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SAMOAN ENLIGHTENMENT :
AN INTERPRETATION OF MODERN SAMOA

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By

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ABSTRACT.

The primary aim of the thesis is evident in its title – *Samoaan Enlightenment : An Interpretation of Modern Samoa*. It attempts to illustrate the contention that Modern Samoaan History – the period from 1830 to 1962 – is the period of Samoaan Enlightenment.

Chapter One attempts to define the concept of Samoaan Enlightenment in the light of the European concept of Enlightenment, in conjunction with the works of Samoaan Historians. The main point stressed here is the predominance of the theological imperative in the concept of Samoaan Enlightenment. Chapter two illustrates certain features of Samoaan Religious Enlightenment. These are suggested to be, the transition from primitive religion to the acceptance of the Gospel, and the appropriation, preservation and reinterpretation of certain traditional religious beliefs and concepts in light of the Gospel. Chapter three illustrates some features of Cultural Enlightenment. These include the enriching of Samoaan Culture by the Gospel, as well as the selectivity and the blending of foreign influences with Samoaan Culture. Chapter four explains particular features of Political Enlightenment. These contain the resurgence of Samoa's traditional political authority against the colonial and imperial rule of European powers, and Samoa's assertion to be independent. Such resurgence was to an extent the result of Religious Enlightenment. The Conclusion sums up the various results of these chapters. The main point emphasised is that the period from 1830 to 1962, generally referred to as Modern Samoa, is suggested to be the period of Samoaan Enlightenment. While it has similarities with that of European Enlightenment, it is different in a largely distinctive way, as it enthrones God within the foundation of Modern Samoa mainly in the areas of culture, politics and religion.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii - iv
INTRODUCTION	1 - 2
CHAPTER ONE: ESTABLISHING THE CONCEPT OF SAMOAN ENLIGHTENMENT.	3 - 16
1.1 European Enlightenment	3 - 8
1.2 Samoan Enlightenment	8 - 16
CHAPTER TWO: RELIGIOUS ENLIGHTENMENT.	17 - 33
2.1 Samoan Ancient Traditions – Prophecies of a New Age in Pre-1830 Samoa	17 - 19
2.2 The Arrival of Christianity in 1830 – Prophecies Fulfilled	19 - 24
2.3 The Impact and Further Spread of Christianity	25 - 28
2.4 Contributing Factors to the fast Acceptance of Christianity	28 - 33
CHAPTER THREE: CULTURAL ENLIGHTENMENT.	34 - 45
3.1 Culture : Definition	34 -35
3.2 Samoan Oratory Language : Expressions of a New Age	35 - 37
3.3 Samoan Culture in Transition	38 - 40
3.4 Samoan Culture in Pre - 1830 : Glimpses of Light	41 - 43
3.5 The Moulding of Two Culture.	43 - 45

CHAPTER FOUR: POLITICAL ENLIGHTENMENT.	46 - 68
4.1 Samoan Traditional Political Authority	46 - 49
4.2 Political Impact of the Missionaries	49 - 51
4.3 Political Impact of European Settlers	51 - 57
4.4 Samoa's Surge for Independence	58 - 64
4.5 Samoa's Independence and the Constitution	64 - 68
CONCLUSION	69 - 72
APPENDICES	73- 78
BIBLIOGRAPHY	79 - 81

INTRODUCTION

The selection of this topic as the focal point of this research was born out of my study of European History, especially the period known as the Enlightenment or the Age of Reason. During the study of this most pivotal era in the history of Modern Western Europe, I was intrigued with the idea of 'Enlightenment' as a driving force behind the progress of Western civilization.

Upon personal reflection, certain similarities were noted between the development of European Enlightenment and the progress of Samoan society from the early 19th Century to the middle of the 20th Century. In particular, I became fascinated with the enlightening effects of the Gospel in the remarkable changes and transformation of Samoan society within this period. It is an impression I believe is not confined to an individual like myself, but instilled in the minds of the Samoan people in general. It is present in the mainstream understanding of the Samoan people that is expressed through their culture and language. This remarkable discovery changed my perspective of Samoan history throughout the last two centuries. Hence the inception of the idea of interpreting the history of Modern Samoa from the perspective of the European Enlightenment.

The period of Samoan history to be discussed is roughly from 1830 to 1962. It constitutes what I believe to be the period of Samoan Enlightenment, also generally accepted as the period of Modern Samoa as instilled in the mainstream understanding of the Samoan people. The two major events marking the boundaries of this period are, the arrival of the missionaries in 1830, and Samoa's Independence from colonial rule in 1962. The

connection of these two events is evident in the impact of Christianity on Samoa and how it changed the way we see Samoa as a society. This change is expressed through the words and views of Samoans regarding Samoa's Independence. Samoa was evolving from becoming a Christian society to the founding of a Christian nation in 1962. This was the result of a historical process which Danny Ioka refers to as the "mutual interpenetration of the Biblical world and Samoan Cultural world."¹ This shaped the character of Modern Samoa. The Gospel changed Samoan culture, and the acceptance of that reality is affirmed in the declaration of faith in Samoa's Political Independence.

The approach used in this research is thematic as well as eclectic. From a historical and theological perspective, it offers an interpretation that focuses on discussing the history of Modern Samoa from 1830 to 1962 using the theme of Enlightenment.

¹ Danny Ioka *Origin and Beginning of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (C.C.C.S.) in Aotearoa New Zealand*, PhD. Thesis, University of Otago, 1996, 12-13.

CHAPTER ONE

ESTABLISHING THE CONCEPT OF SAMOAN ENLIGHTENMENT

This chapter attempts to establish the concept of Samoan Enlightenment. In pursuing this prime objective, it aims at firstly, emphasizing the essence of the concept of Enlightenment by referring to the European Enlightenment of the 18th Century, when the concept of Enlightenment was conceived. With reference to the European Enlightenment, it also attempts to define Samoan Enlightenment using works of certain Samoan Historians.

1.1 EUROPEAN ENLIGHTENMENT.

Enlightenment in its simplest meaning is 'to shed light on, or to give light to'.² Someone who is enlightened is someone who has seen the light, who has a clear vision and is guided by rational thought.³

Enlightenment is the term given to the philosophical movement of the 18th Century, concerned with the critical examination of previously accepted doctrines and institutions from the point of view of 'rationalism'.⁴ In French, the Enlightenment is called *Lumieres*

² *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, (Great Britain : Oxford University Press, 1988), 320.

³ *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, (Great Britain : Oxford University Press, 1988), 320.

⁴ The origins of the Enlightenment can be traced back even before the birth of Christ. The powers and uses of reason were first explored by Greek philosophers who discerned in the ordered regularity of nature, the workings of an intelligent mind. At the height of the Roman Empire, Rome adopted and preserved much of Greek culture and ideas of a rational natural order. Amid the turmoil of the Roman Empire a new concern arose for personal salvation. As a result, Christian thinkers gradually found uses for this Greco-Roman heritage which has been passed down throughout the generations. Born out of this was the use of a fresh new system of thought known as 'Scholasticism'. This was clearly evident in the work of Thomas Aquinas, one of the greatest theologians of all time. Aquinas acquired the power of reason as a tool for understanding spiritual revelation and revealed truths of Christianity.

which means the light that "...beamed on to a wide range of subjects: philosophy, science...economics, politics, history and education."⁵

According to Norman Davies, the Enlightenment is best understood in reference to the darkness which the 'light of reason' was trying to illuminate. The darkness was provided "...by all the unthinking, irrational, dogmatic attitudes with which European Christianity had become encrusted."⁶ Immanuel Kant referred to this period in the development of European civilization as the period when "...mankind grew out of its self-inflicted immaturity."⁷ These definitions, clearly shows Europe moving into a new age, from the darkness of the Middle Ages to a new age; the light of the Enlightenment. As Gerald R. Cragg claims, "By the middle of the seventeenth century we stand on the threshold of the modern world."⁸

Roy Harrisville and Walter Sundberg in *The Bible in Modern Culture*, give a clear perspective of this movement from the darkness of the Middle Ages to the light of the Enlightenment. They refer to it as the 'war of two worldviews'. The pre-modern view of the Middle Ages as represented by the Augustinian view of human nature as completely corrupt and sinful, and the new worldview of the Enlightenment that emphasises human innocence and capabilities. This modern worldview emphasises that humanity is not depraved. Humanity is called into the world to transform it. Human being is capable in

⁵ Norman Davies, *Europe-A History*, (London: Pimlico, 1997), 596.

⁶ Norman Davies, *Europe-A History*, (London: Pimlico, 1997), 596.

⁷ Norman Davies, *Europe-A History*, (London: Pimlico, 1997), 596.

⁸ Gerald R. Cragg, *The Church and The Age of Reason 1638-1789*, (London : Penguin, 1990), 13. "The issues which occupied men's minds and the spirit in which they were debated carry us from an atmosphere still predominantly medieval to one which is essentially modern."

light of reason and experience of perfecting good life on earth. Human beings are not subject to fate, instead they hold the future in their hands. Finally, it presents the notion of freedom - freedom from ignorance, superstition and the arbitrary oppression of the constituted social authorities.⁹ According to Harrisville and Sundberg, "This opposing vision that emerged under the new intellectual dispensation of choice and self-reliance is one of 'cheerful optimism'".¹⁰

This new worldview of the Enlightenment was triggered by the rise of Science, Scholasticism and the Critical Historical Method. These came to have profound effects on the Church and society during the Middle Ages which was a time when the intellectual and political edifice of Christianity was impregnable. The Church was like a fortress failing to live up to its calling to offer hope and refuge to people. Davies states that, 'People knew that Christendom was sick; they knew that the ideals of the Gospel were far removed from prevailing reality...'¹¹. In other words, the Church was not reaching out to the people. It became rigid, authoritative, confessional and inward looking. These reflected aspects similar to absolute institutions of political authority.

⁹ Roy A. Harrisville and Walter Sundberg, *The Bible in Modern Culture*, (Michigan : William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 30. The doctrinal crisis of Western Christianity is the clash of Augustinianism with this new worldview. Where Augustinianism teaches that human nature is corrupted by the Fall, the Enlightenment asserts boldly the innocence of human nature. Where Augustinianism professes that salvation requires the direct intervention of God to rescue humanity from the sorrows of the world, the Enlightenment declares that the end of existence is the good life on earth. For Augustinianism humanity stands under the sovereignty of God's election. In the view of the Enlightenment, humanity is capable of directing its own fate. Augustinianism affirms trust in the church and the scriptures; they provide knowledge of the truth for individual life. The Enlightenment counters that truth is obtained by pursuing critical knowledge and obtaining freedom from superstition and oppressive institutions.

¹⁰ Roy A. Harrisville and Walter Sundberg, *The Bible in Modern Culture*, (Michigan : William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 29.

¹¹ Norman Davies; *Europe-A History*, (London: Pimlico, 1997), 383.

This fortress however was eventually felled by the assaults of Science, Scholasticism and the Critical-Historical method specifically administered in the forms of Humanism,¹² the Renaissance,¹³ and the Protestant Reformation.¹⁴ Humanism bred the experimental science of Francis Bacon, Copernicus and Gallileo¹⁵ and the mathematical vigor of Descartes¹⁶, Leibniz¹⁷ and Newton.¹⁸ The Renaissance led to the rediscovery of much of the Classical Culture. It revived the notion of man as a creative being. The Protestant Reformation challenged the rigid authority of the Church. For Luther, Bacon, and Descartes¹⁹, the pathway to truth lay in the application of human reason, the language of the Heart, the sanctity of human consciences. As a result, received authority and confessionalism were now under the skeptical eyes of the intellects. The corruption and authoritative nature of Christendom was now under threat. Religious customs and traditions were questioned. People were no longer passive recipients of the faith and Martin Luther took the driver's seat of this new mentality. The result became known as the Protestant Reformation.

This was the critical mentality that seeped into the 17th and the 18th Centuries and flourished during the Age of the Enlightenment. The Church reacted by rethinking its stance in Society. Dogmatic attitudes of bigotry, intolerance, superstition, fanaticism and

¹² Norman Davies, *Europe-A History*, (London: Pimlico, 1997), 479.

¹³ Norman Davies, *Europe-A History*, (London: Pimlico, 1997), 479.

¹⁴ Norman Davies, *Europe-A History*, (London: Pimlico, 1997), 482.

¹⁵ Ian G. Barbour, *Religion and Science*, (London : SCM Press Ltd, 1998), 9-11.

¹⁶ Ian G. Barbour, *Religion and Science*, (London : SCM Press Ltd, 1998), 12-13.

¹⁷ Gerald R. Cragg, *The Church and The Age of Reason 1638-1789*, (London : Penguin, 1990), 43-44.

¹⁸ Ian G. Barbour, *Religion and Science*, (London : SCM Press Ltd, 1998), 17-20

¹⁹ Gerald R. Cragg, *The Church and The Age of Reason 1638-1789*, (London : Penguin, 1990), 37-38. Descartes's philosophy of doubt and Isaac Newton's law of nature brought a new perspective on the Church's understanding of God. It challenges the church to rethink its theology using the power of reasoning, and the experimental methodology of Science to better express its beliefs and convictions.

monkishness needed to change.²⁰ Hence the Enlightenment was seen as the Saviour, the light beaming on all corruption and bigotry of Church as well as political authorities.

Central to the idea of the Enlightenment was the use and celebration of reason, the power by which man understands the universe and improves his own condition. The goals of the rational man were considered to be knowledge²¹, freedom²² and happiness. At the forefront of this great movement was the driving force to better society and improve our understanding of the world God created for us to enjoy. Hence, the Enlightenment was optimistic and hopeful. Its purpose pushed for the benefits of humanity, for its progress and prosperity.

On the other hand, the Enlightenment had negative effects. Peter Gay sees the Enlightenment as the return to Pagan worldviews.²³ Modern assessment of the Enlightenment also recognises the corruption in Enlightenment ideals. Leo G. Perdue in his book called *The Collapse of History*, notes that the corruption in the Critical-Historical method and Scholasticism no longer hold the predominant position.²⁴ The corruption in the Scientific methodology, the limitations of rationalism, positivism, tyranny of 'the enlightened' and the illusion of knowledge were all becoming evident. Norman Davies also realises the stupidity of overemphasising the faculty of reason in the

²⁰ Norman Davies, *Europe-A History*, (London: Pimlico, 1997), 596.

²¹ Norman Davies, *Europe-A History*, (London: Pimlico, 1997), 597. The Enlightenment highlighted the significance of knowledge. That is knowledge of God. Knowledge that is certain and objective. Knowledge in the Enlightenment was inherently good. The discerning of knowledge is always good. It therefore has an optimistic outlook. It strengthened the faith of Christianity, rather than weakening it. It challenged the mind to find better ways of expressing and understanding God's nature and God's purpose for humanity.

²² Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment-An Interpretation*, (New York : Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), 3.

²³ Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment-An Interpretation*, (New York : Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), 8-9.

²⁴ Leo G. Perdue, *The Collapse of History*, (Minneapolis : Fortress Press, 1994), 7-11.

Enlightenment philosophy. According to Davies, "... it seems extraordinary that so many of Europe's leading intellects should have given such weight to one human faculty - Reason - at the expense of all others".²⁵ The tendency to believe in the omni competence of Reason was later challenged by the stress on feelings or language of the heart. According to Pascal, "The heart has its reasons which Reason doesn't understand".²⁶ Hume in line with this view, shows that extreme rationalism leads to complete skepticism.²⁷

Most historians acknowledge this feature in the development of Samoa during this

In summary, the Enlightenment was a great movement that benefited humanity. Its positive effects are still experienced today in the progress of society. However, it must be noted that the negative side of the Enlightenment was its overemphasis on human abilities which led to humanity becoming the central focus while God was pushed aside. This point is crucial in my definition of Samoan Enlightenment whereby, on one hand, the European Enlightenment puts humanity in the center, Samoan Enlightenment on the other, enthrones God as the center of its new worldview.

1.2 SAMOAN ENLIGHTENMENT

In light of the Enlightenment movement in Europe, I contend that the period of Samoan History from around 1830 to 1962 is the period of Samoan Enlightenment. It is within this time frame I believe, that Samoan Society was radically changing and transforming

²⁵ Norman Davies, *Europe-A History*, (London: Pimlico, 1997), 577. "Naivety of such proportions, one might conclude, was heading for a fall; and a fall, in the shape of the terrible revolutionary years, is what the Age of Reason eventually encountered."

²⁶ Norman Davies, *Europe-A History*, (London: Pimlico, 1997), 510.

