

Covenant Keepers:
A History of Samoan (LMS) Missionary Wives in the Western Pacific from
1839 to 1979

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of The Australian National University

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge, my own original work, except where acknowledged in the text.



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ABSTRACT

From 1839 to 1979, a period spanning 140 years, more than 600 Samoan missionary couples were sent out by the London Missionary Society to spread the Gospel to islands of the western Pacific. Although much has been written about the work of Samoan missionary husbands in the evangelisation of the western Pacific, very little is known of Samoan wives. Of the 600 or more of them who accompanied their husbands, more than half of their names were not even documented in mission archives. Yet they were trained and were even expected to perform in the mission field. Rather than any actual analysis, perceptions of them today, as in the past, are based on pervasive stereotypes founded on gender and racial hierarchy that marginalise them. Samoan missionary wives however were far more than mere “helpmeets” or assistants to their husbands. Despite the challenges of mission work, they were a crucial part of the movement to evangelise islands and places in the western Pacific. Moreover, they were articulate in their work and deeply committed to mission endeavour. This thesis examines Samoan missionary wives as a distinct group. It attempts to analyse their social and cultural backgrounds, their lives and work in the mission field, and their interactions with the local people they encountered. It concludes by considering whether they had a distinctive impact that distinguished them in the project of evangelisation in the Pacific.

INTRODUCTION

On 7 December 1959, a young woman named Olivia left Samoa with her husband on the steamer *Tofua*, on their way to Papua New Guinea (PNG) to work as missionaries. The young couple had been married for a few days and were excited to embark on their first missionary venture. The young woman had just turned twenty years of age and had been teaching for a few years at Papauta Girls' School, a boarding school for girls established by the London Missionary Society (LMS) in 1892. The school was a place where Samoan girls were groomed to become wives of Samoan pastors and, upon graduation, many went as missionary wives to the western Pacific. As a young girl, she grew up at the Mālua Seminary, where her family lived while her father was a teacher at Leulumoega School, a nearby vocational school for young men hoping to be trained as pastors at the seminary. It was here that she heard stories of returning missionaries from PNG. These accounts inspired her to become a missionary one day. She met a young graduate of Mālua who had expressed his wish to go on mission. They were married on 5 December and left the following Monday.

On arrival they were assigned to work in the Gulf, on the south western coast of the country. The Gulf is a 400-kilometre-wide region. Some of the country's largest rivers, such as the Fly, Wawoi, Turama, Kikori and many others flow into the Gulf making it the largest delta in the Pacific. The area is scattered with a variety of inland swamps and covered in dense tropical forest. The only way to get around, even today, is by small boats or local canoes powered by outboard motors. Along the coast, the area is dotted with small islands where the rivers converge as they make their way into the ocean.

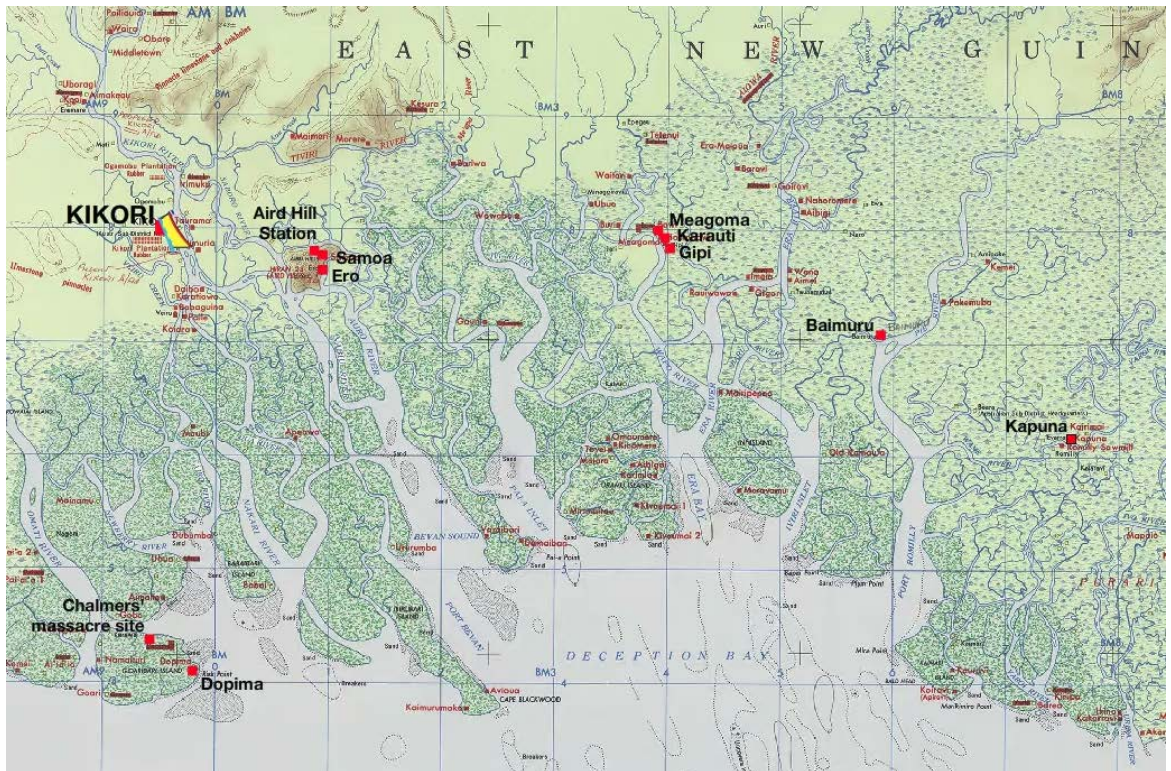
The young couple was appointed to work under the supervision of an Australian missionary, John Crip who was based at the main mission station at Aird Hill, situated about thirty kilometres inland from the shore. Crip was in charge of about six villages and was attempting to extend his district to the small islands on the coastline. One of those islands was Goaribari, situated at the mouths of the Omati and Newberry rivers. On this island, was a village called Dopima where the pioneer LMS missionary James Chalmers was killed in 1901. The young couple was to establish a mission church there.

The young wife had heard stories about Dopima, of how the people had killed James Chalmers and his assistant Oliver Tomkins, and ate their bodies including their shoes. From what she had heard Dopima was still marred by this incident and the people were labelled “savages” and “cannibals,” Since this incident, the village had been avoided both by Christian missions and the Australian colonial government. The young Samoan couple were the first foreigners to reside there and they planned to re-establish the church.

The young woman in the story is my mother. Together with my father Fekusone, they served in the Papuan Gulf for thirteen years. Fifty years later, in July 2013, I embarked to follow her footsteps, visiting the places where she worked. I re-imagined what it must have been like for her coming from Samoa, the striking contrasts in the natural environment with its vastness and challenges, the difference in cultures, the diversity of languages, the remoteness and isolation of this place and the fear of malaria which had killed many Samoan missionaries and their wives in the past.

Visiting Dopima the village where my mother worked was a moving and poignant experience. The village is now all but submerged under water. Over the years the people had dispersed around the Gulf leaving just one family with only two houses left. What must have been a thriving community is now but a ghost village, with only the remains of posts of houses now sticking out from the sandy beach. I heard from the local people, that the plight of Dopima is linked to the killing of Chalmers, which had brought a curse upon the village and the Gulf. This is seen in the way the region has had very little progress, despite the large-scale mining of oil and gas by foreign companies for many years now.¹

¹ Similar experiences are found in other places where ideas about curses linked to missionary killings in the past have resulted in contemporary poverty and underdevelopment. Several scholars and anthropologists have written on the impact of curses on local people as well as recent ceremonies of reconciliation in order to lift such curses. See Dedorah B. Gewertz and Frederick K. Errington, “Duelling currencies in East New Britain: The construction of shell money as national cultural property,” in *Occidentalism: Images of the West*, ed. J. Carrier, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1995, pp. 161–91; Michael Young, “Commemorating missionary heroes: Local Christianity and narratives of nationalism,” in *Narratives of Nation in the South Pacific*, ed. Ton Otto and Nicholas Thomas, Academic Publishers, London, 1997, pp. 91–132; Geoffrey White, *Identity Through History: Living Stories in a Solomon Islands Society*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991; Christopher Ballard, “Atonement and restitution: Making peace with history in Vanuatu,” unpublished paper, Pacific and Asian History, The Australian National University, April 2010; Matt Tomlinson, “Aggressive prayers, curses, and maledictions: Curses, foiled again and again,” *The Immanent Frame: Secularism, Religion, and the Public Sphere*. Online: <http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/2014/10/21/curses-foiled-again-and-again/> (accessed 11 December 2015).



Map 1. A detailed map of the central Gulf showing the mouth of the Kikori River and places where my parents worked.

The desertion of Dopima and the displacement of its people made me wonder about the work of my parents. I was here to collect memories of their time here, but it seemed that any visible evidence of their presence, had been completely eradicated, except for a plank of wooden timber, which I was told was from a mission house that my father had built.

But talking with Omeri Keivai, the only elderly person who now remains in the village, gave me hope that at least my parents' work had not been completely eroded from people's memories. Keivai remembers my father well as a great carpenter and my mother as a strict teacher and a disciplinarian. He told me that he was one of her first students when she arrived in 1959.²

The story of my mother began to unfold more when travelling to the various places where the diaspora of people from Dopima now live. I met with her namesakes, her students both men and women, the wives of Papuan pastors with whom she worked, her helpers and the nannies who babysat me and my siblings. About twenty women

² Personal interview with Mr. Omeri Keivai, Goaribari PNG, 7 August 2013.

claimed they babysat me and I found out that they used to call me the “noisy truck,” a reference to my loud cries as a baby.



Figure 1. Left: *Olivia (R) with her older sister So’oletaua before she was married and left for PNG. Family photo collection, date and photographer unknown.*



Figure 2. Right: *Where the old Dopima village was once situated now eroded by the sea. The only things remaining are the remnants of the posts of houses. Photographed by Latu Latai, 8 August 2013*

Olivia’s story is but one amongst hundreds of untold stories of Samoan women who accompanied their husbands in the mission fields in the western Pacific, stories of young women inspired by the spirit of mission, adventure and a deep commitment to spreading the Gospel. Despite the dangers involved, the uncertainties and the

strangeness of these foreign places, there was never a shortage of young Samoan women who offered their lives in service.



Figure 3. Left: Omeri Keivai in the green shirt with members of his family who now mostly live in Kikori. They are holding a timber said to be used for the mission house built by my father. The two houses behind are the only ones remaining in the village. Photographed by Latu Latai, 8 August 2013.



Figure 4. Right: First meeting at Kikori with former students of my mother and those who used to babysit me at Aird Hill. Photographer unknown, 5 August 2013.

Between 1839 and 1979, about 600 Samoan missionary couples³ were sent out by the LMS to work on the various islands in the western Pacific, from Rotuma, Vanuatu, Loyalty Islands, New Caledonia, Niue, Tokelau, Tuvalu, Kiribati, to the Torres Strait and finally the last frontier, PNG.⁴ Of all the island mission forces in the Pacific, the Samoan

³ See Appendices 1–7 for information about Samoan missionary wives and their husbands on the different missionary fields in the western Pacific.

⁴ The current names of these countries will be used throughout the thesis although different names have been used throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For example, Vanuatu used to be the New Hebrides, Tuvalu previously known as Ellice Islands and PNG used to be formerly British New

group constituted the largest. They thus dominated the mission and had a crucial impact on the islands they evangelised. Their contribution to the evangelisation of the Pacific has been documented and often praised but also heavily criticised as overly zealous. However, although the efforts of Samoan male missionaries have been acknowledged even if they have been diminished as “native teachers” vis à vis European missionaries, their wives are rarely named and barely mentioned. In missionary records, these women are often referred to and listed as “wives.” The scarce mention of their names in the archives of missionary activities in the Pacific imparts an eerie silence since they were equal in numbers to their husbands. Their personal experiences and perspectives, edited out of most mission records and indigenous memories and historical consciousness, presents an unfortunate gap in history. In this research, I aim to recuperate the presence and experiences of these women challenging the perception that they were mere attachments or extensions of men—marginal figures in evangelisation.

Recuperating the voice of women in mission: Double vision in Pacific history and Island missionary scholarship

The study of Samoan missionary wives is situated in that genealogy of Pacific studies which aim to achieve a “double vision” in Pacific history—a move which began at The Australian National University (ANU) with the initiatives of Jim Davidson to turn imperial history on its head, looking at the colonial experience from the islanders’ viewpoint rather than that of the imperial powers.⁵ Kerry Howe writes of this change as the decolonisation of Pacific History. He observes that “as colonies became decolonised, so historians began to decolonise history.”⁶ This movement accompanied an intellectual decolonisation across other disciplines especially anthropology from the 1960s where a new emphasis on practice as opposed to structures and systems emerged and where the actions and intentions of local actors were especially valued. This meant giving voice to once muted subjects which helped bring to the fore the

Guinea in the south and German New Guinea in the north before it was united when it became an independent nation in the 1970s.

⁵ Jim Davidson, “The study of Pacific history: An inaugural lecture delivered at Canberra on 25 November 1954,” Canberra, 1955; “Problems of Pacific history,” *Journal of Pacific History* vol. I (1966): 5–21.

⁶ Kerry R. Howe, *Where the Waves Fall: A New South Sea Islands History from First Settlement to Colonial Rule*, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney London, 1984, p. xii.

important role they played during the colonial period. This novel phase in Pacific history affected the way Pacific Island history was written.⁷ Consequently, many historians and historical anthropologists like Greg Dening, Marshall Sahlins, Nicholas Thomas, Margaret Jolly, Anne Salmond and others have attempted to tell Pacific history from both sides.⁸

The shift to a “double vision” in Pacific history has also influenced the study of Christian missions in the Pacific, which has helped retrieved the vital role and contribution of Pacific Islanders in the evangelisation of the Pacific. This began with the influential works of Ron Crocombe and Marjorie Crocombe in the 1960s where they observed that the introduction of Christianity throughout most of the Pacific was not accomplished by European missionaries alone, but by a veritable army of newly converted Island teachers and pastors.⁹ The Crocombes thus set in motion a new

⁷ As anthropologist Sherry Ortner insists, we need to take the perspective from the shore as opposed to the view from the ship. She rejects the view of many political economists that we can never really know the perspective of the “other.” Her response is that we should try nonetheless. The attempt to view other systems from the actors’ point of view, which dates back to Malinowski, is the basis of anthropology’s distinctive contribution to the human sciences. See Sherry B. Ortner, “Theory in anthropology since the sixties,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* vol. 26, no. 1 (1984): 126–66.

⁸ Dening’s ground-breaking *Islands and Beaches* shows the importance of looking at both sides of the encounter which means respecting how islanders define and construct their own “islands” and “beaches” as well as knowing the world of the newcomers and the “islands” and beaches” they created. According to him, to know a culture is to know its system of stated and unstated meanings. To study cultures in contact is for him also to appreciate both recognition and misrecognition of meanings and the transformation of meanings through encounters. Influenced by the work of Clifford Geertz, Dening also stresses the importance of performance and the value of embodied experience and witness in what he has called the “season of observing.” See Greg Dening, *Islands and Beaches: Discourse on a Silent Land*, Melbourne University Press, Victoria, 1980, p. 6; *Readings/Writings*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1998; *Beach Crossings: Voyaging Across Times, Cultures and Self*, Miegunyah Press/Melbourne University Publishing, Carlton, Victoria, 2004; see also Marshall Sahlins, *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities: Structure in the Early History of the Sandwich Islands Kingdom*, ASAO Special Publication 1, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1981; “The apotheosis of Captain Cook,” in *Between Belief and Transgression: Structuralist Essays in Religion, History and Myth*, ed. Michael Izard and Pierre Smith, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1982, pp. 72–102; *Islands of History*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1985; “Captain Cook in Hawaii,” *Journal of the Polynesian Society* vol. 98, no. 4 (1989): 371–423; *How “Natives” Think: About Captain Cook, For Example*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1995; Margaret Jolly, “Beyond the beach: Rearticulating the limen in Oceanic pasts, presents and futures,” in *Changing Contexts, Shifting Meanings: Transformations of Cultural Traditions in Oceania*, ed. Elfriede Hermann, University of Hawai’i Press, Honolulu, 2011, pp. 56–73; Anne Salmond, *Two Worlds: First Meetings between Maori and Europeans 1642–1772*, Viking, Auckland, 1991; *Between Worlds*, Viking, Auckland, 1998; Nicholas Thomas, *In Oceania: Visions, Artefacts, Histories*, Duke University Press, Durham, 1997; “Partial texts: Representation, colonialism, and agency in Pacific history,” in Nicholas Thomas *Oceania: Visions, Artefacts, Histories*, Duke University Press, Durham: 1997, pp. 23–49.

⁹ Ron G. Crocombe and Marjorie T. Crocombe (eds), *The Works of Ta’unga: Records of a Polynesian Traveller in the Southern Seas, 1833–1896*, The Australian National University Press/University of Hawaii Press, Canberra/Honolulu, 1968; “Early Polynesian authors—The Example of Ta’unga,” *Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand* vol. 10, no. 37 (1961): 92–93.

interest in the study of Islander missionaries. Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, there was an increasing scholarship on Islander missionaries by scholars such as Harry Maude, Sione Latukefu, Doug Munro, David Wetherell, Andrew Thornley, Charles Forman and others.¹⁰ These studies have tended to follow two main trajectories in their appraisal of Islander missionaries. In the first, they are seen as controversial figures, with numerous allegations about their worldly pretensions, political opportunism and other brazen human imperfections. This was particularly true of studies of Samoans which suggest a certain degree of cultural and spiritual “imperialism” associated with their work.¹¹ The second trajectory is traversed by the hagiographic literature that idealised and ennobled Islander missionaries. This

¹⁰ Harry E. Maude, “The Raiatean Chief Auna and the conversion of Hawaii,” *Journal of Pacific History* vol. 9 (1974): 188–91; Charles W. Forman, “The missionary force of the Pacific Island churches,” *International Review of Missions* vol. 59, no. 234 (1970): 215–26; “The South Pacific style in the Christian ministry,” *Missiology* vol. 2, no. 4 (1974): 421–35; “Foreign missionaries in the Pacific Islands during the twentieth century,” in *Mission, Church and Sect in Oceania*, ed. James A. Boutilier, Daniel T. Hughes and Sharon Tiffany, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1978, pp. 35–63; *The Island Churches of the South Pacific: Emergence in the Twentieth Century*, Orbis Books, New York, 1982; Sione Latukefu, “The impact of South Sea Islander missionaries on Melanesia,” in *Mission, Church and Sect in Oceania*, ed. James A. Boutilier, Daniel T. Hughes and Sharon Tiffany, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1978, pp. 91–108; “Oral history and Pacific Islands missionaries: The case of the Methodist mission in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands,” in *Oral Tradition in Melanesia*, ed. Donald Denoon and Roderic Lacey, University of Papua New Guinea and Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies, Port Moresby, 1981, pp. 175–87; “Triumph and defeat at Roreinang: A Tongan missionary in New Guinea,” in *Polynesian Missions in Melanesia: from Samoa, Cook Islands and Tonga to Papua and New Caledonia*, ed. Ron Crocombe and Marjorie Crocombe, Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva, 1982, pp. 39–53; Doug Munro, “Kirisome and Tema: Samoan pastors in Tuvalu,” in *More Pacific Islands Portraits*, ed. Deryck Scarr, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1978, pp. 75–93; David Wetherell, “Christian missions in Eastern New Guinea – A study of European, South Sea Island and Papuan influence, 1877–1942,” Ph.D. thesis, The Australian National University, 1974; “Pioneers and patriarchs: Samoans in a non-conformist mission district in Papua, 1890–1917,” *The Journal of Pacific History* vol. 15, no. 3 (1980): 130–54; Feleterika Nokise, “The role of Samoan LMS Missionaries in the evangelization of the West Pacific, 1839–1930,” Ph.D. thesis, The Australian National University, 1983; Nancy J. Morris, “Hawaiian missionaries in the Marquesas,” *Hawaiian Journal of History* vol. 13 (1979): 46–58; “Hawaiian missionaries abroad, 1852–1909,” Ph.D. thesis, University of Hawai‘i, 1987; Mataio Saroa, “Our daily work: From a Tuvaluan diary in Papua,” in *Polynesian Missions in Melanesia: from Samoa, Cook Islands and Tonga to Papua and New Caledonia*, ed. Ron Crocombe and Marjorie Crocombe, Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva, 1982, pp. 105–110; Ruta Sinclair, “Samoans in Papua,” in *Polynesian Missions in Melanesia: from Samoa, Cook Islands and Tonga to Papua and New Caledonia*, ed. Ron Crocombe and Marjorie Crocombe, Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva, 1982, pp. 17–36; Turakiare Teauariki, “Polynesia to Papua: A modern mission,” in *Polynesian Missions in Melanesia: from Samoa, Cook Islands and Tonga to Papua and New Caledonia*, ed. Ron Crocombe and Marjorie Crocombe, Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva, 1982, pp. 111–29; Dorothy Barrère and Marshall Sahlins, “Tahitians in the early history of Hawaiian Christianity: The journal of Toketa,” *Hawaiian Journal of History* vol. 13 (1979): 19–35.

¹¹ Wetherell, “Christian missions in Eastern New Guinea”; “Pioneers and patriarchs,” pp. 130–54; Nokise, “The role of Samoan LMS missionaries in the evangelization of the West Pacific, 1839–1930”; Sinclair, “Samoans in Papua”; Featuna‘i Liua‘ana, “Errand of mercy: Samoan missionaries to Southern Vanuatu, 1839–1860,” in *The Covenant Makers: Islander Missionaries in the Pacific*, ed. Doug Munro and Andrew Thornley, Pacific Theological College and Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva, 1996, pp. 41–79.

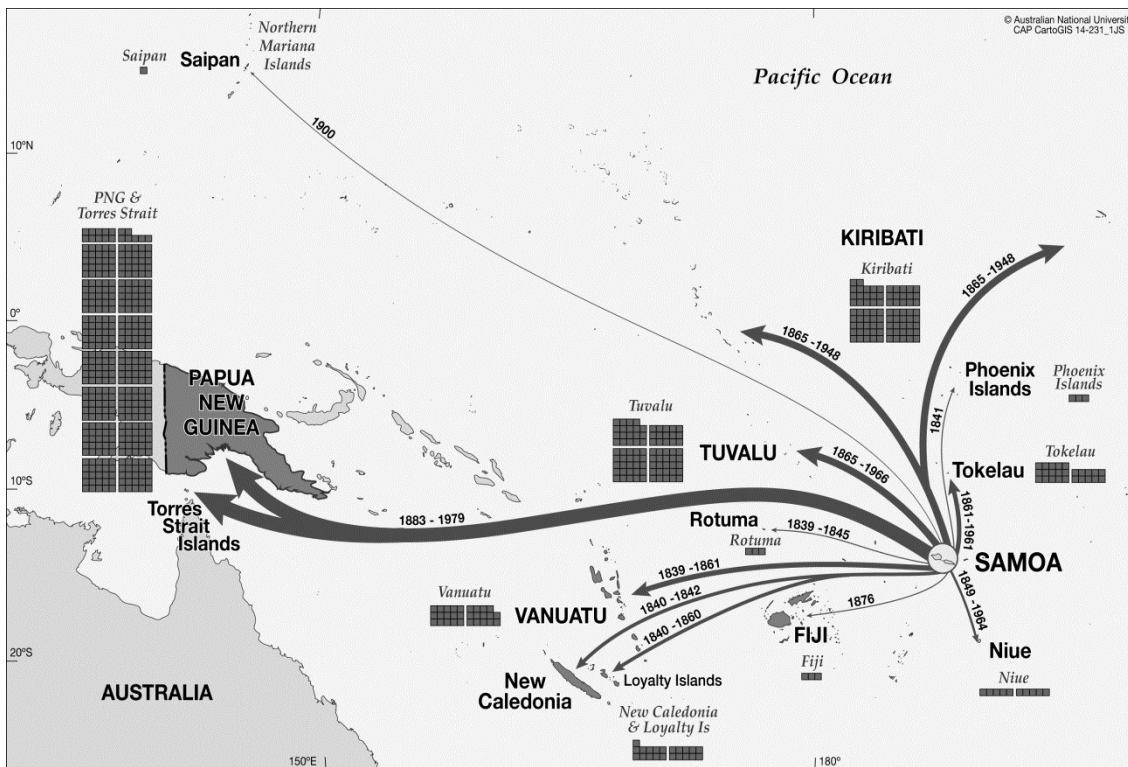
celebratory attitude is common, often emphasising the degree of suffering they endured, especially in the western Pacific. Despite these two divergent views in such analyses, all such works have shifted the pastors from a sideshow to centre stage, making them more than shadowy, unimportant figures. Since then there has been a steady growth in works on Islander missionaries led by historians such as Doug Munro and Andrew Thornley in the 1990s with their edited work *The Covenant Makers* which was dedicated entirely to the missionary work of Islander missionaries.¹²

However, like many works on Pacific Islanders, the focus has largely been on men and here especially on husbands, neglecting the roles of their wives. In that edited work by Munro and Thornley only one chapter was dedicated to the work of an Islander missionary wife. This was the chapter by Jeanette Little on the missionary work of Hawaiian missionary wife Mary Nawa'a, who worked in the Marshall Islands in the 1870s under the mission of the ABCFM.¹³ The title of the chapter "... and wife: Mary Ka'aiali'i Kahelemauna Nawa'a – missionary wife and missionary," depicts the lack of emphasis on Islander missionary women in mission archives but also in the study of missions in the Pacific in general. Since then, the work on Islander missionaries in the Pacific continues to be dominated by the work on Islander missionary men.¹⁴ Hence, although progress has been made in developing a "double vision" in Pacific history, it still suffers from the lack of emphasis on women or indeed on gender relations despite such re-visioning.

¹² Doug Munro and Andrew Thornley (eds), *The Covenant Makers: Islander Missionaries in the Pacific*, Pacific Theological College and Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva, 1996.

¹³ Jeanette Little, "... and wife: Mary Kaaialii Kahelemauna Nawa'a—missionary wife and missionary," in *The Covenant Makers*, ed. Munro and Thornley, pp. 210–34.

¹⁴ Several studies and biographies have been done on Pacific Island missionary husbands. See Doug Munro, "The humble Jeremiah: A Tuvaluan pastor in Tuvalu, 1880–1895," *Pacific Journal of Theology* vol. 23 (2000): 40–48; Semesi Nau, *The Story of My Life: A Tongan Missionary in Ontong Java*, ed. Allan K. Davidson, Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva, 1996; Michael Goldsmith and Doug Munro, "Encountering Elekana encountering Tuvalu," in *Pacific History: Papers from the Eighth Pacific History Association Conference*, ed. Don Rubinstein, University of Guam Press and Micronesian Seminar, Mangilao, 1992, pp. 25–41; Andrew Thornley, "A letter from Oneata: The first missionary report from Tahiti," *Pacific Journal of Theology*, n.s. vol. 14 (1995): 31–34; Mark Gallagher, "The Tahitian connection: Planting Christianity in Hawai'i," *Pacific Journal of Theology*, n.s. vol. 14 (1995): 23–30; Robert L. Jakes, "'Surrounded as we are' (Heb. 12:1–2): Reflections on the contributions of Fijian missionaries in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands / Ko Ira na i Taukei ka ra Kaulotu ki Vanua-Tani," in *Mai Kea Ki Vei? Stories of Methodism in Fiji and Rotum*, ed. Andrew Thornley and Tauga Vulaono, Methodist Church of Fiji, Suva, 1996, pp. 115–27; Wolfgang Kempf, "The politics of distancing: Evangelical missionaries and Samoan pastors in Northeast New Guinea, 1912–1933," in *European Imagery and Colonial History in the Pacific*, ed. Toon van Meijl and Paul van der Grijp, Nijgeegs Instituut voor Comparative Cultuur- en Ontwikkelingsstudies, Nijmegen, 1994, pp. 76–98.



Map 2. *The Spread of Samoans in the evangelisation of the western Pacific*

Paradoxes in gender ideologies

My study of Samoan missionary wives builds on those studies dating from the 1980s which recuperated European missionary women's stories and perspectives in the evangelisation of the Pacific. These include the important works of Diane Langmore,¹⁵ Nancy Lutkehaus and Mary T. Huber¹⁶ on Catholic and Protestant missions in PNG and Patricia Grimshaw¹⁷ on the American Protestants in Hawai'i. These studies have offered important insights to European missionary women's role and influence. They

¹⁵ Diane Langmore's work on missionaries in both Catholic and Protestant missions in Papua from 1874 to 1924 notes the important "domestic" role of women in the "mission house." The mission house was the "object lesson of a civilized Christian home," and it became the domain of the missionaries' wives where training of Papuan women and girls in domestic accomplishments was carried out. See Diane Langmore, "The object lesson of a civilised, Christian home," in *Family and Gender in the Pacific: Domestic Contradictions and the Colonial Project*, ed. Margaret Jolly and Martha Macintyre, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989, pp. 84–94.

¹⁶ Nancy C. Lutkehaus in her work on German Catholic nuns in PNG since 1899, notes the maternal nature of the mission. The mission was seen as "maternal" in that it focused on caregiving and nurturance, on the upbringing and socialisation of children and on the development of morality and spirituality, a role that allegedly best suited women, in the views of the mission at the time. See Nancy C. Lutkehaus, "Missionary maternalism: Gendered images of the Holy Spirit Sisters in colonial New Guinea," in *Gendered Missions: Women and Men in Missionary Discourse and Practice*, ed. Mary T. Huber and Nancy C. Lutkehaus, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1999, pp. 207–36.

¹⁷ Patricia Grimshaw, *Paths of Duty: American Missionary Wives in Nineteenth Century Hawaii*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1989.

have not only recovered the presence and experience of such missionary women whose lives constitute a valuable human record, but have produced a deeper understanding of mission activities in the Pacific more broadly.

Several important findings have emerged from these works. First, they have shown that women were particularly vital to the aspirations of both Catholic and Protestant missions in the Pacific. In most cases their deployment was consistent with the gender ideologies predominant in Europe and America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Such ideologies posited a polarisation in the nature of the sexes and assigned to men work in the world and to women work in the home. Even in Roman Catholic missions where abstinent orders rather than a missionary couple prevailed, women's participation in foreign missionary work conformed to the idea that even if men and women worked side by side, it should be in separate spheres. Often sisters and nuns working with local women and children were subordinated to men and especially the male priests. These works have shed light on how gender ideologies in the West shaped the roles of missionary men and women, on remote frontiers.

Second, and more important, they have also shown that such ideologies were often contested and negotiated at the local level, often blurring the boundaries between the spheres of men and women. Studies of missionaries by these scholars have shown that such "confusion" was common regardless of denomination and that frontiers sometimes invited and even demanded a reversal of their conventional roles. Although most scholars agree on the "domestic" and "maternal" role of women in missions, several more nuanced critical observations have been made. For example, the increasing new public role of women associated with the burgeoning capitalist economy in Europe and America meant that women's presence in foreign mission service became an example of a female ambition for an important and independent career. Women soon discovered that their public work to exalt femininity and female roles came into conflict with the demands of motherhood, especially when they were determined to keep their own children away from the influence of local cultures. This was true throughout the Pacific and in Samoa particularly where many missionary children were sent back to England for fear of physical and spiritual contamination, while others employed local nannies and servants to care for their children and to look

after their domestic duties.¹⁸ Furthermore, the introduction of education for girls initiated by single missionary women both reinscribed and confounded the domestic emphasis by introducing the new professions of teaching, nursing and secretarial work. Hence the paradox was, on the one hand women were taught to be good wives to their husbands, while at the same time, the very lives of European missionary wives presented a somewhat different and novel kind of woman, one who was increasingly becoming professional and independent. This finding is significant in regards to the “domestication” thesis in Pacific missionary and gender scholarship. The domestication thesis offers many insights regarding the idealised project of “civilisation.” However there is a need to assess how European missionary women’s actual lives differed from the prevailing ideals of wives or mothers and how those ideals were challenged and changed by Oceanic ideas and practices of gender.¹⁹

Recuperating the voice of European women in Christian missions has not only offered important insights into the missionary enterprise, but has also provided new questions and new ways of thinking about the colonial process in the Pacific; questions about the efficacy of the “domestication” project and the implications of this for Pacific women. For example if there were such tensions between the ideals and practices of European wives, then how far were such ideals adopted by Pacific women? Missionary writings in Samoa in the late nineteenth century reflect a certain degree of frustration at the lack of progress of Samoan women.²⁰ The failure of the Samoans to emulate such models was likely due not just to faltering “progress” but to the paradoxes inherent in the lives of European missionary wives as well as the different values Samoans cherished in their own culture. Hence there was continuity as well as rupture in Samoan ideas and practices.

This is important in thinking about the influence of Samoan missionary wives, in particular how their formative experience in Samoa shaped the way their mission was carried out. For example, how far did they and their husbands emulate European

¹⁸ See Hyaewool Choi and Margaret Jolly (eds), *Divine Domesticities: Paradoxes of Christian Modernities in Asia and the Pacific*, Canberra, ANU Press, 2014. See also Latu Latai, “From open *fale* to mission houses: Negotiating the boundaries of domesticity in Samoa,” in *Divine Domesticities*, ed. Choi and Jolly, pp. 299–324.

¹⁹ See Choi and Jolly (eds), *Divine Domesticities*.

²⁰ Latai, “From open *fale* to mission houses.”

patterns or rather perpetuate their own distinctive relations and thereby transform European ideals? And what impact would this have on their influence in places where they worked, particularly on women in the western Pacific? The study of Samoan (LMS) missionary wives will I hope, unveil more nuanced ways of understanding such questions.

Samoan missionary wives and the colonial impact on Pacific women

Several studies of Pacific women have shown the extent of the colonial impact on indigenous women in the Pacific. Some have focused on the destructive nature of these processes on indigenous ideas of gender. For example Christine Ward Gailey's work in Tonga argues that European assumptions about maleness and femaleness, appropriate spheres of activity for women and men and progress through civilisation in the western sense have led to women's greater subordination.²¹ However her argument has been heavily criticised by others such as Kerry James in her article "O Lead us not into Commoditisation."²² She has argued that although the introduction of western religious, political, social and cultural processes, affected women negatively overall, the impact varied in different localities and in some cases rather proved positive. Indeed, Christine Dureau in the Solomon Islands talks of mixed blessings.²³ The works of Jocelyn Linnekin in Hawai'i,²⁴ Nicole George in Fiji²⁵ and Margaret Jolly in Vanuatu²⁶ have highlighted the agency of indigenous women in contesting these

²¹ Christine W. Gailey, *Kinship to Kingship: Gender Hierarchy and State Formation in the Tongan Islands*, University of Texas Press, Austin, Texas, 1987.

²² Kerry James, "'O lead us not into 'commoditisation'" ... Christine Ward Gailey's changing gender values in the Tongan Islands," *Journal of the Polynesian Society* vol. 97 (1988): pp. 31–48.

²³ Christine M. Dureau, "Mixed blessings: Christianity and history in women's lives on Simbo, Western Solomon Islands," Ph.D. thesis, Macquarie University, 1994.

²⁴ In Hawai'i, Jocelyn Linnekin sees certain global processes like the peripheralisation of indigenous societies, state formation and class stratification as challenging the status of Hawaiian women. But she also argues that land alienation benefitted Hawaiian women in general. Jocelyn Linnekin, *Sacred Queens and Women of Consequence: Rank, Gender, and Colonialism in the Hawaiian Island*, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1993.

²⁵ In Fiji, Nicole George observes that whereas in some areas indigenous systems were traditionally matrilineal, Fiji's colonial administrators as well as missionaries institutionalised hierarchical, masculinist and patrilineal systems that still persist strongly today. Nicole George, "Situating agency: Gender politics and circumstance in Fiji," Ph.D. thesis, The Australian National University, 2006.

²⁶ In Vanuatu, Margaret Jolly considers that accounts by early missionaries and medical practitioners have painted a negative view of women as mothers in Vanuatu in a male-dominated society. Recent ethnographic research has rather shown Vanuatu women as agents and authors, as mothers. See Margaret Jolly, "From darkness to light? Epidemiologies and ethnographies in Vanuatu," in *Birthing in*

processes. As Linnekin argues, this challenges the view that there was a one-way “directionality” in European expansion. Rather she calls for an awareness of more complex processes of both loss, and creation, adaptation and distancing, collusion and confrontation. Linnekin and others have shown the complex nature of colonial processes, challenging the idea that Islander women were passive recipients of foreign changes. Such a view is supported by scholars such as Sherry Ortner²⁷ and the Comaroffs’ writing on Africa²⁸ who argue against a “fatal impact” view which privileges a radical and total transformation, the rupture between tradition and modernity.²⁹ This more qualified and sophisticated perspective on the colonial encounter and evangelisation is vital for any analysis of the impact of colonisation and Christianity on Pacific women.

Jolly’s analysis of Pacific women’s indigenous modes of making fabrics from fibres like *tapa* is important in understanding this. She has shown how novel textile traditions were appropriated in waves of Christian conversion, variously replicating, replacing, supplementing and synthesising with indigenous cloth. She sees women as passionate

the Pacific: Beyond Tradition and Modernity, ed. Vicki Lukere and Margaret Jolly, University of Hawai’i Press, Honolulu, 2002, pp. 148–77; “To save the girls for brighter and better lives,” *The Journal of Pacific History* vol. 26, no. 1 (1991): 27–48; “Colonizing women: The maternal body and empire,” in *Feminism and the Politics of Difference*, ed. Sneja Gunew and Anna Yeatman, Allen and Unwin, St. Leonard’s, 1993, pp. 103–27.

²⁷ Sherry Ortner also affirms that although external systems such as colonialism and capitalism had an impact on indigenous societies, she warns against a hegemonic view of the world that suggests that virtually every society has already been thoroughly penetrated by the capitalist world system. She believes that such a “fatal impact” view hinders us from seeing resistance, transformation, reproduction and perseverance of culture from the perspective of those in indigenous societies. She highlights the importance of notions of time, in seeing how culture and society transforms and endures. Sherry Ortner, “Theory in anthropology since the sixties,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* vol. 26, no. 1 (1984): 126–66.

²⁸ Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff also challenge a “fatal impact” view and in particular the Weberian tradition in sociology and anthropology which privileged radical and total transformation in the rupture between tradition and modernity. The Comaroffs argue that such a view does not accommodate the variable, gradual and complex nature of the colonial encounter. Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1991.

²⁹ In the Pacific the idea of a massive “fatal impact” remains active in anti-colonial discourse since Alan Moorehead’s book *The Fatal Impact* in 1966. See Alan Moorehead, *The Fatal Impact: The Invasion of the South Pacific 1767–1840*, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1987 [1966]. Since the 1980s however historical anthropologists and ethnohistorians most notably Greg Denning, Nicholas Thomas, Anne Salmond, Douglas Oliver and Marshall Sahlins have been addressing the active engagement between Pacific Islanders and Europeans.

creators and consumers of cloth. Hence, we see indigenous women participating in appropriating new ways, creolising them with the old and transforming them.³⁰

These studies are important in gaining greater understanding of cross-cultural interaction between locals and colonial agents. However, there is still a need to analyse these processes engaging other “colonial” actors rather than just Europeans. Hundreds of Pacific islanders mainly from the Eastern Pacific were deployed by various mission societies to evangelise other Pacific islands. Although they were under the guidance and direction of European missionaries in order to fulfill their mission aspirations, these Pacific Islander men and women carried with them their own cultural “baggage.” Several studies of Samoan missionaries in the western Pacific by historians such as David Wetherell, Doug Munro, Feleterika Nokise, Featunai Liuaana and Ruta Sinclair, have suggested a certain degree of cultural and spiritual “imperialism” associated with the work of the Samoans.³¹ These works have shown that the kind of Christianity that the Samoans took with them was deeply connected to Samoan ideas about status, hierarchy and social order. Such forms of Christianity for which Nokise coined the term “*Kerisiano Faa-Samoa*” or Samoanized Christianity, had a huge impact on the cultures of several islands, in particular Tuvalu and Tokelau, where local customs and even languages were dramatically transformed.

From such analyses we find that in some places the Samoans and other Islander missionaries exerted far more influence on the locals than Europeans.³² Moreover, it shows that colonial processes and concepts had limited impact on Islander missionaries and their wives. Often Christianity was understood and employed by Islander missionaries according to their own cultural horizons. How then can we account for the role and influence of Samoan missionary wives in this process?

³⁰ Margaret Jolly, “Of the same cloth? Oceanic anthropologies of gender, textiles and Christianities,” Distinguished Lecture, Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania Conference, The Australian National University, 14 February 2008; “A saturated history of Christianity and cloth in Oceania,” in *Divine Domesticities*, ed. Choi and Jolly, ANU Press, Canberra, 2014, pp. 429–54.

³¹ Wetherell, “Christian Missions in Eastern New Guinea”; “Pioneers and patriarchs”; Munro, “Kirisome and Tema”; Doug Munro, “Samoan pastors in Tuvalu, 1865–1899,” in *The Covenant Makers*, ed. Munro and Thornley, pp. 124–57; Nokise, “The Role of Samoan LMS Missionaries in the Evangelization of the West Pacific, 1839–1930”; Liua’ana, “Errand of Mercy”; Sinclair, “Samoans in Papua.”

³² Sione Latukefu, “Pacific Islander missionaries,” in *The Covenant Makers*, ed. Munro and Thornley, pp. 17–40.

