masks which appeared as "spirits" to frighten the women and children. Many of these secrets were exposed by the Samoan missionaries, undermining the almost absolute power of men over women and children. In 1893, Walker reported that Filemone had succeeded after much difficulty in inducing his people to move to a much more convenient place some two miles distant where there was a fine harbour and a splendid site for a village.[60] The presence of the Samoan missionaries and the authority they tried to impose on the Papuans because of their pride in their "superior" culture, their status, and their undoubting belief in the truth and superiority of the new religion of which they were messengers, must have modified the balance of power within the villages.

Conclusion

The worst problems the Samoans encountered in their relationships with the Papuans, other Pacific Islanders and Europeans, stemmed from their different backgrounds, standards, convictions and expectations. Because the early nineteenth century missionaries who brought Christianity to Samoa placed great emphasis on stamping out "heathen" practices, and introducing "civilizing" ways such as wearing European type clothes, being "educated" and "industrious", the Samoans accepted and perpetuated these values, ideas and methods. Those who came to Papua enthusiastically did their job using the ideas and methods learnt from the early missionaries in Samoa. Unfortunately for them, many of these techniques were no longer acceptable to the more modern and liberal European missionaries working in Papua in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, so they came in for a lot of criticism.

Because of their high status in the Samoan church and society, they expected a similar status, and more authority than the Europeans in Papua were prepared to give them. Also, because they had the status of "fathers" and "mothers" to their villages in Samoa, some of them expected and demanded this from the Papuans who, understandably, were reluctant to be dominated by these foreigners.

Some Samoan missionaries were not suited for the job in Papua. But the majority were good men and women who did their work to the best of their ability, and had genuine affection for the Papuans amongst whom they lived for long periods. Walker described many of the South Sea missionaries as "Saint and Martyrs, though they may not have the polish and finish of the English Christian who is the product of centuries of Christian thought and training". However, he said, "but for loyal whole-hearted devotion to Christ and His work, there are few who can be compared with them".[61]

NOTES

1. See S. Latukefu, in J.S. Boutilier, D.T. Hughes & S.W. Tiffany (eds) op. cit. in chapter 2, p.91-108.
2. H.M. Dauncey to R.W. Thompson, Jan. 1892. Papua Letters, London Missionary Society (LMS).
3. F.W. Walter to R.W. Thompson, Jan. 1892. Papua Reports, LMS.
4. J. Chalmers & W. Wyatt Gill, 1885. **Work & Adventure in New Guinea,** London.
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6. Neru, **Sulu Samoa,** May 1914, 70.
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10. C.W. Abel to M. Parkin, Kwato, Jan 11, 1895.
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13. A.E. Hunt to Foreign Secretary, 9.4.1895, Papua Letters, LMS.
14. C.W. Abel, cited Wetherell, op. cit., 97.
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28. PDC Minutes 1928, 7.
29. ibid., 1931, 12.
30. PDC Minutes, 1912, 259.
31. ibid., 1930, 13.
32. PDC Minutes, 1912, 259.
33. ibid., 1929, 15.
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35. R. Lister Turner, Answer to Deputation Questions, 1915, cited Prendergast op. cit., 188.
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37. R. Lister Turner, op. cit., 188.
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41. ibid., 89.
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43. ibid., 80-82.
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48. Kiki, op. cit., 7.
49. ibid., 59.
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4 Triumph and defeat at Roreinang

a Tonga mission in New Guinea

Sione Latukefu

One of the exciting episodes, though short lived, in the history of missions in Melanesia is the story of the little known Methodist mission station called Roreinang on the island of Bougainville (now known as the North Solomons Province). It is situated in the Aropa valley, five miles towards the foot of the Crown Prince Range, directly south from the Kieta town. The land was purchased from the Nasioi people in 1947,[1] but mission work did not begin until two years later. The mission station became the Methodist mission centre for a vast area which later became the Kieta circuit.[2] It covered Kieta town itself and a great number of villages over the mountain range between Kieta and the Buin District south of Bougainville. Most of the coastal villages in the Aropa valley close to the mission station belonged to the Roman Catholic mission.

Within two decades this new circuit of Kieta became one of the most promising in the whole of the Solomon Islands Mission District.[3] In his annual report for as early as the year 1959-60, the Chairman of the District was able to say:

> Kieta which now becomes a new circuit, an area which is blossoming and has for a number of years stood on its own feet financially to an extent far greater than others . . . Complete financial independence apart from overseas staff is in sight.[4]

In the 1960s the centre of the circuit, the Roreinang mission station, had become a major attraction and source of real pride for those closely associated with it. Out of this once deserted isolated and extremely dense area of tropical forest, had sprung a beautiful plantation of coconut, cocoa and kapoc trees with a small herd of cattle,[5] a