²⁷ Gerald R. Cragg, *The Church and The Age of Reason 1638-1789*, (London : Penguin, 1990), 14.

in its worldviews and understanding of life and the world. As they became exposed to the influx of new ideas from European culture and civilization, they began to see the need to change and to be in tune with the larger world. This interaction between these two worlds was dialectical in nature, and by the middle of the 20th Century, Samoan Society had become clearly on target in pursuing a societal vision which Danny Ioka understands as becoming a Christian Society with a Biblical Culture.²⁸

Most historians acknowledge this feature in the development of Samoa during this period. It is regarded as a period of great strides in the progress of Samoan Society. The term 'Modern Samoa' for instance, has become synonymous with the study of Samoan history since the arrival of Christianity in 1830. When historians refer to Modern Samoa, this is the general time frame they refer to. Modern Samoa as opposed to Old Samoa, is suggestive of a shift in society, a new era, a change in the progress of society. By labeling this period as Modern Samoa, historians are acknowledging this transformation and that Samoa was at the threshold of a new age.

In his book called *The Making of Modern Samoa*, Malama Meleisea acknowledges this change in Samoan society. He calls it the "ideological change in the 19th Century."²⁹ Meleisea, believes that Samoan society was transformed beginning with its contact with Europeans even before the arrival of the missionaries in 1830.³⁰ He related the sporadic contacts made between Samoans and Europeans which began with the French navigator

²⁸ Danny Ioka, *Origin and Beginning of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (C.C.C.S.) in Aotearoa New Zealand*, PhD. Thesis, University of Otago, 1996, 14.

²⁹ Malama Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, (Suva : Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 12.

³⁰ Malama Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, (Suva : Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 12.

La Perouse in 1787, then another violent encounter with the H.M.S Pandora in 1791, and thereafter common contacts with European merchant and whaling ships after 1830. There were also increasing numbers of ship deserters and occasional escaped convicts from Port Jackson. According to Meleisea,

"these early contacts challenged Samoan cosmology because their knowledge of the universe had been restricted to the central Pacific. Their religious beliefs and explanations were thus undermined."³¹

This exposure to a whole new way of life changed the perceptions of the Samoans and thus was the beginning of what he coins as 'the making of Modern Samoa.'

An important point to be stressed concerns this ideological change in Samoan society. The idea of "change" is a strong element of Enlightenment. In relation to Samoa, it is selective changes that emerge as a result of reasoning with the past, by questioning and challenging old institutions and traditions. It contains the element of preserving what is believed to be enduring and life giving. Aiono Fanaafi emphasises this by seeing Samoan Culture having the inherent potential for self enlightenment.³² As Meleisea notes,

"While the Samoans were able to accommodate Christianity, and even welcomed it as an epistemological solution to the challenges to old beliefs presented by increasing contact with Europeans, they did so with characteristic conservatism."³³

Meleisea argues that, although the Europeans and Christianity had profound effects on Samoan society both in politics and economics, the Samoans were not completely passive recipients of these influences. To illustrate, he refers to John William's account of how

³¹ Malama Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, (Suva : Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 12.

³² Aiono Fanaafi, *Personal Interview*, Alafua, 2003. Fanaafi believes the Samoans were capable of enlightening aspects of their culture without outside influences. This is evident by the advanced nature of Samoan culture even before the arrival of Europeans.

the Samoans did not embrace Christianity lightly. They did so with deliberation for the most materialistic of reasons and with strong assumptions about religion.³⁴ This is an important feature of the kind of Enlightenment that was taking place in Samoa. The Samoans were attracted to European material culture and superior civilization but this did not mean that the Samoans felt inferior and suddenly replaced their culture and religion with that of the Europeans.

To a large extent, Meleisea gives a negative impression of European influence on Samoan Society in terms of their political and economic motives, and their sense of superiority and misconceptions of Samoan politics.³⁵ Although this is a fair assessment of the Europeans at the time, the need for Samoa to be in tune with these new outside forces

³³ Malama Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, (Suva : Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 20.

³⁴ Malama Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, (Suva : Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 18. "While the missionaries intended to transform the organisation of production, they did not succeed in doing so. Along with the gospel, the missionaries preached middle-class individualism, setting up their village pastors as models of the family life they wished Samoans to adopt. The Samoans, however, soon transformed the pastors into a new kind of sacred chief, each nuu providing their minister with the largest and finest house, sending their children to wait upon him and his family, and providing him abundantly with the best of the food available."

³⁵ Malama Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, (Suva : Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 12. In Meleisea's study, his main concern was the new shift in Samoa's chiefly authority. According to him, "before, it was legitimized by traditional religious beliefs but changes were brought about by Christian teaching and other European influence after 1830." Meleisea strongly argues that this change was brought about by Europeans who clearly misunderstood Samoa's political structure. They tried to enforce it but the Samoans had a different agenda and way of accommodating these foreign influences. Malama Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, (Suva : Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 1. According to Meleisea "... categories have been used by Europeans to develop evolutionary arguments to explain why particular Polynesian societies are more advanced than others. Most significant of these criterias is the degree of centralisation of authority. "On this scale of evolution, Samoa has been accorded a low position because at the time of European contact and since there was little centralisation of authority that was intelligible to Europeans." He went on to challenge the Europeans misconceived understanding of precolonial Samoan political and economic institutions. Meleisea argues that what Samoa did have more than most Polynesian groups was a 'unitary system of dispersed power.' However, the Europeans failed to see this and because of their colonial ambitions in the Pacific, they felt that a more centralised form of authority was necessary. This is what they strived for in order for their commercial and strategic plans to be successful. "In the case of Samoa, after the Samoans had at European instigation engaged for more than fifty years in a struggle to chose a Western - style 'king' and to form a central government, the Germans formed a powerful central government with German military backing."

was greater. European technology was far more superior and advanced. The Samoans were enlightened of this and were willing to receive these new changes. Unfortunately, the reality was that this created a sense of superiority on the side of the Europeans.³⁶ They felt that their culture and civilization were far superior than the rest of humanity.

Meleisea maintains the fact that the Samoans were not passive recipients of these foreign influences. The Samoans were quite brilliant in adapting to this new environment.³⁷ This is vital as it shows how Samoans managed to adopt Christianity in a very subtle way. The Samoans' ability to fuse foreign influences with its own culture is a feature of Samoa's evolving from the Old Samoa to Modern Samoa.

Ioka offers a broader theological understanding to this awareness of the Samoans to changes. Ioka deals with the Samoans' strongly held belief that its culture is a Biblical Culture and Samoan society as a Christian society. He relates how this belief exists in the 'national conscience' of Samoa as is clearly stated in the National Motto of Modern

³⁶ Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, (Suva : Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 3. According to Meleisea, this ambitious attitude was based on the European ideology that their culture is far superior than the rest of humankind. Meleisea writes, "From this perspective, the relationship of the rest of the world to Europe came to be defined as one of backwardness and inferiority. The idea of growth became synonymous with progress so that non-Westerners, particular in societies whose technology was labelled as simple, were regarded as 'children.' Hence the negative impressions written about Samoans as ignorant children who needed to be educated" (p3), guided and illuminated.

³⁷ Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, (Suva : Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 13. He stated that "chiefly competition for access to the new religion, probably with the hope of controlling and benefitting from it, introduced sectarian rivalry into Samoa from the earliest years of the church." "The rapid acceptance of Christianity was probably due to competition among the highest ranking chiefs for a new source of sacred power." However the result of Christian teaching were that the sacred powers which had been attributed to them and which were largely the source of the political authority of these chiefs, were weakened." This was an influence of the missionaries. "In the new Christian order, which was well established by 1860, the missionaries, and later the Samoan clergy, largely replaced the 'alii paia' as the holders of sacred power. Their mana was God's grace, which is the contemporary meaning of mana in the language. The belief persisted, however, that the authority of all matai was divinely sanctioned, but by Jehovah, rather than Tagaloalagi."

Samoa – *Faavae i le Atua Samoa* (Samoa is founded on God). Ioka raises the point that, the historical evolution of Modern Samoa which began in the 1830's was characterised by a movement which may be understood as a movement into becoming a Biblical Culture and forming a Christian Society. Such a movement went through a certain historical process which culminated in Samoa's Independence and a Constitution that clearly acknowledges Samoa in what it has evolved into, a Christian Nation.

In Ioka's words - 'In the realm of ultimate belief, Samoans understand themselves to be a Christian people with a Christian culture.'³⁸ This belief was made in history. It goes back to its traditional belief that "...Samoa, their country, land of birth and origin, with a distinctive culture is believed to be their divine *Tofi* or inheritance."³⁹ This was and still is Samoa's understanding of its origin. Samoa is a 'holy land', a divine gift, a gift originated solely from the realm of the Divine.⁴⁰ This understanding was maintained with the arrival of the missionaries, even though the old god Tagaloa was then replaced with the Christian God.

Meleisea agrees with the flexibility of Samoan Culture –

"*Faa-Samoa*, as the Samoans term their political and economic system conveys a very deep meaning to Samoans: clear in essentials, flexible in details..."⁴¹

³⁸ Danny Ioka, *Origin and Beginning of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (C.C.C.S.) in Aotearoa New Zealand*, PhD. Thesis, University of Otago, 1996, 4.

³⁹ Danny Ioka, *Origin and Beginning of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (C.C.C.S.) in Aotearoa New Zealand*, PhD. Thesis, University of Otago, 1996, 4.

⁴⁰ Danny Ioka, *Origin and Beginning of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (C.C.C.S.) in Aotearoa New Zealand*, PhD. Thesis, University of Otago, 1996, 5.

⁴¹ Malama Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, (Suva : Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 16.

This flexibility shows the ability of Samoan culture to maintain its ideals while changing and adapting new means of expressing them. Personally, this is a feature of Samoan Enlightenment. The Samoans were able to reason with the incoming influences of the Europeans. Their willingness to accept foreign religion was not done blindly but with careful consideration. It was based on the existing belief that this was another step in the evolution of Samoan society and culture. It goes back to the Samoan belief in the origin of its land and culture as a divine heritage. According to Ioka this "is rooted in the historical memory of Modern Samoa and in continuity with the cultural spirituality of Old Samoa."⁴²

There is a clear connection or transition here from the Old Samoa to the Modern Samoa.

The two are not completely separate. The Samoans never completely cut off their old religion and totally embraced the God of the Europeans. The Samoans were not ignorant children as suggested by the paternalistic attitude of the Europeans rather, they were active participants of this new step in their evolving society.⁴³

Ioka raises the crucial point that it is only by recognising the futuristic aspects in the cultural spirituality of Old Samoa that one could appreciate the enlightened manner by which Samoan kings and Chiefs accepted and accommodated the cultural blessings of Western Culture and Christianity.

⁴² Danny Ioka, *Origin and Beginning of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (C.C.C.S.) in Aotearoa New Zealand*, PhD. Thesis, University of Otago, 1996, 6.

⁴³ Aiono Fanaafi, *Personal Interview*, Alafua, 2003.

Felix M Keesing attests to this when he writes,

'Between 1830 and 1870 there emerged what might be called a 'Samoa-mission-trader' equilibrium of culture which is the basis of the conservative faa-Samoa today. At this early stage the native Samoan accepted those goods he wanted from the trader and bowed to the voice of an evidently superior Deity.'⁴⁴

To Ioka, the particular form "...the historical process undertook was the mutual interpenetration between the Biblical World and the Samoan Cultural World."⁴⁵ He maintains, "...this is a mainstream belief which is treasured in all levels of contemporary Samoa." Accordingly, Ioka says,

"It is understood as a 'past cultural hermeneutic' – a kind of Samoan lifeskill in appropriating life and the world which had founded and had moulded the Modern Faasamoa, the Samoan Indigenous Church, and Samoa's National Identity and National Conscience."⁴⁶

This 'cultural hermeneutic' is preserved in Samoan expressions which reflect the duality of Gospel and Culture. These expressions represent Samoan cultural reading and understanding of the historical evolution of Modern Samoa, or the interpenetration of the Biblical World and the Samoan Cultural World. Ioka explains that this was reaffirmed in the Constitution of Samoa when Samoa gained independence in 1962. "The predominant influence of this Samoan cultural hermeneutic throughout the 20th Century..."⁴⁷ was evident in the way it "...provided the moral vigour and spiritual vision in the preparations for the restoration of Samoa's political independence and the attainment of its

⁴⁴ Felix M. Keesing, *Modern Samoa : Its Government and Changing Life*, (London : George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1934), 476.

⁴⁵ Danny Ioka, *Origin and Beginning of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (C.C.C.S.) in Aotearoa New Zealand*, PhD. Thesis, University of Otago, 1996, 14.

⁴⁶ Danny Ioka, *Origin and Beginning of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (C.C.C.S.) in Aotearoa New Zealand*, PhD. Thesis, University of Otago, 1996, 9-10.

⁴⁷ Danny Ioka, *Origin and Beginning of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (C.C.C.S.) in*

constitutional government on the foundational Christian conviction, *Ia Faavae i le Atua Samoa*.⁴⁸

The chapter articulates the transition from old Samoan Religion to the acceptance of Samoan Enlightenment therefore, has these distinctive features. Firstly, the Samoans were exposed to European civilisation and saw the benefits that they could grasp from it. Hence they were willing to appropriate and make the necessary changes. Secondly, the Samoans did not feel that their religion and culture needed a complete overhaul. They had highly significant values, beliefs and customs that they protected and guarded fiercely. Overall, Samoan Enlightenment involved changes in many aspects of Samoan society, but these changes were made deliberately and with great consideration. The Samoans preserved what was still lifegiving while also accommodating what appeared to be beneficial. Furthermore, Samoan Enlightenment set a new foundation for Samoan Society and one which led to the death of some cultural habits, preservation of some and the enriching of others. Such new theological foundation gave Samoa courage and understanding to relate positively to outside influences. It encouraged mutual relations between Culture and Gospel, that which was characterised by a dialectical relationship. Samoan culture enthrones God as its foundation. Where European Enlightenment overemphasised the potential in humanity and human culture, Samoan Enlightenment invested its hope and future on God. This theological imperative and dimension is more profound in the Samoan Enlightenment.

Aotearoa New Zealand, PhD. Thesis, University of Otago, 1996, 11.

⁴⁸ Danny Ioka, *Origin and Beginning of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (C.C.C.S.) in Aotearoa New Zealand*, PhD. Thesis, University of Otago, 1996, 11.

CHAPTER TWO

SAMOAN RELIGIOUS ENLIGHTENMENT.

This chapter investigates the transition from old Samoan Religion to the acceptance of the Christian Gospel. Firstly, it briefly explores the prophetic voice of a new age present in ancient Samoan traditions before the arrival of the Gospel. Secondly, a historical account of the arrival and spread of the Gospel is presented to illustrate the fast acceptance of Christianity. Thirdly, the various factors that led to this rapid evangelization of Samoa is discussed. These will in turn explain what I mean by Religious Enlightenment.

2.1 SAMOAN ANCIENT TRADITIONS - PROPHECIES OF A NEW AGE IN PREHISTORIC SAMOA.

Most Samoans believe that the arrival of the missionaries in the early 19th Century with the Christian Gospel was an event destined to happen. This belief is based on their clear understanding of Samoan ancient traditions which vividly depict the idea. The fact that Samoans anticipated this event is a striking phenomenon and one that demands better understanding.

According to Ioka,

"A fundamental feature of ancient traditions of Samoa in pre-1830 time, is a futuristic expectation of better days and movement into enlightened existence which is believed to have originated from the God of Samoa who was aware of the God of the Bible. This is believed to be at the heart of the spiritual significances of the 'dying testaments' and farewell discourses of Samoa's past kings and high chiefs, which in themselves have prophetic significances."⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Danny Ioka, *Origin and Beginning of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (C.C.C.S.) in Aotearoa New Zealand*, PhD. Thesis, University of Otago, 1996, 6.

Similarly, "...there were also cultural prophecies in ancient traditions which anticipated the advent of such better and enlightened days in association with the coming of the Christian Gospel to Samoa. The most well known is that by the goddess Nafanua."⁵⁰ According to legends, Malietoa visited the goddess Nafanua in search of his share of the *Malo* or government. When he arrived, Nafanua had already given out the *Ao* or the head of the government. There was only the tail. Nafanua told Malietoa to accept it and wait for the head to come from the heaven.⁵¹

Ioka also refers to a prophecy recorded by John B. Stair related by an old Samoan *taulaitu* or sorcerer. A Samoan sorcerer from Manu'a told some Upolu Chiefs who went to consult him on war matters that "...the generations to come in Samoa would be blessed, for there was soon to be set up in Samoa a kingdom of peace and goodwill."⁵² This remarkable prophecy was related by an old man at the Jubilee meeting of the Malua Native Teachers' Training Institution held at Malua in 1895.⁵³

Ioka also refers to two prophecies in the Parish Book of the Sapapalii village Church. According to these revelations, "...two old men of the village told stories of the arrival of the Gospel and revelations pertaining to it before its arrival."⁵⁴ First they related the prophecy of Nafanua, then the story about the 'Rain of Iron'. According to Ioka, "...they were stored in bamboo with the thought that they were real iron to make crowbars, but

⁵⁰ Danny Ioka, *Origin and Beginning of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (C.C.C.S.) in Aotearoa New Zealand*, PhD. Thesis, University of Otago, 1996, 6.