The deployment of Samoan women alongside other Polynesian women was a deliberate effort, particularly in the project to “uplift” women in the western Pacific. Trained and modelled on missionary ideas of the ideal “wife,” they were portrayed as role models for other indigenous women in the western Pacific to aspire to and emulate. But how far did these Samoan women see themselves as the embodiment of ideal wives and mothers? This is important in evaluating the representations of Pacific women since the arrival of Europeans, representations that are still suffused with lingering colonial influences based on ideologies of racial hierarchy.³³

Since the early contact period, women in the Pacific were often categorised in racist terms.³⁴ Women in “Polynesia” were often represented as beautiful, sexually alluring doing refined work and being revered and elevated. On the other hand, women in “Melanesia” were depicted as ugly, sexually unappealing and sexually sequestered

³³ The representation of women in the early contact period and since exploratory voyages has been based on racial categories and was typically connected to a view of women’s status vis-à-vis men. As Jolly argues, “‘woman’ was the sign and prophetic index of the passage from savagery to civilisation, just as she was the sign and portent of the dangers of opulence, corruption and overheated commerce in Europe itself.” See Margaret Jolly, “Imagining Oceania: Indigenous and foreign representations of a sea of islands,” *The Contemporary Pacific* vol. 19, no. 2 (2007): 508–45, p. 520; “Women of the east, women of the west: Region and race, gender and sexuality on Cook’s voyages,” in *The Atlantic World in the Antipodes: Effects and Transformations since the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Kate Fullagar, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle upon Tyne, 2012, pp. 2–32.

³⁴ Based on her reading of voyages such as those of Antoine Bruni d’Entrecasteaux (1791–94), Bronwen Douglas however argues that there was a “mobile dialectic discourse and experiences” and suggests that it was not so much prejudicial preconception as the contingent experiences of encounter which shaped the diverse but differential assessments of the peoples of the Admiralty islands, Van Diemen’s Land, Tonga and New Caledonia on that voyage. Rather than a racial plot which anticipated a clear path to Dumont d’Urville’s invidious contrast between Melanesians and Polynesians she stresses the volatility and fluidity of the notions of “variety” or “nation.” Moreover, she argues that voyage narratives and images often linked a pacific reception by indigenous peoples with good character and good looks, and a hostile, intransigent reception with wickedness and unappealing appearance. So, in some accounts of this voyage, a contrast emerges between the good and simple Tasmanians, and the cunning and treacherous Tongans, which owes more to the contingencies of encounter than any proto-evolutionary presumption about a hierarchy of “races” or “nations.” While acknowledging the ethnocentrism of Enlightenment representations, Douglas contends that references to skin colour, hair and physiognomy are circumstantial and shifty, compared to the “complacent, racially-based assumption of European superiority evident in the nineteenth-century equation.” Bronwen Douglas, “In the event: Indigenous countersigns and the ethnohistory of voyaging,” in *Oceanic Encounters: Exchange, Desire, Violence*, ed. Margaret Jolly, Serge Tcherkézoff and Darrell Tryon. ANU E Press, Canberra Australia, pp. 175–98, p. 179; “Notes on ‘race’ and the biologisation of human difference,” *The Journal of Pacific History* vol. 40 (2005): 331–38; “Slippery word, ambiguous praxis: ‘Race’ and late-18th-century voyagers in Oceania,” *The Journal of Pacific History* vol. 41 (2006): 1–29; “‘Novus Orbis Australis’: Oceania in the science of race, 1750–1850,” in *Foreign Bodies: Oceania and the Science of Race 1750–1940*, ed. Bronwen Douglas and Chris Ballard, ANU E-Press, Canberra, 2008 pp. 99–155. See also Margaret Jolly, “‘Ill-natured comparisons’: Racism and relativism in European representations of ni-Vanuatu from Cook’s second voyage,” *History and Anthropology* vol. 5, no. 3 (1992): 331–64; Margaret Jolly and Serge Tcherkézoff, “Oceanic encounters: A prelude,” in *Oceanic Encounters*, ed. Jolly, Tcherkézoff and Tyron, pp. 1–36.

“beasts of burden,” cruelly oppressed by men.³⁵ Although it is clear that there were differences in how women in the Pacific were categorised in the colonial contact period, all Pacific women were considered to be lower and inferior to their European counterparts, the idealised western “woman.” Hence, the concerted effort by missionaries and colonial agents to “rescue” them from savagery and cultural oppression. This project to uplift and transform indigenous women prevailed across the Pacific, although it was much stronger in the western Pacific than in the east because the western Pacific was perceived as far more “savage.” Samoan missionary wives were thus part of this project. They were some of the first “Polynesian” women to enter “Melanesian” and “Micronesian” societies during this early colonial period. How far did they perceive themselves in the light of these racial categorisations? Did they see themselves as superior to their Islander counterparts in the west?

These questions are important to understanding Samoan missionary wives’ lives and their influence on women in the western Pacific. They are also important in thinking about some of the prevailing attitudes amongst women in the Pacific today, where there seems to be a continuing divide between women in the western Pacific and those in the east. This has surfaced recently in debates about how women in the Pacific connect to and contest global “feminist” movements’. For example women in “Polynesia” seem to be more critical of western feminisms while some women in “Melanesia” tend to embrace actions to liberate women from the prevailing male domination in indigenous and colonial constructions. Thus during the CEDAW workshop of 1991, many women in the eastern Pacific deplored the imposition of western values, and suggested, contrary to foreign perceptions, that many aspects of traditional culture in their countries give women important status and influence. Women in the western Pacific however like Grace Mera Molisa of Vanuatu argued that such claims can risk denying discrimination against ordinary women in the Pacific in any country, particularly in “Melanesia” where colonial and contemporary masculinist nation states tend to suppress the voices of women. These differences in views are

³⁵ Jolly, “Women of the east, women of the west”; “Beyond the horizon? Nationalisms, feminisms, and globalisation in the Pacific,” *Outside Gods: History Making in the Pacific*, special issue of *Ethnohistory* vol. 52, no. 1 (2005): 137–66.

clearly articulated by women leaders in “Polynesia” and “Melanesia” today but, as Jolly suggests, these articulations should not be taken as representative of all women.³⁶

How then can we better understand these somewhat dichotomised views of Pacific women today? By juxtaposing these with early accounts of Pacific island women during the mission period, we might find complications and challenges to such perduring and widespread stereotypes. Samoan missionary wives in the western Pacific were situated in a unique position. Hence their views on gender relations and the valuation of women in the “Melanesian” region are important in re-evaluating these prevailing perceptions of Pacific women today.

Methodology: Samoan language sources, oral histories and embodied knowledge

Crucial to the recuperation of the voices of Samoan missionary wives are the sources we use. There is an abundance of mission sources which include journals, diaries, memoirs, biographies, letters and correspondence in the mission archives in the Pacific. These sources have given scholars important insights into the lives and activities of European missionaries. They also give valuable glimpses into the lives of Islanders involved in the mission. However, most accounts of Islanders are still reflections of Europeans who either applauded or condemned their work. According to Michael Goldsmith, European missionaries not only created much of the documentary material but interpreted it to suit themselves.³⁷ And as Harry Maude pointed out, mission documentation as well as Pacific archival sources in general, are to a large extent “tainted,” being written by Europeans with the almost inescapable bias of their racial background.³⁸ But we might ask which accounts are unsullied? All historical sources and interpretations are perforce partial in the sense of being incomplete and

³⁶ Jolly makes the contrast between Haunani-Kay Trask of Hawai‘i and Grace Mera Molisa of Vanuatu, important women leaders respectively. But how far are their views shared and representative of all women? Grace Mera Molisa also challenged western feminism although she saw women as dominated in places like Vanuatu and PNG. See Margaret Jolly, “Beyond the horizon?”; “Colonizing women: The maternal body and empire.” See also Haunani-Kay Trask, *Fighting the Battle of Double Colonization: The View of a Hawaiian Feminist*, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, 1989; *Light in the Crevice Never Seen*, Calyx Books, Portland, OR, 1994; Grace Mera Molisa, *Colonised People: Poems by Grace Mera Molisa*, Port Vila, Black Stone Publications, 1987; Grace Mera Molisa (ed.), *Who will carry the Bag? Poetry Booklet from Woman I Bildimap Vanuatu Festival*, Vanuatu National Council of Women (VNVK), Port Vila, 1990.

³⁷ Michael Goldsmith, “Church and Society in Tuvalu,” Ph.D. thesis, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1989, pp. 125, 285.

³⁸ Harry E. Maude, *Of Islands and Men: Studies in Pacific History*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1968, pp. ix–x.

written from an interested perspective.³⁹ This does not only include written narratives by Europeans but also Samoan language sources used in this research.



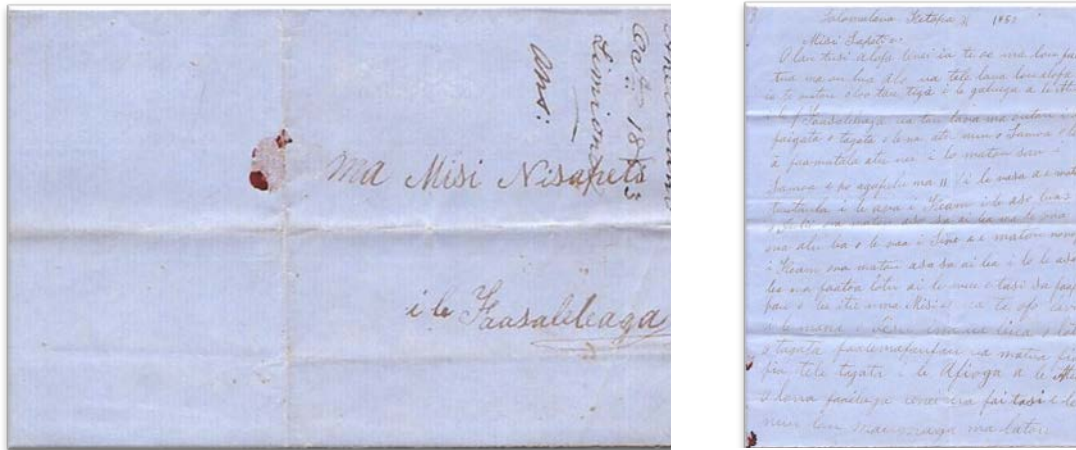
Figures 5a and b. Images of the first editions of the *Sulu Samoa* in 1839. Photographed by Latu Latai at the National Library of Australia, Canberra, 17 November 2011

The earliest Samoan texts began when *O le Sulu Samoa*, a Samoan LMS Church magazine, began its monthly publications in 1839. Although written in the Samoan language, they were authored and edited by European missionaries who at the time showed considerable competence in the local language. For a contemporaneous Samoan reader, the magazine provided a range of topics which included biblical history, sermons, world history, geography, island ethnography and information on other cultures and peoples of the world.

More significantly, the magazine published annual reports of LMS missionary voyages and progress reports of the mission in the western Pacific. Unfortunately, the earliest volumes do not contain any writings by Samoan missionaries and their wives. It is possible that they wrote letters and accounts of their experiences, if we consider that the Rarotongan missionary Ta'unga who worked together with Samoans in the Loyalty

³⁹ There has been a huge debate amongst scholars about the use of European narratives because of their ideological and Eurocentric bias. This is not only true of missionaries but also of other Europeans such as explorers, colonial officials, traders and other European observers. See Gananath Obeyesekere, "Cannibal feasts in nineteenth-century Fiji: Seamen's yarns and the ethnographic imagination" in *Cannibalism and the Colonial World*, ed. F. Barker, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, pp. 63–86; "Cannibal talk: Dialogical misunderstandings in the South Seas," Huxley Memorial Lecture, Manchester University, during Decennial Conference of the Association of Social Anthropologists, 2003; *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook: European Mythmaking in the Pacific*, Princeton University Press/Bishop Museum Press, Princeton New Jersey/ Honolulu, 1992; Jolly and Tcherkézoff, "Oceanic encounters: A prelude"; Thomas, "Partial texts: Representation, colonialism, and agency in Pacific history"; Bronwen Douglas, "In the event: Indigenous countersigns and the ethnohistory of voyaging," in *Oceanic Encounters*, ed. Jolly, Tcherkézoff and Tryon, pp. 175–98; Serge Tcherkézoff, "A reconsideration of the role of Polynesian women in early encounters with Europeans: Supplement to Marshall Sahlins' Voyage around the islands of history," in *Oceanic Encounters*, ed. Jolly, Tcherkézoff and Tryon, pp. 113–60.

Islands in the 1840s was an avid writer and that his writings have survived.⁴⁰ The only written accounts that I have come across by Samoan missionaries during this early period are letters by Elia, Simiona and Mailei who worked in Vanuatu in the 1850s. One of the letters by Elia is translated and published in the LMS missionary magazine *The Samoan Reporter* in 1856.⁴¹ The other letters written in the 1850s are originals held in the personal collections of individuals in Germany, New Zealand and England.⁴²



Figures 6a and b. Images of the letter written by Simiona from Aneityum in 1853. Photographed by Martin Treadwell, New Zealand. From his personal collection

These letters show that Samoan missionaries did write correspondences and most likely kept diaries and journals of their work. However many of these have been either lost or are still yet to be discovered. The lack of available written accounts by Islanders meant that it is much more challenging to recuperate their voices in the early mission encounter. For Samoans, this is particularly so in the case of their work in Vanuatu and the Loyalty Islands in the nineteenth century. Thus, as is often revealed in the histories of Islander missionaries, works on individual pastors are quite rare and group portraits more prevalent by comparison. As Munro and Thornley suggest, writing history is the art of the possible. History is not what happened but more a matter of what happened

⁴⁰ Ron G. Crocombe and Majorie T. Crocombe (eds.), *The Works of Ta'unga: Records of a Polynesian Traveller in the Southern Seas, 1833–1896*, The Australian National University Press/University of Hawaii Press, Canberra/Honolulu, 1968.

⁴¹ The first one to Turner, dated 18 July 1855 and written at Dillon's Bay, Erromango was translated by Turner into English and published in the *Samoan Reporter*, 1856. Letter from Elia to Turner, 18 July 1855, Dillon's Bay, Erromango, trans. Turner into English and published in the *Samoan Reporter* no. 17 (January 1856): 4.

⁴² Another letter written by Elia to Nisbet from Erromango dated 24 October 1857 is in the personal collection of Mr Roland Klinger, Germany. A letter by Simiona to Nisbet from Aneityum dated 31 October 1853 is in the personal collection of Mr Martin Treadwell, New Zealand. And a letter by Mailei to Nisbet from Erromango on 28 July 1855 is held in the personal collection of Mr Jim Crompton, England. Electronic copies of these letters are with the author.

to get recorded and what records survived.⁴³ Where textual records on the work of the Samoans are scarce and incomplete, as is the case with this study, it is difficult to build up a profile about the individual. This is particularly difficult in the first half of this research, as in the nineteenth century, the records only identified the names of husbands and all wives were simply referred to as a “wife.” Thus as Munro and Thornley pointed out “pastors tend not so much to get shut out as shouted down in the records, and their wives even more so.”⁴⁴ And as individuals and as a group, the pastor and his wife are at risk of becoming what one historian had termed an “unperson,”⁴⁵ someone whom other people neglect to mention and who is thus erased from future consciousness.

The latter period of this research however is more blessed with the several textual and oral sources by Samoan missionaries and their wives in PNG. It was not until the 1880s that letters written in Samoan by Samoan missionaries overseas were frequently published in the *Sulu Samoa*.⁴⁶ Since then their accounts populated the church magazine providing a valuable insight into the lives and experiences of Samoan missionaries and their wives.⁴⁷ The survival of these accounts written by Samoans themselves is important in counterbalancing the enormous amount of material written by European missionaries. This is particularly vital for the work of the Samoans in mission from the latter part of the nineteenth to the twentieth century, particularly in the mission field in PNG. This is complemented by a resurgence in Samoan interests in writing and publishing in the last twenty years which has also seen a rise in autobiographies by Samoan missionaries in the Samoan language.⁴⁸ This emerged as a

⁴³ Doug Munro and Andrew Thornley, “Editorial introduction – retrieving the pastors: questions of representation and voice,” in *The Covenant Makers*, ed. Munro and Thornley, pp. 1–16.

⁴⁴ Munro and Thornley, “Editorial introduction – retrieving the pastors,” p. 7.

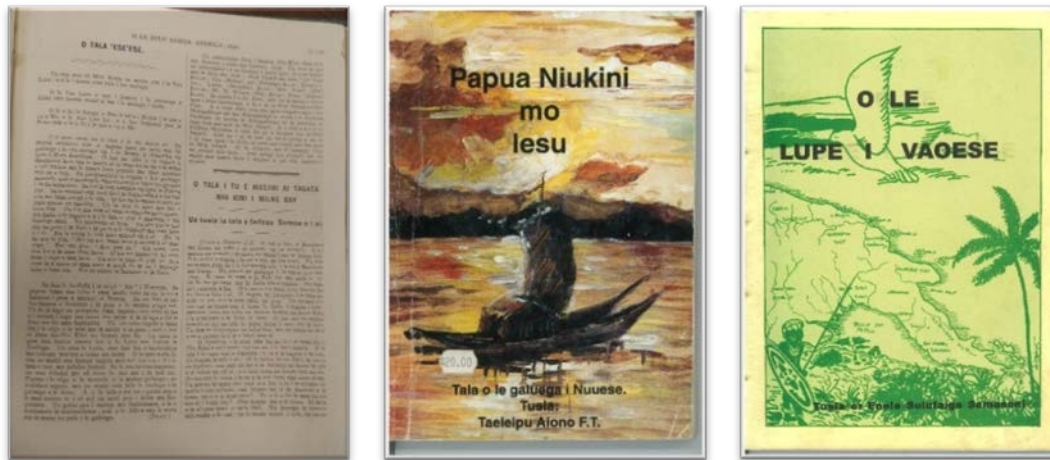
⁴⁵ Fritz Stern, *Gold and Iron: Bismarck, Bleichroder and the Building of the German Empire*, Knopf, New York, 1977, cited in Munro and Thornley, “Editorial introduction – retrieving the pastors,” p. 7.

⁴⁶ Early issues of the *Sulu Samoa* are rare. Fortunately, I accessed several at the National Library of Australia which holds a collection of the earliest copies from 1839 to 1848, then sporadic issues from 1868 to 1956. A collection is held at the Mālua Theological College Library but is incomplete beginning from the 1880s onwards. Other libraries hold incomplete collections like the State Library of NSW (1839–1948), State Library of Victoria (1893–1905), University of Adelaide, Barr Smith Library (1949, 1951) as well as the Turnbull Library and the New Zealand National Archives in Wellington.

⁴⁷ There are also letters written in Samoan from 1874 to 1946 by both Samoan pastors and European missionaries. These are held in microfilm at the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau (PAMBU) collection, ANU.

⁴⁸ These include Taeleipu Aiono, *Papua Niukini mo Iesu*, Le Lamepa Press, Apia, n.d.; Enele S. Samasoni, *O le Lupe i Vaoese*, Mālua Press, Apia, 1994. These autobiographies are the first extensive accounts of

result of the need to record the history of Samoan involvement in missions, particularly since most of the last group of missionaries and their wives who worked in PNG in the 1950s to the 70s are dying out.



Figures 7a, b and c. Accounts by Samoans published in the Sulu Samoa in 1896 and autobiographies written by Samoan missionaries in PNG in the 1990s. Photographed by Latu Latai on various dates

The use of indigenous language sources is therefore significant to this study. Those like Noenoe Silva who rewrote the history of Hawaiian resistance to the overthrow of the monarchy in the 1890s on the basis of the local traditions of Hawaiian language newspapers, highlight the integral value of indigenous language sources.⁴⁹ However, in the same manner in which we should scrutinise European texts, one also needs to tread carefully when analysing these indigenous language texts. The accounts by the Rarotongan missionary Ta'unga, for example show that he was writing for his European missionary counterparts. And, as Gavan Daws argues, even Ta'unga wrote like a foreign missionary.⁵⁰ Reading his writings we will never know what he himself

Samoan missionary couples in the field, but once again, all of these have been authored by male missionaries. During the course of this research, I have collected a number of Samoan missionary wives' written accounts, and personal diaries. These men and women worked in PNG from the 1950s to the early 1970s. More recently a comprehensive history of the Samoan LMS Church by Oka Fauolo was published in 2005. This work includes short biographies provided by surviving missionaries and their wives, all in the Samoan language. Also in the Samoan language is a short history of the Samoan LMS Church by Kenape Tuuu Faletese written in 1959. See Oka Fauolo, *O Vavega o le Alofa Lavea'i: O le Tala Faasolopito o le Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano i Samoa*, Mālūa Printing Press, Apia, 2005; Kenape Tuuu Faletese, *A History of the Samoan Church (LMS)*, Mālūa Printing Press, Apia, 1959.

⁴⁹ Noenoe Silva, *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American colonialism*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2004. See also Kame'eleihiwa in her use of Hawaiian language texts as well as European sources in her retelling of Hawaiian history and the dispossession of Hawaiian land. See Lilikala Kame'eleihiwa, *Native Land and Foreign Desires, Pehea La E Pono Ai? How Shall We Live in Harmony?* Bishop Museum Press, Honolulu, 1992.

⁵⁰ Taunga for example told his mentor, Charles Pitman, that he was writing about "what he saw with my eyes, heard with my ears, and felt with my hands." But he also said that "The customs of these Islands

thought of the “customs” of the islands lest his European missionary audience would be uninterested or disapproving.⁵¹ Thus, even in the cases of accounts written by Islanders themselves, one needs to treat these distinctive materials with care and caution.

This research thus continues to use European missionary writings where there is a lack of writings by the Samoans. This is particularly so for the earlier period of Samoan mission in southern Vanuatu and the Loyalty Islands from 1839 to 1869, as well as in Tuvalu and Kiribati from the 1860s to the 1890s. My research on Vanuatu and the Loyalty Islands for example uses primarily the reports in the LMS missionary magazine *The Samoan Reporter* as well as the *Sulu Samoa*. These periodicals written in English and Samoan contain the early mission reports of the work of the Samoans on these island groups. Although written by English missionaries, these reports were based entirely on the accounts given by the Samoans and Rarotongans who worked on their own on these islands for much of the early decades. This was the same in Tuvalu and Kiribati until the turn of the twentieth century when resident European missionaries were finally settled. Hence, although these reports were by LMS English missionaries who only visited the islands for a few days, much of what is contained in them are the witnesses of the Samoans. Where there is a lack of written narratives by Islanders therefore, European written sources still play a vital role. Despite their Eurocentric bias, they are still important in our reconstruction of the past. Bronwen Douglas has argued that we can see “indigenous countersigns” in colonial texts and images.⁵² This is in spite of those like Gananath Obeyesekere who criticised the use of European accounts as so biased and that nothing factual could be deduced, since all such ethnographic information derived from European narratives.⁵³ Douglas however insists on discerning those indigenous traces despite the racial bias in such accounts.

[the Loyalties] are innumerable. I have not written about all of them, lest you should not approve of these matters, and perhaps you may not be interested.” Cited in Ron G. Crocombe and Majorie T. Crocombe (eds), *The Works of Ta'unga: Records of a Polynesian Traveller in the Southern Seas, 1833–1896*, The Australian National University Press/University of Hawaii Press, Canberra/Honolulu, 1968, p. 111.

⁵¹ Gavan Daws, “Review of Crocombe and Crocombe 1967,” *Journal of Pacific History* vol. 4 (1969): 227–28.

⁵² Douglas, “In the event: Indigenous countersigns and the ethnohistory of voyaging.”

⁵³ Obeyesekere, “Cannibal feasts in nineteenth-century Fiji”; “Cannibal talk.”

The deployment of English as well as Samoan texts are therefore important in this study, but it must be acknowledged that the bulk of these materials was written by males, both Europeans and Samoans. As a result not only is there a Eurocentric bias, but also a gender bias in these sources. If European missionary writings marginalised Islanders, then for Samoan wives they were even further relegated in the mission sources. An example of this is the almost complete absence of their names in the early written records. The perduring question for this study therefore has been: How then can we recuperate the presence of those Samoan women who had been left out of mission writings? Douglas insists on seeing “indigenous countersigns” in European narratives, but what if those like Samoan wives were completely absent in such narratives.

My study thus also stresses the crucial value of oral history as emphasised by Tongan historian Sione Latukefu and recently re-emphasised by Christopher Ballard.⁵⁴ In the course of this research, I have conducted interviews with several living Samoan missionary wives, husbands and their descendants in Samoa, Australia and New Zealand.⁵⁵ These interviews are vital in gauging the Samoans’ experience in the mission field. This was complemented with fieldwork interviews and participant observation done in field sites in PNG and Vanuatu in 2013 for periods of three months in each

⁵⁴ Sione Latukefu argues that

while accepting the view that no absolute truth can be expected from oral traditions since those who preserve them probably do so for reasons of social, economic or political advantage, and while agreeing with Malinowski that distortion results from the sociological functions of current historical traditions, I could not accept the argument that they have no historical value whatsoever. McCall is correct in saying that “to recognize the limitations of the use of traditions is not the same as denying their value”. If social scientists were seeking only bias-free evidence they would have very little indeed to go on, even with written documents. The question that confronted me, therefore, was not whether to ignore or use oral traditions, but rather how, in using them, distortions could be detected and the likely sources of bias given proper recognition.

Sione Latukefu, “Oral history and Pacific Islands missionaries: The case of the Methodist Mission in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands,” in *Oral Tradition in Melanesia*, ed. Donald Denoon and Roderic Lacey, University of Papua New Guinea and Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies, Port Moresby, 1981, pp. 175–87; “Oral traditions: An appraisal of their value in historical research in Tonga,” *The Journal of Pacific History* vol. 3, no. 1 (1968): 135–43; Christopher Ballard, “Oceanic historicities,” *The Contemporary Pacific* vol. 26, no. 1 (2014): 95–154.

⁵⁵ Several former Samoan missionary wives and husbands now live in Australia and New Zealand. For those who had worked in PNG, many of their children became Australian citizens because they were born in PNG when it was an Australian territory. I am also drawing on several of the interviews conducted in 2003 and 2004 for my research on Samoan missionary wives in PNG. See Latu Latai, “*E au le ina’ilau a tama’ita’i: The history of Samoan missionary wives in the evangelisation of Papua New Guinea from 1883 to 1975*,” M.Th. thesis, Pacific Theological College, Suva, 2005.

country. I have conducted visits to various selected sites in PNG and Southern Vanuatu, collecting oral histories from elderly men and women, church leaders, as well as local pastors and chiefs. Through participant observation, I was also able to gain a sense of the early Samoan influences embodied in the customs and cultural performances of these societies. I have found that local recollections of the Samoans for example are memorialised in the material culture of Vanuatu and PNG—in the forms and designs of houses, canoes, and methods of weaving, roof thatches, fans, and mats. They are also remembered in the names of people, places, rivers and other important sites as well as in the names of particular species of plants introduced by Samoans. Samoan missionary wives are often remembered not only for their weaving but also in songs and dances that are still performed today. Such embodied knowledge particularly in places like Vanuatu where there is a great textual silence about the work of Samoan wives is significant in gauging their influence and experiences alongside prevalent oral traditions. Analysing these later oral sources, and embodied knowledge observed in the field, thus provide a window opening onto the archival wilderness of Samoan missionary wives in the nineteenth century. As Margaret Jolly and Serge Tcherkézoff argue,

Even when events occurred in a past too distant for the oral testimonies of living witnesses, ethnographic and linguistic knowledge acquired more recently brings a different lens to those events, which helps to recuperate indigenous agency, even if we have to hazard speculations about past motivations and strategies.⁵⁶

This thesis thus employs a range of different sources and ways of knowing, from archival sources written by European missionaries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, to oral and written histories collected from Samoan missionaries, their wives and descendants, to oral histories and embodied knowledge collected from people in Vanuatu and PNG. In juxtaposing these various sources of knowledge, a more nuanced history of Samoan missionary wives can be constructed. The blending of historical and ethnographic approaches is therefore important in revealing a sense of the embodied

⁵⁶ This is in relation to Douglas' insistence that subsequent historical or ethnographic materials, authored by Europeans or indigenous peoples, is problematic since, as she argues, "the details of indigenous motivations, the content of their strategies, the meanings of their words and actions reported in long-ago encounters with European voyagers are now difficult, if not impossible, to recover, even where rich local traditions subsist." Douglas, "In the event: Indigenous countersigns and the ethnohistory of voyaging," p. 192; Jolly and Tcherkézoff, "Oceanic encounters: A prelude," p. 15.

influences of Samoan wives in places where they worked. This is possible even when we are dealing with the earliest period of Samoan missionary wives in the nineteenth century.



Figure 8. Elders at Tubusereia looking at photos of Samoan missionaries. Photographed by Latu Latai, 31 July 2013



Figure 9. Elders of the Presbyterian Church at Anelgauhat, Aneityum Vanuatu, remembering in conversation the work of Samoan missionaries and their wives. Photographed by Latu Latai, 5 August 2013

Issues of scope and representation

I need to highlight the fact that this study covers a very extensive period from 1839 to 1979, a total of 140 years. This wide scope was at first determined in part by the lack of written sources, particularly in the nineteenth century about Samoan missionary wives in Vanuatu and Loyalty Islands. However, through the deployment of oral history and ethnographic work, this study hopes that a greater understanding of their work and experiences can be achieved in this earlier period. I must also acknowledge that my attempt to represent a very large group of women, can often lapse into making sweeping generalisations, thus stereotyping these women. This is often the case with

the studies of both European and Islander missionaries, whereby, according to Diane Langmore, the missionary, particularly a white missionary, is often seen as a “narrow minded killjoy who introduced a sense of sin into islanders” or part of the “sinister trio of capitalist imperialism in league with the trader and the official” and from the anthropologists’ perspective “a bigot and fanatic who will not let the people worship God in their own way.”⁵⁷ These stereotypes, as Langmore suggests, presuppose that there was one identifiable creature; occluding the fact that not all missionaries conform to such catchall categories. Several stereotypes of Samoan missionaries and their wives also pervade in European accounts. These include their domineering, high-handed and disciplinary approach. For Samoan missionary wives, they were often charged with carrying themselves with an air of self-importance and that they lived like “queens” with servants and nannies taking care of their domestic duties. Part of this study therefore attempts to measure these stereotypes against “reality” insofar as we can construct it in places where Samoan missionary wives worked.

Finally, one of the primary objectives of this study is to restore Islander women to the centre stage of mission history. But the important question is; how are they to be represented? As a Samoan myself and particularly as a son of Samoan missionary parents, I might be tempted to take the celebratory trajectory. This was perhaps the first reason why I was interested in pursuing this research, not only to tell the stories of my own parents but to highlight the important contribution of Samoan wives, something that was missing in the history books that I was reading in schools and local seminaries. Through the course of this research however, I have come to learn the importance of being a historian, in portraying a more balanced view of history. It is thus the hope of this thesis not to perpetuate the lingering and simplistic polarisation of views that depicts Islander missionaries as either saints or sinners, but rather to present a more nuanced depiction of Samoan missionary wives.

⁵⁷ Diane Langmore, *Missionary Lives, Papua, 1874–1914*, Pacific Island Monograph Series, no. 6, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1989.



Figures 10a and b. Two former Samoan missionary wives who worked in PNG with their husbands in the mid-twentieth century. Left: Tumanu Alesana in Samoa, photographed by Latu Latai, 12 December 2004. Right Lagisi Leota in Auckland New Zealand, photographed by Latu Latai, 12 March 2012

Outline of Chapters

The thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 focuses largely on the formative experiences of Samoan missionary wives. Samoan missionary wives went out as *Faletua o Faafeagaiga* or “Wives of the Covenant,” a title that is deeply etched with Samoan ideas about status, sacredness and gender relations. The chapter looks at the arrival of Christianity in Samoa and how Samoans integrated the new religion through the appropriation of the Samoan indigenous concept *feagaiga* or covenant. This process would see the elevation of the new religion, and posited the novel figures of the pastor and his wife on a level that is unparalleled in the Pacific. This process however was accompanied by European missionaries and their wives’ effort to “domesticate” women by the creation of special classes for wives and mothers and boarding schools for girls. There were however paradoxes inherent in this project, and this chapter analyses the implications this had not only on Samoan missionary wives but on Samoan women in general. As “Wives of the Covenant,” these women carried into the mission field not only Christian ideals, but also Samoan values that are rooted in indigenous notions about their role and status as Samoan women.

Chapters 2 and 3 look at the first wave of Samoan wives and their husbands in southern Vanuatu and the Loyalty Islands from 1839 to 1869. Chapter 2 explores the arrival of the Samoans on these islands and the challenges they faced particularly in relation to the impact of diseases such as malaria (indigenous to these islands) and introduced diseases such as smallpox and influenza on their work. The arrival of the Samoans also coincided with a boom in the sandalwood trade in the region, and this chapter analyses how this new capitalist movement impacted on their work. Chapter 3

analyses the encounters between Samoans and local people particularly in relation to the customs and practices on these islands. It attempts to analyse what would have been the perceptions of Samoan wives concerning the status and roles of women in Vanuatu at this earlier period. The chapter also tries to show the impact of the Samoans, and in particular Samoan wives, in the evangelisation of these islands which continue to prevail in oral traditions and embodied knowledge.

Chapter 4 follows Samoan missionary wives and their husbands to the next mission fields on the islands of Tuvalu and Kiribati from the 1860s to the 1890s. The work of the Samoans on these islands was far more successful than in the previous field in Vanuatu and the Loyalty Islands. The chapter thus explores the factors that gave rise to this success. In particular is their closer proximity to Samoa as well as their shared social, cultural and linguistic links. It analyses the physical and material signs of conversion and the vital role of Samoan wives in such visible transformation. Despite such success the Samoans were also heavily criticised not only by LMS missionaries but also by other colonial observers. The chapter thus analyses these harsh criticisms, particularly those targeting Samoan wives, in light of the kind of Christianity that was developing in Samoa that informed the manner in which they carried out their work.

The final two chapters focus on PNG, the last frontier for Samoan missionary wives and their husbands. These chapters traverse a large terrain of place and period from 1883 to 1979. PNG was where the majority of the Samoans were sent, and where many died due mainly to diseases like malaria and influenza. Chapter 6 looks at the first fifty years of the Samoans in PNG and the struggles that the Samoans faced not only in relation to diseases but because this was a vast and physically challenging field. It analyses how their perceptions of this impenetrable landscape were combined with their ideas of the “savage” and “dark” nature of Papuan customs and practices particularly those to do with the roles and status of Papuan women. It explores how such notions impacted on the manner in which they carried out their work. It looks particularly at the experiences and the extraordinary work of Samoan wives in such a challenging field. Chapter 7 looks at the final group of Samoan wives in the final decades of their work in PNG. It analyses this last group of Samoan wives and their encounter with the persisting local customs and practices relevant to the roles and status of women in

PNG. Of particular interest is their attempt to “uplift” local women and the paradoxes inherent in this project.



Figures 11a and b. *Former Samoan missionary wives who worked in PNG in the mid-twentieth century. Left Lusa Fuatai (died 2015), photographed by Latu Latai in Samoa, 21 December 2004. Right Olivia Latai (died 2009), photographed by Latu Latai in Samoa, 30 December 2004.*



Figures 12a and b. *More former Samoan missionary wives who worked in PNG in the mid-twentieth century. Left: Lupeline Tagaloo, photographed by Latu Latai in Samoa, 3 April 2012. Right: Teipo Taeleipu Aiono photographed by Latu Latai in Samoa, 29 March 2012.*

The chapters thus attempt to weave together analyses of the experiences, work and perceptions of Samoan missionary wives in different fields, contexts and time. The hope of this study is to highlight not only their extraordinary stories but also the impact and contribution of Samoan wives to this incredible, vast and ultimately

successful project in the evangelisation of the western Pacific. As suggestive in the title of this thesis, despite the prolonged, challenging and diverse nature of this mission project, Samoan missionary wives were “Covenant Keepers” in the sense that they had a commitment not only as keepers of a new covenant based on their newfound faith, but also on Samoan ideas about their roles and status as Samoan women.

CHAPTER 1. COVENANT IN THE MAKING: THE ARRIVAL OF CHRISTIANITY IN SAMOA AND THE FORMATION OF SAMOAN MISSIONARY WIVES

One of the most admired forms of the Samoan language is the *lauga* or oratory speech.¹ A *lauga* is an important part of any Samoan gathering like an *ava*² ceremony when visitors are officially welcomed, or ceremonial events such as the bestowal of chiefly titles. A significant part in the structure of a Samoan speech is the announcement of *taeao* or mornings. These “mornings” are regarded as the major turning points in the history of Samoa. It is expected of an orator when delivering a speech that these mornings are announced in their order of precedence. At the climax of this section, the orator would sum up by saying, *Ae ui a i isi taeao o le atunuu, ae o le taeao sili lava le taeao o le Talalelei* (Of all the mornings of the country, the most important morning is the morning of the Gospel).³ Chiefly oratory thus reflects on the arrival of Christianity as a crucial event in the history of Samoa. To Samoans, this event signifies the breaking of a new dawn, a new age, a turning point in Samoa’s history. The enormity of this rupture is embedded in the collective memory of Samoans and is still expressed today in Samoan language and oral traditions.⁴

This high regard for the coming of the Gospel expressed in oratorical language is attributed both to the enduring impact of Christianity, and the value it swiftly gained in Samoan society. Christianity continues tenaciously at the core of Samoan culture and likely will for many years to come. Samoan oratory likewise remains a central source

¹ A detailed understanding of the Samoan *lauga* in its formal structure can be found in Faamatuainu Faafetai Tui, *Lauga: Samoan Oratory*, University of the South Pacific and National University of Samoa, 1987.

² *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 bestowal of chiefly titles, village meetings and when welcoming visitors. See Augustine Krämer, *The Samoa Islands: An Outline of a Monograph with Particular Consideration of German Samoa, Vol. I*, 1902, trans. Theodore Verhaaren, University of Hawai‘i Press, Honolulu, 1994, pp. 20–21.

³ The orator would often give supporting statements to this such as, *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); or *O mea na sa fai i aso o nuupo. Ua ao Samoa* (Those things were done in the dark days. Samoa is enlightened).

⁴ According to Samoan theologian and historian 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 religious thought, forms and ideologies. Lalomilo Kamu, *The Samoan Culture and the Christian Gospel*, Methodist Printing Press, Suva, 1996, pp. 55–56.

for understanding Samoans' philosophy, theology and general worldviews.⁵ But the centrality of Christianity is also attributed to the remarkable welcome with which the new religion was received in Samoa. When John Williams of the LMS arrived on 24 August 1830,⁶ his reception was marked with incredible enthusiasm. Malietoa Vaiinupo, the most powerful chief in Samoa at the time received Williams and said, "This ... 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 *aiga tasi*, one family, and hope you will do the same."⁷ Malietoa's favourable stance was an essential factor in the success of the mission, but Williams also noticed the enthusiasm of the Samoans in general. When he returned in 1832, he was met with news of the continual spread of the new religion. After visiting other parts of the archipelago, he noticed that the mission was favourably received in all the islands. He wrote that, "The rapidity of the work is another circumstance of too great importance to be overlooked. Wherever I went I was received with the greatest respect, and all classes manifested a desire for missionaries."⁸ He observed that, compared to Tahiti, the mission in Samoa was peaceful and successful. "In less than twenty short months chapels were erected, and the people anxiously waiting for instruction."⁹ In the end, Williams' delight at the positive turn of events was attributed to "the gracious interposition of Divine Providence, which so remarkably prepared and prospered our way at the Navigators' Islands... 'Here is something more than an accident: *this is the finger of God!*'"¹⁰

Williams may have attributed his positive reception to the divine will of God, but it was also clear that the Samoans were ready to receive the new religion. Samoan oral

⁵ When we talk about the Samoan language we are referring to two main variants; 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 or traditional events and ceremonies. 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 are available to all. Kamu, *The Samoan Culture and the Christian Gospel*, p. 56.

⁶ John Williams, *A Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands*, John Snow, London, 1840, p. 85.

⁷ Ibid., p. 90.

⁸ Ibid., p. 149.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 148.

history largely attributes the arrival of Christianity to the fulfilment of a prophecy by the war goddess Nafanua, who prophesied the coming of Christianity and ushered Samoa into a new era. According to Samoan mythology, Nafanua was renowned for her power and strength and was able to unite Samoa under her leadership. Many of the Samoan legends and important titles either originated from her victorious endeavours or her *mavaega* (dying wishes). She was notable for her advice and wisdom and many chiefs and warriors consulted her before engaging in war. The legend goes that before she died, the paramount chiefs of Samoa sought to gain their share of her kingdom. Sadly when Malietoa arrived, all the shares were given away and when he asked for his share of *ao* (heads) of her kingdom, she replied “*Tali i le lagi se ao o lou malo*” meaning “Await a head of your Kingdom from Heaven.”¹¹

At the time of Williams’ arrival, Vaiinupo, the holder of the Malietoa title, held the balance of power. He was the most powerful chief having just reached the *Tafaifa* status. The *Tafaifa* refers to the four highest paramount titles of Samoa. These titles were called *papa*¹² and the person who held all four, governed all of Samoa. When Williams arrived and sought Malietoa, this was believed to be the fulfilment of Nafanua’s prophecy. Later when Malietoa died, his conviction in this prophecy and in the Gospel is reflected in his dying testimony. He split the *Tafaifa* titles which had caused political rivalry in the past, in the hope that there would be no more war in Samoa. This interpretation of history is still highly regarded and is often recounted and narrated in chiefly oration.

¹¹ The Malietoa referred to here is Malietoa Fitiseanu. He was succeeded by Gatuitasina and then Malietoa Vaiinupo who accepted John Williams. See Malama Meleisea on a summary of Nafanua’s prophecy, *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa*, University of the South Pacific, Suva, 1987, pp. 57–58.

¹² The *papa* titles are Gatoaitale, Tamasoalii, Tuiaana and Tuiatua. Salamasina, a woman, was the first person who held the four highest chiefly titles, called the *papa*, which governed all of Samoa and by this she was conferred the “tupu of Samoa” or “Queen of Samoa.” 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 testimony gave the titles to Malietoa Vaiinupo in 1802. Malietoa received the Gatoaitale and Tamasoalii titles from Afega and Safata which made him the Tafaifa. 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 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. See Meleisea, *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa*, pp. 31–32, 74.