⁵¹ Kenape T. Faletese, *A History of the Samoan Church (LMS)*, (Apia : Malua Printing Press, 1959), 10.

⁵² Danny Ioka, *Origin and Beginning of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (C.C.C.S.) in Aotearoa New Zealand*, PhD. Thesis, University of Otago, 1996, 6.

⁵³ John B. Stair, *Old Samoa*, (Oxford : Religious Tract Society, 1897), 291.

⁵⁴ Danny Ioka, *Origin and Beginning of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (C.C.C.S.) in*

they melted. Then there was the 'Snow of Iron' which was seen falling from heaven... these revelations were prophecies to prepare people to accept the Head of Government and the Word of life which was symbolized in the snow from heaven."⁵⁵

It is clearly evident from these ancient traditions, that there was indeed a prophetic voice that anticipated the arrival of a new age. Hence when the Gospel arrived the Samoans interpreted this event as the ultimate fulfilment of those prophecies. This belief is still echoed in the language and oratory of the Samoans.⁵⁶

Present within this background of ancient traditions was a certain awareness and readiness of the Samoans to move into a new age of Enlightenment. There was indeed a willingness perhaps to anticipate, welcome and embrace new changes. This portrays the openness and flexibility of Samoan Society. This was largely instrumental in the rather peaceful transition from Old Samoa to Modern Samoa. At the dawn of the 19th Century, Samoa was at the threshold of a new era.

2.2 THE ARRIVAL OF CHRISTIANITY IN 1830 – PROPHECIES FULFILLED.

The arrival of Christianity in Samoa was characterised by rapid acceptance.⁵⁷ Political and materialistic influence played a role here, but the general spread of the gospel in Samoa was still quite remarkable. John Williams noted in his journal,

Aotearoa New Zealand, PhD. Thesis, University of Otago, 1996, 6.

⁵⁵ Danny Ioka, *Origin and Beginning of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (C.C.C.S.) in Aotearoa New Zealand*, PhD. Thesis, University of Otago, 1996, 6.

⁵⁶ This point will be discussed in detail in Chapter three.

⁵⁷ K. R. Howe, *Where the Waves Fall*, (London : Allen & Unwin, 1984), 238. According to Howe, "By 1840, only ten years after missionaries landed in Samoa, most Samoans were Christians and some 10 000 could read their language."

"The rapidity of the work is another circumstance of too great importance to be overlooked. Where ever I went I was received with the greatest respect, and all classes manifested a desire for missionaries."⁵⁸

Compared to Tahiti and New Zealand, the mission in Samoa was peaceful and successful.

'At the Navigators, in less than 20 short months chapels were erected, and the people anxiously waiting for instruction.'⁵⁹

The official arrival of Christianity in Samoa is attributed to the London Missionary Society or LMS.⁶⁰ The LMS Missionaries arrived in Samoa on the 24th August 1830⁶¹ led by John Williams and Charles Barff. They were accompanied by a Samoan couple Fauea and his wife Puaseisei, as well as eight Tahitians and sailors. Initial contact with the Samoans was at the Western end of Savaii, where they found out that Tamafaiga, most feared Chief in Samoa at the time, was dead.⁶² Upon hearing this great news, Fauea as recorded as shouted with joy,

⁵⁸ John Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, (London : John Snow, 1840), 149.

⁵⁹ John Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, (London : John Snow, 1840), 149.

⁶⁰ John Garrett, *To Live Among the Stars*, (Suva : Institute of Pacific Studies) 1985, 8-13. Formed in 1795, the LMS is made up of Protestant denominations. The London Missionary Society, sprang into existence at the close of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, is the result of the evangelical revival in England originated by Whitefield and the Wesleys. It was formed in the wake of the formation of the BMS or Baptist Missionary Society in 1792 especially when they began missions to India and Africa. According to Dr Featunai Liuaana, (Lecture Notes - 2002) the aim of the LMS was 'to take the Gospel to the heathens and uncivilized'. The LMS stressed the fundamental principles drawn up which included, (a) churches set up was to be left to the people in terms of its structure, and (b) they would not be involved with the politics of the people. So the LMS was in the Pacific to preach Christ not a particular denomination.

⁶¹ John Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, (London : John Snow, 1840), 85.

⁶² John Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, (London : John Snow, 1840), 85. John Williams recorded Fauea's worries about Tamafaiga - "He had no doubt but that the chiefs would gladly receive us, and the common people all readily attend to Christian instruction, yet there was a person at Samoa, called Tamafaiga and if he opposed us, he feared that our efforts would be impeded." John Williams; *Missionary Enterprises*, 1840, 85. Fauea described Tamafaiga as, "the man in whom the spirit of the gods dwelt; that he was the terror of all inhabitants; and that if he forbade it, the people universally would be afraid to place themselves under our instruction."

"Ua mate le Devolo, ua mate le Devolo; The devil is dead, the devil is dead!... The obstacle we dreaded is removed; Tamafaiga is dead, they have killed him; the people now will all receive the lotu."⁶³

The death of Tamafaiga obviously had a positive bearing on the arrival of John Williams. The following course of events would have been different if he was alive. Perhaps these events were coincidental but to John Williams, this was God's way of opening a door for them. This belief is also concurrent with that of most Samoans that the arrival of the Missionaries was a divine act, evident by the death of an evil Chief. It also bears a theological significance in terms of Samoa's belief in ancient prophecies being fulfilled. The death of a symbolic figure of an evil reign was to prepare the way for the arrival of the new reign represented by the Gospel.

When John Williams arrived at Sapapalii, Malietoa Vaiinupo (the most powerful paramount Chief at the time) was at war avenging the death of Tamafaiga at the district of Aana in Upolu.⁶⁴ Williams wrote that as their ship docked, he could see smoke rising to the sky.⁶⁵ While the Gospel was arriving on one island, Malietoa was burning bodies on the other.

A message informed Malietoa that a religious ship had arrived. Upon receiving the message, he came straight away, welcomed John Williams and took them ashore.

⁶³ John Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, (London : John Snow, 1840), 85.

⁶⁴ According to tradition, Malietoa was *Tafai* or king at the time, and Tamafaiga was one of his warriors. Tamafaiga was leader of the Manono confederation. Malietoa at first was not a supporter of Tamafaiga. But apparently one of Malietoa's ally turned against Malietoa and Tamafaiga came to his aid. Malietoa was also related to Manono. Hence was the reason why he was involved in the war.

⁶⁵ John Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, (London : John Snow, 1840), 87.

Malietao "...professed to be highly delighted."⁶⁶ He said "...he had heard of the *lotu* and, being desirous of instruction was truly glad that they had come to impart it."⁶⁷

The missionaries expressed their concern about the war upon which Malietao replied that, "...as a person related to himself, and to all the principal chiefs, had been killed, they must avenge his death."⁶⁸ He promised however that he would take care there should be no more wars after the present, and that, "...as soon as it was terminated, he would come and place himself under the instructions of the teachers."⁶⁹

The next morning, there was an official meeting between the missionaries and Malietao upon which gifts were exchanged. Upon receiving the various gifts from the missionaries, Malietao conveyed his gratitude -

"This, continued the delighted chieftain, is the happiest day of my life and I rejoice that I have lived to see it. In future I shall consider ourselves and you as *ainga tasi*, one family, and hope you will do the same."⁷⁰

Malietao's response to the missionaries, clearly shows his willingness to accept the Gospel on behalf of Samoa.

John Williams stayed for four months and visited other parts of the islands. On Manono Island, he met Chief Matetau who asked for a teacher like Malietao.⁷¹ He was promised one the next time John Williams visits. He made a deal with Malietao that eight Tahitian

⁶⁶ John Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, (London : John Snow, 1840), 87.

⁶⁷ John Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, (London : John Snow, 1840), 87.

⁶⁸ John Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, (London : John Snow, 1840), 87-88.

⁶⁹ John Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, (London : John Snow, 1840), 87.

⁷⁰ John Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, (London : John Snow, 1840), 90.

⁷¹ John Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, (London : John Snow, 1840), 110.

teachers would settle for a month to teach the Gospel, then after that, they would be distributed to other parts of Samoa.

When Williams visited Samoa again in 1832, the eight teachers were still confined under Malietoa's control. Nevertheless, Williams noted an excitement about the new religion. At Manono, Matetau was excited to see the missionaries. He had been waiting for his missionary as promised before. When he was given a Rarotongan teacher by the name of Teava and his wife, he went eagerly to tell his people about the Good News shouting as he approached his island.⁷²

Upon reaching Sapapalii, the people were delighted to see them. Expressions of joy through weeping met them.⁷³ The teachers informed John Williams that Malietoa, his brother, the principal Chiefs and nearly all the inhabitants of their settlement had embraced Christianity. They built a Chapel for six to seven hundred people and it was always full. In Savaii and Upolu the Gospel was introduced to more than thirty villages. They said that "the great body of people were only waiting John William's arrival to renounce their heathen system."⁷⁴

Malietoa met the missionaries, was truly thankful that the good word of Jehovah had been brought to his islands and that so many had embraced it. He said,

"And now...all the people will follow; for by your return they will be convinced that the lotu is true, and will believe the assurance of the

⁷² John Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, (London : John Snow, 1840), 110.

⁷³ John Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, (London : John Snow, 1840), 110.

⁷⁴ John Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, (London : John Snow, 1840), 110.

teachers. For my own part, my heart is single in its desire to know the word of Jehovah."⁷⁵

John Williams later visited other places in Savaii and was surprised at the rapid spread of Christianity. At Aana he found that there was a woman who started the Church there. She had visited the teachers at Sapapalii constantly, then she gathered the women of her district and renounced their heathen worship.⁷⁶

At Lalomalava, the Chief there was delighted to see John Williams. He said,

"I feel highly honoured by a visit from so great a chief, a chief of religion. I am now a worshipper of Jehovah, my heart and thoughts are in love with the good word, and my sincere desire is, that speedily it may spread through the land and that not...a devil's man, may remain."⁷⁷

Apart from Savaii, Christianity was also taking root in other parts of Samoa. Manono island, the leading district of the *malo* or government of Samoa was established by teachers from Sapapalii.⁷⁸ Furthermore, Christianity was introduced to Tutuila by travelling natives who had been converted by LMS teachers in Savaii.⁷⁹

John William's delight at the success of the mission was attributed, "...to the gracious interpositions of Divine Providence, which so remarkably prepared and prospered our way at the Navigators' Islands...Here is evidence of something more than accident: this is the finger of God!"⁸⁰

⁷⁵ John Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, (London : John Snow, 1840), 111.

⁷⁶ John Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, (London : John Snow, 1840), 117.

⁷⁷ John Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, (London : John Snow, 1840), 115-116.

⁷⁸ John Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, (London : John Snow, 1840), 118-119

⁷⁹ John Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, (London : John Snow, 1840), 109.

⁸⁰ John Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, (London : John Snow, 1840), 148.

2.3 THE IMPACT AND FURTHER SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY.

Samoa was indeed ready to accept a new religion. When the Tahitians and Rarotongans accepted Christianity, they burned their idols and pulled down their temples.⁸¹ Samoans however, did not generally construct elaborate temples or idols, so the rejection of the old gods was symbolised by a ceremony in which new converts 'ate their *Aitu*.'⁸² This practice maybe experimental but it also shows the boldness of the Samoans in carrying out this act of faith.

John B. Stair described how each person in Samoa was forbidden to eat certain species of birds, animals or fish because they represented their ancestral, village or district *Aitu*.⁸³ When a village decided to convert to Christianity they had a large gathering during which the creatures which were desecrated to them, were cooked and eaten. This so desecrated the Spirit in each creature that it could never be worshipped again.⁸⁴

This ceremony of eating the *Aitu* or gods was boldly carried out by Malietoa then followed by his sons and relatives. A certain day was set for this action. Williams explains how -

"...every chief of note has his *aitu*...This was the same species of bird, fish or reptile, in which occasion, one of the class was cooked and eaten, by which act, in the estimation of the natives, the *aitu* was thoroughly

⁸¹ K. R. Howe, *Where the Waves Fall*, (London : Allen & Unwin, 1984), 144.

⁸² John Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, (London : John Snow, 1840), 113.

⁸³ John B. Stair, *Old Samoa*, (Oxford : Religious Tract Society, 1897), 211-215. The *Aitu* were the most common gods. These comprised national war-gods, local or district war-gods, family tutelary deities and deities of various trades and employments. There were also *Aitu* which "included descendants of the original gods or all deities whose aid was invoked or whose vengeance might be denounced by the various classes of the priesthood." (p211)

⁸⁴ Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga-A Short History of Samoa*, (Suva : University of the South Pacific Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 53.

desecrated that it could never again be regarded as an object of religious veneration."⁸⁵

John Williams also recorded the destruction of Papo, a war god. Papo was a piece of old rotten matting about three yards long and four inches in width. This was the god of war, always attached to the canoe of their leader when they went forth to battle, and it was regarded with great veneration. Words of Papo being drowned produced a very general excitement. Applications for a visit from the teachers came from Manono, Upolu and all parts of Savaii. Some individuals came to the missionaries and went back with little information, so they would repeat this.⁸⁶

These successful incidents of experimentations with the old gods, created mass conversions. In general, these conversions may have been nominal only.⁸⁷ However, this reflects the communal nature of Samoan society as opposed to Western Individualism.

By 1840, the LMS managed to cover the whole Samoan islands with a network of mission stations, each occupied by a missionary sought to evangelise the different villages and groups.⁸⁸ It was a period of great achievement for the LMS. The pattern described by Richard Lovett was maintained: the missionaries, assisted by their native teachers, now mostly Samoans, preached, converted, conducted biblical classes and

⁸⁵ John Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, (London : John Snow, 1840), 113.

⁸⁶ John Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, (London : John Snow, 1840), 114.

⁸⁷ Alan Gavan Daws, "The Great Samoan Awakening of 1839," in *Journal of Polynesian Society*, Vol. LXX : 326 -337, 1961, 326.

⁸⁸ Richard Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society, 1795-1895*, (London : Henry Frowde, 1899), 379.

elementary schools, held regular Church services, performed baptisms and funeral services and supervised the construction of Chapels.⁸⁹

The introduction of the LMS mission press in 1839 proved a major step forward in the advancement of literacy. Also the opening of the Malua Theological College in 1844 ensured a regular supply of qualified teachers and missionaries. In 1835 George Pratt began translating the Bible.⁹⁰

By 1839, only eight years after the arrival of the LMS missionaries, the first twelve Samoan missionaries were sent out to evangelise other Pacific Islands mainly in the west.⁹¹ In Faletese's words -

"It has not been ten years since the arrival of the Gospel, but many offered their lives for Jesus and His Gospel. People who were born in the age of darkness, they were uneducated, they didn't have Bibles, just the story of what they heard about the love of Jesus Christ and Holy Spirit."⁹²

As shown above, the Samoans were willingly renouncing their heathenism for the God and the religion of the missionaries. This transition of Samoa from its old religion to the Gospel I believe is a feature of the Religious Enlightenment process. Samoans believe that the arrival of the Gospel marks the beginning of the period of Samoan Enlightenment in general. This is expressed in the Samoan expression, 'Ua ao Samoa'- Samoa is enlightened. This shows an acknowledgement of the period before the arrival of the Gospel as generally dark. This implicates that Samoans were aware of the folly of some

⁸⁹ Richard Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society, 1795-1895*, (London : Henry Frowde, 1899), 379.

⁹⁰ Richard Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society, 1795-1895*, (London : Henry Frowde, 1899), 384.

of their previous cultural and religious beliefs and customs and that the light of the Gospel has exposed those dark aspects of Samoan Culture and Religion.

2.4 CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO THE FAST ACCEPTANCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

There are several factors that contribute to the rapid success of the LMS Mission. Firstly were the contributions made by the heretical and other forms of Christianity introduced by sailors, castaways and Wesleyan converts from Tonga. Although they preached a crude and watered-down version of Christianity, they nevertheless created an atmosphere of anticipation for the easier acceptance of Christianity before 1830. (Refer to Appendix A – *The Crude Version of Christianity Before 1830.*)

Also, Samoans were attracted to the material goods of the missionaries. Fauea stressed this to the Samoans when he said,

“Can the religion of these papalagis be anything but good?...Let us look at them, and then look at ourselves, their heads are covered, while ours are exposed to the heat of the sun...their bodies are clothed all over with beautiful cloth, while we have nothing but a bandage of leaves around our waste; they have clothes upon their feet, while ours are like the dogs; and then look at their axes, their scissors, and their other property, how rich they are!”⁹¹

The Samoans were under the impression that the many useful and beautiful possessions of the Europeans came from their God and that if they accepted Christianity they would also receive similar goods.

⁹¹ Kenape Tuuu Faletose, *A History of the Samoan Church(LMS)*, (Apia : Malua Printing Press, 1959), 18.

⁹² Kenape Tuuu Faletose, *A History of the Samoan Church(LMS)*, (Apia : Malua Printing Press, 1959), 18.

Another reason for the acceptance of Christianity was the desire for new knowledge introduced by the missionaries in the form of reading and writing. To the Samoans, literacy was the key to the wealth of knowledge possessed by the Europeans. Inglis described this as the 'Literate Revolution'.

"People now, to some extent, were disappointed with their own tradition, not that they wished to drop it and forget it, but rather that it was not wide enough for the new awakening within them."⁹⁴

By 1839, Samoans were ready to be sent out as missionaries. Thus their willingness to be educated in order to help spread the Good News. Missionary William Day noted in a letter that, several of the things that he witnessed during this time include, "...the great multitude of persons who have learned and are learning how to write, and ...the mental development and intellectual activity of a numerous class of inquirers, chiefly young men."⁹⁵

A major contributing factor was the favourable stance taken by the new leader of the Samoan government, Malietoa Vainuupo, towards the Christian religion. This stance may have been taken for political reason, but it is also paramount to note Malietoa's strong conviction for the Gospel. This is reflected in his dying testimony where he split the *Tafai* titles which had caused political rivalry in the past, with the hope of no more war in Samoa.

⁹³ John Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, (London : John Snow, 1840), 86.

⁹⁴ John D. Inglis, *Reasons for the Acceptance of Christianity in Western Samoa in 1830*, (Auckland : 1977), 312.

⁹⁵ *A Letter from William Day to William Ellis, 4/11/1839, London Missionary Society, South Sea Letters*, (London : Livingston House).

It is also important to note that Samoan religion before 1830 contains some of the most significant elements of Christian beliefs. (Refer to Appendix B – *Samoan Religion Before 1830*) Paramount to Christianity is the belief in a God who created humanity and all of creation. This idea was also similar in a way to Samoa's belief that a supreme god name Tagaloa also created humanity and Samoa. This god existed before anything came into being. His existence before creation was accepted without question. Christianity also believes that there is a life beyond death. Samoan religious beliefs also hold this idea of a spiritual world called *Pulotu*⁹⁶ in which our spirits will go upon death.

The striking similarities of these Samoan religious concepts and understanding of God and the divine realm to the Christian understanding brought by the missionaries is interesting. It had a bearing on the fast acceptance of Christianity by the Samoans. With these previously held beliefs the Samoans found it easier to grasp the meaning and essence of Christianity. According to Kamu,

"Belief in the Supernatural or in the one Supreme Being was not foreign to the Samoan people. It was not even considered something new brought by the missionary movement, though many, including our own people, seemed to believe so at the time."⁹⁷

Therefore, the very existence of these concepts in the Samoan mind helped them understand what the missionaries were trying to explain. .

⁹⁶ John B. Stair, *Old Samoa*, (Oxford : Religious Tract Society, 1897), 217. *Pulotu* is believed to be the abode of the blest. Samoans also believe that most of their gods were supposed to dwell in the *Fafa*, *Salefee* and *Pulotu*. These places refer to what Samoans believe to be the spirit world. *Fafa* or Hades is the entrance to *Salefee*, the Samoan Tartarus or dread place of punishment.

⁹⁷ Lalomilo Kamu, *The Samoan Culture and The Christian Gospel*, (Suva : Methodist Printing Press, 1996), 8.

Kamu refers to these as 'pre-Christian concepts' of God which fitted with the Christian concepts of God brought by the missionaries. According to Kamu,

"The more I understand the pre-Christian concept of God as revealed by the creation myths...the firmer I am convinced that essentially we are talking about the same God in whom the Christians believed."⁹⁸

This proposes that, "the coming of Christianity has transformed the pre-Christian concept of God in Samoa. Although it was done slowly, the *Atua* or God of the Samoans who was parochially understood in scope, is now understood as the *Atua* whose domain is not limited to Samoans but includes all people throughout the world. As a Creator, God created not only the world of the Samoans, he created the whole world which belongs to him. This conceptual transformation through the Gospel has given the Samoans greater challenges and greater opportunities, in relation to God's people in other parts of the world."⁹⁹

Furthermore, the Biblical concepts like love, respect, and forgiveness were not without similar examples in Samoan Culture. These values are still strong today and further enhanced by the influence of Christianity. Respect is perhaps the most significant whereby the young are always taught to respect their elders. Forgiveness in Samoan culture is perhaps best illustrated by the practice of *ifoga*. A Samoan equivalent of the Biblical concept of Atonement. According to Fanaafi, when one commits an offence within the village, the culprit finds the highest Chief of his or her kin to kneel covered

⁹⁸ Lalomilo Kamu, *The Samoan Culture and The Christian Gospel*, (Suva : Methodist Printing Press, 1996), 31.

⁹⁹ Lalomilo Kamu, *The Samoan Culture and The Christian Gospel*, (Suva : Methodist Printing Press, 1996), 31.

with a fine mat in front of the offended family. The Chief who is the most important person of status in the family, has committed no sin and is innocent yet he takes the place of the culprit. If he is killed in the act, he or she has spared the life of the offender. That is atonement in the Samoan perspective and it was practised long before the arrival of the missionaries.¹⁰⁰

The similarities between Samoa's traditional religion and the biblical religion are a viable explanation in relation to the successful introduction of Christianity to Samoa. The Samoans were able to make that connection between their old religious concepts with that of the new one. In teaching Christianity to the Samoans, the missionaries had found it easier to find Samoan religious concepts that were similar to explain theirs.

The stark correlation between Samoan traditional religious beliefs before 1830 and the teachings of Christianity is a vital point to note. The significance of this relationship will help us understand the transition of Samoa from its traditional religion to Christianity.

Religious Enlightenment for the Samoans was not a one way process whereby they totally disregarded their old religious beliefs and replaced them with new ones.

According to Aiono Fanaafi,

"We were not passive recipients of the faith. The Samoan people, whether politics or whatever, when these new ideas were brought in, the Samoans did not follow them blindly."¹⁰¹

John Williams noted this nature of the Samoans when at a meeting a Chief stood up and said,

¹⁰⁰ Aiono Fanaafi, *Personal Interview*, Alafua, 2003.

¹⁰¹ John Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, (London: John Lane, 1842), 149.

"Suppose, then, we were to visit their country, and say that Jehovah was not the true God, and invite them to cast him off, and become worshippers of Tagaloa, of the Samoa islands, what reply would they make? Would they not say, Don't be in haste; let us know something more of Tagaloa, and the worship he requires? Now I wish the Samoans to act just as these wise English people would, under the same circumstances, and to know something more about this new religion before they abandon that which our ancestors venerated."¹⁰²

This conservative nature of the Samoans being represented, means they took much care and thought before accepting Christianity.

1.1 CULTURE - DEFINITION

In summary, Religious Enlightenment for the Samoans, was a process whereby they were awakened to the fact that here was a new religion that professes some of its own religious beliefs and concepts. It is Enlightened Conservatism which is changing only what is appropriate, and conserving and holding fast to what is eternally enduring and life giving. Here is a commonality and continuity from their faith in the past to the newly introduced faith of the Europeans. The biggest Enlightenment for the Samoans however, was the Gospel, the Good News about Jesus Christ. God's only begotten Son came down to save humanity and His creation. This became the new crux and center of their faith. And it became the founding vision for Samoa's nation-building, and a new basis for Samoan Culture throughout Modern Samoan history. This founding vision was actualised in the Constitution of the Independence State of Samoa in 1962 in which it declared Samoa to be a Nation founded on God.

¹⁰¹ Aiono Fanaafi, *Personal Interview*, Alafua, 2003.

¹⁰² John Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, (London : John Snow, 1840), 149.

CHAPTER THREE

SAMOAN CULTURAL ENLIGHTENMENT.

This chapter will illustrate certain features of Samoan Cultural Enlightenment. It looks at the transformation of Samoan Culture from pre-1830 to the period of Modern Samoa from 1830 to 1962. This cultural transformation highlights the dynamic nature of Samoan Culture and the changes in Samoan worldviews from pre-1830 times to Modern Samoa.

3.1 CULTURE - DEFINITION.

Culture can be defined as,

"...social and intellectual formation. The totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all products of human work and thought characteristic of a community or population."¹⁰³

Culture is seen as a term that encompasses almost all facets of society. It is simply a way of life that distinguishes a particular society or race of people.

"Culture is what holds a community together, giving a common framework of meaning. It is preserved in language and thought patterns, way of life, attitudes, symbols and presuppositions, and it is celebrated in art, music, drama, literature and the like. It constitutes the collective memory of the people and the collective heritage which will be handed down to generations still to come."¹⁰⁴

A significant element of culture highlighted in the above definitions, is that it holds the common framework of meaning and the general intellectual thinking of a society. This is preserved and expressed in language and other means. Culture therefore preserves the intellectual thinking and worldview of a society. In terms of Samoan Cultural

¹⁰³ *Reader's Digest Universal Dictionary*, 382.

¹⁰⁴ *International Review of Missions*, Vol. LXXIV No.294, World Council of Churches, April, 1985, 154.

Enlightenment, we will see whether the pre-1830 Samoan worldview was transformed by the a new worldview brought by the Europeans and especially the Gospel.

3.2 SAMOAN ORATORY LANGUAGE : EXPRESSIONS OF A NEW AGE.

According to Lalomilo Kamu,

"The importance of language as a living expression of culture cannot be underestimated nor can it be superficially studied. Oral and written forms of language are vital means by which cultural forms and ideas are conveyed and only the language concerned can fully convey the meanings of its traditional and religious thought forms and ideologies."¹⁰⁵

The Samoan language evidently remains a significant means of analysis for Samoan's intellectual thinking and general worldview.¹⁰⁶

One most admired form of the Samoan language is the Samoan *lauga* or oratory speech.

A *lauga* is always an important part of any Samoan gathering like in an *ava*¹⁰⁷ ceremony

or when welcoming visitors. A significant part in the structure¹⁰⁸ of a Samoan speech is the mentioning of *taeao* or mornings. These mornings are regarded as the major historical

¹⁰⁵ Lalomilo Kamu, *The Samoan Culture and the Christian Gospel*, (Suva : Methodist Printing Press, 1996), 55-56.

¹⁰⁶ Lalomilo Kamu, *The Samoan Culture and The Christian Gospel*, (Suva : Methodist Printing Press, 1996), 56. When we talk about the Samoan language we are referring to two main aspects; the Chiefly and the Common. The chiefly language as suggested by its name is a far more complex form that is used in Chiefly gatherings. However as Kamu suggested this does not mean that, "the chiefs have a monopoly on the chiefly language while the rest of the population only learn and use the common language." In other words the chiefly language is not representative of an elite group of society but rather of the whole of society. This is significant because it shows that the ideologies and the intellectual thinking preserved in this form of language is representative of Samoan society as a whole.

¹⁰⁷ Augustine Kramer (Translated by Theodore Verhaaren), *The Samoa Islands*, Vol. I, (Auckland : Polynesian Press, 1994), 20-21. Ava is a beverage prepared from the root of the kava plant, the piper *methysticum* Forst. It is used in the ava ceremony – a ritual for special occasions like the bestowment of chiefly titles, village meetings and when welcoming visitors.

¹⁰⁸ A detail understanding of the Samoan Lauga in its formal structure can be found in these sources; Faamatuainu Faafetai Tui, *Lauga : Samoan Oratory*, (National University of Samoa : Institute of Pacific

turning points in the history of Samoa. And these mornings are always recounted in a *lauga*.

The most significant of these mornings is the *Taeao nai Mataniu feagai ma le ata*, (The Morning at Mataniu feagai ma le ata.) This refers to the arrival of Christianity in 1830 which in turn has a significant bearing on the Samoans' high regard for this historical occasion. The arrival of Christianity was a new morning, a new age, and the turning point in Samoa's history. The enormity of this conviction must not be underestimated. It is a conviction that is imbedded in the collective memory of the Samoans. To solidify this point when orators sum up these mornings they always end it with the statement - *E ui a i isi taeao, ae o le taeao sili lava o le taeao o le talalelei*, (Of all the mornings, the most important morning is the morning of the Gospel.) This reflects the significance of this event in the hearts of Samoans, as a major historical peak point.

Other Samoan oratory expressions further depict this conviction. In relation to the morning of the Gospel, an orator would usually utter these expressions -

Talu mai le Talalelei ua utu le toto masaa. Ua le toe tau Samoa. (Since the Gospel, there is no more bloodshed. Samoa is no longer in warfare.)

O mea na sa fai i aso o nuupo. Ua ao Samoa. (Those things were done in the dark days. Samoa is enlightened.)

Ua tatou feiloai i luma o nuu ae le o tua o nuu. (We have met in front of the village, but not at the back of the village.)

Studies, 1986). Also refer to Danny Ioka, *Origin and Beginning of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (C.C.C.S.) in Aotearoa New Zealand*, PhD. Thesis, University of Otago, 1996, 19-25.

From the above expressions, it is clear that the language of Samoan oratory speaks volume about the importance of the arrival of the Christian Gospel in Samoa. To the Samoans, this historical event is the entry point into what can be defined as Modern Samoa. It marks the boundary as to the end of the dark age in Samoa and the entrance into enlightened days. The expressions encapsulate this transition in Samoan culture and appreciate the value of the Gospel in transforming Samoa's culture.

Ioka elaborates on this notion by his exegesis of the Samoan saying - *Ua utufia le toto masaa*. According to Ioka,

"...one of the profound cultural understandings, if also a revolution in cultural-intellectual wisdom, into the impact of the Biblical Gospel is aptly expressed in this popular wisdom saying in Cultural Oration. It literally means, the spilt blood is returned to its living source in the person and in the Divine. The expression implicates the folly and darkness of Old Samoa in its pre-1830 warring days; but its literal force celebrates the 'promise and performance' of the Rebirth and Reconciliation brought by the Gospel."¹⁰⁹

Therefore, Samoan Oratory preserves this new worldview of the Samoans. A worldview that acknowledges the Gospel as the core of Samoa's transformation from some of its pagan cultural ways to an enlightened culture. The arrival of the Gospel marks Samoa on the threshold of this modern age.

¹⁰⁹ Danny Ioka, *Origin and Beginning of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (C.C.C.S.) in Aotearoa New Zealand*, PhD. Thesis, University of Otago, 1996, 7.

3.3 SAMOAN CULTURE IN TRANSITION.

It is clear from the previous discussion that the Samoans strongly believe that the Gospel was the light that illuminates many of Samoa's dark ways. The Gospel therefore was paramount in the transformation of Samoan Culture.

The biggest impact of the Gospel on Samoan culture was on its social aspect. This came about as the result of the conflict between the teachings of the Bible and various Samoan practices at the time. One social activity that the missionaries were first confronted with and ready to stamp out was the *poula*. John Williams described it as a 'charge sexual expression of human nature.' Williams witnessed it on the night of their arrival.¹¹⁰ To the minds of the missionaries this was a sinful uncivilized practice. To the Samoans, these sexual practices were "...like leisure activities and they found much pleasure in these."¹¹¹ However, the extreme nature of this practice reveals the degradation of humanity and it belittles the dignity of not only Samoan women but men. The need to change such a practice was not only necessary for the ideals of the Gospel but to uphold Samoan values in the dignity of sexual relationship.

Another social practice missionaries worked hard to eliminate was polygamy. Polygamy was a custom instigated for political reasons. Through marriages a Chiefly title can elevate its status.¹¹² Since the main reason for Chiefs contracting so many marriages was the Samoan political system, changing that custom also greatly changed the political

¹¹⁰ John Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, (London : John Snow, 1840), 89.

¹¹¹ Olivia Latai, *Personal Interview*, Fatitu, 2003.

¹¹² This will be discussed in detail in Chapter four- Political Enlightenment.

system of Samoa.¹¹³ The Gospel teaches men and women to have only one marriage partner and should be faithful to one another thus Chiefs wishing to become Christians were asked to choose one wife for the rest of their lives, and to permit their previous wives to remarry. The positive effects of the Gospel on this practice is that, it not only elevates the rights and dignity of women but it also takes away an imperative for creating hostility and rivalry for political power.