The fulfilment of ancient prophecies celebrated in oral tradition and oratory is thus significant to Samoan understanding of the reception of Christianity. An understanding that also explains not only the centrality of Christianity in Samoa but also of the novel and divine figure of the Samoan pastor. The first official meeting between Malietoa and Williams is often celebrated in Samoan oratory as the establishment of a new covenant between Samoa and the new god Jehovah. This covenant was symbolically sealed with the conferring of the title of *fa'afeagaiga* onto the white missionaries and subsequently Samoan pastors.¹³ When Samoans today refer to a pastor, one says "*Lau susuga i le Fa'afeagaiga*" (Your honourable the "Covenant"). The prefix '*fa'a*' is a causative prefix that means "to be," *fa'afeagaiga* thus means "to be *feagaiga*." Here we see the values of *feagaiga* being transposed to the pastor. The bestowal of this title was the highest honour that Malietoa could have given to this novel figure of the pastor,¹⁴ an honour that was traditionally given to Samoan women as "sisters." This attribution was centrally significant to the status of women in Samoan society, a prestigious and honorary position that conferred on them important power and influence. The transposition of the *feagaiga* onto the novel figure of the pastor, was perhaps the most appropriate way in which the new religion could be integrated into Samoan society. *Feagaiga* was not only an indigenous concept central to gender relations in Samoa but it also defines the dual relationship between the sacred and secular in Samoan epistemology and worldview. This process thus reflects the continuity of Samoan ideas about religion. As we will see, this process elevated the position of Christianity in Samoa and along with it the status of the pastor and his wife. But, as we will also see, this process of transposition was a complex one that would subsequently transform the status of women in Samoa in complex and varied ways. Samoan missionary wives who went to the western Pacific were *Faletua o Faafeagaiga*, or Wives of the "Covenant." I will analyse how the transposition of the *feagaiga* influenced their status as wives of Samoan missionaries.

¹³ Aiono F. Le Tagaloa, "Western Samoa: The sacred covenant," in *Land Rights of Pacific Women*, University of the South Pacific, Suva, 1986, pp. 102–109.

¹⁴ Serge Tcherkézoff, "Culture, nation and society: Secondary change and fundamental transformations in Western Samoa – towards a model for the study of cultural dynamics," in *The Changing South Pacific: Identities and Transformations*, ed. Serge Tcherkézoff and Françoise Douaire-Marsaudon, ANU E Press, Canberra, 2008, pp. 245–302.

The advent of Christianity and conversion in Samoa

Contrary to the view of a divine fulfilment of prophecy and the popular interpretation of history found both in Samoan oral traditions and in missionary accounts, a more critical historical analysis has suggested other important factors that contributed to the successful reception of Christianity. Firstly, there was already an awareness of the new religion in Samoa before the arrival of Williams.¹⁵ Malietoa himself referred to the fact that he had heard of the *lotu* and was anticipating its arrival. Indeed, Williams himself was not the first to introduce Christianity. A crude form of Christianity was introduced in the early 1820s by merchants and traders as well as castaway convicts and beachcombers who washed up on the shores of Samoa.¹⁶ These men represented what became known as the “sailors’ sect.” Samoans themselves, who had traversed the Pacific and beyond also introduced other forms of Christianity. A Samoan chief named Saivaaia while visiting relatives in Tonga in the mid-1820s, was converted and 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.¹⁷ Another Samoan by the name

¹⁵ Williams heard of the “sailors’ sect” on his second visit from William Gray, an English man who had been living in Samoa for three years. He told Williams of a sailor by the name of Salima who was diligent in evangelising and was quite successful. He also met two English men who came on board and claimed that they had converted about 300 Samoans. They had preached and baptised people much to the horror of Williams. He told them that they were ignorant and wicked men for administering the sacred ordinance of baptism. See Richard Moyle, *The Samoan Journals of John Williams 1830 and 1832*, ANU Press, Canberra, 1984, pp. 68, 109–14; see also Kamu, *The Samoan Culture and the Christian Gospel*, p. 64; and Malama Meleisea, *A Short History of Western Samoa*, University of the South Pacific, Suva, 1987, p. 52.

¹⁶ Françoise Douaire-Marsaudon has shown how in Tonga beachcombers, escaped convicts and castaways were significant to the introduction of Christianity before the arrival of European missionaries. See Françoise Douaire-Marsaudon, “Uncertain times: Sailors, beachcombers and castaways as ‘missionaries’ and cultural mediators in Tonga (Polynesia),” in *Oceanic Encounters: Exchange, Desire, Violence*, ed. Margaret Jolly, Serge Tcherkézoff and Darrell Tryon, Canberra: ANU E Press, 2009, pp. 161–74.

¹⁷ Converted to Methodism in 1829 while in Tonga, he returned to Samoa and fought against Malietoa. It is also believed that he was in the company of the Samoan visionary and prophet Siovoli. The two men went first to Tonga, then to the Society Islands with Captain Henry. References in one of the hymns composed by Siovoli and quoted in John Williams’ journal in 1832 suggest that the men may have returned to Samoa via Britain, New South Wales and Tonga. When Williams first met Malietoa in 1832 he appealed to Malietoa to spare the life of Saivaaia (also known as Tuinaula), a paramount chief of Satupaitea village in 1830. This was on the understanding that Saivaaia was among the forces opposed to Malietoa in Upolu. Later when Williams arrived, he requested teachers from Malietoa. Rebuffed by Malietoa, he then petitioned the Wesleyans in Tonga for a resident missionary. See Moyle, *The Samoan Journals of John Williams 1830 and 1832*, p. 73; Martin Dyson *Light and Shade in Samoan Mission Life*, Microfilm no. A2583, Mitchell Library, Sydney, 1865, p. 13; Archibald W. Murray, *Forty Years’ Mission Work in Polynesia and New Guinea from 1835 to 1875*, Robert Carter & Brothers, New York, 1876, p. 33; see also Elia Tulifau Taase, “Beyond Samoan Christianity: A study of the Siovoli cult and the problems facing the Church in Samoa today,” B.D. thesis, Pacific Theological College, 1971.

of Siovili was also responsible for the introduction of a distorted version of Christianity just several months before Williams arrived. In about 1827, he travelled to Tonga on a merchant ship and ended up in New South Wales where he attended Anglican and Catholic Churches. Upon his return to Samoa he initiated what became known as the Siovili Cult. Siovili was said to have carried out healing and claimed that Jesus spoke directly to him. When Williams arrived he referred to him as an imposter who learned about Christianity but then took advantage and practised much deceit upon the people.¹⁸

Samoans were thus already showing a keen interest as shown by their reactions to the earlier forms of Christianity as well as the arrival of the LMS. Despite the horror of the missionaries who fiercely rejected these earlier forms of Christianity as both heretic and blasphemous, the Samoans and in particular their chiefs were already showing competitive interests in the new religion. Malietoa's favourable stance therefore may have been taken for political reasons. Associating with Europeans and the *lotu* was seen as a powerful statement to his rival chiefs. Although he was the *Tafa'ifa*, political power in Samoa was never vested in a single chief and the holder of the *Tafa'ifa* was always conscious of the limitation of his authority. Real power lay in the hands of the powerful oratory groups and political constituencies who conferred the four *papa* titles.¹⁹ Evidence shows that Malietoa accepted Williams in order to protect his elite status and to maintain people's respect for his authority. Williams wrote that when he refused to give Malietoa a gun, he pleaded that he would become the laughing stock of all his brother chiefs. He said, "They would say a vessel had come to him from a far land but had not brought him one Musket."²⁰ Malietoa thus saw Williams as a means to consolidate his authority, not just by providing firearms, but by his very association with the white missionary. Williams noted that "Malietoa had no real authority but at his own place except in case of war or anything which concerns the people as a body when they look up to him in war."²¹ This was further noted when Williams returned in

¹⁸ Williams, *A Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands*, p. 111. See also Taase, "Beyond Samoan Christianity," p. 47.

¹⁹ This was one of the reasons for civil wars in Samoa as chiefs were always attempting to gain support and allies from the power bases who conferred the *papa* titles.

²⁰ Moyle, *The Samoan Journals of John Williams 1830 and 1832*, p. 76.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

1832 and the eight Tahitian teachers he left behind were not distributed to other parts of Samoa. Williams must have thought initially that Malietoa's *Tafaifa* status made him king over Samoa; however, when he failed to distribute the teachers, this demonstrated that he had no absolute authority to do as he pleased.²²

Chiefly political interest in Christianity was thus evident but the Samoans were also interested in the material possessions of the missionaries.²³ The previous association of Samoans with European travellers meant that there was already a strong awareness of the wealth Europeans possessed. Trading these objects had been going on for some time and the Samoans thought that the many useful and beautiful possessions of the Europeans came from their God.²⁴ Fauea, the Samoan who accompanied Williams from Tonga, stressed this to the Samoans when he made reference to the superiority of the Christian God. 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 sun ... their bodies are clothed all over with beautiful cloth, while we have nothing but a bandage of leaves around our waist; 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!²⁵

Williams noticed the Samoans' interest in these material objects. He wrote,

Scissors Knives hatchets etc etc are all acceptable property but at present the large sky blue bead is the gold and silver of the country. Their eyes sparkle with joy when they see them. Tin also was in great demand. For half a dozen sheets of tin cut up in small

²² See Featuna'i B. Liuaana, "Samoa Tula'i: Ecclesiastical and political face of Samoa's Independence, 1900–1962," Ph.D. thesis, The Australian National University, 2001, p. 10.

²³ Polynesian interest in guns, cloth, iron, ships and so on, is extraordinarily widely contested. Caroline Ralston argues against the view that Polynesian millennial movements were motivated primarily by an extraordinary desire for European property. Nicholas Thomas suggests however that interest in material wealth does not mark a Polynesian thirst for a "Western goods" as such but rather an interest in the indigenous forms of prestige and power that possession and deployment of those goods at once enabled and marked. See Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, and London, 1991, Chapter 3; Caroline Ralston, "Review," *Pacific Studies* vol. 9, no. 1 (November 1985): 150.

²⁴ Williams noted people coming to trade as they arrived. People thought that this was a trading ship. See Moyle, *The Samoan Journals of John Williams 1830 and 1832*, p. 69.

²⁵ Williams, *A Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands*, p. 86.

pieces a large vessel might have obtained refreshments enough for a cruise. They have lately taken to smoke tobacco and they want the tin to line their pipes with.²⁶

Williams also noted how several Samoans had embraced wearing cloth entirely and “On Sabbath days ... the Teachers have succeeded in inducing the whole congregation men & women to attend properly clothed & decently covered.”²⁷ Samoans were thus open to the new religion and it was perhaps the combination of these political, religious and material factors that contributed to its enthusiastic reception in Samoa. Early conversion in Samoa was thus marked by incredible rapidity. When the Tahitians and Rarotongans accepted Christianity, they burned their “idols” and pulled down their temples.²⁸ Samoans did not construct elaborate temples or “idols,” so the rejection of the old gods was symbolised by a ceremony in which new converts ate their *aitu* or totemic deities.²⁹ Williams described in his journal of 1832 how each person in Samoa was forbidden to eat a certain species of bird, animal or fish because they represented their ancestral, village or district *aitu*. When a village decided to convert, a large gathering was held during which the creatures which were sacred to them were cooked and eaten. This so desecrated the spirit in each creature that it could never be worshipped again. This ceremony of eating the *aitu* was carried out by Malietoa and 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

²⁶ Blue glass beads had been popular in Samoa as an item of barter long before the arrival of Williams. On Roggeveen’s visit in 1722, La Pérouse in 1787 and Kotzebue in 1824, they were preferred over any other single item. When Williams visited again in 1832, a chief asked for muskets and beads. Moyle, *The Samoan Journals of John Williams 1830 and 1832*, pp. 105, 222.

²⁷ Moyle, *The Samoan Journals of John Williams 1830 and 1832*, p. 231. See also Thomas on the significant value that Samoans had in the adoption of European cloth. Nicholas Thomas, “The case of the misplaced poncho: Speculations concerning the history of cloth in Polynesian,” in *Clothing the Pacific*, ed. Chloë Colchester, Berg, Oxford, 2003, pp. 79–96, pp. 91–94. See also Serge Tcherkézoff, “‘On cloth, gifts and nudity’ regarding some European misunderstandings during early encounters in Polynesia,” in *Clothing the Pacific*, ed. Colchester, pp. 51–75.

²⁸ Kerry R. Howe, *Where the Waves Fall*, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, London, 1984, p. 144.

²⁹ 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 or summoned by the various classes of the priesthood. John B. Stair, *Old Samoa*, Religious Tract Society, Oxford, 1897, pp. 211–15.

of the natives, the *aitu* was thoroughly desecrated that it could never again be regarded as an object of religious veneration.³⁰

These incidents of experimentation with the old gods, created mass conversions. But it must be noted that these conversions were nominal and largely based on the communal nature of Samoan society. Once chiefs took the lead in conversion, their extended kin, villages and entire districts would follow. Deep conversion to an extent would have been decades in the making while the Samoans took on the new religion while conserving many of the old beliefs. Malama Meleisea notes, that while the Samoans were able to accommodate Christianity, and even welcomed it as an epistemological solution to the challenges that increasing contact with Europeans presented to old beliefs, they did so with characteristic conservatism and with deliberation, for the most materialist of reasons and with strong presumptions about the new religion.³¹ Williams himself noted the deliberate and conservative nature of the Samoans early on when at a meeting a chief stood up and said,

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 Tangaroa, of the Samoa Islands, what reply would they make? Would they not say, Don't be in haste; let us know something more of Tangaroa, 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.³²

Their conservative nature meant that the Samoans were not passive recipients of the new faith and they took great care and exercised deep thought before converting. The Samoans were prescient in thinking that Christianity was to become an integral part of the fabric of their society. The new religion could be potentially disruptive to their existing belief systems and way of life. But a process of appropriation was employed

³⁰ Williams, *A Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands*, p. 113.

³¹ Malama Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, Institute of Pacific Studies, Suva, 1987, p. 12. Meleisea argues that Kerry Howe's book, *Where the Waves Fall* gave too much weight to native agency, thereby underplaying the destructive effects of western interference. Paradoxically, Caroline Ralston chided Howe rather for smuggling in a "fatal impact" perspective in spite of his avowed intentions. She argues for example that the title of his book, seemed to define the islands as the place where foreign "waves" landed. See Malama Meleisea, "Preface," in *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa*, Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva, p. vii; Ralston, "Review," p. 150.

³² Williams, *A Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands*, p. 149.

whereby existing indigenous models and values were deployed, translated and transposed in order to incorporate the new religion. Samoan Church historian and theologian Lalomilo Kamu argues that Samoans appropriated the new religion based on Samoa's existing traditional belief system. According to him, belief in the divine or in one Supreme Being was not foreign to the Samoan people. It was not even considered something new brought by the missionary movement.³³ Although Samoan religion was polytheistic, Samoans also believed in the supreme god Tagaloa who created humanity and the world. Kamu thus emphasises the similarities between the creation legends of Samoa as well as those in the Biblical accounts. He also examined indigenous Samoan ideas of worship, spirituality and concepts such as atonement and redemption and refers to these as "pre-Christian concepts" which fitted the Christian concepts of God brought by the missionaries.³⁴ He wrote that, "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."³⁵

Kamu thus shows the open and dynamic nature of Samoan religion and the ability of the Samoans to identify old religious concepts with those of the new religion. The consonance between earlier Samoan religious values and beliefs and the teachings of Christianity is a vital point. It also shows how the evangelisation of Samoa was not a linear process whereby Samoans disregarded their old beliefs and replaced them with new ones. Rather it implies a much more active role of Samoans in the process of conversion, in negotiating between old and new values.

³³ Kamu, *The Samoan Culture and the Christian Gospel*, p. 8.

³⁴ The similarities between Samoa's traditional religion and, the Christian religion are another viable explanation of the successful introduction of Christianity to Samoa. Kamu refers to these as "pre-Christian concepts" of God which fitted the Christian concepts of God brought by the missionaries. The acts of redemption and atonement so central in the Christian religion are perhaps best illustrated in the practice of *ifoga*, where when one commits an offence within the village, the culprit would find the highest chief or his or her kin to kneel covered 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. This is atonement in the Samoan culture and it was practised long before the arrival of the missionaries. Belief in a creator god, spiritual realm and life beyond death were also part of Samoan religion. Samoans also believed in a spiritual world where the spirits of the dead descend. Pulotu is believed to be the abode of the blest. Samoans believed 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. On pre-Christian religion see Stair, *Old Samoa*, p. 217; George Turner, *Samoa: A Hundred Years Ago and Long Before*, Macmillan, London, 1884.

³⁵ Kamu, *The Samoan Culture and the Christian Gospel*, p. 31.

When Malietoa received Williams on their first encounter, he expressed his wish that the missionaries and Samoa would be *aiga tasi*, one kin. *Aiga* in its indigenous Samoan sense is much more expansive than the western sense of a nucleated family. *Aiga* incorporates the whole extended kin. In Samoa this can even extend to a whole village or even the whole country. In his Independence address to the nation, the Head of State of Samoa Tui-Atua Tupua Tamasese recently said that “*O Samoa e le o se Malo, O Samoa o le uso ma le Aiga*,” (Samoa is not government. Samoa is family and brotherhood).³⁶ This statement alludes to the belief that all Samoans are connected and their genealogical history can be traced to one origin. Thus when Malietoa told Williams that he hoped for them to be *aiga tasi*, it meant that the new religion would be integrated with that long genealogical history. From the missionaries’ point of view, Samoa’s enthusiastic embrace of Christianity would mean a complete rupture from the old Samoa. However, from the Samoans’ point of view, the new religion would be integrated into their own existing systems, social structures and long genealogical history. This integration as we will see was seen in the transposition of the highest honour of the *feagaiga* or covenant onto the new religion.

The Covenant: Integration and appropriation of Christianity

According to the LMS missionary George Pratt, who published the first Samoan dictionary in 1862, the word *feagaiga* refers to an established relationship between different parties such as those between brothers and sisters and their children, and between chiefs and *tulafale* or “orators.” Furthermore he stated that the term is adopted generally to mean an agreement or a covenant.³⁷ The word *feagaiga* however

³⁶ Tupua Tamasese’s Independence Address for the 50th Anniversary of Samoa’s Independence. In Leasiolagi Malama Meleisea, Ellie Meleisea and Penelope Schoeffel (eds), *Samoa’s Journey 1962–2012: Aspects of History*, Victoria University Press, Wellington, 2012, pp. 9–12.

³⁷ George Pratt in 1862 defines *feagaiga* as “an established relationship between different parties, as between brothers and sisters and their children; between chiefs and their *tulafale* (orators).” Pratt refers specifically to the special relationship between sister and brother, between the children of sister-brother pairs, and between chiefs and orators and heads of families. As Pratt rightly pointed out, the concept of *feagaiga* exists both in the brother-sister relationship as well as high chiefs and their orators. Sisters and high chiefs were seen to encapsulate the ideals of honour, dignity, grace and sacredness, in contrast to brothers and orators who represent more mundane instrumental qualities. Yet, in the early period soon after the arrival of missionaries in 1830, the word *feagaiga* was already widely used by missionaries to refer to covenants in the Bible. In the LMS missionary magazine, *Sulu Samoa*, which was first published in 1839 entirely in the Samoan language, the term was used to refer, for example, to the covenants in the Old Testament between Jehovah and the people of Israel, between Jehovah and Abraham, and other patriarchs of the Old Testament. These Biblical covenants were considered sacred and involved certain promises, taboos and obligations, to which both parties must adhere. Missionaries

from a Samoan epistemological viewpoint is more than just an agreement or contract, as it has a sacred element. The word itself comes from the word *feagai* which means to be opposite to another. In Samoa, to be so opposed does not denote a state of agonistic conflict but rather of persons or parties being in a reciprocal or mutual status and valuation. *Feagai* is a crucial aspect of Samoan life, which dictates how people relate to each other and is deeply connected to values such as *tapu* (taboo), *faaaloalo* (mutual respect) and *va tapuia* (sacred and relational space).³⁸ It applies to various social relationships within the *aiga* or extended kin and the village. For example, certain roles and ways of behaviour are viewed as appropriate according to age and status. The young are obliged to talk respectfully to their elders, using *gagana faaaloalo* or respectful language. Untitled men are to approach chiefs or holders of *matai* titles with deference and courtesy.

In a formal setting both within the family and village, members are seated according to their status. It would be inconceivable for one of lesser status to sit opposite a high-ranking chief. Sitting arrangements are therefore important in establishing and rendering visible orders of hierarchy within a social gathering. Serge Tcherkézoff suggests that this order of hierarchy should not be seen through a western lens of inequality, but rather in terms of those at the top encompassing others.³⁹ In a gathering of the *fono a matai* or the village council of chiefs, the seating arrangements

saw the parallels of these covenants in the relationships between brothers and sisters and chiefs and their orators and applied the term “covenant” to these indigenous relationships. The term today however has been transformed as it is now used to refer to contractual agreements or treaties. This change is seen in the translation given by G.B. Milner in 1966. The older meaning however in terms of a sacred relationship is still understood today. See Latu Latai, “Changing covenants in Samoa? From brothers and sisters to husbands and wives?” *Oceania* vol. 85, no. 1 (2015): 92–104; see also George Pratt, *A Samoan Dictionary*, London Missionary Society Press, Samoa, 1862, p. 118; George B. Milner, *Samoa Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, London, 1966; “Problems of the structures of concepts in Samoa: An investigation of vernacular statement and meaning,” Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1968.

³⁸ Albert Wendt, “Afterword: Tatauing the post-colonial body,” in *Inside Out: Literature, Cultural Politics, and Identity in the New Pacific*, ed. Vilisoni Hereniko and Rob Wilson, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Lanham, 1999, pp. 399–412; see also Efi Tui-Atua Tupua Tamasese, *Su’esu’e Manogi – In Search of Fragrance*; “*Sufiga o le tuaoi*: Negotiating boundaries – from Beethoven to Tupac, the Pope to the Dalai Lama,” Keynote Address, Samoa Conference II, NUS, Le Papaigalagala Campus, Vaivase, Samoa, 5 July 2011.

³⁹ Serge Tcherkézoff, “Hierarchy is no inequality – in Polynesia, for instance,” in *Hierarchy: Persistence and Transformation in Social Formations*, ed. Knut M. Rio and Olaf H. Smedal, Berghahn Books, New York and Oxford, 2009, pp. 299–330.

are orchestrated in the architectural design of the *faletele* or meeting house.⁴⁰ The *fale* is of oval or circular design with a circle of posts holding a domed roof. At each post sits a holder of a chiefly title who represents his or her *aiga* in the gathering of title holders in the village. The village, the basic form of polity in Samoa is a group of extended kin. They have important historical connections which are captured in the honorifics of titles and collective genealogy of the village. Each family therefore has a representative voice in the affairs of the village. This is expressed through the holder of the family title who represents the family in the village council of chiefs. The *fono a matai* is thus representative of the whole village and the *aiga* is not an independent entity but an integral part of the community. At a gathering, once all the posts of the *fale* are occupied, orators would refer to this state of order in the expression, '*Ua feagai segaula*'⁴¹ meaning all sides are befittingly seated and paired like lory birds. When such expressions are stated, it means that everything is in a state of order, the circle is complete and the meeting or ceremonial gathering can proceed. The word *feagai* as applied here therefore on a deeper level, refers to a state of collective harmony and appropriateness. This has a different sense to that of an agreement which usually in English refers to choices between agents more individually conceived.

This state of order is perhaps what Tamasese refers to as the sacred relation or "harmony" to which Samoans aspire, including harmony amongst people, with the cosmos and with the environment. This harmony is based on the Samoan belief that all things—living and non-living, physical and spiritual—are deeply integrated and dependent on one another.⁴² Concepts such as *tapu*, *faaloalo* and *va tapuia* are crucial in maintaining this harmony and life itself. The term *feagaiga* broadly applied invokes a foundational Samoan worldview that dictates how people relate to one another and

⁴⁰ As I have argued elsewhere, the architecture of the Samoa *fale* is symbolic of the relational nature of the Samoan person, as well as the extended nature of Samoan kinship. See Latu Latai, "From open *fale* to mission houses: Negotiating the boundaries of domesticity in Samoa," in *Divine Domesticities: Paradoxes of Christian Modernities in Asia and the Pacific*, ed. Hyaeweol Choi and Margaret Jolly, ANU E Press, Canberra, 2014, pp. 299–324.

⁴¹ The literal translation is "The lory birds have faced each other." Traditionally lory birds were tamed pets for high chiefs and they usually sat on their shoulders wherever they went. This oratory saying refers to when two high chiefs meet and face each other with the birds on their shoulder.

⁴² Efi Tui-AtuaTupua Tamasese, "In search of harmony: Peace in the Samoan indigenous religion," in *Su'esu'e Manogi – In Search of Fragrance: Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi and the Samoan Indigenous Reference*, ed. and comp. Tamasailau M. Suaalii – Sauni ... et al., Centre for Samoan Studies, National University of Samoa, 2009, pp. 104–114; "*Sufiga o le tuaoi*: negotiating boundaries."

the world that surrounds them. Applied to social relations, the term *feagaiga* is a “covenant” directed at maintaining a state of harmony within kin and Samoan society as a whole. In Samoa, this is illustrated clearly in the brother-sister relationship which is crucial not only to gender relations, but also the relation between the secular and sacred.

According to Samoan belief, the woman is born a *tamasā* or “sacred offspring.” In Samoan theology, she is regarded as a sacred vessel of divinity with powers to attract the divine. This sacred valuation determines her status and roles within the family. She is called *feagaiga* which has been translated as “covenant.” This refers to the sacred covenant of respect between a brother and a sister which gives special honour to the sister and reciprocal tribute to the brother. In this covenantal relationship, both parties have obligations that dictate their behaviour towards each other. From childhood brothers and sisters observe certain taboos. The brother is not allowed to be near his sister nor indeed be alone with her. In her presence and later in her house no indecent conversations could be engaged in. A boy is not allowed to even touch his sister’s personal possessions, particularly her clothing or the mat she sleeps on. Hence there is a particular taboo on everything sexual. Sisters and brothers are not supposed to have any knowledge of one another’s premarital sexual activities which are forbidden to girls but not to boys. This is because incest is strictly taboo and is thought to lead to a curse on the family.⁴³

In this brother-sister relationship, the brother is required to serve and care for his sister as long as he lives. There are several sayings in the Samoan language that bear out this service or *tautua*.⁴⁴ *O le ioimata i le mata o le tuagane lona tuafafine* (The

⁴³ Penelope Schoeffel, “The Samoan concept of feagaiga and its transformation,” in *Tonga and Samoa: Images of Gender and Polity*, ed. Judith Huntsman, Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies, Christchurch, 1995, pp. 85–106; Latai, “Changing covenants in Samoa.”

⁴⁴ *Tautua* is a central concept in Samoa, expressed in the saying *O le ala i le pule o le tautua* which translates as “The path to authority is service.” This service is broad and applies to all forms of social and kinship relations, between brother and sister, parents and children, chiefs and their kin, etc. For the brother it can be in the form of providing food and protection for the family and for the sister in the form of making valuables like fine mats and *siapo* or *tapa*. *Tautua* is thus an essential criterion for the selection of appropriate holders of titles which include one who was most prominent and diligent in service. However, today *tautua* incorporates the ability to provide financially for the family or being able to add prestige to the family by having a highly paid government job. Thus we see those living overseas contributing cash and material wealth and those in prominent government posts holding important family titles. See Tcherkézoff, “Culture, nation and society,” p. 274; Schoeffel, “The Samoan concept of feagaiga and its transformation,” p. 104.

sister is the pupil of the eye of the brother), and *E mu mata o le tama i lona tuafafine* (The brother's face burns for his sister). These sayings speak of the respect shown in this relationship where sisters are given privileged treatment. All of the brother's services given to the sister must be agreeable to her, for it is generally believed that the sister has the power to curse him if she is not pleased. As the sacred child, the sister's curse is something to be feared, hence the brother's service or *tautua* is vital and must please his sister.⁴⁵

In pre-Christian times, sisters as sacred beings were therefore highly revered and feared, and to a large extent this belief still exists today. According to Samoan belief, to ignore the wishes of the *tamasa* would lead to misfortune, sickness or death of a family member.⁴⁶ For the brother it could mean barrenness or infertility. In ancient Samoa, sisters as *feagaiga* were also spiritual mediators. In the evenings they conducted family worship and offered prayers to the family god, a role shared with the family chief.⁴⁷

The *feagaiga*'s venerated status however comes with serious responsibilities. She is called *o le pae ma le auli* or the shell and the iron referring to her role as the peace maker—the one who resolves any frictions within her family. She is the *faioa*, the maker and provider of cultural wealth and valuables like *ietoga* or fine pandanus textiles and *siapo* or tapa that are extremely important and essential in the social and cultural life of Samoans. These highly valuable items are not only essential to ceremonial gift exchanges but are also crucial in the custom of *ifoga* or public apology in which the culprit is covered with the *ietoga*. The *ietoga* symbolically acts to protect the culprit from any harm, and in this way the culprit can be redeemed. The redemption relates to the sister's role as the *tausala* or redeemer and *taulaga* or offering that will be able to redeem the family in times of dire need. Most significantly, the sister carries the *mamalu* or honour of the family which she has to maintain by keeping her virginity. In ancient Samoa, this was perhaps her most serious

⁴⁵ Samoans believe that sisters held the power to curse the brothers with the blight of barrenness. This is still a common belief among Samoans today, See Irving Goldman, *Ancient Polynesian Society*, University of Chicago, Chicago, 1970, p. 252.

⁴⁶ Horst Cain, "The sacred child and the origin of spirits in Samoa," *Anthropos* vol. 66 (1971): 173–81.

⁴⁷ Meleisea, *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa*, p. 37. See also Fanaafi Aiono Le Tagaloa, *Tapuai: Samoan Worship*, Mālūa Printing Press, Mālūa, 2003.

responsibility as failure to do so would bring shame to her brothers and the rest of the family.

The traditional sacred valuation of Samoan women as *feagaiga* gives them important power and influence. They receive equal respect to that of the family chief. Women as sisters are given the attribution of *se'ese'e talaluma* "the one who sits in the front part of the house." In a family gathering this is her rightful place depicting her esteemed status. She and the *matai* are the first to be served. During important decision making relating to family matters her opinion is highly regarded and sought after. In many cases it is the sister who has the power to veto decisions of the family. When deciding a new holder of the family *matai* title, the sister in her own position could claim the title as every family member is an heir, irrespective of gender.⁴⁸ However, in many occasions she gives the title to her brother, as a sign of respect and honour for his services. Accordingly, for a *feagaiga*, to claim a *matai* title means she has to relinquish her *feagaiga*-ship. Women's claims to chiefly titles therefore were rare even in pre-Christian times. An exception to this is Salamasina, who rose to prominence in the sixteenth century and was the first to hold all four paramount titles in Samoa, making her the queen of a united Samoa.⁴⁹

The power of women as sisters is seen collectively in the village setting in which all the sisters and daughters of the local men make up the social institution of *aualuma*, which translates as "the front group." This describes the *aualuma*'s prestigious position within the village ranking, because it constitutes the *feagaiga* of the village. Here we see how the covenant relationship between the brother and sister plays out at village level. In pre-Christian times, the institution of the *aualuma*, as the front group, stood for the honour and respect of the village. In times of war, the *aualuma*

⁴⁸ In Samoa there are no commoners as everyone is an heir to a chiefly title irrespective of gender. Accordingly for a *feagaiga*, to claim a *matai* title means she has to relinquish her *feagaiga*-ship. This is because both statuses function as equal and complementary in terms of authority. It must also be noted that as a sister is to her brother, so is a female descent line (*tamafafine*) to a male descent line (*tamatane*). So every Samoan descent-group contains two categories of kin; the *tamafafine* and the *tamatane*. Both groups comprise female and male members, who should treat one another as though they were sister and brother respectively.

⁴⁹ Apart from her, there are no records of women holding chiefly titles, though this could be due to the presumptions of early colonial administrators, ethnographers and missionaries who often recorded genealogical history with a patrilineal or masculinist bias. Niel Gunson, "Sacred women chiefs and female 'headmen' in Polynesian history," *Journal of Pacific History* vol. 22 (1987): 139–72.

led in order to solicit the favours of the gods.⁵⁰ They were responsible for guarding the virginity of the *taupou* or the virgin daughter of the village high chief, before her marriage to a chief of high rank. This responsibility was significant because of its political impact. The institution of the *taupou* was vital in linking families and villages all over Samoa through the multiple marriages of chiefs to high-ranking women.⁵¹ The failure of the *taupou* to remain a virgin would result not only in disgracing the honour and respect of the village but also in the retraction of the marriage. Moreover, the *aualuma* in pre-Christian times made up the *nu'u o tamaitai*, or village of ladies, a parallel body of authority to that of the *nu'u o al'ii* or village of men. A good example of this powerful social organisation which has survived the test of time is the *nu'u o tama'ita'i* of the village of Saoluafata. This continues to play a powerful political role complementary to the *fono a matai* or male council of chiefs, although, as Manumaua Luafata-Simanu Klutz argues, that role has been challenged more recently by their male counterparts.⁵²

As we have seen, the Samoan woman as sister has a venerated status within her family and village. The situation however changes when she is married and moves to her husband's family and village. Here, her status shifts from a *feagaiga* to a *nofotane* or wife.⁵³ In her husband's family, her status is determined by that of her spouse which means that she is lower to that of her husband's sister. But, as I have argued elsewhere, once her husband's service is honoured with the bestowal of the family chiefly title, her position is elevated to being a *faletua*⁵⁴ if the title is an *ali'i* or high

⁵⁰ According to Robert Louis Stevenson, young women often marched in front of their fathers and brothers during war and they were not allowed to be killed. Stevenson, *A Footnote to History: Eight Years of Trouble in Samoa*, Serenity Publishers, Rockville, 1892 [2009], p. 11.

⁵¹ Penelope Schoeffel, "Rank, gender and politics in ancient Samoa: The genealogy of Salamasina O le Tafaifa," *Journal of Pacific History* vol. 22 (1987): 174–94; Gunson, "Sacred women chiefs and female 'headmen' in Polynesian history."

⁵² Simanu M.L. Klutz, "*A Malu i Fale, e Malu fo'i i Fafo*: Samoan women and power: Towards an historiography of changes and continuities in power relations in Le Nu'u o Teine of Saoluafata, 1350–1998 C.E.," Ph.D. thesis, University of Hawai'i, 2011.

⁵³ *Nofotane* is made up of two words: *nofo* meaning to sit or stay and *tane* meaning husband. The term can be a derogatory one given to a female married into the family if she should err in the carrying out of her duties.

⁵⁴ According to Aiono Fanaafi Le Tagaloa, *faletua* has been translated by Samoan feminists to mean "back of the house" since that is its surface literal translation: *fale* means dwelling; *tua* means back. Yet the real meaning of the term according to her is, "the adviser that the house depends on; the backing which a *matai* finds difficult to do without. Likewise the primary role of the wives of chiefs is to give good advice and to be suitable counselors to their husbands who are the collective authority of the *āiga*

chief, or *tausi* if the title is that of a *tulafale* or orator.⁵⁵ As wife of a chief, therefore, the Samoan woman ultimately assumes an influential role within her husband's family and village. Moreover, despite her lower status in her husband's family, vis à vis his sister(s), her inherited rights as a *feagaiga* will never be denied within her own natal family. She remains a *feagaiga* in her natal family regardless of where she chooses to live. A negotiation made by her natal family in her absence can never be declared valid if her consent is not given.

In pre-Christian Samoa, then, women as *feagaiga* held important status that gave them superior power and an encompassing role over their brothers. Their status as *feagaiga* played a central role in maintaining a state of aptness and harmony within Samoan society both within the family and in the village as a whole. The special relationship between brother and sister as we have seen clearly exemplifies this view of a world characterised by encompassment and mutual respect for the other, as well as Samoa's view of the reciprocal relationship between the sacred and the secular. In Samoa, this relationship is vital to what George Milner postulates as the principle of "social balance."⁵⁶

The evangelisation of Samoa from 1830 by the LMS saw the introduction of a new figure in the form of the missionary and later the pastor. With the coming of Christianity, the pastor was seen as corresponding to the traditional priest or spirit medium, and the authority of the *feagaiga* in communicating with the gods was attributed to him.⁵⁷ Samoan paramount chiefs like Malietoa who accepted Christianity

and the village." Aiono Fanaafi Le Tagaloa, "The social status and the economic roles of the female in traditional and modern Samoan society," unpublished paper, n.d., p. 5.

⁵⁵ This is due to the relationship of covenant between her husband and his sister. As a *nofotane*, she supports her husband in carrying out this service. She accompanies him to the garden during the day, and in the evening assists him in the preparation of the evening meals. In her capacity as wife, she moves out of the *fale* and enters what is considered the sphere of her husband. Within her husband's village, she belongs to the group known as the *avā a taulele'a* "the wives of untitled men," who come under the direction of the *auluma*. They are often referred to as *o lima ma vae* meaning "hands and feet" referring to their roles in doing errands when the village women get together. All this is part of their service in honouring the sisters of their husbands. For the wife, this service can be difficult but all will be rewarded when her husband becomes a chief.

⁵⁶ George B. Milner, "Problems of the structures of concepts in Samoa: An investigation of vernacular statement and meaning," Ph.D. thesis, London School of Economics, University of London, 1968, pp. 158–200.

⁵⁷ Malietoa Vainuupo, the most powerful paramount chief in Samoa at the time officially welcomed Christianity in 1830. When he died in 1841 he relinquished all his paramount titles and gave his honorific title of *susuga* as well as *ao o faalupega* to the pastor. These titles were high honours which led to the

had their own *feagaiga*, their sisters to whom they were obligated. So, given the importance of integrating the new religion, the pastor was ascribed this honour. The *feagaiga* is now recognised in the relationship between the pastor and the village. The pastor is now a man of divine power, hence his word is revered and he is feared because his curse would surely lead to misfortune and death. By the mid-nineteenth century the status of the pastor was greatly elevated. Within the village, he was treated with great privilege. LMS missionary accounts have shown that Samoan pastors were already fully supported by their local parishes by the 1850s.⁵⁸ The village now plays the brotherly role of service to the pastor as their *feagaiga*, and in return the pastor maintains his *mamalu* or “honour” and intercedes on behalf of the village. He became a spiritual mediator, peacemaker and redeemer, keeping the good relations amongst members and families within the village. Like sisters in their covenantal relationship with their brothers, the pastor assumed these serious responsibilities. In return the village privileges him with respect and provides for his physical needs. He is given land, and a house is built especially for him and his family.

In ascribing the attributes of the *feagaiga* to the pastor, his influence is confined to the sacred or the spiritual, and he plays no political role in the village. This is affirmed by the rule that the pastor must have no direct family or immediate blood connections to the village. This is still the policy of Samoan Protestant churches today.⁵⁹ Thus although highly revered, pastors remain outsiders in the political affairs of the village. They are not allowed to sit in the proceedings of the council of chiefs, unless on special cases when they are invited to open a meeting with a prayer. This is similar to the status of sisters as *feagaiga* who largely refrain from the sphere of chiefs out of respect for their brothers.

increasingly high status of the pastor in Samoan society. Tagaloa, “Western Samoa: The sacred covenant.”

⁵⁸ The *Samoan Reporter*, a biannual magazine published by the LMS in Samoa since 1845, gave regular reports of annual contributions made by Samoan villages for the welfare of their Samoan pastors. These included cash, *siapo* or tapa, food etc.

⁵⁹ The two main Protestant Churches include the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (CCCS) which originated from the LMS and became independent in 1962, and the Methodist Church of Samoa. The Methodist church however has a system in which pastors and their wives are appointed by the Church authority to village parishes while in the CCCS it is the parish or village which appoints and calls their own pastor and his wife to make a covenant. Although the Roman Catholic Church and other Evangelical Churches do not formally have *feagaiga* between their clergy and congregations, they nonetheless apply the same principles of the *feagaiga* in the relationships between their clergy and the villages where they work.

But, unlike sisters within their natal family, the pastor is necessarily married. As mentioned, virginity before marriage was crucial to maintaining the sacredness and honour of the sister. For the pastor, virginity and purity are expressed through monogamy. Adultery or inappropriate sexual behaviour are seen as unbecoming to the pastor's role and are totally unacceptable. Once such a taboo is broken, the pastor loses his honour and the covenant is broken. High moral behaviour is therefore expected of the pastor. Such expectations also extend to his wife and children. His wife is given the title *faletua*, the advisor to the pastor, the one who backs and gives support to the pastor—a role which parallels that of a high chief's wife. This role is extremely important and essential to the operation of the church at village level. Her crucial role is testified by the fact that once a pastor is called into covenant with a village, or *osi le feagaiga*, he must be married. Moreover, in the case where the wife dies, the pastor must remarry as soon as possible in order to stay in the village. This remains the rule in Samoan Protestant churches today.

As a *faletua* the wife must behave in an honourable way together with her children. If any member of the pastoral family acts in ways unbecoming of their status, the covenant is broken and the pastor would be required to leave the village. Children of pastors are thus governed by the same principles of the covenant. As such they are tabooed from courting within the village. When for example a son or a daughter of a pastor is found in a sexual relation with someone in the village, this would ultimately lead to the pastor and his family leaving the village. This is because, like the brother-sister relationship, the relationship between the pastor, his family and the village is grounded in the incest taboo.⁶⁰ Any sexual relations between these two parties are therefore seen as incestuous and greatly condemned. In some ways, the very idea and value of virginity that once applied to women as sisters was transposed collectively onto the pastor and his family. Similar to sisters within their natal family, the pastor and his family are obligated to honour the village by maintaining a high standard of sexual morality and purity. Here we see a convergence between Christianity and the

⁶⁰ Morgan Tuimaleali'ifano, "*Talofa e Aiga, ua ai e lagoon le tofa!*" Village governance and development in Falelatai," in *Governance in Samoa-Pulega i Samoa*, ed. Elise Huffer and Asofou Soo, Asia Pacific Press, The Australian National University, Institute of Pacific Studies University of the South Pacific, Canberra and Suva, 2000, pp. 171–88.

ideals of the *feagaiga* although certain ideals such as “purity” have now expanded beyond that of the pastor.

The transposition of the values of the *feagaiga* onto the pastor and his family elevated their standing within the village and put them in an appropriate position in relation to the village. The interplay between sacred and secular which once suffused the relation between brothers and sisters has now shifted to the relationship between the pastoral couple and the village, again maintaining a sense of harmony within the village.

This transposition of the *feagaiga* onto the pastor was therefore successful, but as we will see, as sacred power shifted to the pastor and his wife, the sacred power and influence of women as sisters eventually diminished. English missionaries and their wives came with a perception that Samoan women were of lower status and thus aimed to uplift them by emphasising a European ideal of women as mothers and wives. In this process, although suffused with many paradoxes, the status of Samoan women as wives was elevated and at the apex of this new configuration was the *Faletua o le Faafeagaiga* or wife of Covenant. This elevation of Samoan women as mothers and wives made the wives of Samoan pastors influential and very powerful women in Samoan society, eventually to the diminution of women as *feagaiga*.

The project to “uplift” Samoan women⁶¹

The first European missionary couples arrived in Samoa in 1836, six years after Williams formally introduced Christianity in 1830. During those early years, Tahitian missionary couples worked on their own, with Williams and other European missionaries from other well-established missions in Tahiti and Rarotonga visiting intermittently. The arrival of European missionary couples marked an important development in the evangelisation of the Samoans. The Tahitians’ efforts were significant, but they were often under the influence of local paramount chiefs who confined them under their protection and deployed them for local political aspirations. The arrival of white missionaries and their wives meant that evangelisation became far more dispersed, with the establishment of mission stations throughout the Samoan islands, where they

⁶¹ This part of the chapter is based on my chapter, “From open *fale* to mission houses: Negotiating the boundaries of domesticity in Samoa.”

were able to exert more direct influence. This was a strategic move to quickly spread the missionaries' sphere of activities to cover the whole of the archipelago.

European missionary couples arrived with keen desires to transform Samoa into a civilised and Christian society. The wives in particular saw their role as focusing on the conversion of women. Their early impressions of the state of local women made them more determined. In one of her first letters written soon after arrival in Samoa in 1836, Mrs. Liliās Mills wrote; "The women are in a lamentable condition – slaves to the tyranny of their masters. The Gospel will soon rescue them from their thralldom."⁶² Mrs. Mills, like many of the early missionaries and their wives were too quick to judge the state of Samoan women. Later writing by the missionary Archibald W. Murray would correct her assessment. He wrote,

A more extensive acquaintance with heathen countries would have led Mrs Mills to form a different estimate as to the position and treatment of women in Samoa.

Nowhere among the many islands, east and west, which I have visited, have I found woman so nearly upon an equality with man as in Samoa. Indeed, the treatment of women on that group was one of the most marked features of the milder type of heathenism that was found there.⁶³

Early missionary wives however did not see this as a "milder type of heathenism," and were passionately determined to transform what they perceived as the low state of local women vis-à-vis their "masters." Upon arrival, they quickly set out to educate women. There was a clear demarcation of the roles of missionary husbands and wives. The husbands would conduct regular visits to neighbouring villages and districts while the wives worked mainly from their homes. This separation was in terms of their distinct roles, the husband dealing in an enlarged public sphere while the wife was clearly confined to the private, focusing on her "domestic" and "maternal" roles.

Initially missionary wives conducted classes from their homes. Their schedules were intense, with classes running all week except Saturdays. The first lessons were basic

⁶² Liliās Mills, Apia, Upolu, to brother, England, June 13, 1836, in Archibald W. Murray, "Memoirs of Mrs Mills," *The Illustrated Words of Grace*, Colonial Publishing Company, Sydney Melbourne vol. 4, no. 9 (1880): 177.

⁶³ Murray, "Memoirs of Mrs. Mills," p. 177. Murray's assessment was made around 1880, after spending several decades in Samoa during which he had gained a better understanding of the status of Samoan women. His view is also based on having visited other islands in the Pacific; in comparison he found the status of Samoan women greater than others.

literacy and catechisms on biblical knowledge and Christian principles. Soon, *faasā* or “forbidding” classes were introduced for women who had decided to relinquish heathen customs. The methods included reading a portion of scripture, which was explained and practised in the catechism. Samoan practices like *poūla* or night dancing, tattooing, polygamy, *taupou* or the cult of virginity and arranged marriages crucial to political alliances were prohibited.⁶⁴ Instead missionaries encouraged monogamous marriage and the idea of a nucleated family consisting exclusively of father, mother and their children. Samoan women were taught to be proper Christian wives to their husbands and good mothers to their children. Special classes were conducted to teach how to best do domestic chores and how to bring up children. Mrs. Day wrote to her son in 1843,

Papa and mama have a very large class of mothers, that they may get knowledge how to bring up their children. For instance they have no idea of the cleanliness we are accustomed to in England; but it is pleasant to see them now, with their bodies clean and shining; the only clothing they generally wear is a piece of cloth about their loins.⁶⁵

Modesty was one of the first lessons that missionary wives attempted to instil in Samoan women. The nakedness of Samoan women exposing their upper bodies was abhorrent to many missionaries and their wives. When Williams first arrived he wanted such nakedness banned. On seeing the lack of progress in this area on his second visit in 1832, he questioned his Tahitian teachers but they replied,

They prefer to expose their breasts which they are very proud of ... the Samoan women even wished the teachers wives to lay aside their garment and *faa-Samoa*; do as the Samoan ladies do, gird a shaggy mat round their loins as low down as they can tuck up the corner in order to expose the whole form and side of the left thigh anoint themselves beautifully with scented oil, tinge themselves with turmeric put a string of blue beads round their neck and then *faalialia*, walk about to shew themselves. You

⁶⁴ Missionaries and their wives were adamant about prohibiting customs that were associated with “sex” which included the *pōula* or night dancing. Williams described this form of dance as a “charged sexual expression of human nature.” Williams, *A Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands*, p. 89. Other practices like tattooing and traditional marriage which also involved sexual practices were greatly condemned by missionaries.

⁶⁵ Mrs William Day, Sagaga, Upolu, to her son, England, April 5, 1843, in William Day, *The Domestic Correspondence of the Rev. William Day and His Family in the Launceston Public Library*, transcribed by Phillip K. Cowie, Launceston Public Library, Tasmania, 1963, p. 52.

will have, say they, all the *Manaia* the handsome young men of the town loving you then.⁶⁶

When Williams left in 1832 he told Malietoa Vaiinupō, of the things that should be forbidden to Christians. They included war, theft, lying, cheating and dancing naked. Missionary wives thus assumed the responsibility of covering up Samoan women. One of the early lessons they taught was in millinery and dressmaking. Mrs. Mills wrote in 1837 that, “My trouble will be repaid by seeing the female body covered and the bunch of leaves laid aside.”⁶⁷

Early missionary wives soon praised the success of their work and the enthusiastic response of Samoan women in attending their schools. This was often expressed in their letters as well as school “progress reports” that filled the pages of the missionary newspaper *The Samoan Reporter* in the 1840s and 1850s. Mrs. T. Bullen wrote in 1946, “Our female boarding school contains 32 pupils. They appear to prize the privileges they enjoy, and their progress in the various branches of education is, to the whole, satisfactory.”⁶⁸ This eagerness to learn spread to neighbouring villages and districts; some came from miles to be taught. Young girls were eager to learn and soon made good progress. Girls who became fluent in Samoan literacy were then used as monitors to teach others. Older women were desirous but were slower to learn.

The enthusiasm of Samoan women for collective education however, might be attributed in part to the pre-existing collectivity of women in social organisation. As mentioned, women in their status as sisters form the powerful and extremely well-organised *aualuma*. Conversion was communal and thus once the leaders of the *aualuma* decided to convert, all women including their daughters followed suit. Early conversion in Samoa is often attributed to the influence of paramount chiefs like Malietoa. This largely ignores the power of Samoan women in conversion. When Williams returned in 1832, he found that in some districts it was the women who were

⁶⁶ Richard Moyle, *The Samoan Journals of John Williams 1830 and 1832*, vol. 1, p. 117. Nicholas Thomas suggests that the important point is not that the Tahitians were reputedly shocked by Samoan sexuality, not that exhibitionism and orgiastic ceremonies loom large in Williams’ account of heathen Samoan mores; it is rather that Tahitian teachers and Samoans alike evidently understood their differences, in their missionary efforts and reactive mockery respectively. See Thomas, “The case of the misplaced poncho,” p. 89.

⁶⁷ Liliās Mills, Apia, Samoa, to her brother, April 24 1837, in Murray, “Memoirs of Mrs Mills,” p. 304.

⁶⁸ *Samoan Reporter* no. 4 (September 1846): 2.

at the forefront of conversion. At Aana, where a recent war had devastated its people, he found a woman had started the Church there. She had visited the teachers at Malietoa's residence at Sapapalii constantly, then she gathered the women of her district and renounced their heathen worship.⁶⁹ Williams also described this scene on this visit,

Just as our conversation was about to end we were interrupted by the appearance of a line of females following each other in goose like procession about seventy in number each bearing something in her hand. On entering the house ... she (the leader) had heard that I had come up to the settlement and fearing that I might not reach so far as hers she had collected the Christian females together and come to pay her respects to me as the Chief to whom she was indebted for the knowledge of Jehova.⁷⁰

On this occasion, Williams witnessed a powerful demonstration of the unity and influence of Samoan women within the village. Mrs. Day also witnessed this in 1844,

This day all the Ladies of Sagaga came with their *alofa* (love gifts) to the *Faifeaus* [Missionaries] with a head of taro and one fish, each of them dressed alike, with a pretty native piece of cloth put over the shoulders and the bosom with a very fine mat put on so as to make a train behind, with a wreath of flowers round the head: they marched up to the front of the house singing a pretty native song. At the end of the procession one of the Ladies got up and made a suitable speech to the gentlemen. I could not help shedding tears.⁷¹

Samoan women were thus desirous of the new religion. Learning to read and write was linked to accessing the knowledge of the Europeans and, as we have learned, to their material wealth. Samoan women saw the values in accessing new skills, even of domestic duties, as beneficial to them. The wives of missionaries were seen as the source of this new knowledge.

⁶⁹ When Williams first arrived in 1830, Malietoa was involved in this war to avenge the death of Tamafaiga, a much feared chief in Samoa at the time. It was Aana who had assassinated him and because Malietoa was related to him, he had to avenge his death. Williams wrote that as their ship docked, he could see smoke rising to the sky on Upolu. Ironically, while the *Messenger of Peace* arrived on one island, a war was raging on the other where Malietoa was burning houses and bodies, desecrating the villages of Aana. See John Williams, *Missionary Enterprises*, pp. 115–16.

⁷⁰ Moyle, *The Samoan Journals of John Williams 1830 and 1832*, p. 146.

⁷¹ Mrs William Day, Upolu, to her son, July 7 1844, in Day, *The Domestic Correspondence of the Rev. William Day*, p. 70.

From the beginning, the enthusiasm of Samoan women coupled with the resolve of missionaries and their wives to uplift women to their standards of the idealised Christian woman, led to initial success in school attendance. However, as they soon realised, things were not as easy as they seemed, and conversion was largely nominal at this early stage. As the project to uplift Samoan women continued, the local context in Samoa provided new challenges that would complicate the work of missionary wives.

Missionary wives began their mission from the domain of their home where women flocked in order to observe and learn. The emphasis was on the “home” or what Diane Langmore dubbed the “object lesson”⁷² for the local women, where the missionary wife would perform her domestic duties as a respectable wife and ideal mother. Yet initially the Europeans lived in Samoan *fale* given to them by village high chiefs. These houses which were open and usually at the centre of the village, provided a highly visible stage for the inquisitive audience of Samoans.⁷³ This being a stage also hindered such performances.

First, early missionary wives struggled to deal with the different environment and the strange behaviours of the locals. They complained about the heat, humidity, insects and the lack of comfort in their living quarters. The open *fale* exposed them not only to the harsh physical elements they were not accustomed to but also to the prying eyes of locals. Mrs. Mills once complained that, “All the time my hands are busy with some domestic employments, and no one attempts to assist me in this. They all stand wondering at everything I do.”⁷⁴ She went on to write that, “Often when my house has been full of noisy Samoans I have sighed for a quiet corner where I should shut my door and be alone.”⁷⁵

The mission home, an important exemplar for instilling a civilised way of life to the natives soon became a place of discomfort as missionary wives constantly complained about the lack of privacy and expressed yearning for the comforts of an English home.

⁷² Diane Langmore, “The object lesson of a civilised, Christian home,” in *Family and Gender in the Pacific*, ed. Margaret Jolly and Martha MacIntyre, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989, pp. 84–94, p. 86.

⁷³ Latai, “From open *fale* to Mission Houses: Negotiating the Boundaries of Domesticity in Samoa.”

⁷⁴ Liliās Mills, Upolu, to her sister, June 24, 1836, in Murray, “Memoirs of Mrs Mills,” p. 178.

⁷⁵ Liliās Mills, Upolu, to her brother, September 25, 1836, in Murray, “Memoirs of Mrs Mills,” p. 210.

Feelings of “homesickness” and yearnings for home comforts were perpetuated by the lack of letters or news from their relatives back “home.” Communication was hard at this stage as the mission ship, the *Camden*, only visited England once every two years and thus news of relatives and of broader British affairs did not reach them for months or even years.

Missionary wives also suffered greatly from diseases such as erysipelas⁷⁶ and dropsy⁷⁷ which caused them to be bedridden for weeks. Many of their letters expressed worry over their lack of usefulness to the mission project due to prolonged sickness. Some wrote of their anxiety that they would die without having achieved their mission. Some suffered from loneliness and mental depression. Such laments and ailments however, were often suppressed and seen as sinful, an obstacle to their calling to save the lost souls around them. As Mrs. Mills wrote, “The want of civilised, or the want of Christian society, the want of many precious ordinances I feel much; but when I put them in the balance with the wants of the souls around me, and the claims of my Saviour, the latter preponderate.”⁷⁸

An additional predicament was the increasing burden of both domestic and mission duties. Missionary wives were often regarded as “self-sacrificial helpmates” to the pastoral endeavours of men.⁷⁹ Their ongoing responsibilities included the instruction of village girls and women, as well as their customary household tasks. As their schools grew in number, the latter became increasingly burdensome. Servants and nannies were thus employed to attend to their domestic chores like washing, ironing and child care. Although they complained about Samoan women’s lack of knowledge about domestic work, this was an option they had to choose in order to commit time to their schools.

⁷⁶ Erysipelas is a type of skin infection with symptoms such as blisters, fever, shaking and chills.

⁷⁷ Dropsy is characterised by swelling of the body caused by a build-up of fluids in the body cavity due to internal organ failure. It is caused by exposure to poor water conditions, excessive use of salt and improper diet.

⁷⁸ Liliuokalani, Upolu, to her brother, September 25, 1836, in Murray, “Memoirs of Mrs Mills,” p. 210.

⁷⁹ Sharon W. Tiffany, “Introduction: Feminist perceptions in anthropology,” in *Rethinking Women’s Roles: Perspectives from the Pacific*, ed. Denise O’Brien and Sharon W. Tiffany, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1984, pp. 1–12, p. 10.

Furthermore, missionary wives were in constant worry over their children's intellectual and spiritual development. Many were anxious about their education, as well as their spiritual wellbeing in a "pagan" environment.⁸⁰ Missionaries' children were often vulnerable to illnesses in the tropics and there was the constant fear that if their children died, their souls would not be saved. Hence they were vigilant in observing signs of spiritual rebirth in their children. Mrs. Mills wrote of her son, "Since the end of March our dear William has been ill, and many a pang have I felt, as well as many a tear I have shed, chiefly on account of his soul. I have not yet had the evidence that he is born again, and this is the reason of my distress."⁸¹ She also wrote of her children, "They seem to me so far behind what children of their age are at home and this is one reason why I am so anxious they should be where they are likely to improve more rapidly."⁸² According to Murray such anxieties were common among missionary wives. Many feared that Samoa was not a place to raise their children, for fear of contamination. Murray wrote that, "If they are to be saved from moral contamination, and fitted for positions of usefulness and respectability in life, the question of their removal to a civilised land must be entertained."⁸³

Thus on 2 December 1846, ten years after many of these women settled in Samoa, the mission ship the *John Williams* on its return voyage to England, witnessed a kind of a mass "evacuation" of many of the missionaries' children. The farewell was a sad occasion and many wrote about the intense sorrow they felt when having to part with their children. Murray wrote,

And the nature of that scene, only they who have passed through it can fully understand. Oh! The anguish of the parting moment! The writer has had personal experience of it; and he has been a sympathising witness of the scenes he describes on many occasions. In as far as his experience goes, there is but one thing that inflicts a

⁸⁰ These concerns were often shared in "maternal meetings" where the wives discussed and prayed over their children's early conversion to God. A special hour was also dedicated to the supplication of their children. Mrs. Day wrote to her son that "At our last maternal meeting all the eldest children were mentioned in a special manner for early conversion to God, and you my darling Benjamin are one of them. Our hour for that purpose is every Tuesday night any time from seven to nine." See Mrs William Day, Upolu, to her son, July 7, 1844, in William Day, *The Domestic Correspondence of the Rev. William Day and His Family*, p. 70.

⁸¹ Liliās Mills, Personal Journal, May 12, 1846, in Murray, "Memoirs of Mrs Mills," p. 371.

⁸² Liliās Mills, Upolu, to her sister, June 3, 1845, in Murray, "Memoirs of Mrs Mills," p. 290.

⁸³ Murray, "Memoirs of Mrs Mills," p. 290.

deeper wound—viz., separation by death. And when the sad crisis is past, when the last fond words have been spoken, the last embrace given, the last lingering looks exchanged, and the ship has stood away out to sea, and been watched till all trace of it has been lost in the distance—what then! Ah! What then?⁸⁴

Tragically many of these missionaries and their wives never saw their children again; some of the children died in England soon after, of illnesses contracted there.

Missionary fears of physical and moral contamination were thus a major factor in the “evacuation” of their children. It must be noted that many of them came with a perception of the Pacific not as “a paradise” where “noble savages” lived in perpetual harmony as popularised by eighteenth-century voyage accounts,⁸⁵ but as a place of savagery and sexuality which needed to be rescued from evil customs and practices. Exposing their innocent children to this world was thus seen as detrimental to their physical and spiritual growth.

Overall, the idealised project of domesticity was clear in the efforts of early missionaries and their wives. However, there was much paradox and poignancy in this project. The portrayal of missionary wives as ideal mothers and wives was often hampered by local conditions that made their early experiences extremely dangerous and uncomfortable. Their discomfort with the open *fale* reflects a clash of ideals about domesticity. This was further complicated by the employment of servants and nannies to perform their domestic duties, and by sending their children back “home.” As they taught Samoan women how to become proper wives to their husbands and proper mothers to their children, they themselves were living very different lives, often as full time teachers. This paradox continued with the establishment of more formal

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 405.

⁸⁵ Serge Tcherkézoff, *First Contacts in Polynesia: The Samoan Case (1722–1848)* Western *Misunderstandings about Sexuality and Divinity*, The Journal of Pacific History/MacMillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies Canberra/Christchurch, 2004; Margaret Jolly, “Desire, difference and disease: Sexual and venereal exchanges on Cook’s Voyages in the Pacific,” in *Exchanges: Cross-cultural Encounters in Australia and the Pacific*, ed. Ross Gibson, Museum of Sydney/Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, Sydney, 1996, pp. 187–217; Margaret Jolly, “Imagining Oceania: Indigenous and foreign representations of a sea of islands,” *The Contemporary Pacific*, vol. 19, no 2 (2007): 508–45; Margaret Jolly and Lenore Manderson, “Introduction: Sites of desire/economies of pleasure in Asia and the Pacific,” in *Sites of Desire, Economies of Pleasure: Sexualities in Asia and the Pacific*, ed. Lenore Manderson and Margaret Jolly, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1997, pp. 1–26; Margaret Jolly, Serge Tcherkézoff and Darrell Tryon (eds), *Oceanic Encounters: Exchange, Desire, Violence*, ANU E Press, Canberra, 2009.

education for the wives of Samoan students at Mālua Seminary in 1844. Some of these women were to become the earliest wives of pastors in Samoa but also of Samoan missionaries in foreign mission.

Mālua

The establishment of Mālua was a strategic move to extend mission influence by providing a pastor and a wife for each village in the country. In Samoa, villages were autonomous, and thus the local context demanded that each village had its own congregation with its own missionary and wife. This meant that the initial establishment of mission stations which incorporated several villages and districts was doomed to fail. Mālua was thus set up to cater for the increasing need for trained pastors. This was on top of providing for missionaries in the western Pacific. The hope was that in a restricted environment, young Samoan men and their wives would be moulded into Victorian models of the perfect gentleman and lady, to be imitated by their Samoan counterparts in the villages not only in Samoa but in the mission field in the western Pacific.

The architecture and design of Mālua was constructed in order to serve this purpose, instilling English ideals of a civilised community. The compound was a replica of an English village, with limestone cottages lined in perfect order, surrounded with gardens and rolling green lawns enclosed with finely trimmed hedges. Samoan students and their families were introduced into a novel way of life, living in box-like cottages with a strict daily routine under the watchful eyes of missionaries.

Missionaries and their wives lived in larger buildings with the trappings of an English home. Mālua was now a striking contrast to life back in the villages. No longer exposed to village life, wives of missionaries at Mālua felt more comfortable in their private dwellings away from open *fale*. Coincidentally, missionaries and their wives in the villages were also living in European styled houses. Many of the missionary wives expressed elation at finally moving into their newly built limestone houses. The discomfort they once felt due to the lack of privacy of Samoan *fale* was now replaced by the comfort and security of their walled up homes. The stage was now closed off and the foreign image of the large European home with huge limestone walls and glass windows now loomed large in the village. The use of enclosed buildings was a means

of instilling not only European values of civilisation but also of domesticity. As George Turner and Charles Hardie wrote in 1847, “Our own private dwellings are quite distinct from these buildings, so that our appeal must be viewed as exclusively for the benefit of the natives.”⁸⁶

In 1850, larger houses were built in Mālūa to accommodate the increase in married couples. Hardie and Turner wrote,

These are good houses, 31ft long by 16ft wide; and so constructed as to let each teacher and family have separate rooms. We wish them to be models that the teachers may learn from them, and wherever they may stationed, set an example to the people of constructing their houses so as to have proper private apartments.⁸⁷

The construction of houses was thus seen by missionaries as an effective way of civilising the Samoans. Samoan missionary couples were expected to replicate this not only in Samoa but in foreign mission fields where they were deployed.⁸⁸

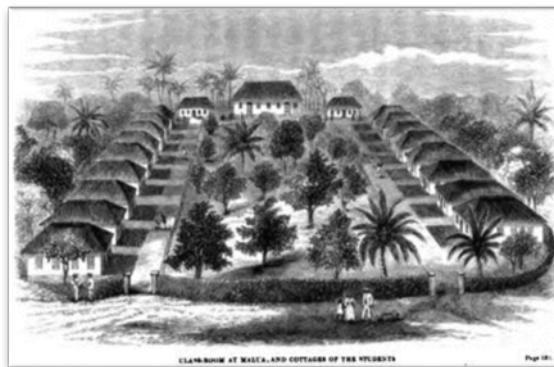


Figure 13. Left: *Classroom and students' cottages, London Mission Society seminary at Mālūa, 1850s. In George Turner, Nineteen Years in Polynesia, London: John Snow, 1861, p. 128.*

Figure 14. Right: *The Reverend J.W. and Mrs. Hills and child outside mission house at Leulumoega, Upolu, Samoa, ca. 1890–1900. International Mission Photography Archive (IMPA), University of Southern California.*

In the early stages, the school numbers at Mālūa averaged around fifty students with single men as well as married couples. From the missionaries' accounts it seemed that a number of them were chiefs as well as sons of chiefs. The school was divided into

⁸⁶ *Samoan Reporter* no. 7 (March 1848): 2.

⁸⁷ *Samoan Reporter* no. 12 (January 1851): 3.

⁸⁸ Samoan teachers trained at Mālūa were also beginning to adopt this new style of enclosed houses once they began working in the villages in Samoa. As Turner wrote in 1849, “Many native-teachers and other consistent characters, seeing the evil, have now separate sleeping apartments in their dwellings; and their better regulated families are becoming models to their countrymen of an improved and improving community.” *Samoan Reporter* no. 10 (November 1849): 1.

two separate classes, one as a preparatory school for young entrants and the other for the training of Samoan teachers. In 1845 Hardie and Turner gave a daily account of life in the seminary.

The order of the day since we commenced has been as follows: at dawn, ring the bell, for all to rise – have their devotional exercises – put their houses in order, and then go to the plantation to work – a few remaining behind to prepare the breakfast. At 8 A.M. the bell is again rung for all to leave work, bathe, take breakfast, and be ready for the class at nine. At 9, a class for reading and scripture instruction, using the Bible as a text book. At 12, another class for writing and arithmetic; and at 3, another for geography, astronomy, &c. During the intervals of classes, they are occupied in fishing, working about their houses, preparing for classes, &c. On Sabbath we have them all under our eye, at both morning and afternoon services, and in the interim, have a Bible Class.⁸⁹

The training of these prospective pastors were thus intense but although the emphasis of Mālūa was for the training of male teachers, the LMS Samoan mission also saw the importance of training the wives of married students. From the beginning missionaries and their wives were responsible for the training of students' wives. The basic curriculum consisted of basic instructions in literacy, Biblical knowledge as well as maternal duties, arithmetic, geography, astronomy, needle work, cutting out garments etc.⁹⁰ The curriculum reflects the emphasis on domestic work and for these women to be exemplars of Christian womanhood.

One of the early books they used for the training of wives was *The Peep of Day*. The main aim of the book as the author puts it was to give “aid to the young mother in conversations with her child of four or five years old.”⁹¹ The book thus set out through conversational formats to teach young children about God and Biblical truths. It includes conversations about the body, the soul, angels, the first sin, temptations, the Virgin Mary, the birth of Jesus etc. Significantly the book also prescribes a particular

⁸⁹ *Samoan Reporter* no. 1 (March 1845): 2.

⁹⁰ *Samoan Reporter*, no. 16 (December 1854): p. 1. See also Valerie Margaret Carson, “The Samoan mission seminary 1844–1884: A study of the means of furnishing teachers in Samoa for educational and religious outreach by the London Missionary Society members in the nineteenth century,” M.A. thesis, Victoria University, Wellington, 1983, pp. 117–21.

⁹¹ Favell Lee Motimer, *The Peep of Day or a Series of the Earliest Religious Instruction the Infant Mind is Capable of Receiving*, John S. Taylor & Co., New York, 1845, p. iii.

gender separation of the roles of husbands and wives in the nurture and care of children. On the lesson on a mother's care, the conversation goes like this,

I have told you, my darling, about little body. Was your body always as big as it is now? – No. Once it was very small indeed. What were you called when your body was very small? – A baby. Now you can take a little care of yourself, but then you could take no care at all. Can babies walk, or talk, or feed themselves, or dress themselves? – No. But God sent you to a person who took great care of you when you were a baby. Who was it? Your dear mother, she took care of you then. She nursed you in her arms, and fed you, and took you out in the air, and washed you, and dressed you. Do you love your mother? – Yes. I know you do. But who gave you a mother? – It was God who sent you to a kind mother. A little while ago there was no such little creature as you. Then God made your little body, and he sent you to your mother, who loved you as soon as she saw you. It was God who made your mother love you so much, and made her so kind to you. Your kind mother dressed your poor little body in neat clothes, and laid you in a cradle. When you cried, she gave you food, and hushed you to sleep in her arms. She showed you pretty things to make you smile. She held you up, and showed you how to move your feet. She taught you to speak, and she often kissed you, and called you sweet names.⁹²

On the lesson on a father's care, the conversation went like this,

Who is it that dresses you and feeds you? – Your dear mother. But how does your mother get money to buy the clothes, and the food? – Father brings it home. Your father works all day long, and he gets money and brings it home to mother. He says to your mother, "Buy some bread with this money, and give some of it to the children." Will your father give this money to buy bread for you? That is very kind of him. Do you love your father? How hard your poor father works in the fields! What is your father, little Ann? – He is a thresher.⁹³

English missionaries and their wives thus used the book for teaching Christian ideas and morals to wives of students, but also in characterising Christian ideals about the role of woman as a Christian mother, carer and nurturer for the bodily and spiritual wellbeing of her children. The father on the other hand was the "thresher," the one who cares for the physical needs of the family. From these texts we can clearly see the

⁹² Ibid., pp. 19–21.

⁹³ Ibid., pp. 24–25.

gender separation between spirit and matter as well as the domestic and public. These gendered separation of roles were intensely taught and encouraged by missionaries and their wives in Mālua. Turner and Hardie reported in 1854 that in their classes for the wives, one of their tasks included having to read and then copy repeatedly a translation of the main parental duties from *The Peep of Day*.⁹⁴ After this then,

Mrs Turner ... has these women up with her in the parlour, for an hour, three at a time in rotation, to teach them sewing, give them shapes of garments, and to converse with them in a familiar way on their present and prospective duties.⁹⁵

Turner wrote that classes for women were done on Wednesdays, the industrial day when their husbands did stone fencing, sawing and weather-boarding. Hence while husbands were trained on outdoor physical work, their wives were taught in domestic skills in the domain of the missionary home.

The training of wives was thus important to the missionaries as they soon realised how Samoans preferred to have married couples in their villages. In some cases the choice of a pastor was based on the quality of his wife. Turner wrote,

The people throughout our districts now attach more importance to the qualifications of a teacher's wife than they formerly did. A few weeks ago, we had a marked instance of this. A populous village rejected rather a superior teacher who was offered to them, and gave their united vote for one somewhat inferior, for the simple reason that the latter has a more clever wife than the former. "We want a teacher," the chiefs said, "who has a wife that can teach our wives and daughters something."⁹⁶

In 1864 the LMS saw the importance of training wives and as a result passed a resolution to give priority for entrance of married couples rather than single men. In the words of Turner, "If we have the choice of two we reject the single man, and admit the married couple, for the simple reason that the wife needs education as well as her

⁹⁴ *Samoan Reporter* no. 16 (December 1854): 1. He wrote that they had to write, "sheet after sheet as I give it to them, of a translation of 'Scripture Facts in Simple Language,' by the author of the 'Peep of Day.'" *Samoan Reporter* no. 18 (January 1857): p. 1.

⁹⁵ *Samoan Reporter* no. 18 (January 1857): 1

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

husband and, when instructed, is a great blessing to her sex in the village where he may be called to labor.”⁹⁷

The establishment of Mālua was a great success and missionary reports of the school showed how it soon became a significant means for providing trained clergy for the mission not only in Samoa but increasingly in the western Pacific. Once students graduated, they were offered the choice of working in Samoa or a mission overseas. At this early stage, some were married and others single and it was not until the change in policy in 1864 that most of the native clergy were married before they were deployed in Samoa and in foreign mission.

The success of Mālua was that by the latter half of the nineteenth century, the clergy in Samoa were largely indigenous. Moreover, they also came to dominate the mission abroad in the western Pacific. In Samoa graduates of Mālua and their wives took over the roles of European missionaries and their wives in villages altering the outlook of the mission. European missionaries were still at the helm, but the day-to-day activities of the Church in villages were now mainly in the hands of Samoan pastors and their wives. By the 1870s there was already a growing sense of independence in the church in Samoa, and the Samoan clergy were already gaining greater power in how the church was run. As a result the Samoan clergy were increasingly seeing themselves as equals to white missionaries and demanded to have more say in the administration of the mission church. In 1875 the General Assembly or *Fonotele*, which included all Samoan pastors was instituted as a consultative body. And after much pressure from the Samoans, English missionaries reluctantly granted the ordination of Samoan pastors. This was an unprecedented event in the Pacific, which saw Samoan pastors as the first recognised ordained indigenous clergy in the Pacific.⁹⁸ Consequently the wives of Samoan pastors also instigated the establishment of the Samoan Women’s *Fono* or Assembly. Samoa was one of the first countries to establish a women’s fellowship in the late nineteenth century. It was the first national organisation in Samoa for women, after the General Assembly of the LMS in 1875. There developed a general assembly

⁹⁷ George Turner, *Nineteen Years in Polynesia*, John Snow, London, 1861, p. 126.

⁹⁸ See Richard Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society 1795–1895*, vol. 1, Oxford University Press, London, 1899, pp. 400–402; Ruta Sinclair, “Preparation of Samoan pastors,” in *Polynesian Missions in Melanesia: from Samoa, Cook Islands and Tonga to Papua and New Caledonia*, ed. Ron Crocombe and Marjorie Crocombe, Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1982, p. 11.

for women held at the same time at Mālua. This fellowship became a strong part of the LMS Samoan Church and is still active today in the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa or CCCS.⁹⁹ Thus, the localisation of the Church and the indigenisation of the clergy led the way for the increasing power and status of Samoan pastors and their wives.¹⁰⁰ This was possible not only because of the covenant between them and the village but also because now they were the most highly educated people sought after by the villages. For Samoan wives their already high status due to the status of their husbands as *feagaiga* was to be further elevated by the establishment of boarding schools for girls like Papauta and Atauloma in the late nineteenth century.

Papauta

The establishment of Papauta saw a more ambitious approach to educating local women in a much more confined and controlled environment. Despite the transformation of Samoan pastors and their wives, English missionaries were still concerned about the progress of the population in general.¹⁰¹ In 1887, a commission led by Sir Albert Spicer on behalf of the LMS directors visited Samoa where he noted a concern about the lack of progress in the project of evangelisation. Of particular concern was the state of Samoan women. As Hilda E.A. Small observed, “Although in Mālua the wives of the students were being taught, the women of the villages were ignorant and degraded.”¹⁰² On his return to London, Spicer urged the directors to establish a college for the formal training of Samoan girls in the Christian life. Valesca Schultze and Elizabeth Moore, two single missionary women, then took on the task of establishing these inaugural schools for girls in Samoa. Papauta Girls School was

⁹⁹ The Samoan pastors’ wives were at the forefront in the establishment and operation of this organisation which quickly became a self-supporting body of the LMS Samoan Church. It has contributed financially in the caring of the sick and needy in society and also towards the mission activities of the CCCS in overseas countries.

¹⁰⁰ See Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society 1795–1895*, vol. 1, p. 400.

¹⁰¹ Many still complained about the persistence of heathen practices after decades of efforts to transform the Samoans. In 1896, missionary John Marriot for example wrote in a published sermon in the *Sulu Samoa*, “I am shocked to hear various stories which show that many old practices are still alive, they are bad and they should be called pagan practices.” Then Marriot went on to condemn practices such as the adoption of children, of girls being prepared as *taupou* and couples not being properly married or looking after their children. From these later published accounts, we see that the ideals propagated by missionaries often fell on deaf ears and that Samoan ideas about kinship and the roles of women endured for decades. *Sulu Samoa* (July 1896): 231. Note that all translations from the *Sulu Samoa* are by the author.

¹⁰² Hilda E.A. Small, *Papauta: The Inland Rock 1892–1967*, Pelorus Press, Auckland, 1967, p. 9.

established in 1892 in Upolu and Atauloma Girls School in 1900 in Tutuila. The vision of the founders of these schools can be summed up in the words of the German missionary woman Schultze, who wrote,

I see a day in the distance when there will be a new generation of Samoan mothers, who will have cast behind them those bad, low and degrading customs, whose highest ambition will be to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of Christ, and so be the means of raising the whole Samoan nation to a higher and purer standard of Christian life.¹⁰³

Papauta was thus set up to train young Samoan girls to become ideal mothers and wives in order to raise the whole Samoan nation. But as we will see, this new venture in the history of the project to domesticate women in Samoa continued to be filled with paradoxes. Coincidentally Papauta also became a place where suitable wives for students at Mālua were found.

In the beginning, the first students to enrol at Papauta were young women, girls of sixteen years of age or more. It was run as a school community with the girls taking their share in all its activities. In the early days there was much more time spent in labour rather than lessons. When the school girls discovered that they were given all kinds of work to do, and that lessons formed only a part of their school schedule, many rebelled, while some left altogether, favouring the relaxed life in a village to the routine and discipline of the school.¹⁰⁴ The school, however, gained momentum and became a popular institution for the training of Samoan girls. In 1901, the *Sulu Samoa* reported the opening of a new extension of the school building which was to cater for the increasing number of girls.¹⁰⁵

One of the main emphases of the school was of course religious life. According to Evelyn Downs who taught and later became the principal in the early 1920s,

Religion in any school, if it is to be real and vital, must be regarded as a natural and integral part of education. It cannot be treated merely as a part of the curriculum, a

¹⁰³ Valesca Schultze, *Report of Female Education*, South Sea Records, 1894, cited in Elizabeth Roach, "From English mission to Samoan congregation," Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, New York, 1984, p. 96.

¹⁰⁴ Evelyn A. Downs, *Daughters of the Islands*, Livingstone Press, London, 1944, p. 24.

¹⁰⁵ *Sulu Samoa* (March 1901): 40.

subject to be taught, but rather as a spirit which permeates every part of life, something to be caught and absorbed by the growing personality.¹⁰⁶

Worship was therefore a normal and integral part of the school day. Private prayer and Bible reading were encouraged for personal devotion. Bible teaching was carried out systematically in the five year course. On Sunday mornings after the service in the school chapel, and when the morning meal was over, the whole school assembled under the great shady tree in the middle of the lawn where mats were spread on the grass for the opening worship of Sunday School, and the classes spread out into shady corners of the grounds taking with them their mats. The lessons were graded and well prepared by the leaders, who had learnt to use maps and pictures effectively. Such was a typical week of activities at Papauta. The whole emphasis was placed on the training of a deeply spiritual and dignified Christian woman. The schools also provided a new pattern of living for girls but continued to propagate the domestic emphasis on women as mothers and wives in order to “raise” the Samoan nation. By the early twentieth century the school was teaching lessons in arithmetic and geography, Scripture, hygiene, language, physiology, composition, music and singing, reading and writing, and English. The girls were also taught needlework and craft-making.¹⁰⁷ Evelyn Downs gives a picture of a typical afternoon at Papauta in the 1940s:

Groups will be found in various parts of the grassy lawns, weaving mats and baskets, sewing thatch or making coconut leaf blinds for the Samoan dormitories, stamping bark cloth, carving new patterns, or cutting buttons and spoons from coconut shell and polishing them until the rich brown mottled surface gleams. Others will be doing needlework, plain sewing and embroidery, making their own cotton dresses and petticoats, and decorating them in gaily-coloured threads, which they love; some will be learning to use the sewing machines, and making the school uniforms of white with red collars and cuffs of which all Papauta girls are so proud.¹⁰⁸

The girls were also involved in gardening and fishing expeditions, activities which they were accustomed to in village life and in their homes. In compliance with Samoan

¹⁰⁶ Downs, *Daughters of the Islands*, p. 34.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

custom, men were also employed to prepare and cook their food.¹⁰⁹ This was a significant change in the education of girls which shows the incorporation of the traditional roles of women, such as weaving and doing light chores like gardening and fishing within the confines of the lagoon. The change in curriculum at Papauta was perhaps due to the influence of Samoan pastors and their wives who came to dominate the mission church at the time as well as a change in the approach of European missionaries who now saw the importance of maintaining traditional knowledge and skills. Thus the school curriculum at this stage not only introduced the modern ways of “civilization” but Samoan traditional skills and knowledge were also stressed.



Figure 15. *Students of Papauta Girls' School in front of the school building, Samoa, 1897. International Mission Photography Archive (IMPA), University of Southern California. Photographer unknown. Possibly John Alfred Tattersall*

A far more important development in Papauta was the training of girls in feminised professions such as teachers, nurses and secretaries. In 1919 the Medical Department of Samoa had started training Samoan girls as nurses. Two girls from Papauta

¹⁰⁹ In contemporary Samoa, men still cook in the traditional way in outdoor kitchens but with the introduction of gas stoves and electric ovens, women are now doing lighter cooking inside the houses. Traditionally all meals were cooked in outdoor ovens.

commenced this work at the request of the Medical Department.¹¹⁰ From then on Papauta girls were trained in healthcare services and as part of their training they often served at the local hospital. In May 1923, three girls from Papauta entered Apia Hospital as probationers. At the same time, girls at Atauloma underwent a similar program.¹¹¹ In 1924, Dr. Roberts, wife of the American Consul, Quincy Roberts, initiated a scheme for women known as women's health committees. Coinciding with the introduction of the women's health committees, the school was used as a base for work amongst village women and therefore organised as a welfare service.¹¹²

In 1938, the Educational Department of Samoa also established Samoa's Teachers College in which girls from Papauta were amongst its founding students.¹¹³ By the mid-twentieth century, typing and shorthand became popular subjects at Papauta, with many of its graduates leading the way as employed typists and secretaries in government and church departments.¹¹⁴ Papauta thus reached the height of its influence between the 1920s and the 1940s.¹¹⁵ The institution ushered in a new type of woman in Samoa, one who was well educated, highly skilled and able to work professionally. The school allowed women opportunities in the workforce, and to have a career, earning their own living—something that was quite a novelty for Samoan women.

Meanwhile, Papauta throughout the twentieth century continued to become a popular institution. The school was well respected and highly regarded, and it was considered an honour for many Samoan families to have a girl from their family educated there. Young girls were taken from the villages to be trained with the purpose of one day becoming role models in local villages. Often the first educated women in villages were

¹¹⁰ London Missionary Society (LMS), "Samoa District Committee, Minutes of Meeting 3–12 June 1919," Pacific Manuscript Bureau, ANU, PMB 96 (microfilm).

¹¹¹ LMS, "Samoa District Committee, Minutes of Meeting 21 May 1923."

¹¹² Goodall, *A History of the London Missionary Society 1895–1945*, p. 363.

¹¹³ Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop, *Tama'ita'i Samoa: Their Stories*, Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva, 1998, p. 68.

¹¹⁴ Personal interview with Olivia Latai, Samoa, 14 April 2003; personal interview with Silomiga Faiai, Samoa, 16 December 2004. Both Olivia Latai and Silomiga Faiai were former teachers at Papauta in the 1950s.