Tattooing was also regarded as a sin and not in line with Christian principles. Tattooing to the Samoans has a significant meaning as a symbol of identity. For a young man having a tattoo or a *tatau*, is a symbol of his transition from boyhood to manhood. However because blood was spilt as well as the sexual associations involved, tattooing was viewed as barbaric and uncivilised.¹¹⁴

One of the most emphatic teachings of the missionaries was that of peace. Although the sad facts of history show that Christians have fought and killed fellow Christians in Europe for the past two thousand years, the Evangelical missionaries emphasized peace as one of the greatest of Christ's messages.¹¹⁵ This is clear in the efforts made by John Williams to stop Malietoa Vaiinupo from continuing with the war at Aana.¹¹⁶ It is also

¹¹³ Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga-A Short History of Samoa*, (Suva : University of the South Pacific Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 68. It was another eight years after 1830, before Samoans really accepted the new teachings on marriage, and when they finally did, the conferring of taupou titles became less important. This is because the institution of the taupou was closely associated with chiefly marriage, which linked families and villages all over Samoa through the multiple marriages of chiefs to high ranking ladies.

¹¹⁴ For further detail refer to Carl Marquardt, *The Tattooing of Both Sexes in Samoa*, (Papakura : R. McMillan), 1984.

¹¹⁵ Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga-A Short History of Samoa*, (Suva : University of the South Pacific Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 69.

¹¹⁶ John Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, (London : John Snow, 1840), 87.

reflected in the dying testimony of Malietoa Vaiinupo in which he split the *Papa*¹¹⁷ titles which made him *Tafaifa* or king. Malietoa's act symbolizes his willingness to have no more war over these titles.

Peace however was hard to come by in the second half of the 19th Century in Samoa as rival factions continued to struggle for ascendancy and dominance. This period in Samoan history is marked with civil unrest and outbreaks of civil war. The missionaries however continued to bring the rival factions to some peaceful solutions. By the middle of the 20th Century Samoa was truly a peaceful country. This transformation owed much to the peaceful teachings of the Gospel and as is acknowledged in oratory expressions and in the Constitution which states Samoa to be a nation founded on God.

These examples of the changes in some of Samoa's cultural practices reveal the enlightening process that was taking place since the arrival of the Gospel to the declaration of Independence.

However, these changes were not totally forced upon the Samoans by the missionaries and Europeans. The Samoans realised in the light of the Gospel that some of their cultural practices needed to change and they sought to effect those changes. The Samoan Culture was not totally dark and chaotic as the Samoans possessed values that were significant which they fought diligently to maintain.

¹¹⁷ *Papa* are paramount titles which in combination and in possession by a Chief would legitimise his kingship over Samoa.

3.4 SAMOAN CULTURE IN PRE 1830 – GLIMPSES OF LIGHT.

Long before the arrival of the missionaries, Samoa already had a 'philosophy, a concept of worship, a social system which lays out the different and interrelated roles of those in society. Samoa already had taboos or rules of society. These already existed and were not brought by Europeans.¹¹⁸ They were living a very distinct way of life with dignity and respect. They were a friendly and hospitable people. This was the true character of the Samoans found by the missionaries when they arrived in 1830. John Williams noted this nature of the Samoans. On the day they were officially welcomed, the missionaries presented both Malietoa and his brother Tamailelagi equal gifts. Tamailelagi in turn offered his gift for Malietoa out of respect for his older brother. Malietoa was evidently gratified with this mark of respect shown but with a noble disinterestedness, equal to that evinced by his brother he replied, "No brother; these alii papalangi, English kings, have given it to you; it is yours, and you must keep it."¹¹⁹ In William's own words, the incident presented -

"...a nobleness of feeling displayed by the two chiefs, that gave us an exalted idea of their general character, and such we could scarcely have expected to find among a people who had been represented as in so savage a state."¹²⁰

This noble and respectful nature of the Samoans stems from their upbringing in the *aiga* or family where values such as *faaaloalo* or respect, courtesy and good manners are taught. In Samoan customs the child is always taught to respect the elders and people who are not relations. This is reflected in the way they speak, walk and sit. There is a saying in Samoa that; '*E iloa le tama poo le teine i lana tautala, i lana tu ma lana*

¹¹⁸ Aiono Fanaafi, *Personal Interview*, Alafua, 2003.

¹¹⁹ John Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, (London : John Snow, 1840), 90.

¹²⁰ John Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, (London : John Snow, 1840), 90.

savali'- (A boy or girl is known by the way he or she talks, stands and walks.) It would be a great dishonour to the family if one member talks, stands and walks in an improper manner. For example, if one talks to an elder or stranger, one is expected to use the *gagana faaaloalo*, or language of respect. To walk in front of someone, one has to bend forward while passing and when sitting it is only proper to sit cross legged. These etiquette and manners are very important and reflect the advanced character of Samoan culture.¹²¹

The *aiga* or family and the *matai* or titled head of the family system are also central to Samoan culture. Both the *aiga* and the *matai* inherently belong together in what is commonly known as the matai system. The *matai* are the family representatives of the *aiga* to the matai council which makes decisions for the village. The matai system or the *faamatai* is the basis of a Samoan village. It is the council of *matai* that seeks to maintain peace, stability and welfare of the people within the village. 'The Samoan culture believes that if there is strife and divisiveness instead of peace and unanimity in the extended family or the village, then the *matai* are unworthy of the faith and confidence bestowed upon them.'¹²² Though the *matai* in Samoan society have much authority, they must use that authority for developments that will sustain the welfare, prosperity and peaceful life for the heirs who elected them.¹²³ According to Fanaafi, 'the ideal social organisation in Samoan society is the *faamatai*.'¹²⁴ Furthermore the significance of the

¹²¹ Olivia Latai, *Personal Interview*, Fatitu, 2003.

¹²² Aiono Fanaafi, *Samoan Village Society*, in *The Courier*, No. 99, September – October, 1996, 74.

¹²³ Aiono Fanaafi, *Samoan Village Society*, in *The Courier*, No. 99, September – October, 1996, 73.

¹²⁴ Aiono Fanaafi, *Samoan Village Society*, in *The Courier*, No. 99, September – October, 1996, 72.

Matai system is incomparable to any social or political system in the western world.¹²⁵

The Samoans had been living a system that has kept peace and tranquility for thousands of years way before the arrival of the missionaries.

Hence, Samoa to a large extent had glimpses of a people with an enlightened culture. A culture that upholds good values for the wellbeing of the people. Culture however is not always perfect. According to Kamu, '...though culture is basically good, evidence has shown that certain cultural traditions proved to be both negative and detrimental to peace in society.'¹²⁶ Likewise Samoan culture contained aspects that had created conflicts and strifes and degraded the dignity of humanity. These aspects of Samoan culture were exposed to the light of the Gospel and the civilization of the Europeans and Missionaries. Consequently, what followed was the transformation of Samoan culture.

3.5 THE MOULDING OF TWO CULTURES.

Another feature of Samoan Cultural Enlightenment is the process of assimilation the Samoans used in adopting European values and ideals. Although Samoan culture underwent many changes due to the influence of European civilization and the Gospel, many of these changes were assimilated by the Samoans to suit their needs.

When the Europeans arrived, the Samoans were able to perceive the good as well as the bad elements in their culture. They were able to see the values that were significant and fought diligently not to rid of them. At the same time, they were able to make that

¹²⁵ Aiono Fanaafi, *Personal Interview*, Alafua, 2003.

¹²⁶ Lalomilo Kamu, *The Samoan Culture and the Christian Gospel*, (Suva : Methodist Printing Press, 1996), 37.

transition to accommodate the foreign influences which they saw were deemed necessary. To me, this is the process of Enlightenment that was taking place in Samoan society. It was a process whereby the Samoans woke up to in the early 19th Century. The realisation of a new era of change, yet they knew that these changes should not undermine their own culture. The Samoans used their reasoning, their rationale to weigh and evaluate the new situation presented.

According to Meleisea, although there is evidence that Christianity 'revolutionized' Samoan culture during the mid-nineteenth century, these changes were absorbed and Samoanized. He went on to say that, the second generation of Christians accepted the Lotu and many of the new ways taught by the missionaries, as Samoan Culture, often interpreted new things in old ways. One example is the exchange of dowry during weddings. Before, they used Samoan items but these were later replaced by furniture presented by the wife's family. Another custom was the introduction of saucers and mugs. When an *alii*¹²⁷ or a pastor is served with tea, he receives a china cup and saucer. A *tulafale* receives his tea in a cup without a saucer, or in a mug. New goods came to be used in old ways to indicate distinctions of rank and status. In this way, over the past one hundred and fifty years of Christian Samoan history, Christian and *papalagi* customs and institutions have been made distinctively Samoan.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ There are two kinds of Chiefs – *alii* and *tulafale*. Their different roles and status are discussed in Chapter four – Political Enlightenment.

¹²⁸ Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga-A Short History of Samoa*, (Suva : University of the South Pacific Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 70.

John Williams also referred to this nature of the Samoan people. They were conservative and did not rush to decision. Meleisea refers to it as the conservative nature of the Samoans. Ioka describes it as the result of the interpenetration of the Biblical World and the Samoan cultural world. Fanaafi uses the word 'blending'¹²⁹ to explain this fusion of the two worlds.

In summary, Samoan Cultural Enlightenment was the transformation of Samoan Culture by the Gospel. The Gospel was the true light that beamed on the various pagan practices of Samoan Culture. This enlightening process meant two things - the light of the Gospel meant death to these dark aspects of Samoan Culture that depraved humanity and, life and enrichment to those good aspects of Samoan Culture that were life giving and enduring. Hence, Cultural Enlightenment was the enriching of Samoan life by the Gospel and by foreign influences which were selectively appropriated.

¹²⁹ George Tamm, *Samoa - A History of Four Years Ago and Long Before* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1884), 178-179. "The titles of the heads of families are not necessarily hereditary. The one may ascend to the title which his father held, but it may be given to another, or a cousin. ... Sometimes a stranger may succeed to a title through adoption or service to a family. An adopted member of the family can also be chosen to hold the title. A Chief, before he dies, may make a request to succeed him, but the final decision rests with the heads of the family to which of the members of the Chief's family shall bear the title and be regarded as the village head."

¹³⁰ George Tamm, *Samoa - A History of Four Years Ago and Long Before*, in *The Courier*, No. 99, September-October, 1896, 72.

¹²⁹ Aiono Fanaafi, *Personal Interview*, Alafua, 2003.

CHAPTER FOUR

SAMOAN POLITICAL ENLIGHTENMENT.

This chapter seeks to illustrate Political Enlightenment during the period of Modern Samoa from 1830 to Samoa's Political Independence in 1962. Politically this period is marked by the continuous battle between two conceptions of authority. The Samoan decentralised form of government and the European centralised form of government. Personal interest lies in the development and outcome of this clash. How did the Samoans react to the superior and dominant forces of European form of power and authority? Did this reaction reflect features of Enlightenment? I believe this was the case.

4.1 SAMOAN TRADITIONAL POLITICAL AUTHORITY.

Samoan political authority and governance lie in the hands of the *Matai* or Chiefs. The *Matai* is the head and holder of the *Aiga* or family *Matai*-title. The *Matai* represents each family within a village to the village *Fono* or Council. Each *Matai* is selected by the family members,¹³⁰ therefore the *Matai* is responsible to the family. He or she '...holds in trust the *aiga* heritage – their verbal traditions and the land which belongs to the *matai*-title.'¹³¹ The *Matai* however, does not hold absolute authority over the family. Final decisions concerning the welfare of the family are always reached after consultations

¹³⁰ George Turner, *Samoa: A Hundred Years Ago and Long Before*, (London: MacMillan and Co., 1884), 173-174. "The titles of the heads of families are not necessarily hereditary. The son may succeed to the title which his father had, but it may be given to an uncle, or a cousin...". Sometimes a stranger may succeed to a title through *tautua* or service in a family. An adopted member of the family can also be chosen to hold the title. "A Chief, before he dies, may name someone to succeed him, but the final decision rests with the heads of families as to which of the members of the Chief family shall have the title and be regarded as the village Chief."

¹³¹ Aiono Fanaafi, *Samoa Village Society*, in *The Courier*, No. 99, September – October, 1996, 72.

with all family members or heirs to the family title. This implies that although the *Matai* is the head of the family, he or she does not always have the final say.

There are two kinds of *Matai*; the *Alii* and the *Tulafale*. "As heads of families both categories are called *Matai* but the status and role of each is very different."¹³² In governing villages, "...the role of the *Alii* is to make the final decisions after listening to the advice of the *Tulafale* who spoke for and issued orders from the *Alii*."¹³³ Although the *Alii* are often considered higher in status, we will come to learn that the *Tulafale* with their oratory skills often hold the upper hand in Samoan politics.

When the *Matai* of the different *Aiga* in the village gather, they become the *Pule* or authority in the village.¹³⁴ Hence the Samoan village is the basic political unit in Samoan society. In fact, the whole of Samoa is really a confederation of villages.¹³⁵ The Chiefs of a village combined makes up the village *Fono* or Village Council. This Council is responsible for the "...political decisions of the village as far as the outside world was concerned, and organized the production of food."¹³⁶ The Village Council is the most powerful group within the village, possessing the authority to confer punishments to

¹³² Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga-A Short History of Samoa*, (Suva : University of the South Pacific Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 27

¹³³ Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga-A Short History of Samoa*, (Suva : University of the South Pacific Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 27. The *Alii* titles are linked to Samoan historical genealogies that go back to Tagaloa. Hence these titles are considered sacred as they carried the *mana* of the gods. The *Tulafale*, also known as Talking Chiefs or Orators have the same ancestral origins as the *Alii* but their duties are more executive.

¹³⁴ Aiono Fanaafi, *Samoa Village Society*, in *The Courier*, No. 99, September - October, 1996, 72-73.

¹³⁵ Aiono Fanaafi, *Samoa Village Society*, in *The Courier*, No. 99, September - October, 1996, 72.

¹³⁶ Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga-A Short History of Samoa*, (Suva : University of the South Pacific Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 28.

those who commit crime within the village. They are the supreme leaders who make the rules that govern everything in village life.

On the District level, it is the Chiefs who represent the village. The local affairs of each settlement come under their control, and are discussed and decided upon in a public assembly composed of the leading men of each village or district.¹³⁷

On the national level, there are *Ao* or *Papa* titles. These are the highest titles in Samoa.¹³⁸ The *Papa* titles are Gatoaitale, Tamasoalii, Tuiaana, and Tuiatua. When all four *Papa* are held by one person that person is called *Tafaifa*. When the missionaries arrived in 1830, Malietoa Vainuupo was soon to become the only other holder of the four *Papa* titles hence was the *Tafaifa*.¹³⁹ By this time the conferring of two of these titles was held by the powerful oratory group of Tumua, while the other two by Safata and Afega of Tuamasaga. The implication of this arrangement is that total political power was never vested in a single person or Chief. Hence, a *Tafaifa* is always conscious of the limitation

¹³⁷ John B. Stair, *Old Samoa*, (Oxford : Religious Tract Society, 1897), 84.

¹³⁸ Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga-A Short History of Samoa*, (Suva : University of the South Pacific Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 31. Around the 16th century, a new centralisation of rank and political authority was created in the western Islands. According to one tradition, "previously Manu'a had been the centre. The highest titles of Samoa then were firstly the Tuimanu'a and in the west the titles of Tuiaana and Tuiatua. The new order in the west may have begun as a result of Tongan rule in Samoa. Oral traditions describe how the brothers Tuna and Fata with the assistance of their sister's son Ulumasui, who had sacred power, drove the Tongans from the shores of Samoa. This event led to the creation of a new high title Malietoa." p31.

¹³⁹ Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga-A Short History of Samoa*, (Suva : University of the South Pacific Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 74. Salamasina was the first *Tafaifa*. Several conflicting traditions suggest how Malietoa got the titles. One tradition suggests that the four titles had been passed down in the Sa Tupua descent line since the time of Salamasina. This tradition says that Iamafana who was the *Tafaifa* prior to 1802, in his dying testament gave the titles to Malietoa Vainuupo in 1802. Malietoa received the Gatoaitale and Tamasoalii titles from Afega and Safata which made him the *Tafaifa*. (Refer also to p28) Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga-A Short History of Samoa*, (Suva : University of the South Pacific Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 74. Another tradition says that from 1810 the most powerful chief was Tamafaiga of Manono who gave himself the title 'Tupu o Salafai' or 'King of Salafai'. When Tamafaiga was killed just prior to the arrival of the missionaries, Malietoa won the titles Tuiaana and Tuiatua. Afterwards the other two *papa* were bestowed on him because he was the leader of the conquering side.

of his or her power and authority. This was one of the reasons for civil wars in Samoa as paramount Chiefs were always asserting their power to gain support and allies.

In retrospect, Samoan traditional political authority was generally dispersed and scattered. This is clear in the selection of a *Matai* for the *Aiga* in the local level. It is also clear in the national level. Although the concept of *Tafaifa* is suggestive of central authority¹⁴⁰, the *Tafaifa* can never be equated with the concept of 'Kingship' in the Western understanding. The holder of the *Tafaifa* would always be subject to the oratory groups and other political factions who conferred him or her the titles. This nature of Samoan politics was misunderstood by the Europeans and the reason for their continual struggle to impose a centralised form of government on the Samoans.