¹¹⁵ Papauta was recorded as showing great progress as a result of the good work of Miss Downs, Lakena and Staff. LMS, "Samoa District Committee, Minutes of Meeting 9 May 1939." See also Forman, "Sing to the Lord a new song: Women in the churches of Oceania," p. 159.

the graduates of Papauta and because of this they “were sought after as wives for aspiring pastors and teachers.”¹¹⁶ In 1925 the Samoan District Committee or SDC authorised the principal of Mālūa to allow unmarried students who had completed their studies to leave, provided they were engaged either to a teacher or graduate of Papauta or Atauloma. Mālūa was to withhold the unmarried students’ leaving certificate until a marriage was contracted.¹¹⁷ Thus Papauta eventually became a breeding ground for wives of Samoan pastors. Throughout the twentieth century Papauta groomed and provided wives for many Samoan pastors who went as missionaries to the western Pacific. According to Fineaso Faalafi, more than 75 percent of these wives were ex-students of Papauta.¹¹⁸ This created a special relationship between these institutions which is summed up in the words of a song composed by Mālūa students for the centenary of Papauta in 1992. I have translated the first verse here:

<i>E lele lava le toloa, ae maau lava i le vai</i>	The kingfisher flies, but continually yearns for the river
<i>Aua o Papauta, o Mālūa na fofoa ai</i>	Just like Papauta, which was born out of Mālūa
<i>O le ala lena e le faagaloina ai oe</i>	That is why my memory of you will never fade
<i>O lea ua ou sau sei o ta mulumulu'aufoe.</i>	I have come to celebrate with you on your special day.
<i><u>Tali.</u> Teine o le Papa, le manamea</i>	<i><u>Chorus.</u></i> Ladies of the Rock, my darling
<i>O lo'u ivi na faia ai oe e le Atua</i>	Out of my rib you were created by God
<i>Aua nei faagaloina mai Ierusalem</i>	Forget not Jerusalem
<i>O le laueleele na osi ai la ta feagaiga.</i>	The land where our covenant was made. ¹¹⁹

The words of the song reflect not just the close bond between the two schools, but the emphasis on Papauta as a place where girls were trained for the purpose of becoming suitable wives for Samoan pastors and missionaries. Once married, the young graduates of Papauta and their Mālūa-educated husbands were posted to a village

¹¹⁶ Forman, “Sing to the Lord a new song: Women in the churches of Oceania,” p. 159.

¹¹⁷ LMS, “Samoan District Committee, Minutes of Meeting 20–30 May 1925.”

¹¹⁸ Fineaso T. Samuelu Faalafi, “An historical survey of the changing role and status of Samoan women,” B.D. thesis, Pacific Theological College, 1982, pp. 50–51.

¹¹⁹ The song was composed by the staff and students of Mālūa and is still sung by students today. Translation is by the author.

where they became the envy of the local village women who were still ignorant of the “new” ways. Papauta thus provided a breeding ground for a new type of a pastor’s wife, one who was highly educated and deeply religious. These women, once deployed to work in villages, were influential in the development of education, health and sanitation in local villages. With this kind of education and training, their status continued to be elevated. Moreover, as wives of pastors they were given greater respect within Samoan society. According to Norman Goodall, “grace, dignity and the most steadfast Christian education were characteristics of these women, as of countless others whom their names represent.”¹²⁰

Eventually the Samoans would come to refer to these women and their husbands as their “spiritual father and mother.” This high regard for the pastor and his wife meant that their opinion and wellbeing were held in high esteem and reverence by the people. They became influential and, to some extent, powerful figures within Samoan society in the twentieth century. Their training in a strict and disciplined environment meant that they were fully entrenched in the ways and means that the missionaries saw fit for their future purpose as pastor and missionary wives.

The rise of the wives of Samoan pastors and the implications for Samoan missionary wives

By the twentieth century we come to see the increasing power of Samoan pastors and their wives not only in the Church but also in Samoan society. This was due to their superior training in Mālua and Papauta but also in their status as “covenants” and “wives of the covenant.” As we have seen, the transposition of the roles and status of the *feagaiga* onto the pastor was highly appropriate and successful. The pastor became like a sister to the village, especially in taking care of the people’s spiritual needs. This status, as well as the associated expectations, was also transposed on their wives. The pastor’s wife was expected not only to be advanced in the modern ways, but also be dignified. This ideal of the Samoan pastor’s wife was embodied in the way she carried herself: the way she walked, dressed, and talked were all integral to her status.¹²¹

¹²⁰ Goodall, *A History of the London Missionary Society 1895–1945*, p. 380.

¹²¹ Feleterika Nokise, “The role of Samoan LMS missionaries in the evangelisation of the South West Pacific 1839–1930,” Ph.D. thesis, The Australian National University, 1983, pp. 57–61.

But we also see that the rise of the wives of Samoan pastors had an impact on the indigenous status of Samoan women. These women were influential in the setting up of women's fellowships and health committees which led to a congregation of all women in the village, blurring the distinction between sisters and wives. As we have seen, with their training in basic health and nursing, the wives of pastors were vital to the establishment of health committees. This new institution embraced all other traditional organisations of women in a single institution, whereby the group of *faletua ma tausi* or wives of the chiefs and orators made up the executive body while the *aualuma* members became the working body. At the head of this new body was the *faletua* or the pastor's wife. The organisation's main focus was on child care, village sanitation, first aid and treatment of minor ailments in the Samoan villages. Normally, a high chief's wife was appointed as the president, and therefore simple medicines such as Epsom salts, castor oil and iodine, were put under her charge.¹²² The introduction of Women's Health Committees greatly reduced infant mortality rates in Samoa in the early twentieth century.¹²³ This modern institution was able to influence the country's affairs and village traditional structures in the early twentieth century. Its effectiveness was due largely to the appointment of the high chief's wife as the president and the pastor's wife as head, both of whom were able to influence village affairs. This amalgamation however, led to the increasing influence of wives of pastors in the village who became leaders of these groups, and the gradual rise of the wives of chiefs who were now able to sit together with the sisters of the village. As mentioned, Samoan women as sisters or *feagaiga* held a highly esteemed status in the social organisation of *aualuma* vis-à-vis their brothers' wives. The high status of women as sisters was thus challenged and the brother-sister relationship which was so important to the traditional structure of Samoan society was now juxtaposed with the increasingly dominant relationship of husband and wife.

Additionally, these women also introduced a new type of woman in Samoa in the twentieth century: one who was well educated and was qualified to work as a professional woman in the public sphere. The establishment of formal institutions like

¹²² Felix M. Keesing, *Modern Samoa: Its Government and Changing Life*, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1934, pp. 221, 383.

¹²³ Robert Trumbull, *Tin Roofs and Palm Trees: A Report on the South Pacific*, University of Washington Press, London, 1977, p. 194.

Mālūa in 1844 and Papauta and Atauloma in the late-nineteenth century thus continued to exemplify the paradox in the project of domesticity. As we have seen the training of girls at Papauta in feminised professions such as nursing, teaching as well as secretarial work opened the way for a new place for women in Samoa working in the public sphere. This paradox was already inherent in the lives of European missionary wives. The shift from the homes of missionaries as places of learning to seminaries and boarding schools for girls, saw the shift of missionary wives from a private to a public sphere reflecting a shifting image of the missionary woman not purely as a wife and a mother, but as a professional woman. The introduction of single missionaries at Papauta and Atauloma continued to further this dramatic move of a missionary woman as an independent person working largely in the public sphere. As these institutions continued to ostensibly propagate the dominant emphasis on woman in the domestic sphere, paradoxically these single missionary women were exemplifying a very different idea of “woman.”

The impact of the LMS mission on the status of the pastors’ wives was thus complex. On the one hand the transposition of the covenant on their husbands elevated their status within the villages where they worked. This was further enhanced by their education in Mālūa and later in Papauta as they became increasingly valued in the villages for their knowledge and skills. However, while these women continued the portrayal of a Christian woman as foremost a mother and wife, their roles were increasingly public in that they were also teachers, nurses or health care workers in the villages where they worked.¹²⁴

As we have seen, the process of conversion in Samoa throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was a complex one not only for Samoan women but in particular for those who became wives of Samoan missionaries overseas. This process saw not only the appropriation of Christian values and European models of gender but also saw

¹²⁴ Ironically, Atauloma was eventually closed and is now just a relic of LMS activities, while Papauta is on the verge of collapsing as Samoan women today no longer seek to be trained as wives or confine themselves to feminine occupations, but rather aspire to become independent, professional women in the public sphere. Papauta is seen today as old fashioned and too restricted to a range of feminine professions. Samoan women are now venturing into occupations which were once considered to be for men alone. Public education provides for these and thus the decline of such institutions. It is also interesting to note that these institutions are no longer places where prospective pastors find spouses, as many students enter the seminary already married. And in cases where students are single, they are no longer pressured to find a suitable wife at these schools.

the continuity of Samoan indigenous ideas about the roles and status of women. Hence such a process was complicated by the value Samoans placed on their own indigenous practices and systems and those promoted by European missionaries and their wives. As we have also seen this was further confounded by the paradoxes inherent in the lives of European missionary wives in their idealised project of domesticity.

As will be discussed in the following chapters, this complexity was also played out in the mission fields where Samoan missionary wives and their husbands worked. Samoan pastors' wives who went abroad as missionary wives took with them not only the skills they received at Mālūa and Papauta and their religious zest for the spread of the Gospel but also their cultural identity as wives of the "covenant." This identity made them powerful and influential figures in their homeland, and as they moved to foreign missionary fields in the western Pacific this impacted the way they carried out their noble calling. They were not there simply to accompany their husbands but were also able to effect changes in the lives of the people with whom they came into contact. Their Christian training and discipline received at Mālūa and Papauta made them strong and unwavering in their faith. And as we will see, these women became fully committed and inspirational to the mission endeavour. With their tenacious attitude coupled with the many skills they possessed these women thus came to have a great bearing upon the mission work in the western Pacific. Significantly, the establishment of Papauta became an effective tool for mission work, and graduates of Papauta became influential not only in Samoa but throughout the Pacific. As Downs proclaimed, "Trained women from Papauta have travelled far through the Pacific, working as wives of Samoan missionaries in far-away Papua."¹²⁵

¹²⁵ Downs, *Daughters of the Islands*, p. 24.

CHAPTER 2. THE FIRST WAVE: EARLY STRUGGLES IN SOUTHERN VANUATU AND THE LOYALTY ISLANDS 1839–1869

Port Resolution is one of the most spectacular harbours I have visited in the Pacific. Situated on the eastern coast of the island of Tanna in southern Vanuatu, it is a popular stop for Australian and New Zealand sailors, as they travel from New Caledonia in the south heading north to Port Vila and beyond. The harbour is enclosed by a ring of steep mountains, providing a secluded and serene environment. Perched on a high cliff at the left hand side of the harbour entrance is the Yacht Club, a rather fancy name for a basic resort that offers cheap accommodation for sailors and tourists alike. The Yacht Club sits on a striking elevated location, overlooking the entrance into the harbour but along the seaside edges of its compound, the ground suddenly plunges about twenty metres into the ocean. It is an impressive sight; inland can be clearly seen a panoramic view of the whole harbour, edged with a beautiful stretch of sandy beach surrounded and protected by deep green mountains. Opposite on the other side of the harbour entrance and just over the mountains is the famous Mount Yasur volcano, a popular attraction for tourists who visit this area. From the Yacht Club, smoke and ashes can be seen rising out of the volcano and now and then, the roaring sound of its eruptions can be heard.

Where the Yacht Club now sits, was where the old Presbyterian mission station once stood. Taking a stroll around the grounds it is still possible to identify the old foundations of concrete and limestone where the earlier church and mission houses were once built. Situated where the church was, is now the main dining and reception area of the Yacht Club, and right next to it is the grave of the Presbyterian missionary A.C.P. Watt, who died on 26 April 1894, aged 47. Situated further down the beach, about five hundred metres from the Yacht Club and directly facing the harbour entrance, was the original mission station before it was shifted. It was there that the first Samoan teachers Lalolagi, Mose and Salamea were dropped off on the inaugural missionary voyage in 1839. There the graves of Samuel P. Johnston and the wife and son of missionary John G. Paton; Mary Anne and Peter Robert Robson can be found. Mary and her son were buried there in March 1859 at the time when the last Samoans were still working in Vanuatu. This land belongs to the village of Eweia whose ancestors first received them and allowed the Samoans to settle. For many years the

Samoans struggled at this place, and it is where many including wives and children perished and were buried. It is hard to imagine that in such an idyllic spot, so much suffering transpired.



Figures 16a and b. Left: *View of the entrance into Port Resolution from the old mission station.* Right: *View inland from the old mission station facing directly inland at the place where the Samoans first arrived and settled.* Photographed by Latu Latai, 20 August 2013



Figure 17. Left: *Headstone of Mrs. Mary Anne Paton and her son Peter Robert.* Photographed by Latu Latai, 20 August 2013.

Figure 18. Right: *The grave of A.C.P. Watt near the Yacht Club's dining house.* Photographed by Latu Latai, 20 August 2013



Figure 19. Left: *Old pictures of the mission station at Port Resolution inside the current church*

Figure 20. Right: *The grave of Samuel P. Johnston.* Photographed by Latu Latai, 21 August 2013

Memories of the Samoans by local people in oral traditions and stories today are vague. But there are material manifestations in practices and places at Eweia. Local Chief Narua, a descendant of Chief Nowa who received the first Samoans, said there are Samoan influences in their songs, dances, methods of cooking and in their craft making, but they cannot pinpoint exactly what they are. However, there are three important sites that still remind them of the Samoans.

Situated down the beach from the Yacht Club is a stone anchor, a round solid object of about 1.2 metres in width, probably weighing about sixty kilograms or more. The stone anchor sits about ten metres out from the end of the beach. At high tide, it is submerged and can only be seen when the tide is low. According to oral traditions, this stone anchor was laid there by the Samoans and it continues to remind the local people of the first bearers of the Gospel. Just above where the anchor lies on a fifteen-metre high cliff is about a quarter of an acre of cleared land. The clearance is round and resembles a meeting place. According to oral tradition, this land was gifted to the Samoans by Chief Nowa when they first arrived. The original name of this place was lakuferon but when the Samoans settled here, it became known as Samoa.¹ On the other side of the village, about four hundred metres away from the Yacht Club, are the unmarked graves of the Samoans. The site is overgrown with trees and vines but it is still possible to discern the outline of the graves lined with huge slabs of limestone. Many of the Samoan teachers, their wives and children were buried here during the devastating outbreak of diseases in the 1840s and 1850s. But unlike the marked graves of the white missionaries and their families, the names of the Samoans who lay beneath these graves will never be known.

The story of the evangelisation of the islands of southern Vanuatu, Loyalty and New Caledonia is a sad and tragic one. For the period of about three decades when the Samoans laboured in this region, many died and never saw their homeland again.² Some who made it back were without their wives and children; some of the wives returned as widows while some families including children perished altogether. Samoan Church historian Featunai Liuaana, describes the work of the Samoans in

¹ Personal interview with Chief Narua, Port Resolution, Tanna, 20 August 2013.

² See Appendices 1 and 2 for the lists and information of Samoan missionaries and their wives in southern Vanuatu and the Loyalty Islands.

southern Vanuatu alone as one filled with “blood, sweat and tears.”³ According to Margaret Jolly, about fifty Polynesian men and women died in the mission stations in southern Vanuatu before 1856.⁴ This does not include those in the Loyalties and New Caledonia as well as the deaths of many of their children. Of about fifty-two Samoan missionary couples who worked in this region from 1839 to 1869, about twenty-four men, ten women and nine children were reported to have died. This makes up a total of forty-three. For the Samoans this was more than half of those who worked on these islands. These numbers however, particularly those of women and children are rather low and there could have been considerably more as many of their deaths were not recorded.⁵



Figure 21. Left: *The anchor believed to be that used by the Samoans. Photographed by Latu Latai, 20 August 2013*

Figure 22. Right: *The place called “Samoa” where the Samoans later settled. Photographed by Latu Latai, 20 August 2013*

One of the biggest causes of the death of the Samoans was disease. These included pre-existing diseases in the islands of this western region like malaria and filariasis, but also new diseases like dysentery, measles, smallpox, influenza and venereal disease, which raged as epidemics throughout the islands. Most of these newly introduced

³ Featunai B. Luiaana, “Errand of mercy: Samoan missionaries to Southern Vanuatu, 1839–1860,” in *The Covenant Makers: Islander Missionaries in the Pacific*, ed. Doug Munro and Andrew Thornley, Pacific Theological College and Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva, 1996, pp. 41–79, p. 69.

⁴ Margaret Jolly, “To save the girls for brighter and better lives,” *The Journal of Pacific History* vol. 26, no. 1 (1991): 27–48.

⁵ These numbers are according to my own reading of missionary accounts. The total number of wives is not clear as missionary records do not specify which Samoan missionaries took their wives in the early years. However from 1840, most of the wives joined their husbands so their number is close to that of the husbands. For those who died the numbers of husbands is closer approximation but it is hard to determine how many wives died. During my visits to the unmarked grave sites of the Samoans on Tanna and Aneityum, I saw that most of them were mass graves in which many were buried together.

diseases as well as malaria which is not found in Samoa, were new to the Samoans and because of their lack of immunity, they were easily infected leading to illness and death. But although the Samoans were frequent victims of such diseases, hundreds of ni-Vanuatu including large proportions of island populations also perished during these outbreaks.⁶ For local people on these islands, the deaths and destruction caused by these epidemics were unlike anything they had ever witnessed before and thus many attributed it to the coming of foreigners and their new God. As such, the Samoans as well as the Rarotongans, who were often the only resident foreigners on these islands, were constantly attacked, chased out and killed during times of epidemics. Moreover, the increasing presence of sandalwood traders with missionary allegations in the 1840s of “slavery,” “blackbirding” and “prostitution” on their part, meant that the situation for the Samoans deteriorated further with growing violent confrontations.



Figures 23a and b. *The unmarked graves of the Samoans at Port Resolution distinguished by slabs of limestone. Photographed by Latu Latai, 20 August 2013*



Figure 24. *Chief Narua holding a picture of his ancestor Chief Nowa who, according to local tradition, first received the Samoans. Photographed by Latu Latai, 20 August 2013*

⁶ On depopulation in Vanuatu see Margaret Jolly, *Women of the Place: Kastom, Colonialism and Gender in Vanuatu*, Routledge, London and New York, 1994, pp. 29–34.

The Samoans thus entered into their first mission field at a time of extreme danger and risk to their lives. The writings of English missionaries both of the London Missionary Society (LMS) and the Presbyterian missions are abundant but for the most part are disgracefully brief in any mention of the Samoans. Although some acknowledgements were made, the truth is that English missionaries, who depended for their very lives on the Samoans, and who would routinely send them into “dangerous” territory ahead of them, were poorly acknowledged. The Samoans and their wives endured hardships far in excess of anything the white missionaries endured, but many texts did not even record their names. As for Samoan wives, none of their names were given at all. It is easy to shrug this off as a product of the time, but it was symptomatic of the missionaries’ world view and their idea of their own place in it. This racial hierarchy not only structures and suffuses the written records but, as we have seen, the materials and upkeep of graves, oral histories and even contemporary reconciliation ceremonies in these islands.⁷ The Samoans however were the foundational pioneers and martyrs; yet the Europeans have been far more celebrated in the “coming of the light.”

The inaugural missionary voyage

The first group of Samoan missionaries were sent to the western Pacific in 1839 just nine years after Christianity was formally introduced to Samoa in 1830. In August 1839 at a meeting with missionaries and Samoan chiefs at the village of Fasito’o, John Williams expressed his wish to go with Samoans to evangelise islands in the west. The motion was well received by all those present. Williams requested nine Samoans but was surprised to get thirty-four volunteers.⁸ Twelve were chosen in the end, symbolic of the twelve Apostles who began the spreading of the Gospel. A farewell service was

⁷ A recent book by Carol E. Mayer, Anna Naupa and Vanerra Warri, documents a reconciliation ceremony in 2013, between the people of Erromango and descendants of John Williams. The title of the book is *No Longer Captives of the Past* which depicts the lifting of such a curse which the people of Erromango had believed to have been on them since the death of Williams. These reconciliation ceremonies often highlight the roles and work of English missionaries. Moreover they are much more publicised and written about by academics and scholars. However although there have been reconciliations, between Samoans and Vanuatu for example, as I found out in Aneityum, not much has been written about these events. Christopher Ballard however has written an unpublished paper about a reconciliation in 2003 at Lelepa Island where Rarotongan missionaries and their wives were killed. See Mayer, Naupa and Warri, *No longer Captives of the Past*, Vancouver and Port Vila: University of British Columbia, Museum of Anthropology, 2013; Christopher Ballard, “Atonement and restitution: Making peace with history in Vanuatu,” unpublished paper, Pacific and Asian History, The Australian National University, April 2010.

⁸ London Missionary Society, “Samoan District Committee, Minutes of Meeting 31 October 1839,” Pacific Manuscript Bureau, ANU, PMB 95 (microfilm).

held at the village of Saleimoa, attended by all of the missionaries including Williams' own family,⁹ the paramount chief Malietoa, and the families of the twelve Samoan teachers. Williams preached from Acts 20:22–24 which reads:

And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me – the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace.¹⁰

Williams' message was inspiring, stirring up a sense of courage and of martyrdom for those present including the Samoans. The presence of Malietoa gave legitimacy and support for this inaugural missionary voyage. He himself was instrumental in gathering support and volunteers as these pioneering Samoan missionaries were people from his extended kin and constituencies where he exerted political influence.¹¹

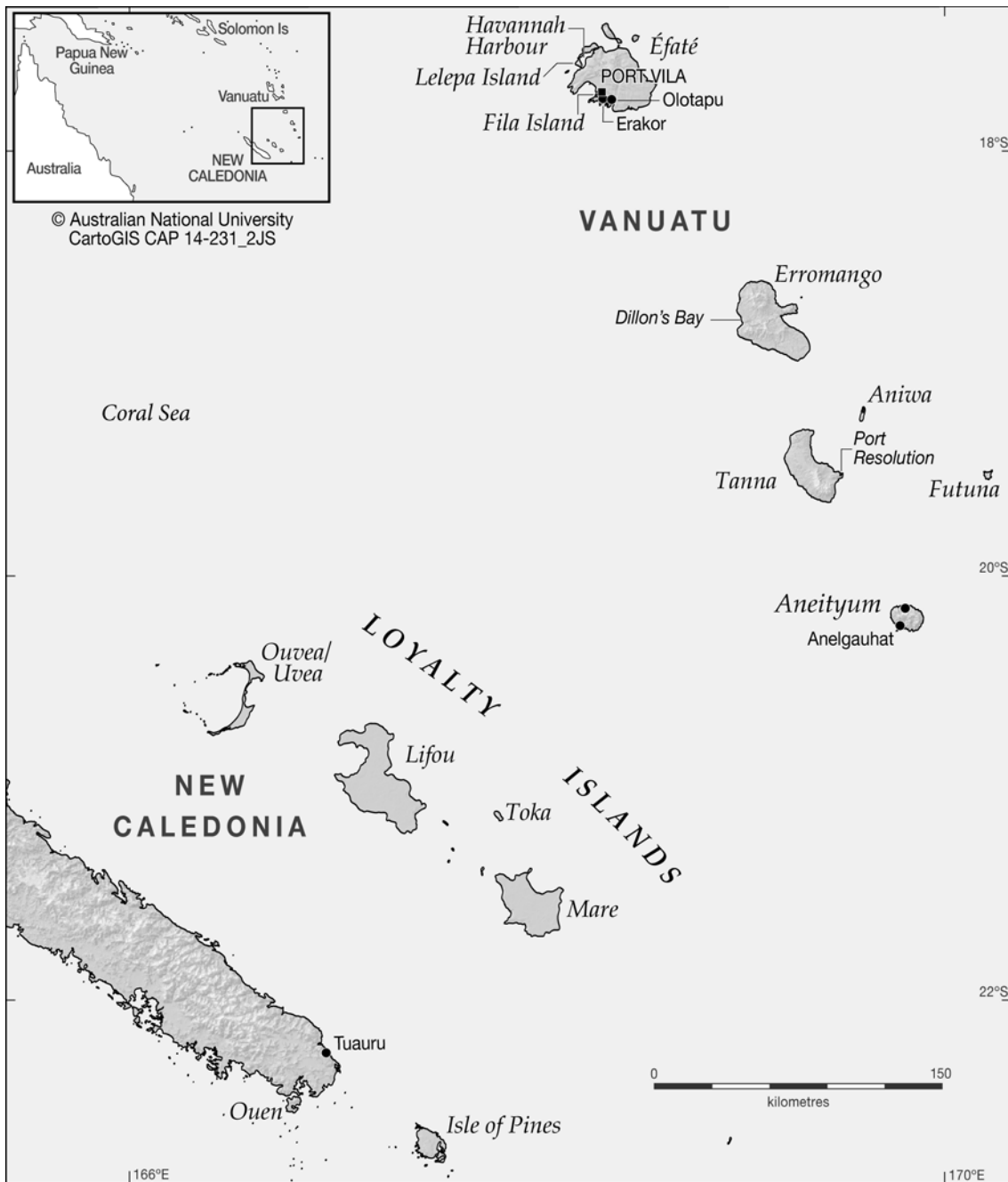
After a rousing send off, the *Camden* finally left Samoa, on its first voyage to plant the seeds of the Gospel on the islands in the western Pacific. On this voyage, Williams was accompanied by Captain Morgain, Reverend Harris and twelve Samoan teachers. They arrived first on the island of Rotuma where two Samoans Sa'u and Leiataua were deployed to begin the mission. Then they sailed to the islands of southern Vanuatu where they made first contact with the people of Futuna. They found the people only interested in trading and thus gifts of hooks, mirrors and beads were made, but no teachers were placed. The next island they sighted was Tanna and there on 18 November 1839 at Port Resolution, the first Samoan teachers were landed in southern Vanuatu. They offered to stay. Williams' account suggested that the locals were mourning a death as people's faces were painted black. Lalolagi later reported that once Williams and the ship left, the people came, touched their skins and commented

⁹ At this time, Williams' wife Maria and two of his children John and his wife Caroline and youngest son Aaron Barff had settled with him in Samoa and were present at the farewell. His second son Samuel Tamatoa was left in England for education.

¹⁰ This English translation is taken from the New International Version Bible. By 1839, translation of the Samoan Bible had already begun, starting with the New Testament. John Williams would have likely read from this Samoan translation.

¹¹ Oka Fauolo, *O Vavega o le Alofa Lavea'i: O le Tala Faasolopito o le Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa*, Mālua Printing Press, Apia, 2005, pp. 67–69.

on how good they would be to eat.¹² The *Camden* left Tanna and headed north to Erromango where the mission ended in tragedy.



Map 3. Islands in the south of Vanuatu, Loyalty Islands and New Caledonia

At Dillon's Bay, despite the warning signs of danger, especially an absence of women and children that was noted by Morgain, Williams decided to go ashore accompanied by Harris. The people in this area had just suffered an attack by the crew of a sandalwood ship which killed several local people and destroyed their settlements and

¹² *Sulu Samoa*, vol. 1, no. 3 (1840): 34.

plantations.¹³ According to missionary accounts, Williams and Harris were mistaken as sandalwood traders and the two missionaries once landed on shore, were clubbed to death. The inaugural missionary voyage thus ended in tragic circumstances. The *Camden* returned to Samoa with the seven remaining Samoans who had witnessed the horrific massacre of their mission leader.



Figure 25. "The Massacre of the Lamented Missionary the Rev. J. Williams and Mr. Harris," by George Baxter. Williams in the water, James Harris and other missionaries in a boat in the distance. The picture was published by the artist in 1841 and is in the National Library of Australia, Canberra.¹⁴

¹³ Dorothy Shineberg has challenged this interpretation as part of the missionaries' attempt to paint a negative image of sandalwooders. She argues that the death of Williams was due to the breaking of *tapu* by going inland at a time of a feast. She also argues that their killings could be due to the Erromangans' fear of diseases. Missionary writings however persisted in claiming that it was due to the deaths and destruction caused by sandalwooders. In 1854 they wrote of how several years later when missionaries visited Erromango, they met with Kauiaui who had killed Williams and were told this was the reason and that his own son was killed when sandalwood traders destroyed their settlements. In one of the rare surviving letters written by a Samoan, Mailei who was at Erromango in 1855, the reason told to him by locals and Kauiaui himself was due to the missionaries being linked to the sandalwooders. He wrote,

Two chiefs are now attending church one who killed Williams name aueai [Kauiaui] ... and another. He [Kauiaui] killed the missionary. He said that they thought that the mission ship was a sandalwood ship because a sandalwood ship came ... and killed the people of Eromaga [Erromango]. This is why the village was angry. They thought it was a sandalwood ship, then they killed the missionary Williams and the other missionary of the same family.

See Dorothy Shineberg, *They Came for Sandalwood: A Study of the Sandalwood Trade in the Southwest Pacific, 1830–1865*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1967; *Samoa Reporter* no. 14 (January 1854): 1; Letter by Mailei to Henry Nisbet, Erromango, 28 July 1855.

¹⁴ Published by G. Baxter 1841. Downloaded from the National Library of New Zealand, reference number B-088-002.

The news of the death of Williams on November 20 1839 on that fateful voyage, not only brought shock and sadness to the mission world, but also heightened the real fears in the missionary endeavour.¹⁵ The nature of William's death was to forever mark the people of Erromango and of this region as a ferocious and savage race as expressed in mission texts and engravings.¹⁶ A spirit of discouragement and dissuasion was evident among the missionaries, but it was the Samoans who stood up and offered to continue the work left by Williams, so that his death would not be in vain.¹⁷

On March 24 the following year, the remains of Williams and Harris were brought back to Samoa by the British warship the *Favourite*. A commemoration and burial was held. Two weeks later on 10 April 1840, the *Camden* left Samoa again to resume the mission.¹⁸ This time it was led by missionary Thomas Heath accompanied by thirteen Samoan teachers and two Rarotongans.¹⁹ Despite the volatile nature of the situation in Vanuatu, the wives and children of the teachers accompanied them on this voyage, including those already in Tanna.²⁰ A year later, on 1 February 1841, the Samoa District Committee (SDC) approved more than ten Samoans to resume the mission.²¹ In May of the same year a proposal to church members to commence contributions to the spread of the Gospel was "cheerfully acceded" to.²² This was in spite of the fact that there were already reports of Samoans suffering in the mission. The Samoan mission however persisted and European missionaries wrote about the enthusiasm of the

¹⁵ Reports of this tragedy were discussed in meetings of LMS missionaries in Samoa and also published both in English and Samoan LMS missionary magazines, the *Chronicles* and *Sulu Samoa*. See LMS, "Samoa District Committee, Minutes of Meeting 30 March 1840"; *Missionary Magazine and Chronicles* vol III no. XLIX (June 1840): 81–82; *Sulu Samoa* vol. 1, no. 3 (1840): 34–35.

¹⁶ Although such notions of savagery have recently been revised in the recent reconciliation ceremony in which the Erromangans are perceived as "no longer captives of the past." See Mayer, Naupa and Warri, *No Longer Captives of the Past*.

¹⁷ This is the view of Samoan Church historians Kenape Faletese and Featunai Liuaana. According to Liuaana, the European missionaries reminded the Samoans of their obligation to Williams and the Samoans became more determined to return to southern Vanuatu. Hence it was perhaps the insistence of the Samoans that led to the quick resumption of the mission. See Liuaana, "Errand of mercy," p. 44; Kenape Faletese, *Talafaasolopito o le Ekalesia Samoa (LMS)*, Mālue Printing Press, Apia, 1959, p. 6.

¹⁸ *Sulu Samoa* vol. 1, no 3 (1840): 34.

¹⁹ The Samoans were Atamu from Manono, Iona from Falefa, Lasalo from Apolima, Mataio from Manono, Tanielu from Mulifanua, Tuitama from Faleasiu, Pomare from Tutuila, Vaiofaga and Taniela from Tutuila. The two Rarotongans were Teava and Sakaria.

²⁰ On this voyage were the wives of the Samoans working on Tanna as well as the wives of Sa'u and Leiataua who were at Rotuma. See *Sulu Samoa* vol. 1 no 3 (1840): 34.

²¹ LMS, "Samoa District Committee, Minutes of Meeting 1 February 1841."

²² LMS, "Samoa District Committee, Minutes of Meeting 10 May 1841."

Samoans for mission. In the LMS periodical, *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicles* in March 1842, a picture of a Samoan blind man was posted. Underneath it was a caption with the blind man saying to Williams,

Teacher Williams, I am a blind man, but I have a great desire to go with you to the dark lands. Perhaps my being blind will make them pity me, and not kill me, and whilst I can talk to them and tell them of Jesus, my boy (placing his hand on the head of his son), an interesting youth can read and write, and so we can teach these things.²³

The incident was related by William Mills. Although clearly used for mission propaganda purposes to inspire others the story graphically reveals the willingness of many Samoans to take up their calling in their newly acquired faith.

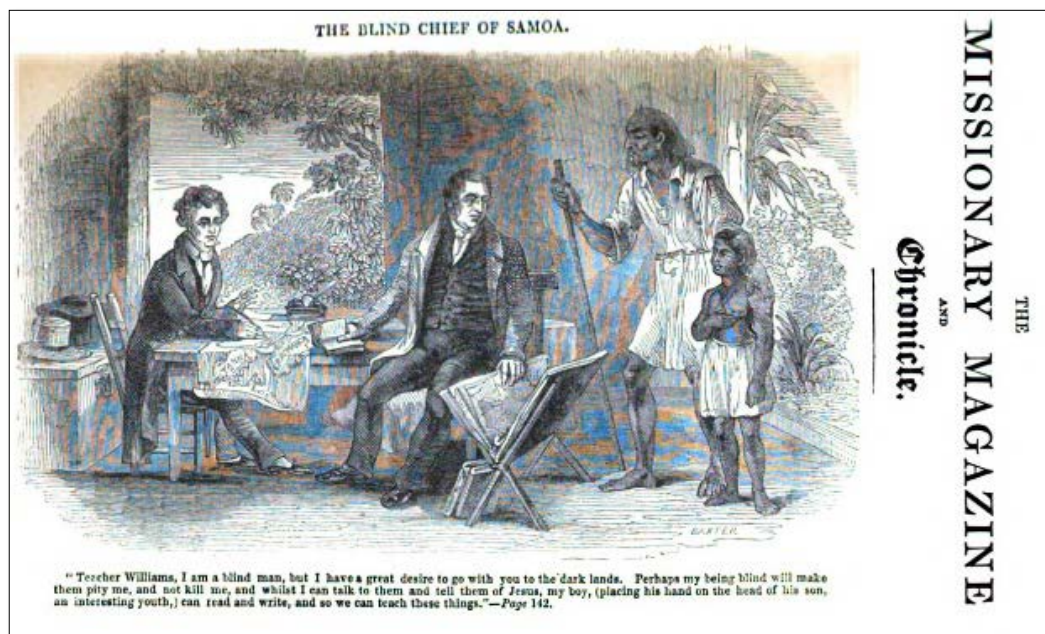


Figure 26. Image of the Samoan blind man and his son offering to go as a missionary in *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle* March 1842

Early missionary voyages

For the first twenty years of mission from 1839 to 1859, the Samoan LMS mission undertook fifteen missionary voyages. The first four voyages were completed by the missionary vessel the *Camden*. This was replaced in 1845 when the new ship the *John*

²³ *Missionary Magazine and Chronicles* (March 1842): 141–42.

Williams named after the pioneering English martyr of the LMS in the Pacific was purchased.²⁴

Voyages often took several months. In the early years, the ship would leave Samoa and sail west to the islands of southern Vanuatu, Loyalty Islands and New Caledonia where they would make a circuit of the islands. During the initial voyages, they would stop first at Rotuma where Samoan teachers had already been deployed since 1839. By 1845, the mission on that island was handed over to the Wesleyan Methodist Mission²⁵ and thus the mission ship would sail to southern Vanuatu stopping first at the islands of Futuna, Tanna, Aniwa, Aneityum, Efate, Erromango, and then proceed further to the Loyalty Islands and New Caledonia. This was a total of about ten anchorages. In 1846, Niue was included and was the last island visited before heading back to Samoa. These missionary voyages lasted on average about three months. Their main purpose was not only to assess the progress of the Samoans and Rarotongans on the various islands, but also to deploy new missionary couples and bring supplies.

Although the LMS preferred to have annual visits, missionary voyages were often irregular. The mission ships from time to time took longer voyages to England, to get supplies and to bring back new British missionaries and their families. These longer voyages could take up to a year and half. Thus there were several years during which no visits were made.²⁶ During these periods of absence, the mission in this region was left unvisited and the Samoan teachers left on their own for longer periods of up to two or even three years.

The lack of visits during these prolonged periods meant that teachers relied mainly on their own resources. It also meant that teachers and their wives had no news of Samoa and their relatives back home. Most tragically, it meant that when disasters struck, like epidemic outbreaks, civil wars and natural disasters, the Samoans were left to fend for

²⁴ *Samoan Reporter* no. 2 (September 1845): 3.

²⁵ The Wesleyan Mission Society occupied Rotuma in 1841 while the Samoans were still there until 1845. See John Garrett, *To Live Among the Stars: Christian Origins in Oceania*, World Council of Churches in association with the Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific, Geneva/Suva, 1982, pp. 284–85; Niel Gunson, *Messengers of Grace: Evangelical Missionaries in the South Pacific*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne and Oxford, 1978, p. 21.

²⁶ For example, there were no visits during the years 1843 to 1844, 1847, 1850 to 1851, 1853, and 1855 to 1856. This is clear from the number of missionary reports published in the *Samoan Reporter* from 1839 to 1859.

themselves. News of the sufferings and deaths of the teachers and their families were sometimes not reported until several years after these events occurred. The lack of frequent visitations was a major problem for the Samoans and this was only acknowledged by the missionaries in the late 1850s. George Stallworthy wrote in 1857,

The heathen among whom we place our teachers desire frequent visits from missionaries, and their newly awakened and undefined interest in missionaries and their objects require to be cherished and enlightened. Long intervals between visits of the missionaries cause that interest to abate or die out, and greatly diminishes the value of those visits in the views of the people. Delay in the expected visits chafes their minds, and injures the credit of the missionaries with them.²⁷

He went on to write that in cases in which some people had begun to give attention to the instructions of the teachers, a delay in visiting missionaries discourages the inquirers, the prospective converts. Teachers were thus reliant on the assurance that within a reasonable time they would be visited. In many cases the expected return of the ship was the chief or only protection of the properties and lives of the teachers; as he wrote, “delay in the promised return of the ship lets loose upon them the hand of robbery and murder.”²⁸

When the missionaries did visit, their stays were often brief, spending only a day or two on one island before they moved to the next. During these short visits, the missionaries recorded accounts of the progress of the missions on the various islands from the teachers. Thus, although it was the Europeans who wrote about the early period of evangelisation on islands in the west, these accounts were based on the information related to them by the Polynesian teachers. European missionaries thus had very limited association with or actual experience on the islands in the early years.

The first Europeans who attempted to settle in Vanuatu were George Turner and Henry Nisbet who were deployed on Tanna in 1842. However, they only lasted seven months before civil war broke out and they escaped because of imminent danger. Despite the fact that they had experienced firsthand the danger on these islands, the Europeans continued to deploy Samoan and Rarotongan teachers. It was only when

²⁷ *Samoan Reporter* no. 19 (October 1857): 2.

²⁸ *Samoan Reporter* no. 19 (October 1857): 2.

the situation seemed safe that European missionaries were finally deployed for longer periods.

It is no surprise therefore that the only island that was safe and where little local resistance was experienced in the early period was where the first resident European missionaries settled. This was Aneityum where the Samoans had laboured for several years. The success of their work led to the deployment of John Geddie and his wife Charlotte, Isaac Archibald and Thomas Powell in 1848, seven years after the first Samoans were deployed on this island in 1841. Powell was of the LMS, Geddie and Archibald were from the Presbyterian Mission of Nova Scotia. These missionaries thus experienced the difficulties the teachers were facing and began urging the LMS for reinforcement. Geddie wrote in 1850,

It is exceedingly desirable that one or more Missionaries should be settled in all the islands where native-teachers labour. The result, I am sure, would be a great reduction in your bills of mortality in the West. It is truly affecting to think how many poor teachers have fallen victims to the disease of these islands without any to lend them a helping hand.... Will no brother come to the help of the Lord in these dark islands!²⁹

The arrival of Geddie and Archibald³⁰ saw the gradual rise of the Presbyterian Mission in Southern Vanuatu, where eventually they would eclipse the efforts of the LMS. This however did not diminish the involvement of the Samoan LMS mission during the next decades from the 1850s to the 1860s. They continued to visit these islands where their island teachers were working, bringing in reinforcements from Samoa. But the presence of these Presbyterian resident missionaries on Aneityum meant that there was now a more regular supervision of the island missionary couples and their families. This was greatly assisted with the purchase of the missionary vessel the *John Knox* for use by the Presbyterian missionaries in Vanuatu.³¹

²⁹ Letter from John Geddie, Aneityum, 20 May 1850. In *Samoan Reporter* no. 12 (January 1851): 4.

³⁰ Archibald was later charged with having an affair with a local woman and left. See George Patterson, *Missionary Life among the Cannibals: Being the life of the Rev. John Geddie, D.D., First Missionary to the New Hebrides: With a History of the Nova Scotia Presbyterian Mission on that Group*, James Campbell & Son, James Bain & Son and Hart & Co., Toronto, 1882, p. 209.

³¹ The vessel was built in Glasgow and gifted by the supporters of the Vanuatu mission there. When Aneityum was visited by the *Camden* in 1854, the *John Knox* vessel was already in operation. *Samoan Reporter* no. 19 (October 1857): 2.

Aneityum thus became the central island of the mission in the region. From there, they observed whether other islands were safe for the deployment of European missionaries. In 1857, Erromango was finally settled with George Gordon and his wife. A year later in 1858, John G. Paton and his wife Margaret Whitecross, John W. Matheson and his wife Mary, Thomas Nielson, and Joseph Copeland were posted on Tanna. At Efate, Futuna and Aniwa there was no resident missionary even in 1861. Thus, except for Aneityum, most of the islands of southern Vanuatu did not have resident white missionaries during the first two decades of mission. The Samoan teachers worked mainly on their own, enduring many years of isolation and struggle.

By the 1860s, all of the missionaries in southern Vanuatu were of the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia. The Samoans were slowly being phased out and replaced by locally trained teachers, mainly from Aneityum where there was great progress in the mission.³² On Aneityum the last of the Samoan teachers there, and one of the longest serving, died from the measles outbreak of 1861. He was the much loved Simiona, who was posted there with his wife in 1842 and had worked there for almost twenty years. By now, the mission in Vanuatu was under the leadership of the Presbyterian Mission. The LMS Samoan mission continued to visit, but it no longer had a direct influence on the islands. Rather the LMS was now concentrating more on the Loyalty Islands and other parts of the western Pacific including Niue, Tokelau, Tuvalu, Kiribati and later PNG further to the northwest.

Early Samoan missionaries and wives

Early Samoan missionaries and their wives came from important chiefly families.³³ Two of the names listed of the first twelve who went in 1839 for example, Sa'u from Apolima and Leiataua from Manono are important chiefly titles in these villages. Although the rest of the names recorded were mostly transliterations of Biblical

³² As early as 1856, the missions on Futuna and Erromango were dominated by Aneityumese teachers. When Gordon and his wife were settled at Erromango in 1857, there were no Samoans left due to illness and from then on he was assisted by Aneityum teachers. By 1859, the mission on Tanna was largely dominated by Aneityum teachers under the supervision of the Presbyterian resident missionaries. By 1861, the mission on Efate was largely run by a few Rarotongans and Aneityum teachers. At Aniwa, there were only Aneityum teachers left. The Samoans however continued to work and dominate the mission in the Loyalty Islands.

³³ Liuaana, "Errand of mercy," p. 41.

names, most are believed to be holders of chiefly titles.³⁴ This is because the adoption of Biblical names was a common practice among Samoan chiefs at the time, a practice which Malietoa also followed, by changing his name from Vaiinupo to Tavita after David, the King of the Israelites. Here we see the significance of name change in tracing a new lineage and genealogy to the new God Jehovah.³⁵

The majority of early Samoan missionaries were therefore high chiefs of important status in their villages and districts. These chiefs were from the areas where the paramount chief Malietoa had political alliances and influence and where Christianity was firmly established. The villages of Apolima and Manono for example, were allies of Malietoa and two of the first villages to embrace Williams when he arrived in 1830. Thus it was fitting that the highest chiefs from these villages offered to lead the initial voyage. Malietoa's own role and influence was vital to the missionary enterprise. According to Samoan Church historian Oka Fauolo, this shows the extent of the influence of Malietoa in the structuring of the mission, but also in gathering support for the evangelisation of the western Pacific.³⁶ Fauolo considers that there was much wisdom in the selection of the first twelve Samoan missionaries. According to him, the first twelve teachers were representative of the whole country and their selection was strategic and symbolic of the political divisions of Samoa. For example Sa'u, Leiataua and Ioane were from the constituency of Aiga i le Tai, renowned as expert seamen and navigators. Salamea and Seupule came from the village of Faleula, a district of traditional warriors. Mose and Filipo came from Iva, representing the Puleono or the six authorities of the island of Savaii. Paulo Fa'asavalu was from Falelatai, the traditional residence of the Tuiaana, one of the paramount titles in Samoa. Lalolagi Samoanamao, came from the village of Malieota himself. Mose from Saleimoa represented the authority of Aiga, le Faletolu, Luatua and the Gautaala, and from where the inaugural mission was farewell and launched. Lastly was Fuga representing

³⁴ Several of the Samoan teachers with biblical names include: Atamu (Adam), Iona (Jonah), Lasalo (Lazarus), Tanielu (Daniel) and Mataio (Mathew).

³⁵ Fauolo, *O Vavega o le Alofa Laved'i*, p. 69.

³⁶ Fauolo, *O Vavega o le Alofa Laved'i*, p. 71.

the authority of Faasuaga ma le Faleagafulu ma Tama matua, referring to the islands of Tutuila and Manua in the east.³⁷

The chosen twelve were therefore not a random selection of individuals symbolising the twelve apostles but as Fauolo suggests, representative of the whole of Samoa and encapsulated in the Samoan proverbial saying, *Ua atoa tino o Va'atausili*, meaning the body of Va'atausili is whole and complete.³⁸ The selection of the first group of Samoan missionaries thus shows the influence of Malietoa and other high chiefs of Samoa, an evidence of indigenous appropriation which was significant at the start of Samoan missionary work.

Unlike their husbands however, none of the names of the early Samoan wives, who worked as missionary wives at this stage, were ever recorded. When wives joined their husbands in 1840, they were only referred to as “wives.” It is most likely that they themselves adopted Biblical names. But although “nameless” we know that they were wives of chiefs, some of whom held very important titles. The institution of marriage in Samoa was vital in linking chiefs to other important chiefly families. We can safely say

³⁷ Tutuila and Manu'a became a territory of the United States in 1900 and 1904, and are now called American Samoa.

³⁸ Fauolo, *O Vavega o le Alofa Lavea'i*, p. 69. According to Samoan legends, Va'atausili was the brother of Vaea who avenged the death of Vaea's child. The story goes that Vaea was once a fierce and strong warrior and many feared him. One night his parents while fishing saw a boat afloat in the moonlight and fearing they were warriors they rushed to shore to tell Vaea. Vaea wanting to show his strength to these strangers, lifted the boat with all the crew inside and rested it upon the branches of a nearby tree. Upon the next day, it was realised that the crew was from Fiji, which included two brothers and their sister. Fearing for their lives, they gave up their sister to be Vaea's wife. For many years the brothers lived in Samoa and served Vaea. Vaea however was taken by Apaula's beauty and he came to love her. Time passed and Apaula was heavy with child. Apaula convinced Vaea to let her brothers go back to Fiji to their homeland. Upon agreeing, the brothers begged Vaea if they could take Apaula back to Fiji with them one more time before she made Samoa her home for good. Fearing that Apaula might not come back Vaea refused, but after much persuasion, he gave in to what his wife wanted. As the boat sailed off, Vaea stood by the seashore until it disappeared and waited for the day of his wife's return. Meanwhile, the brothers after years of planning vengeance on Vaea, finally had their way when Apaula gave birth. Ending Vaea's line before it started, the brothers killed the baby and threw his body into the sea. Apaula was devastated. Apaula was determined to escape back to Samoa to avenge the death of her child. She finally returned and upon reaching Samoa, Vaea had almost died. He had refused to move from where he stood to say goodbye to Apaula and eventually, the story goes that he turned into a rock which slowly built up into a mountain from his feet. Still, his eyes focused on the horizon for the return of Apaula. Apaula reached him when only his head had not turned into rock. She told Vaea of the death of their son and her plan to avenge his death. Vaea told her to go to his brother Vaatausili who would avenge the death of their son. Apaula found Va'atausili and was disappointed to see that he was a scrawny figure merrily chasing butterflies on the beach, and she wondered how this little man could possibly defeat her terrible brothers. Vaatausili reassured Apaula, and then went into a nearby cave. Later, he emerged transformed into a ferocious beast and set off to hunt his baby nephew's murderers. Hence the saying, “*Ua atoa tino o Va'atausili*.”

therefore that these women were from important chiefly families. As wives of high chiefs and orators, they held important status and would have been influential in the intersecting roles of women and chiefs in Samoa. Moreover, in their status as sisters, they were also *feagaiga* or covenants in their own families and villages. Thus they were highly esteemed and played powerful roles in the local affairs of their natal families and villages. As we have seen in the previous chapter, this dual status of Samoan women was significant. Yet now they were more restricted to their Christian status as wives to their missionary husbands, and long separated from their natal families where they were honoured sisters.

Most of these women had been in recent polygamous relationships, a custom that was still thriving in Samoa at the time of the arrival of Christianity, primarily among chiefs of high status. Thus wives of early Samoan missionaries, who had just been converted to Christianity, had themselves only recently experienced Christian ideas of monogamous marriage. The influence of European missionaries in stressing values of Christian marriage would have precipitated a shift in their ideas of marriage as monogamous and the family as nucleated. This would have been consolidated further when they were living in foreign places in the mission field, outside of the Samoan context. Here Samoan missionary couples were presented as models of monogamous marriage and the novel Christian family. Paradoxically for them, polygamy was also a common practice amongst chiefs in these mission fields in southern Vanuatu, and as we will see, their encounter with this practice not only challenged their newly held Christian values but for some, it cost them their very lives.

Early Samoan missionaries and their wives were therefore an elite group of chiefs and wives of chiefs. Most had just converted to Christianity but were deeply committed to their new vocation, a vocation that was partly sanctioned by the powerful chief Malietoa and by their strong belief in their new God. Most if not all of them had been influential in the introduction of Christianity in their own villages and districts. This included not only chiefs but also women. As we have seen, leaders of the *aualuma*, or daughters of villages were vital to the collective conversion of women in Samoa and it is most likely that some of these early Samoan missionary wives were at the forefront of such conversions. As shown in Chapter 1, Samoan women were quite enthusiastic in education and often excelled in schools, and hence most were able to read and write.

The few surviving letters written by their husbands in the 1850s show how advanced they were in writing. And although there are no records of these women's own writing, they would have been equally capable. Once the formal training of teachers and wives began in 1844 when the Mālua Seminary was established, the majority of them would have been highly literate and fluent in Biblical texts as well as knowledgeable in introduced domestic skills. Many of these women were thus prepared to join their husbands in missionary work. They were exceptionally committed and brave, particularly when they later realised the enormity of the task they were to encounter.

The early struggles with diseases

As we have learned, Samoan missionary wives first arrived in the mission field in southern Vanuatu in 1840, a year after the death of Williams. Their introduction to mission work however was miserable, arriving at a time when a series of disease outbreaks ravaged these islands. The first group of women were the wives of those already deployed on Tanna at Port Resolution. Upon arrival, they found their husbands struggling with diseases and the climate. Thomas Heath who led this voyage wrote that "all (were) ill of intermittent fever, occasioned most likely by the coldness of the climate."³⁹ It is most likely that the cause of illness was malaria. Moreover, on these southern islands the temperature is much cooler than in Samoa, and the Samoans were clearly finding it hard to acclimatise.⁴⁰ Lalolagi who had been there for a year requested that he be returned to Samoa. The missionary Heath however decided that "his going away would hurt the minds of his companions, & therefore resolved to let him stay at least for another year."⁴¹ The Samoans Lalolagi, Mose and Salamea now with their wives and children were forced to stay together with two new Samoan teachers, Apolo and Faleese. Six weeks later, Captain Edward Belcher of the *H.M.S*

³⁹ Thomas Heath, "Voyage to Rotumah, New Hebrides and New Caledonia in the *Camden*, 20 April–9 June 1840," in London Missionary Society, "South Seas Journals" no. 126.

⁴⁰ During my visits to Tanna and Aneityum, I have found the climate much cooler than what I had experienced growing up in Samoa, which is often at an average temperature of 30°C with very high humidity, although the average minimum temperatures from February to July can fall to 24°C, particularly at night. In Vanuatu the average temperature is 28°C while in the winter from April to September it averages around 23°C. Coming from such a climate the Samoans would have found it cold and thus would have been more prone to illness.

⁴¹ Heath, Voyage to Rotumah, New Hebrides and New Caledonia in the *Camden*, 20 April–9 June 1840.

Sulphur reported on the pathetic state of the Samoans. One had died; all were ill with fever and “painfully anxious to return to their native land.” He wrote,

I certainly felt a more than ordinary interest about these unfortunate beings, and the frequent repetition of “Samoa, Samoa”, from the sick within the hut, sounded like the cry of the condemned.⁴²

The first of the Samoans thus succumbed to disease in 1840, but we do not know whether it was a teacher or one of the wives who had recently arrived.

But despite such poor conditions, LMS missionaries continued to persist by placing two Samoans on Erromango and extending the mission to other islands such as Aniwa and to the south of New Caledonia.⁴³ In the following year, ten more new Samoan missionaries, mostly with their wives, were deployed despite the fact that things had not improved. At Erromango, they found the Samoans Taniela and Lasalo, who were left there the previous year, ill-treated and desperate to leave.⁴⁴ On this voyage, however, the mission was expanded to include Futuna, Aneityum, and the Loyalty Islands.⁴⁵

⁴² Edward Belcher, *Narrative of a Voyage Round the World: Performed in Her Majesty's ship Sulphur, during the years 1836–1842, including details of the naval operations in China, from Dec. 1840, to Nov. 1841; published under the authority of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty*, vol. 2, Henry Colburn, London, 1843, pp. 58, 59.

⁴³ The Samoans Taniela from Mulifanua and Tufulele and Lasalo from Apolima were left on Erromango to re-establish the mission on the other side of the island. Atamu and Iona were deployed at Aniwa. There is no account of the progress of their work in its early stage. However the 1843 epidemic outbreak of influenza led to their abandoning the mission escaping to Tanna. They were blamed for the cause of the disease. When Murray and Turner arrived they had heard that the teachers left due to the scarcity of food and had moved to Tanna. Aniwa was never visited again until 1845, at which time the locals were receptive of teachers again. *Samoa Reporter* no. 2 (September 1845): 3; *Sulu Samoa* vol. 1, no. 3 (1840): 34.

⁴⁴ The two Samoans Taniela and Lasalo soon found themselves victims of the cruelty of the people. The people refused to care for them, their property was stolen and they were left to starve to death if it was not for the kindness of a local named Vorevore who secretly supplied them with food. In 1841, the *Camden* rescued them and they were told to return to Samoa. They were evacuated and were about to return to Samoa, but they refused and were taken to work at Kunie on the Isle of Pines. *Sulu Samoa* vol. 3, no. 2 (August 1845): 24–25.

⁴⁵ The new group of Samoan teachers were, Apela, Apolo, Faleese, Fuataiese, Paoo or Fao, Sakaria, Samuelu, Tavita, Tataio from Sapapalii and Tanielu. On this voyage Samuelu and Apela were posted to Futuna, Fuataiese and Tavita at Aneityum. Tataio and Tanielu were posted at Mare and two others Sakaria and Paoo with the intention of going to Lifou. In October 1842, Sakaria and Paoo finally moved to Lifou. See LMS, “Samoa District Committee, Minutes of Meeting 1 February 1841”; *Sulu Samoa* vol. 3, no. 2 (August 1845): 22–23.

In 1842, the *Camden* left Samoa again taking more wives and children. On this voyage were the English missionaries George Turner and Henry Nisbet who had now decided to reside in the mission field.⁴⁶ The English missionaries however soon found out the harsh reality of the mission. On Tanna, Turner and Nisbet discovered their properties were constantly ravaged by local people, with things like nails, mirrors, combs, clothes, pots, pans, cups and even chicken stolen.⁴⁷ This however was only a small part of their problems. The following year, an outbreak of dysentery quickly spread killing large numbers of the local populations. This was followed by an outbreak of influenza that was suddenly felt throughout the islands. On the Isle of Pines, Mataio became the second Samoan to die.⁴⁸ On Aneityum the Samoan couple Tavita and his wife died from complications of the disease—Tavita from a blood haemorrhage, while his wife died from a disease of the stomach.⁴⁹ The situation continued to deteriorate and the Samoans were soon blamed by locals as the cause of diseases. On Aniwa, Atamu and Iona and their families, fearful of their lives, escaped to the nearest island of Tanna. They arrived to find that the epidemic on that island had already claimed the lives of two Samoans—Pomare and the pioneering Salamea. The mission was abandoned, including the wives and children of the Samoans, as well as Turner and Nisbet and their families, who had only been on the island for seven months. But one of the most tragic cases occurred on the island of Futuna, where the Samoans were again blamed for the sickness. All were killed, including Apela, Samuela and his wife and daughter.

⁴⁶ On this voyage more Samoan missionaries and their wives were included: Simeona who became the longest serving Samoan and his wife at Aneityum and the Rarotongan missionary Taunga at New Caledonia. The other Samoan missionaries were Taume, Apolo, Noa, Taniela and Simi. Taume and Simi were left with Turner and Nisbet on Tanna. At this time however Lalolagi had left in 1841, on board the *John Williams* as it travelled to Sydney then to Samoa where he built a church at the village of Malie where he was the first Samoan pastor there. We do not know whether all of them took their wives with them. See *Sulu Samoa* vol. 3, no. 2 (August 1845): 15–25.

⁴⁷ *Sulu Samoa* vol. 2, no. 3 (September 1843): 35.

⁴⁸ The Rarotongan missionary Taunga who replaced him later wrote about the epidemic which killed many and as a result the Samoans were blamed. As a result Chief Matuku asked the rest of the Samoans to leave. The missionaries reported that the Samoans were regarded as the cause of epidemics and their lives were in danger. Missionaries reported that as a result Matuku the main chief on the island had told the Samoans to leave. Later we will learn more of the fate of these early Samoans. *Samoa Reporter* no. 2 (September 1845): 3.

⁴⁹ They were the first Samoans deployed there in 1841. Both were buried on Aneityum. Fortunately no blame was laid upon the teachers there and therefore there are no accounts of retaliation against the Samoans. *Samoa Reporter* no. 2 (September 1845): 2.

The story goes that during the epidemic, some men from the island of Tanna had visited Futuna and told them of how they could stop the sickness by killing the teachers. Then one day when Apela and Samuela had gone off to their gardens in the morning, leaving Samuela's wife and daughter alone at the mission station, the crew of local men headed to the teachers' garden and, armed with spears and clubs, attacked them. Samuela was transfixed with a spear and he and Apela were clubbed to death. The group of men then headed back to the teachers' premises where the leader, Nasaua, offered to spare the wife of Samuela if she would become his wife. She recoiled but held out an axe and other goods in exchange for her life. They were refused and Kautiama, the chief of Imounga who had promised to protect the teachers, then took the club and struck her down. The child now left alone was not spared, for it was the custom to kill every one related to the disease makers. The bodies of the Samoans were cooked but the Futunese did not like the taste of their flesh. They were buried in the sand and later their bones were used for fish hooks. Their houses and possessions were all burnt and the Futunese wore the teachers' clothing in dances to show defiance.⁵⁰

The story of the Samoans on Futuna is a sad and tragic one, and this is amplified in the way these stories were told and circulated. For the wife of Samuela, who with her daughter had recently come to assist her husband, life was abruptly ended with her tragic death.

The disease outbreaks of 1843 thus proved fatal for the Samoans and their families. What is most poignant is the fact that the European missionaries Turner and Nisbet managed to escape to Samoa while the epidemic was raging across the islands. As Dorothy Shineberg noted, the Samoans "not having the same means of escape ... were murdered."⁵¹ The missionaries left the Samoans behind to face not only the disease, but the ferocious retaliation of the people. There was no attempt to evacuate them to

⁵⁰ Another version suggested that the young daughter of Samuela was thrown into the sea and drowned. Several versions of this story are found: *Samoan Reporter* no. 2 (September 1845): 3; William Gunn, *The Gospel in Futuna*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1914, pp. 7–8; Archibald W. Murray, *Missions in Western Polynesia: Being Historical Sketches of these Missions, from their Commencement in 1839 to the Present Time*, John Snow, London, 1863, pp. 12–13; Graham J. Miller, *Live: A History of Church Planting in the New Hebrides, to 1880*, Book I, General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, Sydney, 2001, p. 26; Oka Fauolo, *O Vavega o le Vaega Lavea'i*, p. 98.

⁵¹ Shineberg, *They Came for Sandalwood*, p. 61.

other islands. Moreover, it took another two years before the teachers were revisited. When Archibald Murray and Turner himself arrived in 1845, it was only then that they discovered the great suffering that the teachers and their families on Futuna and on other islands had faced.⁵² But despite such heartbreaking incidents, the LMS Samoan mission continued to persevere. Except for Futuna, which was avoided for ten years until the mission was resumed in 1853,⁵³ the rest of the islands were immediately supplied with Samoan couples; two on Aniwa, seven on Tanna and four on Efate to begin the mission there.⁵⁴

The situation however did not abate for the next decade as epidemic outbreaks continued to devastate these islands. When the European missionaries visited in 1846, the mission was once again in chaos. On Aniwa, the teachers had abandoned the island fearful of their lives while on Aneityum, a Samoan wife and two of the teachers' children had died.⁵⁵ On Tanna things were much worse. Three of the wives and a child had lost their lives while those who were still alive were attacked. Their houses and properties were burnt to the ground and one of the teachers was killed in the bush while returning from his evening prayer. The rest of the teachers decided to leave and escaped on board a sandalwood vessel. To make matters worse, a quarrel ensued between the crew and locals which led to the death of a crew member. In an act of revenge the Captain fired at the local people killing four of them. As the ship left, the

⁵² When Murray and Turner arrived at Futuna, they found the people uneasy and acting suspiciously. Turner wrote, "None would come near us; they shouted out that the teachers were on the other side of the island, and begged us to be off there with the vessel." Unfortunately the Samoans were all dead and it was at Aneityum where they learned of their tragic deaths. The missionaries were told that the Futunese had been urging the people on neighbouring Aneityum to kill the Samoan teachers there. Turner wrote that "we are told that they [Futunese] sent a message to the Aneiteum people, begging them to go do likewise, to kill their teachers as a mean of saving the island from epidemics." *Samoan Reporter* no. 2 (September 1845): 3.

⁵³ Several missionary voyages from 1846, 1848, 1849 and 1852 avoided Futuna. It was not until 1853, ten years after the Samoans were killed that Futuna was again put back on the mission agenda and the mission resumed.

⁵⁴ Lefau and Levasa were left on Aniwa to resume the work while on Tanna seven new teachers, mostly married with their families, were deployed; four Samoan couples and three Rarotongans, who replaced Atamu and Iona. The Samoans were Pita, Peteru, Tagipo and Ioane; the Rarotongans were Ragia, Upokumanu and Marugataga. We also find that Iona and his wife offered to work on the island of Lifou in the Loyalty Islands, instead of going to Samoa. On Efate the Samoans Setefano, Mose, Taavili and Sipi, and their wives were deployed. *Sulu Samoa* vol. 3, no. 2 (August 1845): 4; *Samoan Reporter* no. 2 (September 1845): 3.

⁵⁵ Aniwa was thus avoided and no Samoans were ever deployed there again until 1858, when two native teachers from Aneityum, Navailak and Nemeian, resumed the mission there. *Samoan Reporter* no. 5 (March 1847): 3; no. 21 (March 1860): 2.

people of Tanna, associating the teachers with the sandalwood traders, destroyed the rest of their houses and properties.⁵⁶

On the island of Efate the first deaths were reported with more tragic stories of the killing of teachers' wives. In 1848, one of the Samoan teachers died and his wife who was now left alone then wished to go and reside with the teachers at another station. However, the chief wishing to have her as his wife and to own her paltry property, would not allow it. Turner and Nisbet wrote, "Poor woman! This was more than her mind could bear. Preferring death to degradation, she rushed into the sea one day and was drowned before the other teachers had time to unite in an effort to remove her from that station."⁵⁷

In 1853, the Rarotongan teachers Pipika and Kavaviri together with their wives on the island of Lelepa suffered the same fate when they were killed on 20 November 1853. Charles Hardie reported that the people of Lelepa killed the teachers and then turned on their wives. He wrote,

When the teachers were killed, the chiefs wished to take their wives for themselves, and that the poor women fled, and attempted to cross the narrow strait that separates the island on which they lived from the main-land, and were pursued, and, by order of the chiefs, were killed in the water. It is also reported, that one of the chiefs spared the life of the little boy, the son of one of the teachers, but that afterwards he ordered him to be taken out to sea, and cast away, which was done; but having escaped from the deep, they cut off the poor little fellow's hands, and otherwise mangled him, and then killed and ate him!⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Tanna was avoided for several years until 1848, when the mission was resumed by teachers from Aneityum under the supervision of the now resident missionary Geddie of the Presbyterian Mission. *Samoa Reporter* no. 5 (March 1847): 3.

⁵⁷ *Samoa Reporter* no. 8 (September 1848): 3.

⁵⁸ *Samoa Reporter* no. 16 (December 1854): 3. Another account of the killing of the Rarotongans can be found in Archibald Murray's version in 1863. See also Christopher Ballard on the reasons for the killing of the Rarotongans as well as Featunai Liuaana. Murray, *Missions in Western Polynesia*, pp. 256–57; Ballard, "Atonement and restitution," p. 68.

Today on a piece of land on the mainland of Efate, near the narrow strait facing the small island of Lelepa, is a place called Samoa Point, in remembrance of the Rarotongans and the Samoans who were killed there.⁵⁹

In 1854, an outbreak of smallpox killed another wife of a teacher and a child on Efate⁶⁰ while the following year, on Erromango, infections of malaria became so bad that the Samoans and Rarotongans decided to abandon the mission. Geddie reported that on that island,

The teachers ... continue to find the climate unhealthy. One has died, and the wives of other two also have there found a grave. The Mission has been further disabled by four of the teachers leaving. They felt that ague was entirely unfitting them for usefulness, and left, to seek restoration and missionary work on some more salubrious island. Two of them are now well and labouring on Mare (or Nengone); another if fully employed at Lifu; and the fourth died at the Isle of Pines on his way to Nengone.⁶¹



Figure 27. Left: Sign at entrance to Samoa Point.

Figure 28. Right: Havannah Harbour at Samoa Point looking towards Lelepa Island on the left where the Rarotongans were killed and the harbour where their wives tried to escape by swimming to the mainland. Photographed by Latu Latai, 24 April 2013

⁵⁹ Local oral traditions suggest that this coastal land was where the Samoans were killed thus the name Samoa Point. According to Christopher Ballard this was a misconception still current on Lelepa until the 2003 ceremony, when the visiting dignitaries corrected local understanding. It is possible that at the time, local people referred to all Polynesian missionaries and their wives as Samoans, since the majority were Samoans and the mission ship, the *John Williams*, brought teachers directly from Samoa. It is also possible that the naming of the land was also to commemorate other Samoans who died on Efate. Interestingly, this piece of coastal land has become a site for foreign residents and expatriates who have built private mansions. This picturesque area however had recently been damaged due to the devastation of the recent cyclone Pam in 2015. See Ballard, "Atonement and restitution," p. 3.

⁶⁰ *Samoan Reporter* no. 15 (January 1854): 2. The outbreak of smallpox also killed three teachers on the island of Tanna, including one who was a wife. Murray and Sunderland wrote that they "were unable to learn any particulars respecting her death – whether she died of small-pox of a broken heart, or how, we could not ascertain." *Samoan Reporter* no. 15 (January 1854): 2.

⁶¹ *Samoan Reporter* no. 17 (January 1856): 2.

Later the missionaries gave the details of those who had died, all in the space of eighteen months while seeking refuge on the Loyalty Islands. They included the Samoans Paulo and his wife and Elia's wife; Va'a died on the Isle of Pines on his way to Mare; Poito and Meariki's wife who died on Mare. Of the children, there was a child of Akatangi, a child of Meariki, two children of Mailei and two of Isaaka.⁶² In total, twelve of these had belonged to the Erromango mission; including six children, three teachers and three wives.⁶³ Most of them died while away from Erromango as they tried to find refuge on other islands in the Loyalty group.

Diseases and outbreaks of major epidemics were thus relentless during the three decades the Samoans were in this region. The biggest challenge was not just the impact on the health of the teachers and their families but also the blame attributed to them for introducing these diseases.⁶⁴ Large numbers of the local populations were killed by these disease epidemics and their resistance to the teachers should be understood in the light of this larger devastation. During the epidemic of 1843, the death toll was so great on Tanna that according to Turner the "dead lay scattered about in the villages, so numerous that they could not bury them."⁶⁵ In 1853 on the island of Lelepa off Efate, about 150 men died and the missionaries reported that so great the mortality that many dead bodies lay unburied.⁶⁶ In 1861, an outbreak of measles led to the decimation of the population on Aneityum including the much loved Simiona, one of the longest serving Samoan teachers in Vanuatu. Murray wrote,

⁶² Poito, Meariki, Akatangi were Rarotongans.

⁶³ *Samoan Reporter* no. 19 (October 1857): 4.

⁶⁴ See Bronwen Douglas and Margaret Jolly on the impact and interpretation of introduced disease epidemics in Vanuatu. Bronwen Douglas, "Autonomous and controlled spirits: Traditional ritual and early interpretations of Christianity on Tanna, Aneityum and the Isle of Pines, in comparative perspective," *The Journal of the Polynesian Society* vol. 98, no. 1 (1989): 7–48; "Discourses on death in a Melanesian world," in *Dangerous Liaisons: Essays in Honour of Greg Denning*, ed. Donna Merwick, University of Melbourne, History Department, Melbourne: 1994, pp. 353–78; "Power, discourse and the appropriation of God: Christianity and subversion in a Melanesian context," *History and Anthropology* vol. 9, no. 1 (1995): 57–92; Margaret Jolly, "Devils, holy spirits, and the swollen God: Translation, conversion and colonial power in the Marist Mission, Vanuatu, 1887–1934," in *Conversion to Modernities: The Globalization of Christianity*, ed. Peter Van der Veer, Routledge, New York and London, 1996, pp. 231–62, p. 246.

⁶⁵ *Samoan Reporter* no. 2 (September 1845): 3.

⁶⁶ *Samoan Reporter* no. 16 (December 1854): 4. The missionaries' report refers to an island named Kona but this is incorrect as they also referred to the same island where the Rarotongans were killed, which is Lelepa. There is no record of an island named Kona.

Mr Geddie thinks, that not half a dozen persons escaped throughout the island. The disease spread so rapidly that whole communities were laid prostrate at the same time; hence, there was no one left in a fit state to help another, and on that account the distress and mortality were much greater than they might otherwise have been. About eleven hundred – that is, one third of the entire population of the island – were swept into the grave in the short space of three months. About sixty church-members died; and twenty persons on the mission premises, seven died; in each case, about a third of the whole.⁶⁷



Figures 29a, b, c and d. *Images of mass graves of local people as well as Samoans who died at Anelegauhat, Aneityum in the disease epidemics in the 1840s to the 1860s. Photographed by Latu Latai, 23 August 2013*

According to missionaries, diseases were carelessly introduced by sandalwood vessels. The smallpox outbreak on Tanna in 1853 for example was claimed to have been introduced by a sandalwood vessel anchored at Port Resolution. According to the missionaries, the occupants of the vessel took no steps to prevent the spread of the disease. Natives were allowed free access to the vessel and the foreigners were frequent visitors to the houses of teachers. When the ship left, it was the teachers and

⁶⁷ *Samoa Reporter* no. 23 (May 1862): 2. This same outbreak led to the death of Simiona, as noted above, one of the longest serving Samoan teachers in Vanuatu.

their wives who were the first to fall ill, and from there the disease spread.⁶⁸ This was the reason they were blamed. In 1861, the measles outbreak at Aneityum was blamed on the schooner *Hierondelle* led by Captain Rodd.⁶⁹ According to Murray, natives of Tanna and Lifou who worked for the company were allowed to go on shore with the infection and mingle with the people, to whom no warning was given.⁷⁰ What made it worse was that this crew of men told the natives that the cause of diseases was the teachers and missionaries.⁷¹

But while missionary accounts often blamed traders for the introduction of diseases, LMS missionaries during their visits on these islands also contributed. Often when LMS missionaries left, an outbreak of minor or serious proportions took place within weeks of their departure.⁷² Hence, although missionaries were quick to blame traders, they themselves contributed and often exacerbated the spread of diseases. Moreover, Norma McArthur has argued that Presbyterian missionaries in southern Vanuatu were important vectors in the spread of such diseases. The concentration of mission populations into stations, schools, and dormitories, and their coastal location provided ideal breeding grounds for the spread of both indigenous and exotic diseases.⁷³

Diseases and disease epidemics had a huge impact on the Samoans as they attempted to settle in these islands. As we have seen, women and children were not spared and they suffered as much if not more so, especially in the wake of the deaths of their husbands. When they did survive, they were often forced to become wives of local chiefs, and when they refused, they were killed along with their children. For local people, this must have been the first time they had witnessed such devastation on their island communities. In the midst of such destruction, they let out their rage and anger towards foreigners who were now encroaching on their world. But according to

⁶⁸ *Samoan Reporter* no. 15 (January 1854): 2.

⁶⁹ This ship belonged to one of the sandalwood establishments at Anelegauhat Harbour on the island of Aneityum.

⁷⁰ A similar outbreak of measles was also introduced on Tanna by a sandalwood vessel the *Bluebell*. *Samoan Reporter* no. 23 (May 1862): 2.

⁷¹ On Futuna in 1854, missionaries reported that traders who visited the island told the natives that the teachers' religion was bad and was the cause of diseases. *Samoan Reporter* no. 16 (December 1854): 3.

⁷² Liuaana, "Errand of mercy," p. 69.

⁷³ Norma McArthur, "Population and prehistory: The late phase on Aneityum," Ph.D. thesis, Research School of Asia and Pacific Studies, The Australian National University, 1974.

missionary reports, at times epidemics were attributed by local people to the anger of their ancestral gods for the introduction of the new religion. At other times it was attributed to the anger of the Christian God for their resistance and bad treatment of the teachers. As Bronwen Douglas has shown, missionaries in southern Vanuatu were seen both as the source of illness and death as well as a source of healing and of life.⁷⁴ Hence Indigenous ideas about diseases were deeply linked to sacred power and divine will. But, as Margaret Jolly has shown, such notions about diseases and divine will were also similar to those held by European missionaries. Although missionaries were familiar with some of the medical science of the period, they also interpreted death or survival as a sign of sacred power witnessed in the world—albeit in their case, God’s will. Thus, prolific deaths and diseases provided the occasion in which the combat between the divine powers of the ancestors and of the Christian God was fiercely contested. In this contest, local views were challenged particularly beliefs that all deaths were ultimately motivated by sorcerers, priests or ancestral spirits.⁷⁵ With the introduction of modern medicines, the new religion greatly undermined the authority of traditional priesthoods and local chiefs who sanctioned the powers of their sacred gods.

Samoan missionaries and their wives were no doubt implicated in such a contest. They came from a background in which beliefs in the sacred powers of their ancestral gods had also been greatly condemned by missionaries. But the intensity of epidemics and the prevalence of such deaths which had not yet been felt in Samoa, perhaps gave them a more resolute belief in the divine power of their new God. Such a combat was fiercely fought in the early stages when the Samoans and their Rarotongan counterparts laboured on their own. Hence they faced far greater suffering than English missionaries who later arrived with their wives.

⁷⁴ Bronwen Douglas, “Autonomous and controlled spirits”; “Discourses on death in a Melanesian world”; “Power, discourse and the appropriation of God: Christianity and subversion in a Melanesian context,” *History and Anthropology* vol. 9, no. 1 (1995): 57–92.

⁷⁵ Margaret Jolly has shown in her study of Marist priests in South Pentecost that the epidemiological conditions were clearly conducive to such a contest. Given both the sheer amount of dying and its shared religious salience, it is hardly surprising that death was the prime occasion on which the contest and negotiation between missionary and indigenous understandings of sacred power was most fiercely enacted. Thus this was a contest of meanings about whose sacred power prevailed—disease and death always entailed a combat between such rival imaginaries. Subsequently, as the epidemics receded and deaths abated, the power of the mission grew. Jolly concluded that this “is a sign not so much of their coercive powers of warships or the persuasive power of their words but of the triumph of their sacred power over the local priests.” Jolly, “Devils, holy spirits, and the swollen God,” p. 252.

Disease thus caused many complex challenges for the missionary work of the Samoans. It cost many their lives, but it also impacted on the political landscapes and religious beliefs of the people making it an unstable environment. Other factors were also on the rise which further complicated the mission field on these islands. The sandalwood trade had brought with it, allegations of associated practices such as “slavery,” “blackbirding” and “prostitution” that seemingly were now prevalent in the region, adding to the already escalating violence.

Missionary views of sandalwood trade and local resistance

Samoan missionaries and their wives arrived at a time of increasing trade in sandalwood in southern Vanuatu, New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands in the 1840s. The high demand for sandalwood by Australia for its trade with China led to the eventual presence of traders in a region which for so long had been avoided by Europeans.⁷⁶ According to Dorothy Shineberg, the avoidance was due to discrimination which “was in favour of Polynesia and against Melanesia.” Since the arrival of European explorers in the sixteenth century, Melanesia was seen as less attractive. Their warriors had a reputation for ferocity and cannibalism; there was greater diversity and complexity of language; except for New Caledonia and Loyalties, political units were smaller and harder to gain safety therein by winning the support of a chief; and Melanesian women, on the authority of Cook himself, were less hospitable than their Polynesian sisters.⁷⁷ However, the urgent need for sandalwood and the discovery of the abundance of this resource on these islands led to this sudden upsurge in traders in the region, despite such racial discrimination.

Coinciding with the arrival of the LMS mission, the increasing presence of traders was seen by missionaries as counterproductive to their enterprise. To the missionaries,

⁷⁶ The region was almost unknown to the European world in the early nineteenth century and despite the fact that these groups were the nearest of all to the European settlements in Australia, they had remained a backwater of European contact. This was due to the nature of earlier visits by European explorers which were often brief and left no lasting effects on island communities. Even with the settlement of New South Wales in 1788, there was little activity in Melanesia. New Caledonia and Vanuatu which were only a matter of days by sail from New South Wales were scarcely visited until the 1840s. Traders and merchants were more interested instead on better-known places such as Tahiti for pork, the Australs, Marquesas and Fiji for sandalwood. The presence of missionaries there made the islands in the central and eastern Pacific appeared more hospitable. See Shineberg, *They Came for Sandalwood*, p. 12; Kerry R. Howe, *Where the Waves Fall*, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney and London, 1984, pp. 281–82.

⁷⁷ Shineberg, *They Came for Sandalwood*, p. 12.

sandalwood traders were reckless, violent drunks who had a weakness for island women. According to Geddie, “All the sandalwood vessels that I know are floating brothels.”⁷⁸ They were thus seen as projecting an embarrassing image of their civilisation, acting in ways that were inconsistent with their Christian teachings. This, as Shineberg has argued, was the reason for the missionaries’ harsh and critical writings about traders.

The Samoans however in their reports to visiting missionaries witnessed the extraordinary impact of this trade on the local people. The exploitation of local land and properties and the reckless attitude of sandalwood crewmen were witnessed by both Samoan and Rarotongan missionaries. Such acts led to rising frictions between ni-Vanuatu and traders which resulted in the deaths of many on both sides. At times, such bloodshed was caused by the lack of understanding of these traders of local languages, traditions and customs. At other times it was due to their own reckless behaviour.⁷⁹

The most affected islands in the region were Mare in the Loyalty Islands and the Isle of Pines, where constant conflicts occurred in the early 1840s. Several of the incidents were due to disagreements between traders and local chiefs over trade prices. The missionaries reported on how the entire crew of the Sydney cutter *Sisters* was killed due to the Captain whipping a local chief with a rope after he traded two yams for one hoop iron.⁸⁰ In one particular incident however, six crew members of the *Martha* were killed and cannibalised when one of the oars of the traders’ boat accidentally hit the head of Chief Uianet of Mare.⁸¹

Other incidents occurred over the associated trade in prostitution. For example the *Brigand* was attacked at Mare when some of the crew insisted they go ashore for “women,” despite warnings by the Samoan teachers Tataio and Taniela.⁸² Nine of the ten men who went ashore were attacked and killed immediately. Tataio and Nesili, the

⁷⁸ John Geddie, “Diaries 1848–1858,” entry for 4 July 1854, Pacific Manuscript Bureau, ANU, PMB 418 (microfilm).

⁷⁹ Shineberg, *They Came for Sandalwood*, pp. 203–204.

⁸⁰ *Samoan Reporter* no. 2 (September 1845): 3.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² They were stationed at Keama (also spelled Kuama). They warned the captain that the island was not safe and begged him not to land.

son of Chief Ieui of Keama, rushed out in time to save one of the crew members who ran to them for protection. Meanwhile a battle took place on the ship where one white man and two locals were killed. The following morning the ship managed to leave with several survivors, including one whom the teachers had saved.⁸³

In some cases, the Samoans who often tried to intervene were caught up in such confrontations and killed. When the trading brig *Star* was attacked at the Isle of Pines in 1842, the whole crew was killed along with two Samoan missionaries Lasalo and Taniela who had been recently deployed there.⁸⁴ Turner reported that the incident was caused by a previous conflict between Captain Ebrill and Chief Matuku. The ship left taking with it the two Samoan teachers who sought refuge when they were blamed for a recent disease outbreak. Ebrill however decided to return to the island, risking the lives of all and the two Samoans, who were now regarded by locals as friends of the traders. When the ship arrived, Chief Matuku and a party of thirty men, using the pretence of trading, boarded the ship and killed the Captain and seventeen of his crew. The two Samoans and one of the crew by the name of William Henry, who had been hiding below deck were captured the following day and killed. The vessel was then stripped of sails and rigging. Everything was taken from the cabins and the whole ship set on fire.⁸⁵

The situation continued to deteriorate in southern Vanuatu where conflicts over trade prices led to many killings. At Erromango, one incident led to traders setting fire to the

⁸³ Later a ship containing seven convicts from Norfolk Island visited the island and was attacked by the people where once again the teachers and the Chief of Keama and his people saved two of the convicts. The people showed kindness to the two survivors but in return the convicts stole their property and escaped. The Samoan teacher Tataio and a group chased after them and brought them back. Their lives were spared when the teachers convinced the local men not to harm them. Turner wrote, "Call the natives of Mare heathen, or savage, or treacherous or whatever we may, here is an example of humane forbearance which many a civilized people would have found hard to imitate." In 1848, another incident occurred on the island of Mare, where a sandalwood schooner that was shipwrecked was attacked and all eleven white men and two men from the Isle of Pines were killed. In 1852 an Englishman who was the master of the cutter *Lucy Ann* killed three local men he traded with. These natives were Christian converts but were also related to the "heathen" people on the island. In an act of revenge, the "heathen" people took the vessel and killed all seven on board. *Samoan Reporter* no. 2 (September 1845): 3; no. 8 (September 1848): 3; no. 14 (September 1852): 2.