4.2 POLITICAL IMPACT OF THE MISSIONARIES.

One of the strategies of the LMS missionaries and other missionary groups who evangelized the Pacific was that they attempted first to convert the king or the most powerful Chief in the islands.¹⁴¹ This method was based on the belief that once the top man is converted then the rest of the population will follow suit. The idea was sound, however this approach would only work in a country with a more centralised form of government.

¹⁴⁰ Refer to Malama Meleisea, *Change and Adaptations in Western Samoa*, (University of Canterbury : MacMillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies, 1992), 9-10.

¹⁴¹ K. R. Howe, *Where the Waves Fall*, (London : Allen & Unwin, 1984), 203 - 237.

In Polynesia however, power and authority were dispersed and usually there were continuing rivalries between paramount Chiefs for total power and control of the islands. The LMS missionaries discovered this in Tahiti and Tonga.¹⁴²

The LMS missionaries came to Samoa with that perspective in mind. John Williams went to Malietoa Vaiinupo because he was considered to be the 'king' of Samoa.¹⁴³ Fauea who accompanied Williams must have known of the rise of Vaiinupo and hence influenced the Missionaries' decision. The view that Samoa had a centralised form of government however was misleading. Although Malietoa was the *Tafaifa* at the time, he did not have complete control of Samoa.¹⁴⁴

The need for a more centralized form of government for Samoa however was evident. Samoa was continually at war and there was a great need for peace and stability not only for the sake of the Gospel but for Samoa as a whole. Vaiinupo in his dying testimony bore witness to this conviction that Samoa should have no more wars over political power. His splitting the *Tafaifa* title testifies to this. In his testimony, Vaiinupo stated,

"Tumua, your titles you have bestowed on me, I will take with me to the grave. Do not use them again. There will be only one King of Samoa and that is the one God, (the biblical God). (The Gospel) of the cross of Jesus Christ you shall worship until his return."¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² K. R. Howe, *Where the Waves Fall*, (London : Allen & Unwin, 1984), 125 – 142. In Tahiti, the LMS missionaries struggled for many years before their mission was successful. It was not until Pomare II after extensive influence of the missionaries, became the only dominant ruler in Tahiti that mass conversion began to take place. Pomare's rise to power to a large extent was attributed to the countless efforts of the missionaries to push him up there. It was a similar situation in Tonga in which through the backing of the Wesleyan missionaries, King Taufaahau rose to prominence.

¹⁴³ K. R. Howe, *Where the Waves Fall*, (London : Allen & Unwin, 1984), 236.

¹⁴⁴ K. R. Howe, *Where the Waves Fall*, (London : Allen & Unwin, 1984), 233-234.

¹⁴⁵ Danny Ioka, *Origin and Beginning of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (C.C.C.S.) in Aotearoa New Zealand*, PhD. Thesis, University of Otago, 1996, 65.

According to Ioka, this was a "...call to end the blood spilled, the life wasted, and the strength misused to seek status and power."¹⁴⁶ It was a call to end "...all cultural conflicts and wars but to embark on a new commitment to cultivate peace all over Samoa."¹⁴⁷ This testimony also symbolises Vaiinupo surrendering his kingship to the new *Malo* or Government prophesied for him by the goddess Nafanua. Samoa was to be united in this new Kingdom. The wisdom of this vision for a united Samoa was not only positive for the spiritual lives of the people, but with the influx of European Settlers in the 19th Century that need for a united front escalated.

4.3 POLITICAL INFLUENCE OF EUROPEAN SETTLERS.

The latter half of the 19th Century, saw the increasing involvement of European settlers in the political affairs of the Samoans.¹⁴⁸ The biggest motive of their involvement was to protect their economic and land interests.

By the 1840s, there were small numbers of Europeans settled in districts around Samoa, engaging in trade.¹⁴⁹ One of the ways in which these European settlers protected their interest was through the backing of naval officers and their warships.¹⁵⁰ The impact of

¹⁴⁶ Danny Ioka, *Origin and Beginning of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (C.C.C.S.) in Aotearoa New Zealand*, PhD. Thesis, University of Otago, 1996, 66.

¹⁴⁷ Danny Ioka, *Origin and Beginning of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (C.C.C.S.) in Aotearoa New Zealand*, PhD. Thesis, University of Otago, 1996, 66.

¹⁴⁸ Malama Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, (Suva : Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 31. "While the Samoans fought over the district of Aana in the 1840s and 1850s, there was a steady increase of foreign settlement around Apia bay. Apia attracted foreigners because it provided reasonable anchorage and had a relatively deserted foreshore. Furthermore Seumanutafa Pogai, the high ranking chief of Apia, welcomed foreigners."

¹⁴⁹ Gilson R. P., *Samoa 1830-1900 - The Politics of a Multi-Cultural Community*, (London : Oxford University Press, 1970), 166-7.

¹⁵⁰ Malama Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, (Suva : Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 31.

"During this decade American and British warships called fairly often at Samoa and Europeans in Samoa would call upon naval officers to settle their grievances. Local Consuls were also appointed to represent the

this foreign way of dealing with law breakers belittled the significance of Samoan authority especially if the law breaker was a European. Any punishment given out by the Samoans would most likely be met with retribution from the next warship.¹⁵¹ This brought confusion as to how they should be treated, whether under Samoan authority or European authority.

During the 1860s foreigners had become increasingly numerous and influential. Hence was the need to establish means to protect their interests. In Apia, the increase of foreign residents led to the formation of a 'Foreign Residents Society' which was a municipal government covering the area from Matautu to Sogi along the Apia beachfront, which was the centre of foreign settlement.¹⁵² The society was set up to deal with issues between Samoans and foreigners. However, the problem was that the "...Chiefs of Apia no longer had control over the Apia municipal area. As a result the Samoans faced a situation of lawlessness and trouble-making amongst and between Samoans and Europeans."¹⁵³

As a solution to this problem, the Europeans, both settlers and missionaries, felt that it was necessary to formulate a central form of government which could make laws and

growing numbers of European settlers. They served as intermediaries between naval commanders and the residents of Samoa. Having no power themselves they relied upon warships to back up the interests of the settlers, and in certain circumstances, to intervene on behalf of the Samoans if the Consuls saw that they were being unfairly used by the settlers."

¹⁵¹ Malama Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, (Suva : Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 32.

¹⁵² Gilson R. P., *Samoa 1830-1900 - The Politics of a Multi-Cultural Community*, (London : Oxford University Press, 1970), 230. Refer also to K. R. Howe, on the Growth of Apia - K. R. Howe, *Where the Waves Fall*, (London : Allen & Unwin, 1984), 246-247.

¹⁵³ Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga-A Short History of Samoa*, (Suva : University of the South Pacific Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 77.

conduct courts. This idea however was to have far reaching consequences for the Samoans. The difficulty in achieving this was that it was almost impossible to formulate a way to have all parties in Samoa equally represented in a central government. Samoan ideas about political authority were different. For the Samoans, "...paramount chiefs were like flags representing the dignity of the extended families of Samoa."¹⁵⁴ In addition, the carrying out of government was the work of the orator groups who represented the villages and districts of Samoa. The complexity of this arrangement means that central authority was hard to come by.

The Samoan government however was dispersed once again with the intervention of the

Nevertheless the Europeans pushed for a centralised government. In this attempt, the British Consul, JC Williams pushed for Malietoa Laupepa (Malietoa Vaiinupo's grandson)¹⁵⁵ to be made king of a new centralised form of government. Laupepa was to be the king of a new Confederation in which all the districts of Samoa would be represented as a kind of Parliament. This move however triggered Malietoa Talavou¹⁵⁶ and his supporters including other Europeans, to assert Talavou as the rightful leader and king. This conflict was unresolved and finally the 'War of the Faitasiga' broke out in 1869.¹⁵⁷

Upon reflection, it is clear that during this time, the Samoans found it difficult to unite

Peace talks were finally made, and in 1873, Malietoa Talavou agreed to return to his power base in Savaii and surrender to Malietoa Laupepa. The Samoans were now united

¹⁵⁴ Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga-A Short History of Samoa*, (Suva : University of the South Pacific Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 77.

¹⁵⁵ Malietoa Moli's son.. Moli was Malietoa Vaiinupo's son.

¹⁵⁶ Malietoa Moli's half brother.

¹⁵⁷ Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga-A Short History of Samoa*, (Suva : University of the South Pacific Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 78.

in their desire for a confederation to represent their collective interests. On the European side, the Missions wanted peace and the various settler interests wanted a central Samoan authority with whom they could deal.¹⁵⁸ A Samoa government was finally formed with Malietoa Laupepa sharing the office of king with a representative of the *Sa Tupua*. The government consisted of a *Fono a Taimua*, (Council of the Front Line), representing the major districts and a *Fono a Faipule*, (Council of Law-makers), representing the subdistricts.

This Samoan government however was dispersed once again with the interference of the Europeans.¹⁵⁹ Malietoa Laupepa was ousted but was later supported by the Germans and Americans forming a rival government called *Puletua* or Rural Authority.

In 1876 Malietoa Laupepa's *Puletua* clashed with *Taimua* and *Faipule* and the *Puletua* was defeated. The *Taimua* and *Faipule* however were disbanded and once again Malietoa Talavou moved into Mulinuu, set up a new government called the *Pulefou*, or New Authority, and declared himself king. Malietoa Laupepa was made Vice King.

Upon reflection, it is clear that during this time, the Samoans found it difficult to unite under some form of central government due to the dispersed nature of its political

¹⁵⁸ Malama Meleisea; *The Making of Modern Samoa*, (Suva : Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 36.

¹⁵⁹ In 1875, an American Colonel Albert B Steinberger fooled the Samoans into believing that America would serve as a protectorate to the Samoans. However, Steinberger made secret arrangements with the Germans to act on behalf of German commercial interest in exchange for their support for his efforts to negotiate a workable government in Samoa. In 1875, Steinberger became the first premier in the newly organised government. Growing suspicions however amongst the European settlers and missionaries about Steinberger's secret motives finally led to his arrest and deportation. American Consul Foster obtained evidence from the American Government that Steinberger had no official backing. Malietoa Laupepa was thus persuaded by the missionaries and settlers to sign a deportation order.

structure. This was made even harder by the interference of Europeans, who added fuel to the fire by backing one Paramount Chief against the other. This was to be the story of Samoan politics in the latter half of the 19th Century. Instead of allowing the Samoans to form their own government, the Europeans were always behind the scene ensuring that whoever will be in power would be their man.¹⁶⁰ This was evident in the war between Malietoa Laupepa and Tupua Tamasese in 1887.¹⁶¹ This was also the case in the war between Tamasese and Mataafa Iosefo in 1888,¹⁶² and again in 1893 between Malietoa and Mataafa.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ Further disputes came about when Tui Atua Mataafa, who had left the Tupua side to join the Pulefou government was favoured as king, as he had hoped, so he rejoined the Taimua and Faipule side again. Mataafa's genealogies linked him to the Sa Malietoa and Sa Tupua. The rejection of Mataafa as king caused a split among the Samoans in which support was divided between the Sa Tupua and Sa Malietoa. As a result the Sa Tupua formed a rebel government. Hence when Malietoa Laupepa was made king by the Consuls, the opposing side immediately declared Tamasese as their king. Fighting broke out until a treaty was made making Malietoa Laupepa remaining as king with Tupua Tamasese as vice king.

¹⁶¹ Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga-A Short History of Samoa*, (Suva : University of the South Pacific Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 91. Theodore Weber, the German Consul upon hearing this, retaliated by pushing Tupua Tamasese and his supporters to form a government with Theodore as the Premier. In 1887 Tamasese's forces attacked Malietoa and his allies with the backing of German warships. Malietoa was defeated and was forced into exile to the Marshall Islands. Tamasese declared himself Tafaifa and claimed the Malietoa title. This move backfired and angered many of his supporters including Mataafa who also had claim to the Malietoa title.

¹⁶² Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga-A Short History of Samoa*, (Suva : University of the South Pacific Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 92. Mataafa Iosefa took advantage of the vulnerable situation, and gathered support. The Europeans in Apia supplied him with arms and he went to war against Tamasese in 1888. Each of the powers sent for warships but in 1889 the great hurricane put the war to an end. Although Mataafa Iosefa's side won the war, he was not recognised as king by the three powers who had met in Berlin that year to sign the Berlin act of 1889. This acknowledged Malietoa Laupepa as the 'rightful king.' The Germans particularly objected to Mataafa since he had thwarted their aspirations in the last war. The fact that Mataafa won the war and had the correct genealogical connections did not matter to the European powers. When Malietoa was brought from exile, he had at first acknowledged that Mataafa should be king, but after persuasion from his supporters he asserted his rights.

¹⁶³ Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga-A Short History of Samoa*, (Suva : University of the South Pacific Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 93. In 1893 Malietoa and Mataafa went to war and Malietoa came away as the victor. Mataafa was sent into exile. One would have thought that now things would now settled. But now a new rival was on the rise. Tupua Tamasese Titimaea's son Tupua Tamasese Lealofi I, succeeded him when he died and he formed an opposing government. Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga-A Short History of Samoa*, (Suva : University of the South Pacific Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 98-99. In 1898 Malietoa Laupepa died and Mataafa was brought back from exile. Sadly for him though any thoughts that he entertained of becoming the next king were wiped off by two new contenders for the privilege. First was Tupua Tamasese Lealofi I was contesting the office of kingship. Secondly, Malietoa Laupepa's son Tanumafili I was bestowed the Malietoa title. The contest was taken to the Supreme court and the Chief Justice decided in favour of the youthful Malietoa Tanumafili Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga-A Short History of Samoa*, (Suva :

After decades of struggle to formulate a central government for Samoa, the three powers finally decided to abolish the office of king altogether. In December 1899, an agreement was reached between the three powers to divide up the Samoa Islands. Britain renounced her claim to the Samoan islands. Germany took the main Western islands where her plantation interests were centered and America took the Eastern group because they wanted control of the Pagopago harbour of Tutuila for a naval base.¹⁶⁴

By the end of the 19th Century, the Samoans finally succumbed to the might and power of the European powers. According to Meleisea,

"It had taken a relative handful of foreigners just 70 years since the arrival of the LMS missionaries to establish at some levels, dominance over the Samoan affairs."¹⁶⁵

With the backing of European gun boats, the Samoans found it difficult to assert their right in the struggle for self rule.

After many attempts at forming a centralised form of government the three great powers had no other choice but to take full control of Samoa in a form of a colony. This was the only way they could protect their claims on Samoan land. Sadly for the Samoans this Eurocentric verdict takes no account of their long struggle for a viable central government to protect Samoan sovereignty. Towards the end of the 19th Century, European settlers' land claims reached ridiculous levels. The German firm Godeffroy and

University of the South Pacific Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 99. Mataafa and his supporters after failing to recognize the Court's decision went into war with Malietoa. Mataafa won and formed a de-facto government but in May the same year, a joint commission sent by the three powers once again declared Malietoa Tanumafili to be king. Malietoa who was 19 years old then resigned the office and went to Fiji for education.

¹⁶⁴ Featunai B. Liuaana, *Samoa Tulai: Ecclesiastical and Political Face of Samoa's Independence, 1900-1962*, PhD. Thesis, Australian National University, March 2001, 35.

¹⁶⁵ Malama Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, (Suva : Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 42.

Sons had taken the bulk of prime land. Hence they wanted a government that could protect their economic and land claims. The Samoans realised this threat and hence petitioned both Britain and America to establish a protectorate over Samoa. Britain however was only interested in a total annexation of Samoa while America was only interested in Tutuila because of its harbour.¹⁶⁶

According to Albert Wendt,

'During the struggle, the consuls, planters, traders and gunrunners used Samoan instability to increase their economic, political, and commercial footholds. They shared little genuine concern for Samoan welfare. When they strove for the establishment of a stable government, it was in order to safeguard their own selfish interests. Any form of government which did not suit one of these foreign groups, was rendered ineffective by that group. It seems that foreign interference usually resulted in the disintegration of governments.'¹⁶⁷

By the end of the 19th Century, the image of the Europeans in the Samoan mind underwent drastic changes. They had acquired a reputation for double dealing, rapacity, and ruthlessness. They were motivated by the desire for economic and political power over the Samoans.¹⁶⁸ This new realisation ignited the Samoans' passion to assert their rights to be self rule and to dictate their own affairs. This assertion is a significant feature of Samoan Political Enlightenment. It reflects Samoa's challenge against the absolute institutions of authority imposed by European colonial power.

¹⁶⁶ Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga-A Short History of Samoa*, (Suva : University of the South Pacific Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 101.

¹⁶⁷ Albert Wendt, *Guardians and Wards - A Study of the Origins, Causes, and the First Two Years of the Mau in Western Samoa*, MA Thesis, Victoria University, 1965, 22.