⁸⁴ According to the account in the *Sulu Samoa*, there was also Rangi the Rarotongan missionary who was with the Samoans and was also killed. *Sulu Samoa* vol. 3, no. 2 (August 1845): pp. 24–25.

⁸⁵ This account was told to visiting European missionary by Noa and the Rarotongan missionary Taunga. They reported that the crew of the *Star* included, ten white men, two Marquesans, two Mangaian, one Aitutakian, one New Zealander and one Rarotongan. *Samoan Reporter* no. 2 (September 1845): 3; *Sulu Samoa* vol. 3, no. 2 (August 1845): 24–25.

people's houses. They then proceeded to Efate and killed about a hundred people including the women and children who had escaped to a cave. The traders set fire to the entrance of the cave and all inside were trapped and killed.⁸⁶ On Tanna, a massacre of local people led to the death of three white crewmen from the sandalwood settlement on Aneityum. These men had gone to purchase pigs and yams at Port Resolution where they were killed. In retaliation, a vessel was sent from the settlement on Aneityum and the crew set fire to the villages killing six Tannese men.⁸⁷

Several of the incidents, as we have seen were due to the traders' treatment of local chiefs. In one incident the reaction from local people was due to the killing of chief Gaskin of Tanna on board the brigantine *Deborah* from Sydney. The ship was attacked, several sailors were taken as prisoners and were about to be killed when the Samoan teachers intervened and saved them. The sailors were eventually rescued and letters by W.S. Mansfield and F.A. Cater were left acknowledging the efforts of the teachers.⁸⁸ Thus, despite the sometimes false and vile misrepresentation of teachers and their religion by traders who often blamed them for the outbreak of diseases, the Samoans frequently came to their rescue and risked their own lives for the safety of these men.

Mose who was working on Efate also risked his life and saved one of the crew of the sandalwood ship the *Cross of the British Sovereign* when it was attacked. His name was John Jones and when the ship the *Elizabeth* finally rescued him and the rest of the crew, Jones left a letter thanking the Samoan teacher for saving his life.⁸⁹

On the island of Erromango, where sandalwood trade was intense, the locals' continual resistance against the traders went unabated for many years. Turner and Nisbet reported in 1848 that there was still an unwelcoming attitude to any foreigner on the island and that the people there were still at war with the traders and were determined that "no white man shall ever live an hour on the shores."⁹⁰ According to

⁸⁶ *Samoan Reporter* no. 2 (September 1845): 3. According to them, about sixty Tongans were recruited by the traders to assist them in this expedition. This account was given to Turner by Tongans who were employed by the traders and were then residing on the island. See also Shineberg in her discussion of this killing and reference to the Tongans who carried out this act. Shineberg, *They Came for Sandalwood*, pp. 62–63.

⁸⁷ *Samoan Reporter* no. 8 (September 1848): 3.

⁸⁸ *Samoan Reporter* no. 14 (September 1852): 1.

⁸⁹ *Samoan Reporter* no. 8 (September 1848): 3.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

the missionaries the locals were invariably attacking the sandalwood vessels because their crews were constantly firing at the locals and taking their chiefs prisoner in order to get wood.⁹¹ In 1858, missionaries Stallworthy and Gill reported that on the island of Erromango twenty men, women and children at Dillon's Bay were killed during an operation of *HMS Iris* led by Captain Loring. A party from the *Iris*, headed by Loring and accompanied by a number of New Caledonians, (Loyalty Islanders) went ashore to cut trees. Some of the party was separated and fell into the hands of locals who killed them.⁹² In 1859, another three white crewmen were killed. According to Turner who visited Erromango on this occasion, Captain Edward, missionary Gordon and his wife, who were now established on the island, claimed that the death of these men was their own fault for disrespecting the locals by firing their guns to intimidate them.⁹³

The impact of the sandalwood trade thus caused much violence on these islands. In her pioneering work, Shineberg has highlighted the bias in missionaries' harsh criticism of sandalwood traders, suggesting that the violence that ensued was as much due to local ni-Vanuatu who were not passive objects of European exploitation but islanders "anxious for worldly barter."⁹⁴ But although this was true, and islanders indeed actively participated in the trade, the impact of the sandalwood trade caused much more destruction and havoc for local people within the region.

For the Samoans the environment in which they now worked was extremely challenging. When traders imprisoned local chiefs, disrespected their women and used force to get what they wanted, the local people retaliated by attacking and killing traders and their crews. In the midst of all this, the Samoans struggled to have an impact on the people. As shown, they were often helpless in many situations. At times they attempted to warn the traders of the imminent danger. They were much more familiar with the local languages and the customs of the people, yet their advice often fell on deaf ears. At times they were caught up in the conflicts as they attempted to save the lives of traders and hence were seen by local people as siding with the traders. Such incidents led to the tragic deaths of some. And although silent in all the

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² *Samoan Reporter* no. 20 (January 1859): 4.

⁹³ *Samoan Reporter* no. 21 (March 1860): 3.

⁹⁴ Shineberg, *They Came for Sandalwood*, p. 15.

sources, the wives of Samoan missionaries would have been shocked by such pervasive violence, and no doubt fearful of the danger that their husbands risked in such confrontations. They would have been appalled at the treatment of women, at the rise of a local sex trade, and at the killing of innocent women and children in bloody hostilities. Although violence in civil conflicts was a feature in Samoa even throughout the nineteenth century, none were of this magnitude and particularly not involving Europeans.

The sandalwood trade thus caused much havoc in the region, but a more sinister practice was also beginning to surface in the form of what missionaries claimed to be “slavery” and “blackbirding.” As we have seen local islanders were employed as labourers by trading companies. These included not only islanders from southern Vanuatu and the Loyalty Islands but those from as far as east as Kiribati, Tonga and the Marquesas. The use of islanders as labourers intensified in the region with the growth of the trade and soon missionaries noted the exploitation in such a practice. Turner and Nisbet wrote in 1848 that they “have a strong suspicion that there is a traffic being carried on there more revolting than ever slavery was.”⁹⁵ A decade later in 1859, Turner wrote,

While at Erumanga, our attention was called to a somewhat questionable system of acquiring native labour, which is now extensively practised. The sandal-wooders cannot get the Erumangans to work as they wish; and therefore remove thither natives of the adjacent islands to work for them. We saw there upwards of thirty natives of Fate, and were told that there were as many more in the bush cutting wood. There were a number of Lifu natives also.⁹⁶

Missionaries were appalled at the treatment of local islanders and attempted to save and rescue some of them. Hence we see here the conflicts in the missionary project as to the activities of traders. Turner wrote of an incident on Erromango when islanders sought refuge on their ship.

In the night, eight Fate men swam off to our vessel, imploring us to take them home, and ten Lifu men alike wished us to compassionate them. They say that they are badly provided for, flogged or beaten with a stick at the discretion of their overseer; are kept

⁹⁵ *Samoa Reporter* no. 8 (September 1848): 3.

⁹⁶ *Samoa Reporter* no. 20 (January 1859): 4.

longer from their home [longer] than they wish to stay, etc.; and, we were informed by Mr Gordon, that numbers of the poor creatures sink under it, and either die away from their friends or are taken home in a dying state.⁹⁷

Turner consulted the two captains who were employing the islanders and managed to release two men from Efate. The rest of the men from Lifou were removed from the ship and taken back to the sandalwood establishments. Although LMS missionaries were strongly against this practice they had little power to stop it.⁹⁸ Missionaries also wrote that islanders were kidnapped and taken to New South Wales to work as labourers and shepherds. Several shipments of these islanders were taken to Sydney, among them were those from Tanna, Lifou and other islands of Vanuatu and the New Caledonia groups. Turner reported on two vessels from Sydney that were engaged in obtaining islanders at the rate of £2 per head as yearly wages.⁹⁹ They wrote that such practices were exploitative and had a huge impact on local populations where a large number of local men were removed from their island communities. On Tanna, Turner

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Captain Mair had the men from Lifou and Captain Edwards had about sixty from Efate. However, only two Efate men were released by Edwards. This was probably because they were Christians from Erakor, and the missionaries reasoned for their release. On this particular voyage in 1859, Turner had on board four men from Lifou whom they were returning on the *John Williams*. These men were rescued from the island of Ascension. Turner wrote,

There is a tale connected with these four young men which makes us ashamed of our country. They say that they were decoyed from their island by a sandal-wood vessel from Sydney, upwards of three years ago. They had gone on board to sell some things, were battened down in the hold, and let up on deck next day, when their island was all but out of sight. They were nearly a year on Espiritu Santo, cutting and cleaning sandal-wood, and were then taken to Ascension, and sold for pigs, yams, and firewood. They were rated according to age, &c., and fetched from two to five pigs, and in proportionable quantity of yams, and firewood, for each man. There were ten of them in all. After a time, six managed to run away, and escape to Honk-kong [Hong Kong], where five of them died. The remaining four might still have been in slavery on Ascension, but for the kind help of the American missionaries there, together with Capt Thompson, of the whaling ship "China". The captain brought off two of them, and the other two were redeemed, partly by their own earnings, and partly by the missionary. They were taken to Honolulu. The Rev C Damon and others kindly attended to these at that place until another generous American captain took them to Rarotonga, there to await the arrival of the "John Williams". One of them speaks English well. Mr Williams, the British consul at Samoa had taken down the deposition of the young men and will report all to the proper quarter. *Samoa Reporter* no. 21 (March 1860): 2.

⁹⁹ These vessels had collected forty natives from Wallis Island and were on board when the vessels reached Rotuma. Fearing for their lives and judging by the nature of what they had already experienced, they jumped overboard and swam ashore. The Rotumans received them kindly and when a party from the vessels demanded that the chief of the district give them up. He refused, alleging that as he did not bring them on his land neither would he interfere in the affair or send them away. This unfortunately led to an exchange of fire which injured some Rotumans and several of the ships' crews. See *Samoa Reporter* no. 7 (March 1848): 2.

and Nisbet reported on the consequences of such a practice on local people. The men who were taken to NSW often died there and many never returned. As a result their wives were often liable to be strangled according to local custom. Moreover this had an impact to the local economy where the absence of men's labour meant that women now had to take on extra work.

Missionaries were thus concerned about the treatment of local people, but also of the way the sandalwood and labour trades were impacting on their mission. For them the situation was so bad that they felt that action needed to be taken.¹⁰⁰ They wrote,

It is increasing every year, and hindering our labours beyond descriptions. Surely it would be better to suppress the trade entirely, to prevent all the bloodshed and other deplorable consequences inseparable from it, rather than allow it to be continued as it is now carried on.¹⁰¹

Allegations of "slavery" and "kidnapping" by missionaries in both the sandalwood and labour trades have been widely debated, between those who see the labour trade as "blackbirding," as always kidnap and coercion and those revisionist historians like Clive Moore who stress the volition of many who were recruited. He says that it is racist to suggest that generations of Pacific Islanders were naïve pawns being captured and that many men wanted to go and thus signed for return trips.¹⁰² Shineberg has also argued

¹⁰⁰ The missionaries wrote in 1848, "There is evidently a curse upon the trade. During the last eighteen months alone, upwards of sixty of our countrymen prosecuting it have been cut off by massacres and shipwrecks. But this is nothing compared with the loss of life on the side of natives." See *Samoan Reporter* no. 8 (September 1848): 3.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. According to the missionaries, however, not all traders were as ruthless. They wrote, "We know that there are parties who trade honestly and as peaceably as they can for the wood; but we have reason to believe, that there are others who will do anything to get it." Ibid.

¹⁰² Clive Moore (ed.), *The Forgotten People: A History of the Australian South Sea Island Community*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, 1979, p. 91; "The South Sea Islanders of Mackay, Queensland, Australia," in *Endangered Peoples of Oceania: Struggles to Survive and Thrive*, ed. Judith M. Fitzpatrick, Greenwood Press, Westport, 2001, pp. 167–81; "Tooree: the dynamics of early contact and trade in Torres Strait, Cape York and the Trans-Fly in 1890," in *Lasting Fascinations: Essays on Indonesia and the Southwest Pacific to Honour Bob Hering*, ed. Harry A. Poeze and Antoinette Liem, Edisi Astra Kabar Seberang Sulating Maphilindo, Stein, 1998, pp. 257–79; "Labour recruiting and indenture," in *Culture Contact in the Pacific*, ed. Max Quanchi and Ron Adams, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993, pp. 87–99; "Labour, indenture and historiography in the Pacific," in *Pacific Islands History: Journeys and Transformations*, ed. Brij V. Lal, The Journal of Pacific History, Canberra, 1992, pp. 129–48; "Kanakas, kidnapping and slavery: Myths from the nineteenth century labour trade and their relevance to Australia's immigrant Melanesians," *Kabar Seberang: Sulating Maphilindo*, vols 8–9 (1981): 78–92; Mark Finnane and Clive Moore, "Kanaka slaves or willing workers? Time-expired Melanesian workers and the Queensland criminal justice system in the 1890s," *Criminal Justice History: An International Journal* vol. 13 (1992): 141–60.

that islanders in Vanuatu and New Caledonia were involved in what she termed the “people trade.” Hence their labour and the time they spent while employed, were bought as a contract, rather than the person as is the case with slavery.¹⁰³ This is cognate with arguments by Clive Moore about the later labour trade to Queensland. However, while such arguments have some truth, the reality was that local men willingly signed up for such contracts, but most would not have known what lay ahead. The sandalwood trade was an extremely violent affair and as Tracey Banivanua-Mar suggests, the fact of a “contract” does not negate the exploitation and violence in this trade.¹⁰⁴

Samoan missionary wives thus entered into a mission field that was filled with many challenges. They not only suffered and died from the impact of diseases, but from an environment that was fiercely violent. Despite such a hostile setting, the LMS Samoan mission continued to send them into a mission field that was risky, indeed extremely dangerous. One wonders how many continued to volunteer despite such death and destruction. However, as we will see, the call to evangelise these islands was one that was increasingly seen as a Samoan duty. This sense of duty was linked to Christian ideas of martyrdom that were inspired by the sermons of European missionaries such as John Williams. Such notions reflected in the overwhelming support the Samoans at home gave to the mission, in not only providing material support but also by sending their sons and daughters for the mission. Moreover, in the midst of extreme violence and instability in this region, these men and women came to have an impact on island communities that, despite the lack of acknowledgement by their European superiors, is still remembered in oral traditions and imprinted in the material culture and landscapes of the islands, further west in the Pacific.

¹⁰³ Dorothy Shineberg, *The People Trade: Pacific Island Labourers and New Caledonia, 1865–1930*, University of Hawai‘i Press, Honolulu, 1999.

¹⁰⁴ Tracey Banivanua-Mar, *Violence and Colonial Dialogue: The Australia-Pacific Labor Trade*, University of Hawai‘i Press, Honolulu, 2007.

CHAPTER 3. RESISTANCE AND EVENTUAL SUCCESS: CONVERSION IN SOUTHERN VANUATU AND THE LOYALTY ISLANDS

The introduction of Samoan missionary wives and their husbands to missionary work in the western Pacific, as we have seen, was both challenging and tragic. They were the pioneers and thus were there at a time of tremendous difficulty. They bore the brunt of resistance from the locals who often saw them as makers of the diseases that ravaged the islands during this early period. In addition, their work was made worse by the violent confrontations that ensued due to the impact of the sandalwood trade. But despite the strong local resistance in these places and the impact of diseases on the Samoans during this period, the Samoans continued to give support for the mission on these islands.

As early as 1845, what became known as the *Faiga-Me* or May Offering for the work of the Samoans overseas had already begun.¹ The missionaries reported that

*extraordinary efforts have been made; many districts have made presents of supplies to the John Williams, and all contributed mats, native cloth &c. &c., to the amount of nearly eight thousand articles, as gifts to the almost naked inhabitants of the New Hebrides and New Caledonian groupes. At a very moderate rate these have been valued at two hundred pounds.*²

The generosity of the Samoans was again noted the following year as the missionaries wrote.

These islanders have contributed within the last two years several thousand articles of clothing and mats for the naked pagans to the westward; and the children have lately collected some hundreds of fine mats, (their gold,) and fathoms of foreign cloth &c. with which 26 good canoes have been purchased to lend to our Teachers to the westward. We believe the value of the articles collected ... is upwards to £300.³

¹ This offering is still carried out by the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa or CCCS (formerly the Samoan LMS Church), for the operation of the Church. But since the 1980s a separate offering called the *Taulaga o Nu'u-ese* or Offering for Foreign Mission was initiated for the mission work of the Church in Samoa and in foreign countries.

² *Samoan Reporter* no. 2 (September 1845): 1.

³ *Samoan Reporter* no. 4 (September 1846): 4. £300 was an extraordinary amount at the time. It is equivalent to about US\$60,000 today.

In 1847 the children of Samoa through their offerings purchased a further “noble supply of fine Samoan canoes 22 in number.”⁴ Sunday schools ran by missionaries and their Samoan counterparts in Samoa also contributed to the mission work: *siapo* or tapa, rolls of *afa* or coconut sinnet, beads and food. This fundraising was modelled on those carried out by children of the London Missionary Society (LMS) in England which funded the purchase of the missionary ship the *John Williams*. Later that year, missionary James P. Sunderland once again commented on the giving hearts of the Samoans. He wrote,

It was pleasing to see how freely they gave their dollars at the May meeting. The people are now being accustomed to money and some who had for the first time become possessors of a dollar freely brought it as their subscription to the work of God. One teacher brought 10 dollars, another 6, and another 5.⁵

Two years later, another large shipment of about 5,000 articles was made, including mats, native cloth, beads etc., which “were collected for the ‘out stations in the West’.”⁶ The Samoans however not only supported and contributed to the work of their fellow country men and women in the west, but also to the LMS itself. Coconut oil and arrow root were two major contributions. These were collected and shipped by the *John Williams* on its voyages to England to be sold. In 1846, the missionaries reported that, “If all be well, we hope the John Williams will return home with little less than sixty tons of oil and other property for the parent Society.”⁷

⁴ *Samoan Reporter* no. 5 (March 1847): 3.

⁵ *Samoan Reporter* no. 6 (September 1847): 2.

⁶ *Samoan Reporter* no. 10 (November 1849): 3.

⁷ *Samoan Reporter* no. 4 (September 1846): 4. In 1849, 3,862 gallons of coconut oil was collected. This support by the Samoans meant that the mission in Samoa itself was self-sufficient early on. At a General Meeting in April 1852, it was agreed that the teachers working in Samoa should be supported by the villages where they were deployed. Thus a separate offering apart from the May offering was introduced in the month of January 1853. The proposal was well received by the Samoans and the missionaries reported in 1854, “We would find hope that, in coming years, what is necessary for the support of the teachers will be cheerfully contributed by those who are benefitted by their labours, and that we shall not have to draw on the parent Society for their maintenance.” The care of teachers in Samoa thus promptly fell into the hands of local people and according to the missionaries, the only thing that they should supply in future was stationery for the use of the teachers and their wives. In 1856, contributions to the LMS for the support of native teachers amounted to £245 which increased to £503 in 1857 with the May offering in aid of the LMS increasing to £837. In 1862 the contributions of the Samoans amounted to £1,058, making it the largest since the practice was introduced. See *Samoan Reporter* no. 10 (November 1849): 3; no. 15 (January 1854): 5; no. 17 (January 1856): 2; no. 18 (January 1857): 3; no. 23 (May 1862): 1.

But the most important contribution of the Samoans was in terms of their people. As the missionaries noted in 1862,

But they do not only contribute their property, they give themselves also, and their sons and their daughters to the work. We have just selected six teachers and their wives, who are now waiting the return of the “John Williams” from the east, to proceed on the arduous and perilous enterprise of breaking the fallow ground on some of the savage islands of the New Hebrides.⁸

As we can see, the support of the Samoans for the mission work in the western Pacific was overwhelming. The involvement of Samoan missionaries and their wives in this project quickly became an obligation not only of their families and villages, but of the whole country who gave large material as well as personnel support. This shows how Christianity was embraced in Samoa and the incredible enthusiasm that was felt for the spread of the new religion. The successful reception of Christianity in Samoa perhaps meant that already the people felt that it was their duty to take their new-found religion to other islands in the west. As we have seen, the selection of the first twelve Samoan missionaries was representative of the whole of Samoa. For those back home, they viewed those who went on missions as representatives of their districts and villages. This shows the communal nature of Samoan society and partially explains such incredible support. Those who were later trained at Mālūa when it was established in 1844, under the influence of white missionaries, would have had a deep sense of Christian faith and their zest for mission was perhaps enhanced by notions of Christian martyrdom. Notions of the “savage” and “dark” customs of these islands were certainly known in Samoa at the time, particularly by those returning home and by white missionaries who emphasised them even more. As the Samoans came to settle on these islands, they realised that there were stark differences in some of the customs including cannibalism, infanticide and the strangulation of women. These were found shocking and degrading by white missionaries and the Samoans would also have found such customs strange. Samoan wives would have also found customs involving the treatment of local women particularly odd. The practice of chiefs taking over the wives of those who had died was a novelty for these women. Although polygamy was practised in Samoa, being suddenly forced into marriage with a local

⁸ *Samoa Reporter* no. 23 (May 1962): 2.

chief was something that these women would have found shocking, and their refusal was a sign not only of their pride in their status as *feagaiga* but also of their strong beliefs in monogamous Christian marriage. As we have seen, none of the women accepted offers to marry local chiefs, preferring death instead of breaking their covenants with their husbands and their God. Hence there was a commitment from the Samoans to continue to bring the “light” to these people who were thought to be living in “darkness.”

But despite such differences, some of these customs like polygamy were not foreign to Samoans. Polygamy and values linking marriage and chiefly status were common both in Samoa and Vanuatu. Many of the Samoan wives would have been in recent polygamous relationships. Hence, it is important not to equate the perceptions of Samoan wives and their husbands with those of white superiors. This is also similar to the manner in which they carried out their work and how they lived on these islands. As we have seen, the Samoans’ contributions to the evangelisation of the islands saw the introduction of significant items of Samoan material culture. Some of these objects not only had functional value, but also deep cultural significance. The transportation of these items to the islands in the west reflects not just the transfer of Samoan material culture and technology but also of their own cultural ideas which distinguished them from their white counterparts. Samoan missionaries and their wives might have been seen and presented themselves as models of civilised Christian island couples for local people to emulate, but as we will see, such a view was always complicated and contested leading to complexities in conversion in the mission field. As a result they had an influence that was distinctive and continues to be embodied in the material culture of these islands.

Early impressions of the west

Early Samoan missionaries and their wives would have had very little knowledge of the islands of the western Pacific. Despite the fact that Samoans and Tongans had already frequented islands in this region, very little was told of these places in the oral traditions of Samoa. But European accounts have shown how Polynesians were already known in the islands of southern Vanuatu and the Loyalties. Loyalty Islanders had a long tradition of accepting strangers—travellers and castaways blown westward from

Tonga and Samoa.⁹ They were usually given positions of some status by local chiefs who treated them as favourites in return for their skills. The Tongans were renowned canoe builders, a skill that was much valued in the west. The earliest Europeans noted the prevalence of Polynesian characteristics among the populace and met recent arrivals from Tonga and Samoa.¹⁰ When Samoan missionaries and their wives arrived on the island of Efate in 1845, they were surprised to discover a Samoan had been living there for many years. His name was So'oalo.¹¹ He had left Samoa after a civil war in the mid-1820s, a few years before the arrival of Christianity. The story goes that he was heading south for Tonga with a group of fifty passengers mostly Tongans, after the Atua civil war in Samoa.¹² After a heavy storm at sea they became lost and ended up on Efate. On arrival they were faced with hostility but, under the leadership of So'oalo, they managed to defeat and drive off their enemies and settled on their land. So'oalo became a respected warrior under Chief Pomare of Erakor.¹³ When Samoan missionaries and their wives finally met So'oalo, an emotional reunion was witnessed by the missionaries. This account was published in the *Sulu Samoa* in August 1845,

When Leiataua and Setefano finally greeted Sualo and the Samoan and Tongan women, they suddenly broke out in loud cries of joy. And after an emotional embrace they then sat down together and the teachers talked and shared about the word of God. Then Sualo and all of his clan gathered together and worshipped with several chiefs of Fate.¹⁴

⁹ Kerry Howe, *The Loyalty Islands. A History of Culture Contacts 1840–1900*, ANU Press, Canberra, 1977; *Where the Waves Fall*, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney and London, 1984, p. 282.

¹⁰ Howe, *The Loyalty Islands; Where the Waves Fall*, p. 307.

¹¹ In missionary writings, So'oalo is also spelt Sualo or So'oialo. The correct spelling however is So'oalo as this is a chiefly title of the village of Samauga in Samoa. Oka Fauolo writes about a delegation from Samoa that attended the 150 year anniversary of the arrival of Samoan missionaries at Erakor on the island of Efate in 1995. Included in that delegation was high chief So'oalo Siasia from Samauga who was a descendant of So'oalo. The anniversary was also organised by the then Prime Minister Maxime C. Korman who was also a descendant of So'oalo. Prime Minister Korman who led the organising committee was also known as Afioga So'oalo Kalmare. See Oka Fauolo, *O Vavega o le Alofa Lavea'i: O le Tala Faasolopito o le Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano i Samoa*, Apia: Mālua Printing Press, 2005, pp. 127–34.

¹² *Sulu Samoa* vol. 3, no 2 (August 1845): 19–21; Sse also Oka Fauolo, *O Vavega o le Alofa Lavea'i*, pp. 102–104.

¹³ Pomare is a Tahitian chiefly title. I could not find any link of this chiefly name to Tahiti, but it is possible that it could be linked to pre-Christian contact from Tahitian travellers.

¹⁴ *Sulu Samoa* vol. 3, no. 2 (August 1845): 21.

The missionaries wrote that these women, most probably wives or relatives of So'oalo, were overjoyed to see Samoans, whom they first recognised by the colour of their skin. Two Samoan women and two Tongan women came running, embraced the Samoan teachers and their wives. They continued into the house where So'oalo discovered that one of the teachers was his relative from Savaii.¹⁵ So'oalo helped the Samoans settle and became a great friend to the mission. Together with Chief Pomare, they offered protection for the teachers when they came under attacks from other villages. He later visited Samoa and encouraged islanders from Efate to accept the new religion.¹⁶



Figure 30. Left: *Descendant of So'oalo, Chief So'oalo Sioasi who attended the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the Samoans at Erakor in 1845. He was part of the delegation from the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (CCCS – formerly the Samoan LMS Mission Church) from Samoa in 1995. From the Reverend Oka Fauolo's personal collection.*

Figure 31. Right: *Samoan delegation being greeted by members of the church at Erakor. Photos from the Reverend Oka Fauolo's personal collection.*

The account of So'oalo, who became a chief and warrior on Efate, shows that such encounters were possible and knowledge of these western places was available to the Samoans in pre-Christian times. However, such knowledge must have been sketchy due to the sporadic nature of the encounters and because many of the castaway Samoans never made it back to their home island.

The Europeans themselves did not know much of these islands at this stage either. Although the western Pacific had been visited by European voyagers and explorers since the sixteenth century not much was known at the time evangelisation formally

¹⁵ Fauolo, *O Vavega o le Alofa Laved'i*, pp. 102–104.

¹⁶ Today the descendants of So'oalo are still living in the village of Erakor where their ancestors first arrived more than a century and half ago. When visiting Efate in 2013, I was told this story by my interlocutors and I was introduced to some of these descendants. Personal interview with Jack Kallon, Erakor, Efate, 29 August 2013.

began in 1839.¹⁷ This lack of knowledge was compounded by the negative image of Melanesia portrayed by European explorers who had experienced, often because of their own violence, hostile receptions by local people right up to the time that Cook arrived in 1774.¹⁸ As a result many of these islands were avoided until the arrival of Christianity and the eventual surge in the sandalwood trade, from the 1830s to the 60s and whaling from the early 1800s to the 1870s.¹⁹

It is not surprising therefore that when missionaries turned to the west, there was little that they knew of these islands, except for what they had read and heard from the accounts of early European voyagers and explorers. Williams, himself the first European missionary to venture into this region, would have known little. Although Williams knew of the dangers from these accounts, he was still naively optimistic. He wrote that compared to the east, the west “from the Fijis to the coast of New Holland” lived what he called the “Polynesian negro ... having a Herculean frame, black skin, and woolly, or rather crisped hair.... We have now ... proceeded so far west, as to reach the

¹⁷ The Europeans who visited were only there briefly. Beginning with Carteret, Bougainville, Cook, Surville, D’Entrecasteaux and others, their visits were often short and had no lasting effects on island communities. Although the settlement of New South Wales in 1788 led some traders to make some discoveries in Melanesia and by 1800 maps were outlined of New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and New Caledonia, there was still very little interest in the region. New Caledonia and Vanuatu which were closer to NSW were hardly visited until the 1840s at the time LMS missionaries arrived. Thus from a European point of view Melanesia remained according to Shineberg and Howe, an unknown “backwater.” In 1849, Captain Erskine of *HMS Havannah* wrote: “it is a matter of surprise that a period of time which has seen the establishment of our great settlements in Australia and New Zealand, rendering a knowledge of the western groups of that ocean an object of considerable commercial and political importance, has done little to extend our general acquaintance with them, even among our neighbouring colonies.” See John E. Erskine, *Journal of a Cruise Among the Islands of the Western Pacific*, John Murray, London, 1853, p. 1; Dorothy Shineberg, *They Came for Sandalwood: A Study of the Sandalwood Trade in the Southwest Pacific, 1830–1865*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1967, p. 12; Howe, *Where the Waves Fall*, p. 281; *The Loyalty Islands*.

¹⁸ Melanesians were not always violent and receptions of explorers varied. Hostile receptions were at times often caused by European violence and racist ideals of Melanesians. See Margaret Jolly, “The sediment of voyages: Re-membering Quirós, Bougainville and Cook in Vanuatu,” in *Oceanic Encounters: Exchange, Desire, Violence*, ed. Margaret Jolly, Serge Tchekézo and Darrell Tryon, ANU E Press, Canberra Australia, pp. 57–111; “Men of war, men of peace,” forthcoming; Bronwen Douglas, “Voyages, encounters, and agency in Oceania: Captain Cook and indigenous people,” *History Compass* vol. 6, no. 3 (May 2008): 712–37; Bronwen Douglas and Chris Ballard (eds), *Foreign Bodies: Oceania and the Science of Race, 1750–1940*, ANU Press, Canberra, 2008.

¹⁹ Whaling vessels plied the waters of Vanuatu from the late 1700s onwards. But between about 1800 and 1830 few whaling ships were reported on Vanuatu. In the 1840s, there was one shore station established on Aneityum with a sub-station on Erromango. According to linguists, whaling vessels used South Seas Jargon, the precursor of modern Bislama, to communicate with the Pacific Islanders. See Stephen A. Wurm, Peter Mühlhäusler and Darrell T. Tryon, *Atlas of Languages of Intercultural Communication in the Pacific, Asia, and the Americas*, volume 11.2, Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin and New York, 1996, p. 479.

negro race, and our next effort will be to impart the same blessings to them.”²⁰

Williams was excited about the prospect of evangelising a new mission field. But he was also aware of perils as he wrote, “It will, no doubt, be attended with much danger.”²¹

William’s tragic death hit home to the mission world just how dangerous the new mission field would be.²² His death only added to the already miserable image of this region. By 1840 the European world would have the lowest view of the region. According to Kerry Howe, for Europeans in the Pacific and their reading public, there were few more dangerous places and barbarous peoples in the world. The term “Melanesia” that was coming into currency meant, literally, “dark” or “black” islands, referring to the inhabitants who were considered darker than the Polynesians. Yet the term was far more than a literal description—it carried connotations of its islanders’ physical and cultural inferiority compared with Polynesians, and of their dark, satanic savagery.²³

²⁰ John Williams, *A Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands*, John Snow, London, 1840. pp. 430–31.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

²² The death of Williams however did not deter the Europeans. The 1840s saw the beginning of the arrival of sandalwood traders and missionaries en masse. For the LMS and the mission world, the martyrdom of Williams was a greater instrument for evangelical propaganda than he had been in life. Although his death highlighted the dangers and the “extreme barbarity” of Melanesians, it also highlighted for them the need to evangelise this region as people so utterly degraded were much in need of salvation. They believed in the domino effect of Christianity that, although it would not be easy, the Melanesians would soon succumb to the transforming power of the Gospel. It was the missionaries who brought much more understanding of the region. It was their early accounts and published reports which gave deeper insight into the culture, language and general knowledge of the people in the region. Such reports from the ground however only fuelled the negative view of the Melanesians in the eyes of the Europeans. This was perpetuated further by the hostility they encountered once they were in the mission field. For thirty years after the death of Williams, the progress of the mission in places like Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands continued to fail. According to Howe, “No missionary techniques, no matter how sophisticated, offered protection to missionaries or gave them any means of influencing the Islanders.” Unlike the eastern Pacific, where evangelisation was relatively smooth, the western Pacific was much more difficult than the missionaries had anticipated. See Howe, *Where the Waves Fall*, p. 306. See also Bernard Smith on his analysis of the various pictorial representations of William’s death and how his death amplified western views of “ignoble savages.” Bernard Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific: A Study in the History of Art and Ideas*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1985, pp. 244–45.

²³ See Margaret Jolly, “‘Ill-natured comparisons’: Racism and relativism in European representations of ni-Vanuatu from Cook’s second voyage,” *History and Anthropology* vol. 5, no. 3 (1992): 331–64; “The sediment of voyages: Re-membling Quirós, Bougainville and Cook in Vanuatu”; “Men of war, men of peace”; “Women of the east, women of the west: Region and race, gender and sexuality on Cook’s voyages,” in *The Atlantic World in the Antipodes: Effects and Transformations since the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Kate Fullagar, Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012, pp. 2–32; “Imagining Oceania: Indigenous and foreign representations of a sea of islands,” *The Contemporary*

The death of Williams thus continued to perpetuate this “dark” image of Melanesia, which was further fuelled by the arrival of subsequent missionaries who began to write about the “savage” and “appalling” customs of these people. For the Samoans, knowledge of the islands in the west improved as more and more came to the west as missionary men and women. Those who managed to make it back must have told people at home of their experiences which at the time were often horrific, adding to the “savage” image of these islands. Already the *Sulu Samoa* had begun publication in Samoa in 1839 and those who were literate would have read with great interest the reports of mission activities of their fellow country men and women on these western islands. In Mālūa where Samoan teachers and their wives were trained, more knowledge of the region came to light with information brought back by missionaries and returning Samoans. But another significant development was also happening where missionary voyages began bringing back islanders from the west to be trained in Mālūa. For many Samoans, this would have been the first time they had encountered people from these faraway islands and as relationships were formed, their perceptions of these island peoples and their cultures were expanded.

The first reported case began in 1849 when Murray and Hardie took to Samoa a local chief named Togalulu, his brother and a young man from the island of Lelepa at Efate.²⁴ By the end of the 1850s, islanders from Efate and Erromango in southern Vanuatu, Mare and Lifou in the Loyalty Islands, as well as Niue and Tokelau had been educated at Mālūa. Turner and Hardie reported that in 1854, there were ninety-two students at Mālūa and of these forty-four were preparing for the work of the ministry. The remaining forty-eight consisted of two classes; a class of youths and a class of men from Vanuatu and New Caledonia.²⁵ This shows that the intake of foreign students had increased so much that a special class was created for them. They were also seen as distinct from those training to be ministers. These foreign men were trained in Christian life in Mālūa while at the same time being exposed to the different customs

Pacific vol. 19, no. 2 (2007): 508–45; Douglas, “Voyages, encounters, and agency in Oceania”; Douglas and Ballard (eds), *Foreign Bodies*.

²⁴ The chief referred to was from a place called Sema, and his brother offered to be taken to Samoa. Just as they were leaving another young man, came on board to seek refuge and was glad to be taken to Samoa. On the way, they also picked up Chief Tongia of Niue who offered to join them. See *Samoa Reporter* no. 10 (November 1849): 4.

²⁵ *Samoa Reporter* no. 16 (December 1854): 1.

of the Samoans as well as the transformation that was occurring there. When they returned to their home islands they became not only great assistants for the work of the Samoan teachers, but they also inspired others to go to Samoa. In 1851, Hardie and Turner wrote,

The four Erumangans who were brought to Samoa last voyage of the “John Williams” have been with us ever since, at the Institution. The language and customs of Samoa being so different from theirs we did not for a time assign them anything to do, but treated them kindly, and allowed them, for the most part, to go where and do what they chose. They are now getting hold of the language and are reconciled to the customs of the people. Indeed, they are so much so that they do not seem to have much desire to return to their own land. They go with the teachers to work in the plantations, and seem quite at home and happy among them. We have begun to teach them to read and write. They have made but little progress as yet; but we have no doubt that they will make much more for this time than it was possible for them to do at first; and will also, we hope, have their minds, in some degree, enlightened and impressed with the great truths of our holy religion before they are taken back to their own country.²⁶

In 1852, the first of these islanders were returned.²⁷ Murray wrote of how the sight of these men inspired the locals with full confidence. He wrote of Nalial a young man from Erromango.²⁸

After our return on board, a very touching scene was witnessed. Nalial, one of the Eromangans who had been to Samoa, was standing, with his New Testament in his hand, surrounded by a group of his countrymen, to whom he was reading and speaking about Jesus. He was reading about his advent in the flesh, and pointing to his hands and his feet, to convey an idea of his crucifixion, and to heaven, to indicate the place where he now is.²⁹

²⁶ *Samoa Reporter* no. 12 (January 1851): 3.

²⁷ On this voyage, the four Erromangans and the four Niueans were returned to their home islands. Sadly however one Erromangan named Nivave died before he reached his home. *Samoa Reporter* no. 14 (September 1852): 1.

²⁸ According to Murray, the Erromangans who had been to Samoa were satisfied that the chiefs were sincere and two of them whom they wished to remain with the teachers agreed to do so. *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Samoa Reporter* no. 14 (September 1852): 2. Before Murray left Erromango on this visit, the principal chief gave his nephew, an adopted son and another relative to be taken to Samoa for instruction.

On this same visit, Chief Togalulu and his brother were reunited with their people at Havannah Harbour. Murray wrote of the emotional reunion when they arrived.

The fact of our having the chief on board made our arrival quite an event. We had been absent so long beyond the time expected that the people had concluded he must be dead and had mourned for him as dead. Thus, his appearance among them was as one risen from the dead. Their joy knew no bounds. They shouted, talked, laughed and those more immediately connected with him greeted his arrival with a general burst of weeping.³⁰

The training of these young men and local chiefs thus proved successful for the mission. Their return inspired others while at the same time they were able to influence their people to accept the new religion. Murray and Sunderland later reported in 1854 that the success of the mission on Erromango was due to the locals who had been to Samoa. They wrote, "The principal conductor of these for some considerable time must have been Nulial [Nalial], the native of Eramanga who afforded such satisfactory evidence of having derived lasting benefit from his long residence in Samoa."³¹

Four new teachers were deployed and the missionaries reported that when the Samoans finally met these local men, there was so much joy. The joy was even more so because now they were going to live with their colleagues from Mālua.³² In a letter by the Samoan teacher Elia written in 1855, he acknowledged the great assistance rendered by these local men. He wrote, "Mana (a young man who was in the

³⁰ Ibid. When they were about to leave Efate, two of the chiefs from the area offered, one his son, the other his nephew to be taken to Samoa that they might return at a future time accompanied by teachers. Their names were Lakalomuai and Marifatu of Lelepa who went to Samoa in 1852 and were there for sixteen months. *Samoa Reporter* no. 14 (September 1852): 2; Archibald W. Murray, *Missions in Western Polynesia: Being Historical Sketches of these Missions, from Commencement in 1839 to the Present Time*, John Snow, London, 1863, p. 250; See also Christopher Ballard, "Atonement and restitution: Making peace with history in Vanuatu," unpublished paper, Pacific and Asian History, The Australian National University, pp. 5–6.

³¹ *Samoa Reporter* no. 15 (January 1854): 1. At this time there were seven young men who were trained in Samoa who were now assisting teachers on Erromango. They reported that, except for one, all of them had been steady in their adherence to the teachers. One of them was Joe who was also referred to as Dam. He told the missionaries that his area around Elizabeth Bay was now more favourable and safe for mission work and requested for teachers to work with him there.

³² *Samoa Reporter* no. 16 (December 1854): 2.

Institution at Mālua upwards of two years) is of great service, and constantly exerting himself that the Word of God may grow in his land. He resides with us here.”³³

Similar progress was also occurring on Efate where young men as well as chiefs were taken to Samoa and brought back. Despite the difficulties there with internal civil wars due to the impact of epidemic diseases and sandalwood traders, the chiefs and the young men who had been to Samoa persisted and were loyal to the mission. When the missionaries visited Lelepa in 1853, the young men whom they took to Samoa were enthusiastically welcomed by the chiefs and their relatives and more were taken back.³⁴

Similar progress was happening on other islands in the Loyalty group and in Niue and Tokelau where local men from these islands on their return, assisted the teachers and

³³ Letter from Elia, Dillon’s Bay Erromango, July 18, 1855, in *Samoan Reporter* no. 17 (January 1856): 4. When the missionaries visited Erromango again in 1857, they met the youths who had been to Samoa and saw that they were clothed and were delighted to see them, signs that they were steadfast in their calling. Although most of the Samoans including Elia had left the island due to constant struggles with diseases, the missionaries felt that Erromango was now safe enough to deploy, for the first time, a white missionary couple. Harbutt wrote, “After serious deliberation with the New Hebrides’ missionaries, we were unanimously of opinion, that the time to favour Eramanga had arrived, and that [it was] Mr. Gordon’s duty to enter and take possession of the land.” Thus Mr and Mrs Gordon were deployed with two Rarotongan teachers Taivao and Toka. Elia and the Rarotongan Meariki, as we learned from the previous chapter were later found at Mare and returned to Erromango to work with the Gordons. While away, they lost their wives along with twelve others, including teachers, wives and children. However these two men decided to continue their service. *Samoan Reporter* no. 19 (October 1857): 3.