¹⁶⁸ Albert Wendt, *Guardians and Wards - A Study of the Origins, Causes, and the First Two Years of the Mau in Western Samoa*, MA Thesis, Victoria University, 1965, 23-24.

4.4 SAMOA'S SURGE FOR POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE.

When German rule began at the beginning of the 20th Century, they felt that eliminating the old system of Samoan government would provide peace, order and good government for the colony. Dr Wilhelm Solf who became the new Governor of the colony made the first mistake by abolishing the rights of *Tumua* and *Pule* who were the king makers. Solf's intention was to abolish the *Tafaifa* once and for all. There were to be no more opportunities for *Tumua* and *Pule* to bestow the *Papa* and make their own kings.

Mataafa Iosefo's¹⁶⁹ new role as *Alii Sili*, was seen by the Samoans as only a compromise. His role was that of an intermediary through whom the wishes and orders of the Governor were made known to the Samoans. The German Administration's main agenda was to strip the Samoans of any real power.

This new arrangement by Solf did not go down well with the Samoans. Working behind the scenes, the oratory group of *Pule* would emerge as the new opposition to oust the *Malo*. Because Mataafa was the leader of the *Tumua* Party who had been placed at the top of the Samoan political system by the Germans, the *Alii Sili*, the *Pule* became the opposition party and worked to overthrow the German yoke.

Namulauulu Lauaki became the main instigator of this movement. His rise to fame was truly representative of the old Samoan political system, "...of the warrior past; the skilled manipulator of Samoan political techniques, completely learned in the art of manipulating

¹⁶⁹ Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga-A Short History of Samoa*, (Suva : University of the South Pacific Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 99. He was given the role because Malietoa Tanumafili only 19 years of age resigned to go to Fiji for education.

the *Tumua* – *Pule* rivalry in order to make and break *malo*.¹⁷⁰ It was through his effective leadership and ability to manipulate the minds of Solf's administration that finally in 1912 after the death of Mataafa, Solf granted equal titles, as *Fautua* to both Malietoa and Tupua families. This was an attempt to prevent future clashes between *Tumua* and *Pule*, and to identify both factions within the German *Malo*.

"The *Mau a Pule* was an attempt by Samoans to reinstate their independence and assert their authority in their own country."¹⁷¹ Lauaki petitioned Solf that German authorities "...should show more respect to Mataafa as he was representative of the dignity of the Samoan people,...Mataafa's signature should appear beside that of Solf on important government papers."¹⁷² Also, "...all the *Tama-a-aiga* should stay at Mulinuu to assert the dignity of the Samoan government...and...the German Administration should account to the Samoan people for their expenditure and Samoa should become independent as soon as possible."¹⁷³

Although the German administration managed to suppress the call of the Samoans to be independent, this voice never died. After the failure of the *Mau a Pule*, the Samoans were simply waiting for another favourable opportunity. This opportunity came during the New Zealand administration.

¹⁷⁰ Albert Wendt, *Guardians and Wards - A Study of the Origins, Causes, and the First Two Years of the Mau in Western Samoa*, MA Thesis, Victoria University, 1965, 29.

¹⁷¹ Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga-A Short History of Samoa*, (Suva : University of the South Pacific Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 118.

¹⁷² Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga-A Short History of Samoa*, (Suva : University of the South Pacific Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 118.

¹⁷³ Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga-A Short History of Samoa*, (Suva : University of the South Pacific Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 118-119.

New Zealand administration of Samoa began in 1914 when World War I broke out.¹⁷⁴ Under the New Zealand military administration, the Samoans continued to struggle for their rights to self rule under the domineering rule of the new administration. New Zealand's inexperience and negligence were evident in the tragic events of the 1918 influenza epidemic that hit Samoa. In the course of events, New Zealand was to blame for the outbreak of the virus that decimated around twenty percent of Samoa's population. This figure shows that this was "...one of the most disastrous epidemics recorded anywhere in the world..."¹⁷⁵ during that time. The behaviour and attitude of Colonel Logan during the whole ordeal was that of negligence. The tragedy revealed that he was out of control and was not able to provide solutions to the plight of the Samoans.¹⁷⁶

Logan's response to the discontent of the Samoans and local Europeans was so unapologetic that a petition was drawn up, requesting the administration of Samoa to be transferred to the United States. Logan left for New Zealand and never to return. He was replaced by Colonel Robert Tate in 1920 to begin civil administration. Samoa was placed under New Zealand as a C Class Mandate. This new plan for Samoa was negotiated with the League of Nations without any reference to those Samoan leaders who survived the

¹⁷⁴ New Zealand was invited by Britain to seize Samoa from the Germans. Led by Colonel Robert Logan, the take over was a smooth one. Logan quickly established a military government in Samoa. It did not make any political changes in the political organisation set up by the Germans. Laws and policies passed by the Germans were maintained.

¹⁷⁵ Michael J. Field, *Mau-Samoa's Struggle against New Zealand Oppression*, (Auckland : Polynesian Press, 1984), 49.

¹⁷⁶ Michael J. Field, *Mau-Samoa's Struggle against New Zealand Oppression*, (Auckland : Polynesian Press, 1984), 44-45. Inquiry into the cause of this disaster shows the failure of the New Zealand administration to properly screen the ship Talune which brought the disease. After many repeated warnings, the Talune was allowed to dock in Apia and its infected passengers dispatched. As a consequence thousands of Samoans died. To make matters worse when the epidemic was at its worse state, Logan ignored an offer from American Samoa to send much needed medical help.

epidemic.¹⁷⁷ The Mandate gave New Zealand the power to administer Western Samoa as part of her own territory. This whole system of government allowed the Administrator very wide powers.¹⁷⁸

From 1919 when news of the impending mandate reached Samoa, there was little enthusiasm for the proposal. Memories of the incompetence of the Administration during the epidemic were still fresh in people's minds. The new Mandate offered no power to the native administration in policymaking. Its main function was to just carry out the policies and enforce the rules laid down by the New Zealand authorities. This caused discontent among Samoans. According to Meleisea, "they felt strongly they should have a voice in planning and policymaking. Village authorities throughout Samoa deeply resented the imposition of rules and regulations to which they had been unable to make any contribution. The New Zealand authorities certain their plans were in the best interests of the people, passed an ordinance to control certain Samoan customs...It forbade Samoan councils of Matai their customary right to banish and exile law-breakers from the village. This power was transferred to the New Zealand Administrator."¹⁷⁹ The ordinance also authorised the administrator to "...take away the *matai* titles of Samoa, as a punishment."¹⁸⁰ Furthermore, "the ordinance was designed to force Samoan authorities

¹⁷⁷ Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga-A Short History of Samoa*, (Suva : University of the South Pacific Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 130.

¹⁷⁸ Albert Wendt, *Guardians and Wards - A Study of the Origins, Causes, and the First Two Years of the Mau in Western Samoa*, MA Thesis, Victoria University, 1965, 37.

¹⁷⁹ Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga-A Short History of Samoa*, (Suva : University of the South Pacific Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 133

¹⁸⁰ Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga-A Short History of Samoa*, (Suva : University of the South Pacific Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 133.

to obey and to support the regulations which the Administration imposed upon the districts and villages."¹⁸¹

Meleisea continued, "the ordinance enraged the Samoans and by 1926, anti-New Zealand feeling was strong throughout Samoa. A spirit of rebellion began to grow among the people. Samoans deeply resented the paternalism of the New Zealand authorities, the lack of consultation and power sharing, the apparently arbitrary laws which had been imposed without the consent or understanding of the people, and most of all, the interference with traditional authority and rights over titles."¹⁸² These factors along with the racist attitudes of the New Zealand officials to the part-Europeans also created resentment from the half caste community.

By 1926, Samoans began to voice their grievances and discontent towards the New Zealand Administration. Taisi O.F. Nelson a half-caste and one of the most successful businessmen in Samoa, together with Samoan leaders began to openly criticized Richardson's Administration. What emerged out of this became known as *The Mau*. This organisation became the focus of local dissatisfaction with the New Zealand regime. Its motto was *Samoa mo Samoa*, Samoa for Samoans. The policy of the Mau was a peaceful, orderly programme of non-cooperation with the New Zealand Administration. The Mau movement soon gathered momentum and gained support from all over Samoa.

¹⁸¹ Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga-A Short History of Samoa*, (Suva : University of the South Pacific Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 133.

¹⁸² Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga-A Short History of Samoa*, (Suva : University of the South Pacific Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 133.

Meanwhile Richardson ordered the Mau to be disbanded. A Royal Commission arrived in 1927 but it upheld Richardson's view.

Richardson left in 1928 and was replaced by Stephen Shepherd Allen. The Mau movement escalated with the New Zealand Administration calling two warships to come to Samoa. Allen continued where Richardson left off. The Samoans retreated to hiding in the bush. And the 'gunning down and hunting' of the Samoans by armed forces began.¹⁸³ This course of events was culminated in the tragedy of Black Saturday when Tupua Tamasese Lealofi III was killed while trying to call for peace as New Zealand policemen opened fire on a Mau procession in Apia.¹⁸⁴ On his death bed, Tamasese told his followers,

"My blood has been spilt for Samoa. I am proud to give it. Do not dream of avenging it as it was spilt in maintaining peace. If I die, peace must be maintained at any price".¹⁸⁵

The death of Tamasese however did not dampen the spirit of the Mau. The Samoans were determined to achieve their goal for self rule. They continued to fight on using peaceful means. Their main obstacle however was the racist and paternalistic ideals of colonialism. According to Field, "New Zealanders could not, or would not, accept that the Samoan point of view was a valid one. Their attitude clashed directly with the fundamental Samoan pride in country and culture. Samoans believed very simply that Samoa was their country and that anybody else in it was a guest, welcome or otherwise.

¹⁸³ Michael J. Field, *Mau-Samoa's Struggle against New Zealand Oppression*, (Auckland : Polynesian Press, 1984), xvi.

¹⁸⁴ Michael J. Field, *Mau-Samoa's Struggle against New Zealand Oppression*, (Auckland : Polynesian Press, 1984), 157.

¹⁸⁵ Michael J. Field, *Mau-Samoa's Struggle against New Zealand Oppression*, (Auckland : Polynesian Press, 1984), 157.

And they looked back on a 3,000 year civilization as ample evidence that they were capable of looking after themselves."¹⁸⁶ In 1947, New Zealand finally transmitted to the United Nations Samoa's petition for self government.¹⁸⁷

The oppression and suppression of this Samoan voice during the colonial rule of foreign powers further ignited the Samoans to stand up and continue their fight for justice and freedom from tyranny. Field pointed out that, "in the Mau we see a confident, assertive people coming up against..."¹⁸⁸ these overbearing forces. Their resilience and endurance in this struggle was finally rewarded with the advent of Samoa's Independence in 1962.

4.5 SAMOA'S INDEPENDENCE AND THE CONSTITUTION.

The Independence of Western Samoa in 1962 culminates the struggle that the Samoans underwent for more than a century. A struggle that highlighted their willingness to assert their right to govern their own affairs, to preserve some of their traditional form of authority and maintain their sovereignty, freedom and dignity. In this struggle the Samoans showed their unwillingness to bow to the might and superior mentality of foreign powers. The vision and the persistence of Samoan leaders like Malietoa Vaiinupo, Lauaki, Tamasese and Nelson and many others paved the way for Samoa's Independence. They were truly the enlightened leaders of Samoa.

¹⁸⁶ Michael J. Field, *Mau-Samoa's Struggle against New Zealand Oppression*, (Auckland : Polynesian Press, 1984), 221.

¹⁸⁷ *Western Samoa 1947 : Report to the Trusteeship Council by United Nations Mission to Western Samoa*, Publication No. 39, (Wellington : Department of External Affairs, 1947), 3.

¹⁸⁸ Michael J. Field, *Mau-Samoa's Struggle against New Zealand Oppression*, (Auckland : Polynesian Press, 1984), 222.

When Samoa finally got what they wanted they were able to formulate a foundation of a nation that recognizes what they valued most, their culture and their faith in God. This is reflected in the Constitution of Samoa.

The Constitution of the Independent State of Western Samoa clearly states that "Samoa is founded on God," and part of the Preamble of the Constitution states,

"Whereas the leaders of Western Samoa have declared that Western Samoa should be an independent state based on Christian principles and Samoan custom and tradition."¹⁸⁹

According to Meti, "the Preamble was the last part of the Constitution to be drafted and discussed..."¹⁹⁰ therefore suggesting the significance of this part of the Constitution.

Furthermore, "the agreed text continued those values which are close to the heart of every Samoan; God, Custom and Tradition."¹⁹¹

This Constitution exemplifies what was instilled in the minds of the Samoan leaders, who saw the significant role of the Gospel. That is, as a Christian nation, the Gospel was already an integral part of Samoan society not to mention Samoan culture. By the time the Constitution was drafted and before our Independence in 1962, Samoa had already affirmed its faith in the God that was brought by the first missionaries back in 1830. The Constitution acknowledges the vital role of the Gospel as the foundational basis of Samoa.

¹⁸⁹ Lauofo Meti, *Samoa: The Making of the Constitution*, (Lepapaigalagala : National University of Samoa, 2002), 63.

¹⁹⁰ Lauofo Meti, *Samoa: The Making of the Constitution*, (Lepapaigalagala : National University of Samoa, 2002), 63.

According to Meti,

"During the discussion the committee felt it important to emphasise the sanctity of God. That was done by the insertion of the word 'Holy' before the word 'God.' To be technically correct, it was decided to replace the word 'Him' by the words 'His Commandments' to make clear that the authority to be exercised by the people of Samoa was to be done within the bounds of his commandments."¹⁹¹

This emphasises the significance of God and God's Word in the new foundation of Samoa. It acknowledges what Samoa had become - a Christian Nation founded on God. This was the conviction of the Samoans at the time. This was the culmination of the process of a new Samoa that was already in the making. The total surrendering of Samoa to God. The new Samoa is a Samoa committed to God's terms for the prosperity of Samoa and for the glorification of God. This meant the transformation of all facets of Samoan society, politically, religiously and culturally to serve God.

Meti further discusses that, "...some members of the committee expressed some reservations about the use of the word 'tradition' because it reflected too much of the past and not all traditions and customs were good. The word 'usage' as a substitute was considered more appropriate. 'Customs and usages' would pay respect to the present generation and befitted the present time. Although it was felt that the words 'usage and custom' did reflect the current position, it was agreed to use the more familiar everyday expression of 'Samoan custom and tradition' as it was better understood. There was also

¹⁹¹ Lauofo Meti, *Samoa: The Making of the Constitution*, (Lepapaigalagala : National University of Samoa, 2002), 63.

¹⁹² Lauofo Meti, *Samoa: The Making of the Constitution*, (Lepapaigalagala : National University of Samoa, 2002), 64.

the thought that the customs and usages of the people were now judged by Christian principles."¹⁹³

The Constitution acknowledges God's Word in the transformation of Samoa's culture and religion. It is the Gospel that has enlightened the Samoans of the folly of their past customs and much of Samoa's hostile practices and customs have been tamed because of Christianity. At the same time most of our own good morals and customs have been retained.

From the perspective of Samoan Culture and Society, the motto, *Faavae I le Atua Samoa*, is a theological statement. It is a statement of faith. It is not just a political foundation, but also a newly embraced cultural truth. It is the fundamental principle that governs Samoa and the basis on which Samoan society operates.

In Summary, Samoan Political Enlightenment was a process whereby the Samoans surge to reinstate their dignity as a nation, to assert political autonomy and the rights to determine their own destiny. Samoan Political Enlightenment was a movement against absolute and authoritative authorities of the Europeans. This is a strong feature of the European Enlightenment concept. However at the fulfilment of Samoa's dream for Independence, Samoa acknowledged God as the foundation of its nation as stated in the Constitution. Hence Samoan Political Enlightenment meant two things, the enduring fight for political freedom and Independence and, the surrendering of that freedom and

¹⁹³ Lauofo Meti, *Samoa: The Making of the Constitution*, (Lepapaigalagala : National University of Samoa, 2002), 64.

Independence to God. In contrast to the European Enlightenment in which human goodness was and ability became the focus, Samoan Enlightenment enthrones God as the centre of its society in all its aspects of religion, culture and politic. 1962, is the period of

Samoan Enlightenment.

This understanding can be illustrated and shown by the transformation of Samoan religion, Samoan Culture, and the development of Samoan Politics.

In Chapter one, we have learned that the European Enlightenment of the 18th Century was the enlightenment of the concept of Enlightenment. This is evident in its various features like the clash in worldviews, the transition from old beliefs to new ones and the use of reason to question old institutions and traditions and expectations. Contrary to the European Enlightenment, the Samoan Enlightenment was unique and unique in different ways. Firstly, Samoan Enlightenment has the theme of Conservation. It is Enlightened Conservation whereby the Samoans accepted foreign culture which were beneficial while at the same time preserving those Samoan values that were enduring and life giving. Secondly, Samoan Enlightenment highly values the significance of God and the Christian Gospel in the transformation of Samoan Society. Unlike the European Enlightenment in which it led to the overthrow of old beliefs and institutions, Samoan Enlightenment takes a humble path and endorses God as

the centre of its transformation as a society.

CONCLUSION.

This thesis has attempted to argue that Modern Samoa, the period from the arrival of the Christian Gospel in 1830 to the proclamation of Independence in 1962, is the period of Samoan Enlightenment.

This understanding can be illustrated and proven by the transformation of Samoan Religion, Samoan Culture, and the development of Samoan Politics.

In Chapter one, we have learned that the European Enlightenment of the 18th Century helps in our understanding of the concept of Samoan Enlightenment. This is evident in the common features like, the clash in worldviews, the transition from old beliefs to new ones and the use of reason to question old institutions and traditional and superstitious beliefs. Contrary to the European Enlightenment, the Samoan Enlightenment was distinctive and unique in different ways. Firstly, Samoan Enlightenment has the element of Conservatism. It is Enlightened Conservatism whereby, the Samoans accepted foreign influences that were beneficial while at the same time preserving those Samoan values that were enduring and life giving. Secondly, Samoan Enlightenment highly values the significance of God and the Christian Gospel in the transformation of Samoan Society. Unlike the European Enlightenment in which it led to the overemphasis on human goodness and abilities, Samoan Enlightenment takes a humble path and enthrones God as the core of its foundation as a society.

In Chapter two, we looked at particular characteristics of Samoan Religious Enlightenment. Firstly, the rapid transition from old Samoan Religion to the acceptance of the Gospel. This successful transition was attributed to many factors including politics and materialism. However, we have also learned of certain continuities from pre-1830 Samoan Religion to the newly accepted Christian Religion in the Modern Samoan period. This is reflected in the similarities between Samoan Religious concepts and those of Christianity. These similarities helped the Samoans relate to the new religion. Another factor discussed was the prophetic voice that thrived in Samoan ancient traditions in pre-1830 Samoa, which anticipated a new era in Samoa's history. These factors contributed to the smooth transition from old Samoan Religion to the acceptance of the Gospel. Secondly, and most importantly is that, the Religious Enlightenment effected the transformation of Samoan Society in all its aspects. The acceptance of the Gospel meant the beginning of a new Samoa in the making. This process culminated in the advent of Samoa's Independence and the enthronement of God as the foundation of Samoa.

Chapter three, discussed certain features of Samoan Cultural Enlightenment. Firstly, we have found that Samoan Oratory affirms the conviction that the period of Modern Samoa is that of Samoan Enlightenment. This is expressed in certain common oratory expressions that tributes the Gospel as the driving force behind the Cultural transformation of Samoan Culture. Secondly, this Cultural transformation is characterised by a process of appropriation and selectivity whereby, certain dark aspects of Samoan Culture were changed while the good were preserved and further enriched by the Gospel.

Also in terms of European Cultural influences, certain valuable aspects were assimilated and blended into Samoan Culture.

In Chapter four, we saw certain features of Samoan Political Enlightenment. These included the clash between two conceptions of authority; the decentralised form of Samoan Political authority and, the European centralised form of authority. We have learned that the Samoans realised the need to have a united front and a central form of government in order to deal with the increasing influence of the Europeans. However, the Samoans' various attempts to form a centralised form of government were hampered by European interference. Colonial rule saw the Samoans left out in the cold without any say in the political affairs of their country. This political oppression triggered Samoa's surge for political independence. This surge reveals the determination of the Samoan people to assert their rights to political autonomy and freedom from the oppression of European Colonial powers. This movement I believe reveals the essence of Samoan Political Enlightenment. A bold attempt to challenge the political might of European powers in order to gain political independence and freedom from oppression and tyranny. The climax of this movement was culminated in Samoa's Independence in 1962. The most significant element in this Political Enlightenment movement was when Samoa finally gained Independence and freedom in 1962, Samoa surrendered it all to God. This is clear in its Constitutional motto – *Faavae i le Atua Samoa* (Samoa is founded on God). This new foundation acknowledges Samoa's conviction in God and God's Word as the centre and basis of Samoa's politics.

From the above findings I conclude that the period of Modern Samoa from 1830 to 1962 was the period of Samoan Enlightenment. This is clear in the transformations of Samoan Culture, Religion and Politics. These transformations were not only ignited by a theological vision, but by the influence of the Gospel. This was embodied in the modern foundation of Samoa – *Faavae i le Atua Samoa*. It affirms Samoa's mainstream understanding that Samoa was transformed by the Gospel in all its spheres, politically, religiously and culturally. Ultimately, Samoan Enlightenment took many forms but the driving force was the Christian Gospel.

Although these men helped paved the way for the missionaries, most of their works were

There are several important implications of this finding. Firstly, it shows how the Christian Gospel can effect transformation. This transformation does not destroy culture but enriches it. Secondly the Christian faith can be a basis of political, cultural and religious development in society. This was reflected in my study of Samoan History. Thirdly and lastly, the approach taken in this research can offer another historical perspective in the study of History and Research on other Societies.

Mauvao who helped him as an interpreter.¹⁰⁰ The authors may have introduced some knowledge of Christianity to the natives, but the missionaries were increasingly worried about the form of Christianity that they now were teaching the natives.

¹⁰⁰ Leivale Kana, *The Samoan Culture and the Christian Gospel*, Nuku, Methodist Publishing Press, 1989, 44.

¹⁰¹ William M. Marcy, *Forty Years' Mission Work in Polynesia and New Guinea from 1833 to 1873*, (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1898), 13.

¹⁰² Richard M. Maile (ed.), *The Samoan Pathways of John Williams 1830 and 1832*, (Christchurch: Canterbury Historical Society Press, 1984), 49.

APPENDIX A:

THE CRUDE VERSION OF CHRISTIANITY BEFORE 1830.

The LMS missionaries were not the first to bring Christianity to the Samoans. Christianity was crudely introduced previously by merchants and traders as well as castaway convicts and beachcombers who landed on the Samoan Islands. These men represented what became known as the 'sailors sect.'¹⁹⁴ While in Samoa, some of these men decided to evangelize the heathens and to preach their versions of Christianity.

Although these men helped paved the way for the missionaries, most of their works were not appreciated by the missionaries. They were often criticized for their lack of missionary training as well as the immoral life they lived. John Williams also encountered these men and strongly objected to their involvement in the mission work. Murray referred to a sailor name Salima who taught the natives some things about Christianity though he lived an immoral life.¹⁹⁵ The sailors were also helpful as translators for the missionaries. John Williams referred to a John Wright who lived at Manono who helped him as an interpreter.¹⁹⁶ The sailors may have introduced some knowledge of Christianity to the natives, but the missionaries were increasingly worried about the form of Christianity that these men were teaching the natives.

¹⁹⁴ Lalomilo Kamu, *The Samoan Culture and The Christian Gospel*, (Suva : Methodist Printing Press, 1996), 64.

¹⁹⁵ William M. Murray, *Forty Years' Mission work in Polynesia and New Guinea from 1835 to 1875*, (New York : Robert Carter & Brothers, 1876), 33.

¹⁹⁶ Richard M Moyle (ed); *The Samoan Journals of John Williams 1830 and 1832*, (Canberra : Australian National University Press, 1984), 69.

The Samoans themselves were also responsible for the crude introduction of Christianity before the missionaries. This is evident by the existence of chapels and congregations in Samoa prior to the arrival of John Williams in 1830. The Methodists have also claimed that they were the first to evangelize Samoa by a Samoan Chief Saivaaia.¹⁹⁷

A Samoan by the name of Siovili was also responsible for the introduction of a distorted version of Christianity to the Samoans before the missionaries. He initiated what became known as the Siovili Cult which was later rejected fiercely by the missionaries as both heretic and blasphemous.¹⁹⁸ According to Kamu, although Siovili was heavily rejected by the missionaries, he nevertheless introduced some form of Christianity and is said to have a large following.¹⁹⁹ This might be true to an extent but the missionaries were rightly concerned about the distorted or water-down version of the Gospel he was preaching.

¹⁹⁷ Murray, A.W., *Forty Years' Mission work in Polynesia and New Guinea from 1835 to 1875*, (New York : Robert Carter & Brothers, 1876), 33. While visiting relatives in Tonga, Chief Savaaia of Savaii became a Christian. He received the new faith with enthusiasm. On his return to Samoa he began preaching to his people in Savaii with the assistance of Tongan Christians who were in Samoa at the time.

¹⁹⁸ John Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, (London : John Snow, 1840), 111. Refer also to Lalomilo Kamu, *The Samoan Culture and Christian Gospel*, (Suva : Methodist Printing Press, 1996), 71. Siovili is said to hail from the village of Eva in Upolu. In about 1827 he travelled to Tonga in a merchant ship and ended up in New South Wales where he attended some Anglican and Roman Catholic churches. Upon his return he began preaching to the Samoans, carrying out healing and claiming that Jesus spoke directly to him. John

Williams referred to him as an imposter who learned about Christianity then took advantage and practised much deceit upon the people.

¹⁹⁹ Lalomilo Kamu, *The Samoan Culture and The Christian Gospel*, (Suva : Methodist Printing Press, 1996), 71.

APPENDIX B:

SAMOAN RELIGION IN PRE-1830.

Unlike other Polynesian societies in the Pacific, Samoa had no idols or sophisticated and elaborate temples.²⁰⁰ There was also no evidence of human sacrifices to idols except for references in Samoan legends and mythology to cannibalism in which human sacrifices were offered to paramount chiefs in pre-historic times.

The absence of any elaborate physical symbols of religion was perhaps the reason why the other Polynesian peoples, such as the Rarotongans and the Tahitians regarded the Samoans as a godless people. The lack of religious monuments however does not alleviate the fact that Samoans had a system of beliefs in the divine and supernatural world. The Samoans were in fact a very religious and superstitious people. They believed in divine beings. According to Kenape T Faletese,

"the Samoans believed there are gods or spiritual beings, they cannot be seen, but they take the forms of animals and fish and other objects, and they worship them or they use stones and trees as idols to represent them."²⁰¹

To these gods or spiritual beings the Samoans prayed for prosperity, health, protection, victory in war and revenge against those who had insulted them.

John B. Stair gives a classification of Samoan spiritual beings or gods before the arrival of the missionaries. It included Superior divinities and a host of inferior ones. In general, the Samoans believed that there was one supreme god name Tagaloa who is said to have

²⁰⁰ John B. Stair, *Old Samoa*, (Oxford : Religious Tract Society, 1897), 211.

²⁰¹ Kenape T Faletese, *The History of the Samoan Church*, (Apia : Malua Printing Press, 1959), 5.

created humanity and Samoa. Similar to the Christian concept of God, Tagaloa existed before anything was created.²⁰² Tagaloa was also unrestrictive and unconditioned.²⁰³ This is suggested by its name. Tagaloa comprised two words – *Loa* means long, and *taga*, a bag; or as an adjective, freedom from restriction.

Apart from Tagaloa there were lesser gods. Included in this host of lesser gods were *Tupua*²⁰⁴, *Aitu*²⁰⁵ and *Saualii*.²⁰⁶ The *At* being the most popular which included, personal gods, family tutelary deities, local or district war-gods and national war-gods. The great variety of Samoan gods speaks volume for the beliefs of the Samoans in the Divine.

The Samoans also believed in the afterlife or spiritual world beyond the physical world.²⁰⁷ When one dies that is where the spirit goes. Interestingly there are two places

²⁰² John B. Stair, *Old Samoa*, (Oxford : Religious Tract Society, 1897), 211. Although Stairs classified Tagaloa as one of the original gods under the title *Atua*, Kamu argues that Tagaloa was a single god who was also known through different manifestations and by different names. Lalomilo Kamu, *The Samoan Culture and the Christian Gospel*, (Methodist Printing Press, 1996), 23. This is in accordance to Turner's account that there were several names by which this god superior was known. Although this god Tagaloa is suggestive of monotheism in Samoan religion it is clear that Tagaloa was the supreme one among the many gods.

²⁰³ George Turner, *Samoa : A Hundred Years Ago*, (London : MacMillan and Co., 1884), 22-23. According to Turner, "at one place he was seen in the moon...He was also incarnate in the Turi, or snipe...At another place his image was a large wooden bowl, said to have come from Fiji."

²⁰⁴ John B. Stair, *Old Samoa*, (Oxford : Religious Tract Society, 1897), 211. These are believed to be deified spirits of chiefs. Embalmed bodies of some chiefs were also worshipped.

²⁰⁵ John B. Stair, *Old Samoa*, (Oxford : Religious Tract Society, 1897), 211-215. There were also *Aitu* which included descendants of the original gods or all deities whose aid was invoked or whose vengeance might be denounced by the various classes of the priesthood. The *Aitu* were the most common gods. These comprised national war-gods, local or district war-gods, family tutelary deities and deities of various trades and employments. These gods were invoked by prophets and sorcerers. Local gods were also invoked by family priests. They were regarded as vindictive spirits and to be feared with their maledictions was looked upon as a calamity. These spiritual beings were supposed to enter into the priests representing them, and to make known their commands through them. They were also considered to take the form of certain objects as birds, fish, reptiles as well as human form.

²⁰⁶ John B. Stair, *Old Samoa*, (Oxford : Religious Tract Society, 1897), 211. At the bottom of Stair's classification were the *Saualii* which included ghosts or apparitions and often regarded as inferior spirits.

²⁰⁷ John B. Stair, *Old Samoa*, (Oxford : Religious Tract Society, 1897), 217. Samoans also believe that most of these national and local gods were supposed to dwell in the *Fafa*, *Salefee* and *Pulotu*. These places refer to what Samoans believe to be the spirit world. *Fafa* or Hades is the entrance to *Salefee*, the Samoan

where the spirit goes, *Pulotu* which is for the blessed and a place of punishment called *Salefee*.²⁰⁸

Worship of the family god was generally conducted just before evening meals when the family head implored the god's "protection from war, punishment, disease, and death."²⁰⁹

In a large village, a village god had a sacred grove in the neighbourhood, as well as a temple. In smaller villages, the village guest house served as the temple. Special priests usually served these gods.²¹⁰ District gods presided over various political divisions of the islands and their feasts were elaborate.²¹¹ Prayers and offerings were made to the gods and their feast days were lavishly celebrated with grand feasting, dancing and games lasting many days. The offerings were principally cooked food.²¹²

Communication with the gods was conducted through the *taulaitu*. They varied from the most common being the chief, both *Alii* and *Tulafale* or the family heads, to other classes of *taulaitu* such as the priests of the war gods, keepers of the war gods and prophets or sorcerers. These spirit mediums were called *taulaitu* because they were regarded as the

Tartarus or dread place of punishment. *Pulotu* is believed to be the abode of the blest. To get to *Pulotu* there are two entrance, *O le Lualotooalii* or the deep hole of chiefs, and *O le Lualotootauvanua* or the deep hole of the common people.

²⁰⁸ John B. Stair, *Old Samoa*, (Oxford : Religious Tract Society, 1897), 217. The Samoans believe that when one dies, there are two places to which they went. *O le nuu o Aitu* or land of the spirits or, *O le nuu o nonoa* or land of the bound. The bondage being superintended by such vindictive spirits and other deities. The Samoans also believe that when one dies, the disembodied spirit retained the exact resemblance of its former self and leaving the body it commences its journey to the *Fafa* which was located to the Westward end of Savaii where it plunges into the sea and pursued its solitary way to the mysterious *Fafa*. The Samoans also believed that the spirit of the dead can return and possess a living person.

²⁰⁹ T W. Pritchard, *Polynesian reminiscences: or life in the South Pacific islands*, (London : Chapman and Hall, 1866), 108.

²¹⁰ T W. Pritchard, *Polynesian reminiscences: or life in the South Pacific islands*, (London : Chapman and Hall, 1866), 110.

²¹¹ T W. Pritchard, *Polynesian reminiscences: or life in the South Pacific islands*, (London : Chapman and Hall, 1866), 111.

taula, meaning anchor, of the *aitu*, gods. This was based on the belief that in communicating with the gods the *taulaitu* were possessed by them.²¹³

From the above account, it is clear that the Samoans were not a godless people. They believed in gods, they had a concept of worship and they believed that there was a divine realm or a spirit world where one's spirit goes when one dies. When the missionaries arrived in 1830, these religious beliefs were thriving in Samoa.

²¹² George Turner, *Samoa: A Hundred Years Ago*, (London: MacMillan and Co., 1884), 20.
²¹³ Lalomilo Kamu, *The Samoan Culture and the Christian Gospel*, (Suva: Methodist Printing Press, 1996), 27.

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