³⁴ The chiefs urged to have teachers and two were settled at the village of Tromalla. Things however turned for the worst on Efate, when constant epidemic outbreaks led to attacks on teachers and the massacre of the Rarotongan teachers and their wives at Lelepa. The killings of the Rarotongans and their wives, according to Christopher Ballard, happened several weeks after one of the chiefs’ sons Lakalomuai, who had been to Samoa, died. According to Ballard the killing was possibly at the command of his father. Lelepa hence became the last community in Efate to accept the mission, not until forty-five years later in 1898. Throughout Efate however, the situation was so bad that in the end, there was only one Samoan teacher and the widow of the Rarotongan teacher Vaaru who were spared at Erakor. He was returned to Samoa with So’oalo and four other natives; one was the son of Chief Pomare, a great friend of the mission at Erakor. The mission on Efate was thus abandoned, but the hope was that the young men now taken to Samoa would resume the mission in future. When the missionaries visited Efate again in 1857, although no teachers were deployed, the ever faithful Chief Pomare of Erakor offered one of his sons and another youth to be instructed at Mālua. These two young men were returned in 1858 and assisted with the mission. When the missionaries left, two more young men were entrusted to the missionaries’ care in Samoa for the next year. These two young men, one who had been in Samoa and the other in Rarotonga, were later returned. See *Samoan Reporter* no. 15 (January 1854): 1; no. 19 (October 1857): 3; no. 20 (January 1859): 2. See also Christopher Ballard, “Atonement and restitution,” pp. 5–6.

missionaries there.³⁵ Turner and Hardie expressed their views on the success of this strategy. They wrote in 1854,

The plan of bringing hither, in the “John Williams,” natives from heathen islands, to reside for a time in the Institution, is of signal benefit. They see and learn a good deal, and attachments are formed between them and the students, productive of the happiest results. A letter, for instance, came lately from an Eramangan to one of the students, begging him to go there and be a teacher, as soon as his time is up. Another came from the Savage Island, entreating a young man to go there. These Macedonian cries can hardly be resisted; and, during the past year, an unusually large number have offered themselves to go forth in the arduous service.³⁶

The strategy of taking islanders from the west to be trained in Mālūa saw the benefits in the further evangelisation of the west, but it also gave the Samoans more knowledge and understanding of the places they were entering. Although we hear few accounts of the interaction between the Samoans and islanders from the west in Mālūa, it seemed that relations were cordial and, as shown, long-term friendships were formed which continued as they began to work side by side in the mission fields. Moreover, cultural knowledge was shared and this helped the Samoans prepare for what they were about to encounter in the mission fields. As we have learned from missionary accounts, these men joined in the work of Samoan students at Mālūa in their gardens and physical activities. Hence they were exposed not only to the traditional roles of men and women in Samoa, but also the European gendered division of roles encouraged by English missionaries at Mālūa. There is no mention of the wives of these islanders being brought to Samoa. However, from their interaction with the foreign men, the Samoan wives would have learned some things about the

³⁵ In 1856, Turner reported the return of the men of Erromango, Efate, Lifou, Mare and Niue to their islands. It must be noted however that some of these foreign men died in Samoa before returning to their native home islands. Two from Lifou for example died from disease on the *John Williams* on their way back in 1854. Despite these losses, the other surviving men from Lifou were deployed on their home island to assist the teachers. *Samoa Reporter* no. 17 (January 1856): 1; no. 18 (January 1857): 1; no. 15 (January 1854): 1; no. 16 (December 1854): 1.

³⁶ *Samoa Reporter* no. 16 (December 1854): 1. Macedonian cries is a reference to the vision of the Apostle Paul at Troas wherein a man appealed to him to go to Macedonia to help the Christians there (Acts 16:9). Hardie and Turner also wrote that, “The bringing of those natives hither, and the knowledge which they acquire while here, cannot but be highly beneficial to our infant stations on the islands to which they belong.” *Samoa Reporter* no. 15 (January 1854): 1.

situation of women on these islands as well as their roles and other unfamiliar customs and practices to do with women there.

The changing nature of Mālūa as a multicultural institution thus prepared the Samoans before they left on mission. The experiences of these foreign men in Samoa also gave people in their own home islands greater awareness of the Samoans, about their indigenous culture and the transformation of Samoan society with the introduction of Christianity. Some of these men were able to speak Samoan. By 1857, the missionaries reported that during church services on Aneityum, the addresses were done in Samoan, English and Aneityumese.³⁷ When the missionaries visited the island of Lifou, they also reported that they “spoke to the people in the Samoan language which Tui (teacher) interpreted for us.”³⁸ The Samoan language thus became a language of communication not only between missionaries and Samoans, but also with those local men who were trained at Mālūa. Understanding the Samoan language meant that they had some understanding of Samoan culture and were able to inform their kin and neighbours about Samoa and its people.

Such positive developments in the changing character of Mālūa helped prepare subsequent Samoans before they ventured to the mission field. However, no amount of preparations could fully equip them for the difficulties they encountered. Those volunteering to join knew the dangers involved and of the possibility that they would never see their homeland again. Farewelling Samoan missionaries and their families were therefore very emotional events. Turner and Nisbet witnessed this when they departed for the west on 3 July 1848, “The parting scene here was most affecting. Young and old accompanied their friends to the beach, and, as we pushed off, waded after us into the deep water and there stood weeping bitterly as long as the boat and their friends were in sight.”³⁹

³⁷ *Samoa Reporter* no. 9 (October 1857): 2.

³⁸ Missionaries also reported that on Uvea, two teachers were sent there from Mare by the missionaries Creagh and Jones—one is a man of Tongan parents but born in Mare. The Tongan man spoke Samoan well so they communicated fluently. *Samoa Reporter* no. 19 (October 1857): 4.

³⁹ *Samoa Reporter* no. 8 (September 1848): 3.

Encountering a different culture

Missionary writings based on the reports of the Samoans and Rarotongans, commented on many local customs and practices that they found appalling: including polygamy, women's heavy labour, geronticide, infanticide, the strangulation of women, cannibalism and the live burial of young infants and aged people. These practices were common throughout all the islands in southern Vanuatu where the Samoans were working. In 1845 the missionaries reported that on Efate, "Polygamy prevails. Much manual labour devolves upon the women, and hence, she never nurses more than two or three children. If she has any beyond that number, their grave is dug as soon as they are born, and their helpless cries hushed in death!"⁴⁰

They also wrote about the live burial of aged men and women.

This custom is awfully prevalent here. It is even considered a disgrace to the family of an aged chief, if he is not buried alive. And when the poor old heathen feels sick and infirm, he will tell those around him to bury him. The grave is at once dug, and the old man's dying groans are drowned amid the weeping and wailing of his family and friends. Persons too at whatever age, if in sickness they are delirious, are buried alive forthwith.⁴¹

The Samoans also witnessed the prevalence of the custom of the strangulation of women. When Geddie arrived on Aneityum in 1848, he reported that more mothers were being strangled when their sons died and that two women were strangled when a chief died. He and the teachers interfered in two cases where two women were saved.⁴² But despite their efforts to intervene, the missionaries reported that such a practice continued. In 1849, visiting missionaries reported that on Aneityum,

Our brethren have not been able to prevent the strangling of widows on the death of their husbands, or mothers on the death of their young children. Eleven cases of strangling have come to the knowledge of our brethren since last voyage. But in one instance, in which they attempted to prevent the strangling of a woman, a number of people joined them in the attempt; and, although they did not succeed in preventing

⁴⁰ *Samoan Reporter* no. 2 (September 1845): 3.

⁴¹ *Samoan Reporter* no. 8 (September 1848): 4.

⁴² *Samoan Reporter* no. 13 (July 1851): 3. He also reported on the continuing practice of cannibalism.

the horrid deed, yet discussion on the subject was excited, and there is hope, that the day is not far distant when this distressing practice will be given up.⁴³

In 1852, Murray and Sunderland reported that women strangling on Aneityum continues. They wrote that, "The unnatural and revolting practice is not confined to widows. Not long ago, a woman was strangled at her own request, on the death of her son. The youth had no wife to accompany him to the other world, and his mother chose to do so."⁴⁴

English missionaries and their wives were appalled at the high rate of such practices. Missionaries often claimed that such practices were signs of the complete degradation of these people. Missionaries claimed that practices such as infanticide were because having children was a burden, that because of heavy labour done by women, mothers never nursed more than two or three children.⁴⁵ It is difficult to understand why infanticide was carried out. What is certain, however, is that infanticide was not done because they were callous or indifferent to their children. Missionaries themselves gave evidence of parental indulgence; indeed they themselves complained about it. Charlotte Geddie for example wrote,

The poor mothers are perfect slaves to them, until they are five or six years old, I have been speaking a good deal to the women lately, about their children and the sin of giving in to them always. They say what can we do, if we deny them, they will scream until we are obliged to give way to them. I told them they must be firm, and when children saw that there was no use in persisting they would soon desist. I think that some of them are trying to act upon my advice.⁴⁶

⁴³ *Samoan Reporter* no. 10 (November 1849): 4.

⁴⁴ *Samoan Reporter* no. 14 (September 1852): 1.

⁴⁵ In their accounts, missionaries claimed that local people prefer male over female and hence female babies were often killed upon birth. In 1853 Geddie noted that on Aneityum, "In taking the census of different villages I have been struck with the disproportion between boys and the girls, the former being much more numerous than the latter; and also the disproportion between the children and adults, the former being comparatively few." See John Geddie, *Misi Gete: John Geddie, Pioneer Missionary to the New Hebrides*, ed. R.S. Miller, Presbyterian Church of Tasmania, Launceston, 1975, p. 153; see also Norma McArthur, "Population and prehistory: The late phase on Aneityum," Ph.D. thesis, Research School of Asia and Pacific Studies, The Australian National University, 1974, pp. 12–13.

⁴⁶ Letter by Charlotte Geddie to Mrs. James Waddell, Aneityum, 18 February 1853, in Charlotte Geddie, "Letters of Charlotte Geddie and Charlotte Geddie Harington," p. 28, quoted in Margaret Jolly, "To save the girls for brighter and better lives: Presbyterian missions and women in south of Vanuatu, 1848–1870," *The Journal of Pacific History* vol. 26, no. 1 (1991): 27–48, p. 42.

References to the strangling of mothers in grief when their children died also suggest that women were certainly not heartless and uncaring. Perhaps there were also ecological as well as political reasons for the limitation of children.⁴⁷

Missionaries also saw the strangulation of widows as horrendous, a mark of a marriage relation which was based on male brutality and female servitude.⁴⁸ But, as we have seen, in some of these cases women voluntarily offered themselves to be killed. Margaret Jolly has argued, based on missionary reports, that such a practice was likely for religious reasons so that women would accompany their husbands into the afterlife.⁴⁹ This is a more logical explanation considering the willingness of those women to be killed. As we have seen, missionaries reported that even mothers offered themselves to be strangled at the death of their children. And in one case a mother even offered to be strangled when her unmarried son died in order “to accompany him to the other world.” Hence such practices could have been due to religious reasons, as a way to end the pain of a life lost, by entering into the afterlife to join with deceased relatives. This is also similar to the live burial of elderly people and of anyone who was sick. These were voluntary burials which shows that such killings were most likely due to the pain of old age as well as sickness. Elderly people and even those who were sick at any age thus saw death as a way of entering a spiritual world freed of such pain. It is also possible that such a custom was a way to relieve families of the burden and to stop the spread of diseases.

⁴⁷ Several scholars and demographers have agreed that population control had long been a feature of Pacific people as a way to deal with limited resources on small islands. Hence the control of fertility involved the imposition of a variety of traditional methods to extend birth intervals and limit family size. The availability of only limited resources was one reason but there were also social and political factors. See Norma McArthur, *The Populations of the Pacific Islands* (in several country volumes), Department of Demography, The Australian National University, Canberra 1956; *Island Populations of the Pacific*, ANU Press, Canberra, 1967; Margaret McArthur, “The Kunimaipa: social structure of a Papuan people,” Ph.D. thesis, The Australian National University, 1961; Raymond Firth, *We, the Tikopia: A Sociological Study of Kinship in Primitive Polynesia*, Allen and Unwin, London, 1936.

⁴⁸ Jolly, “To save the girls for brighter and better lives,” p. 41.

⁴⁹ Jolly also based her argument on later interpretations by a local fieldworker of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre named Philip Tepahae. She also gives an anonymous observer’s description and his interpretation of the rite where the woman dressed up with bundles of food and willingly offered to be strangled. Another example is found in John Inglis’ account where he wrote, “The wife was strangled in the death of her husband, that her spirit might accompany his to the land of the dead, to be his servant there as she had been in this world.” See Jolly, “To save the girls for brighter and better lives,” p. 43; John Inglis, *In the New Hebrides, Reminiscences of Missionary Life and Work, Especially on the Island of Aneityum till 1877*, T. Nelson and Sons, London, 1887, p. 31.

Like European missionaries and their wives, Samoans would have found these customs quite shocking, particularly those involving the strangulation or live burial of women, children and elderly people. Although violent deaths during times of wars were prevalent in Samoa at the time,⁵⁰ the treatment of women, children and elderly people on these islands must have been unusual for them, particularly as these practices were unheard of in Samoa. As we have seen Samoan missionary wives were caught up in local practices of polygamy in so far as they were forced to marry local chiefs upon the deaths of their husbands. Although as mentioned chiefly polygyny was a practice common in Samoa in pre-Christian times, these women refused to be subjected to such a custom in the islands and when they refused, they were killed. But it is possible that the killing of these wives was also by strangulation, perhaps in the belief by local people that they should accompany their husbands to the land of the dead.

Moreover, customs of strangulation did not just affect women but also men. Often the death of high chiefs entailed the death of many others, and the destruction of property. On Aneityum when one of the high chiefs died in the village where Simiona and Apolo worked, they were summoned to be killed according to custom, because they were under the protection of this chief. Fortunately the Samoans managed to talk their way out of their imminent death, persuading the locals to use instead all the crops in their plantations for the funeral.⁵¹ Local customs which involved killing should therefore be seen in light of ancestral religion, which enjoined sacrifice at the death of high chiefs rather than as heartless acts of savagery as missionaries propounded.

On many occasions the Samoans intervened to save the lives of locals, particularly women and children. There is no doubt that Samoans would have found such customs hard to understand and thus tried to stop and discourage them. Their influence, along with the determination of white missionaries led to the eventual decline of such practices. In 1855 practices such as the strangulation of widows began to disappear on Aneityum although they were never forgotten. The Samoan teacher Elia at Erromango wrote,

⁵⁰ The mid-nineteenth century was a time of many civil wars in Samoa and many accounts of these confrontations were also published in the *Sulu Samoa and Samoan Reporter*.

⁵¹ *Samoan Reporter* no. 21 (March 1860): 4. Also in Fauolo, *O Vavega o le Alofa Lavea'i*, p. 310.

Other bad customs such as were common formerly on Aneityum and other islands, do not exist here. I mean, the strangling of the widows on the death of a chief, and the killing of children, when parents could not be troubled with them. Parents here are remarkably kind to their children. There is just this sad killing of grown-up people. But they tell me, it is nothing now-a-days to what it was formerly.⁵²

Stories of such customs on islands such as Aneityum were thus known to all the Samoans in the region and there was sadness amongst the teachers and their wives about the manner in which women, children and elderly people were subjected to these customs. Having come from Samoa where women were highly regarded and their own Christian training at Mālua, where family life and the upbringing of children was so important, they must have been eager to transform these customs. Although husbands are most often mentioned in trying to prevent and discourage such practices, wives may also have urged them to intervene. Doubtless, Samoan missionary wives would have come to realise that the situation of women on these islands was starkly different to the treatment of women in Samoa.

European missionary writings show how they saw the situation of indigenous women in these islands as “downtrodden, debased and degraded.”⁵³ This was not only based on their perception of the strangulation of women but on the physical work that local women did. This included cultivating taro, planting, weeding and harvesting, gathering shellfish, feeding domestic pigs, carrying loads of tubers, bush products, wood, water and children, cooking, weaving mats and thatch for houses, and nurturing children. Such work by local women compared to the work done by men, was seen by Europeans as hard and heavy labour.⁵⁴ It was certainly much more laborious than the work of either European or Samoan women of their class and status.

Jolly suggests that the hard work that women did in Vanuatu was not the only reason why European missionaries considered women’s work “degraded.” It was also because such manual and physical work was in the gardens and forest beyond the home. She

⁵² *Samoan Reporter* no. 17 (January 1856): 4.

⁵³ Jolly, “To save the girls for brighter and better lives,” p. 35.

⁵⁴ Jolly argues that although women did an uneven share of all the work, men were not idle as they were involved in cultivating yams, constructing and irrigating taro terraces, hollowing canoes, going on deep sea fishing expeditions, cutting timber and constructing houses. Moreover, they also did some cooking and hauled wood and water, as well as looking after children occasionally. Jolly, “To save the girls for brighter and better lives,” p. 35.

sees this as being based on their Euro-American ideals of the gendered separation of public and domestic spheres. She further suggests that women on these southern islands likely did not come to share the view of themselves as “beasts of burden” because they were hard at work cultivating crops, herding pigs, fishing and carrying heavy loads of firewood and water.⁵⁵

Although there are no writings by Samoan missionary wives to show how they perceived the work of women on these islands, it is possible that like English missionary women, they would have had similar views, particularly given the kind of training they had had at Mālua where such European gender separation of roles were enforced. But we must also be aware that it is likely that they would have found similarities in the work that these women did, particularly in their traditional status as wives. As wives in their husbands’ families, they would have done similar work helping their husbands in their gardens and cooking as well as conventional “women’s work” such as fishing within the lagoon, weaving mats and thatch and nurturing children. In Samoa, this heavier work, as discussed in Chapter 1, was because of their husbands’ service in their covenantal relationships to their sisters. This as we have seen was different to their status as sisters in their natal families where they were treated as *feagaiga* or sacred “covenants,” and were thus confined to lighter work within and around the home. Hence this dual status of Samoan women meant that their perceptions of women’s labour in Vanuatu varied. It is possible that Samoan missionary wives who themselves were wives in their husbands’ families in Samoa, would have been familiar with the work of women in Vanuatu and would not have perceived such work as “heavy labour,” in the same way that white missionaries and their wives did. On the other hand, in their status as sisters in their natal families, it is also possible that they also viewed the situation of local women in Vanuatu differently, similar to those of their white counterparts.⁵⁶ These complexities in the dual status of Samoan women as both wives and sisters is perhaps best reflected in the words of

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 36.

⁵⁶ As we have seen in Chapter 1, the separation of the public and domestic spheres as encouraged by missionaries was not so distinguished in Vanuatu as in Samoa. Such convergence between Samoan gender roles and Christian ones would progress further as Samoan missionary wives in their training back home continued to be influenced by European missionaries’ ideas of domesticities. See Latu Latai, “From open *fale* to mission houses: Negotiating the boundaries of domesticity in Samoa,” in *Divine Domesticities: Paradoxes of Christian Modernities in Asia and the Pacific*, ed. Hyaeweol Choi and Margaret Jolly, Canberra, ANU Press, 2014, pp. 299–324.

Esther, a Samoan woman who is married to a local man on Aneityum and had lived on the island since 1985. She said,

In our Samoan culture women who are married into our families are treated differently to our daughters, or female children. The *nofotane* (wife) does all the work in the family, and cooks all the food. She is also the last person to eat. But here, everyone is equal, girls of the family are not treated differently to those who are married into the family. All women are treated equally.⁵⁷

Esther thus shows the differences in the dual status of women in Samoa and how women as wives do a lot more work than in their status as sisters. This dual status of Samoan women, as wives and as sisters, as Esther has observed is different to the greater sense of equality of women that she has experienced in Vanuatu. Hence despite more than a century of Christian transformation on these islands, such indigenous gender models persist not only in Samoa but in places like Vanuatu.

In hindsight, the dual status of Samoan women meant that Samoan missionary wives in Vanuatu would have found both differences and similarities with the work that women did in Vanuatu. At this stage however, we know that these women were out of the Samoan context in which such expectations in their traditional roles as wives were carried out. In the mission field and as wives of Samoan missionaries or as pastors or *feagaiga* in Samoa, also meant that their status had been lifted and they were perhaps no longer in a situation akin to regular wives in Samoa. Nonetheless, their cultural background in Samoa meant that they were far more able to relate to the local contexts. In comparison to the wives of white missionaries, they would have found greater cultural consonance with local women which meant that they would have been better able to identify with and relate to local women. They were perhaps less harsh in their judgements and able to mix more with the local people. Moreover, Samoan missionaries and their wives once settled into these islands, were also able to adapt to the environment far better than their European counterparts. Although they attempted to recreate a way of life that was close to their homeland, their ideas of life

⁵⁷ Personal interview with Esther, Aneityum, 26 August 2013. Esther is from the village of Fugalei in Samoa. She told me that she met John in Samoa when he was working on a cargo ship. They got married and moved to Vanuatu where they had been living since 1985.

in the islands were much closer to the ni-Vanuatu than those of European Presbyterian missionaries.

Conversion and material signs of success

Despite all the challenges in the mission field in southern Vanuatu and the Loyalty Islands, the work of the Samoans, was quite successful on several islands. This was witnessed by visiting European missionaries and what they saw as the physical transformation, which they interpreted as signs of spiritual conversion. One of the most progressive islands in southern Vanuatu was Aneityum where visiting LMS missionaries reported in 1845 a considerable change amongst the local population. Murray and Turner wrote that already,

The Aneiteum people set a higher value upon their teachers. Here good is being done. Schools have been formed for children and adults, public worship is attended to by many of the people and some heathen customs are hiding their heads before the light of the gospel. Instead of casting the dead out to sea, some are now buried. The horrid custom which they have of strangling the widows of the departed is becoming detested by them, and some are now giving positive orders that, in the event of their death, their wives are not to be strangled.⁵⁸

Long before the arrival of Geddie in 1848, therefore, the Samoans were already having an impact. The influence of the Samoans and the progress they were making was shown in the respect shown to them by the locals. Moreover, many were starting to abandon “heathen” customs such as the strangulation of widows. Even before Charlotte Geddie and other missionaries’ wives arrived, Samoan wives were responsible for the education of children and women. Through their lessons they would have taught about the wrong in practices such as infanticide and the strangulation of women. Although we know that some of these practices like the strangulation of women persisted for some years, a large proportion of the population on Aneityum had turned to Christianity, and some had already abandoned such customs.

When Geddie and others finally arrived, the Samoan teachers Tavita, Apolo, Simiona and their wives had already established a thriving mission settlement on Aneityum.

⁵⁸ *Samoan Reporter* no. 2 (September 1845): 3.

They had also set up more schools, built a limestone plastered house and a chapel.⁵⁹

These houses, constructed from limestone, used a method that they had learned from their training at Mālūa. As we have seen earlier, such western architectural designs were encouraged by missionaries in Mālūa with the hope that Samoan missionaries would replicate them in places where they would work, both in Samoa and in the mission field in the western Pacific. Visiting LMS missionaries were thus pleased when they witnessed such structures which they saw as clear signs of civilisation, material prosperity and spiritual conversion.

On the Loyalty Islands large and impressive mission stations began to appear with the use of limestone. Upon arrival on the island of Lifou in 1852, missionary Murray wrote,

A large substantial stone chapel, 100 feet long by 40 wide, was the most prominent object of the mission station.... The walls are about nine or ten feet high and three feet thick. It has a good pulpit and reading desk, doors, and venetian windows; and it is being furnished with seats. It had been only four months in hand, at the time of our visit.⁶⁰

Near this most impressive chapel, Murray wrote about the teachers' houses, "The dwelling of the teachers is quite in keeping with the chapel. It is a neat commodious plastered house enclosed and having a neat gate and gravel walk in front which gives it quite a civilised appearance."⁶¹

Murray wrote that the teachers had only been on the island for two years but a great change had taken place: the whole island had embraced Christianity and the chapel was filled every Sabbath with about 600 to 700 people in the congregation. He went on to write, "the external appearance of the natives was evidence sufficient that a great change had taken place."⁶²

⁵⁹ *Sulu Samoa* vol. 3, no. 2 (August 1845): 16. When the island was visited again in 1849, Hardie wrote of Anelgauhat Harbour, "Five years ago not a house was to be seen here but now the neat plastered dwellings of our brethren, the chapel and the houses of the native teachers and other buildings erected by foreign residents gave the place quite a civilised appearance." At this stage however, the Roman Catholics were to move to the main island of New Caledonia to establish their mission there. See *Samoa Reporter* no. 10 (November 1849): 4.

⁶⁰ *Samoa Reporter* no. 14 (September 1852): 2.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

Murray witnessed a similar vision of the mission stations on the islands of Toka and Mare.⁶³ He wrote,

We spent the Sabbath at the very spot where the first teachers were landed eleven years ago. A large number of people about 600 or 700 were assembled near the landing place waiting for us. They all sat in a circle, and welcomed us in the most cordial manner. We proceeded to the chapel. The scene there, and the emotions to which it gave rise, baffles description. The chapel is 72 feet long and 24 broad. It was densely crowded with apparently deeply interested worshippers.⁶⁴

On this island, the Samoan teachers Fili and Mita with their wives had worked with great success. Both had catalysed the construction of impressive chapels and stations like the one described by Murray. According to Murray, two services were held every Sabbath. The teachers had thirty-one good readers, two hundred members of a select Bible class and fifty-one candidates for baptism. The teachers were also well respected by the locals. Fili who had died just before Murray arrived was greatly lamented by the people. Murray wrote that “Fili died as it becomes a Christian to die. The poor people made great lamentation over him and appeared as if they could hardly part with his widow and children.”⁶⁵

When Murray and Sunderland visited Mare again in 1854, another impressive building was erected. They wrote,

A large, well-built, commodious dwelling-house ... fifty-four feet by thirty, containing six rooms, the walls thirteen or fourteen feet high, with a spacious verandah in front, venetian windows and panel doors, for the reception of a missionary or missionaries when these may arrive.⁶⁶

So impressed were the missionaries that they wrote,

A complete revolution has taken place throughout the entire framework of society, and, externally at least, there is a most striking fulfilment of the prophetic declaration,

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 3.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ *Samoa Reporter* no. 15 (January 1854): 4.

“Behold, I make all things new.” A fire is already kindled in their midst, which will doubtless spread till the entire system of heathenism is consumed.⁶⁷

In 1854, the first resident missionaries Creagh and Jones and their wives were finally settled in the Loyalty Islands on the island of Mare. According to Hardie, “Three convenient plastered cottages were given up by the teachers for them.”⁶⁸

The success of the Samoans together with the Rarotongans in the Loyalty Islands was thus reflected in the construction of mission houses and stations which were later occupied by white missionaries and their wives when they arrived to settle.⁶⁹ When one of the last Samoan teachers Tataio died in 1869 on the island of Mare, Turner wrote,

In the afternoon I accompanied Mr Creagh to the village ... where Tataio had been stationed of late years. There of course everything we saw brought him vividly to remembrance. The chapel he had built, the pulpit he had made and from which he preached the word of God, and the people among whom he had laboured.⁷⁰

Samoans were thus recognised for the remarkable contribution they made particularly in the physical transformation that was taking place on these islands. When white missionaries and their wives arrived they consolidated the pioneering work of the Samoans. In the 1850s, missionary reports highlighted the remarkable transformation of Aneityum since the arrival of Geddie. A census carried out by missionaries in 1854 showed that of a population of about four thousand people on Aneityum, two thousand six hundred had professed Christianity, more than half the total

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ *Samoan Reporter* no. 16 (December 1854): 3.

⁶⁹ Such transformations were also witnessed on other islands in the Loyalties like Uvea. When Turner visited the island in 1869 he wrote, “An impressive chapel 75 feet long and 46 feet wide and a dwelling house for the missionary – the neatest if not the most substantial on the Loyalty group. It certainly does great credit to the taste and skill of those who planned it and superintended its erection.” On this island was English missionary Ella and the two Samoans Apolo and Uele. Turner credited the two Samoan teachers, for the construction of this mission house. *Samoan Reporter* no. 1 (February 1870) n.s., p. 8.

⁷⁰ *Samoan Reporter* no. 1 (February 1870) n.s., p. 7. “When Mr Creagh announced from the pulpit the death of the man who was one of the ‘first that ever bore good tidings to their distant shore,’ and who laboured for so long and so faithfully among them, there was quite a sensation throughout the large congregation. ‘The memory of the just is blessed.’ So it is in the present case. The memory of the humble Samoan Evangelist will fragrant on Mare and his name remembered with affectionate gratitude when the names of the world’s heroes and great ones are forgotten, or remembered only as objects of aversion and scorn.”

population.⁷¹ By 1859, Turner wrote that, “the island is encircled by 56 school houses, 11 chapels and 60 native teachers and assistants.”⁷² Aneityum was thus an exceptional case in southern Vanuatu but, as other islands slowly accepted the teachers, more mission settlements began to develop.⁷³

European missionary accounts however highlighted an external transformation that focused on the material ideals of western culture and civilisation. Often missionaries when visiting the teachers in the mission fields, judged the progress of their work on the physical changes that they saw. This was based not only on the changes in the landscape and the buildings erected but also on the physical appearance of the local people. This shows how they saw material changes in housing and clothing as signs not just of civilisation but of spiritual conversion.

But Samoan missionaries and their wives, although they constructed impressive European mission houses, did not simply confine themselves to such western ideals. These men and women also constructed a way of life that was close to that of their home island and culture. This way of life continues to be remembered by local people today in the material remnants of Samoan settlements, and the influences Samoan missionaries and their wives had on local material culture.

⁷¹ By 1854, the mission stations were so impressive that Hardie wrote, “Mr Geddie’s stone house, sixty feet long by twenty wide has been completed; and the people, thinking their former chapel too small, pulled it down, and have built a good plastered one in its stead, seventy-seven feet long by thirty-four feet wide. These, with the printing-office, and a few small plastered houses, give the station quite a cheerful and civilised appearance.” He also wrote that Mr Inglis’ station showed similar prosperity. There is a plastered chapel with Mr Inglis’ house and other cottages which “give the station quite a respectable and pleasing appearance.” *Samoa Reporter* no. 16 (December 1854): 3.

⁷² *Samoa Reporter* no. 21 (March 1860): 1.

⁷³ While Samoan and Rarotongan teachers struggled on other islands due to disease epidemics and local resistance to sandalwood traders, Aneityum was remarkably progressive. It was only in the 1850s that things began to change on several of these islands. On Efate there were about two hundred converts at Erakor in 1852 with a chapel built in a Samoan design. In 1859, it was reported that worship was conducted regularly. On Tanna the mission at Port Resolution still struggled with outbreaks of diseases and the blame being put on the mission. So-much-so, the missionaries reported in 1854 that “Tana, unhappy Tana! Is still the same repulsive, forbidding field it has so long been; or, rather, it is in a more sad and discouraging state at present than it has been at any time since the expulsion of the servants of Christ from its shores, in 1843.” At Erromango, reports of progress finally came in 1854 with regular attendees in Sabbath worships. Also, new stone houses for teachers and a chapel were under construction. Samoan teacher Elia reported in 1855 that there were about two hundred converts. This success he attributed to the assistance of Erromangans who had been at Mālua like Mana and Nalial. At Futuna progress was still slow even in the 1860s where teachers there were still blamed as causes of diseases. *Samoa Reporter* no. 14 (September 1852): 2; no. 20 (January 1859): 3; no. 15 (January 1854): 2; no. 15 (January 1854): 3; no. 16 (December 1854): 3–4; No. 16 (December 1854): 2; no. 17 (January 1856): 4; no. 21 (March 1860): 1.

As we have seen, the Samoans took with them large amounts of their material culture in the form of pandanus textiles as well as tapa, coconut sinnet, canoes etc. Tapa and fine pandanus textiles were used in Samoa not only as items of exchange in cultural ceremonies but also as clothing, and as nets for mosquitoes. This was similar to the value and use of tapa and pandanus textiles in Vanuatu. Large quantities of these items were thus transported to the west for the use by the Samoans, but these artefacts also became items of value to present as gifts to local chiefs. The missionaries noted in 1849 that, “these things are also of great use in making up presents to heathen chiefs and thus form no inconsiderable aid in meeting the expenditure of these out stations”.⁷⁴

Like European cloth which had long been valued in exchanges with European explorers and traders, Samoan artefacts also became sought after by locals in Vanuatu. Mailei wrote in 1855 about how *siapo* was vital in order to gain the favour of local chiefs at Erromango. At one point the distribution of *siapo* made one chief jealous, almost costing the lives of Elia and Isaaka. He wrote, that “the chief was angry when *siapo* were not given to him but to the men who lived with the teachers.”

One day he took the axe and was about to hit Elia and Isaaka, before his brother grabbed it from his hand. Later *siapo* were given to him as he is a mean and violent man. Similar things have also happened to us, our authorities sometimes attempt to beat us but it never happened. How amazing is the love of God.⁷⁵

The Samoans were thus very much dependent on such items which had become items of value on these islands. But such local interest also shows consonance with local materials. The making of such artefacts was the role of Samoan women in Samoa, and it is possible that knowledge and techniques in making tapa were shared both by Samoan wives as well as local women.

Other items such as *afa* or coconut sinnet were essential in the construction of Samoan houses as well as tools and utensils used in their homes. In 1853 Simiona at Aneityum wrote about the lack of coconut sinnet and asked Nisbet for more, “Reverend, just a few words to tell you what we lack here in the west, some sinnet to

⁷⁴ *Samoan Reporter* no. 10 (November 1849): 3.

⁷⁵ Letter by Mailei to Henry Nisbet, Erromango, 28 July 1855.

build our house as we can only use vines here. It's just asking, as I do understand how hard it is for you and the congregation as there are still a lot of difficulties facing you."⁷⁶

Coconut sinnet, as we have seen, was one of the most popular items transported to these islands from Samoa. Eventually the Samoans would take over seedlings of the *niu-afa* or sinnet coconut. On Aneityum, locals today refer to a particular variety of coconut tree which the Samoans brought and activated there. They are described as bearing large fruits unlike the ones indigenous to their island. This particular variety was used for the making of sinnet ropes for the construction of houses and everyday use.

Samoan missionaries thus built their own houses, based on their traditional knowledge of Samoan architecture. The designs and construction of mission houses, as well as chapels, particularly roof structures, were based on Samoan architecture. When Murray visited Efate in 1852 he wrote that a chapel was erected in 1849 which was "built after the manner of Samoan houses, and enclosed with reeds. It holds about 150."⁷⁷ The construction of early chapels and mission houses thus reflected Samoan architectural patterns and designs and not just European models. These houses and particularly chapels however were enclosed, which shows European influence. These earliest houses and chapels were built with the help of locals, a sure sign that they had accepted the teachers to live amongst them. This they did with the agreements of local chiefs who were willing to host them in their villages. However these structures were also targeted when locals vented their anger towards the teachers, when they were blamed for the introduction of diseases or when certain parties rejected the presence of another religion. As we have seen, teachers' houses and church properties became the first objects that locals destroyed once they turned on the teachers. With the killing of Samuela's wife and her family on Futuna in 1843, all their houses and properties were burnt and the people wore their Christian clothing in dances to show defiance.⁷⁸ However, once the tide turned for the teachers, their properties also

⁷⁶ Letter by Simiona to Henry Nisbet Aneityum, 31 October 1853.

⁷⁷ *Samoa Reporter* no. 14 (September 1852): 2.

⁷⁸ Similar actions were taken on other islands. For example on the island of Efate in 1853, a chapel that was half built at the village of Pango was burned when the people returned to heathenism because of an epidemic. And on Aneityum in 1861, a fine large chapel which had just been finished was burnt to the

became sacred sites that were revered and respected. This was the case on Tanna when the heathen party was subdued. Turner wrote, “No one after that dared jeer at any who assembled for worship on the Sabbath. Nor would anyone go near our house, or touch an article that grew in the garden, breadfruit &c were allowed to ripen, and fall, and rot, untouched.”⁷⁹

But despite such instability particularly in Vanuatu, in places where they were able to settle, the Samoans managed to live as normal a life as they could. On islands such as Aneityum and Efate, Samoan settlements are recognised today by local elders by the plants that the Samoans liked to grow near their houses. One of those plants, is the *talie* or tropical almond tree.⁸⁰ It is usually grown by the Samoans near their houses for the shade that it provides but it is also used as a source of medicinal remedies.

According to local oral traditions, some of these are still standing today and they continue to remind local people of where the Samoans once settled.⁸¹ One of the islands in which the Samoans are most remembered is Aneityum. There, the remnants of Samoan settlements are still visible, recognised by locals by the round patterns of stone foundations that are typical of houses in Samoa. The construction of these houses involved the skills of Samoan wives, particularly in the weaving of thatches and mats—important work they performed in Samoa. These patterns of weaving are still practised by Aneityumese women in the construction of houses, called *niom Samoa* (houses of Samoans) and mats called *nijap Samoa* (mats from Samoa).⁸² According to local women, the *nijap Samoa* has become a significant valued artefact in their culture, as an item used in traditional gift exchanges as well as ceremonies of reconciliation,

ground as a result of the epidemic outbreak. See *Samoan Reporter* no. 15 (January 1854): 3; no. 23 (May 1862): 4. Also in Graham J. Miller, *Live: A History of Church Planting in the New Hebrides, to 1880*, Book I, General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, Sydney, 2001, p. 29.

⁷⁹ *Samoan Reporter* no. 2 (September 1845): 3.

⁸⁰ The scientific name for this particular species is *Terminalia catappa*. The wood is red and solid, and has high water resistance; it has been used in Polynesia for making canoes. The leaves and the bark are used in different herbal medicines for various purposes.

⁸¹ Personal interview with Elder Kenneth, Anelgauhut, Aneityum, 23 August 2013; personal interview with Jack Kallon, Erokar, Efate, 29 August 2013. It is likely that most trees would not have survived for this long but perhaps some would.

⁸² Personal interview with Pastor Isaac, Epece, Aneityum, 24 August 2013.

where it is presented by those who have committed a crime or have broken village rules.⁸³

Local elders also perceive Samoan influence in the design of their outrigger canoes, where the sticks that hold the outrigger are secured into holes dug into the outrigger. This they say is a Samoan influence which is different to the earlier method of just tying the connecting sticks with vines, as is common on other islands in Vanuatu.⁸⁴

Hence through oral history we get a real sense of how Samoans attempted to reconstruct their own way of life as in Samoa. As we have seen, Samoan support for their teachers involved sending over huge amounts of coconut sinnet which was used in the construction of their own houses. John Geddie, who spent several months in Samoa before departing to southern Vanuatu, learned about Samoan architecture and particularly the construction of roofs and the use of Samoan thatching in Mālūa.⁸⁵ When he settled on Aneityum he had brought with him Samoan servants who assisted in the building and in the thatching of his mission houses. Samoan missionary wives on the island, would have helped in the weaving of thatch and of mats to cover the floors.⁸⁶

The introduction of Samoan material culture by Samoan missionaries and their wives, and the continued influence they had on the material culture of places like Aneityum shows that in the mission encounter, there was not only an intense but a *mutual* exchange in cultural knowledge between Samoans and local people. The Samoans, as we have seen, lived in Samoan-designed houses. Although different they would have been similar to local houses in the materials used. In the construction of such houses, Samoans and local people would have exchanged and shared knowledge and techniques. Samoan wives would have shared their knowledge with local women in the weaving of mats and thatch. Such knowledge has been passed down through generations and is still remembered by local women in their oral tradition. According to woman Elder Akissie of the Presbyterian Church at Anelgauhat,

⁸³ Personal interview with woman Elder Akissie Nasaule, Aneityum 2013; personal interview with Esther John, Aneityum 2013.

⁸⁴ Personal interview with Elder Kenneth, Anelgauhat, Aneityum, 23 August 2013.

⁸⁵ George Patterson, *Missionary Life among the Cannibals: Being the Life of the Rev. John Geddie, D.D.*, James Campbell & Sons, Toronto, 1882, pp. 179–80.

⁸⁶ Patterson, *Missionary Life Among the Cannibals*, p. 172.

Some of the things that the Polynesian teachers came here with their wives and they taught our old ladies include the mat. That's what they taught the old ladies here, and we call that *nijab Samoa*. So they taught the old ladies. It's like one of the customs, when we have visitors, we give that to the visitors. But it's not really our custom. The Samoan ladies taught our women.⁸⁷



Figures 32a and b. Left: *Stone foundations of houses believed to be that of the Samoans at Anelgauhat, Aneityum (left) and near an old talie tree (right).* Photographed by Latu Latai, 23 August 2013



Figure 33. Left: *A round depression believed to be the foundation of a Samoan house where the earliest Samoans lived.* Photographed by Latu Latai, 22 August 2013

Figure 34. Right: *Thatching technique believed to have been introduced by Samoan women.* Photographed by Latu Latai, 22 August 2013

⁸⁷ Personal interview with woman Elder Akissie Nasaule, Aneityum, 25 August 2013.



Figure 35. Left: House called niom Samoa. Photographed by Latu Latai, 26 August 2013



Figure 36. Right: Local Pastor Isaac drawing on the sand to show the differences between a house introduced by Samoans and the local indigenous design. Photographed by Latu Latai, 24 August 2013



Figure 37. Left: The nijab Samoa presented to me by women of the Presbyterian Church at Anelgauhat. In the front in the green and white “mother hubbard” dress is Mrs Akissie Nasaule. Photographed by Latu Latai, 25 August 2013



Figure 38. Right: Local canoe with the distinctive Samoan outrigger design. Photographed by Latu Latai, 25 August 2013

No doubt Samoan missionaries and their wives were also influenced by local techniques and cultural knowledge. The Samoans, although attempting to recreate life as in Samoa, would have also been influenced by local architecture adapted to the climate in these islands. The Samoan houses referred to on Aneityum are enclosed, in contrast to the open Samoan *fale*. The coldness of the climate in these southern islands meant that this was a much more appropriate design for the Samoans. It is also possible that this was due to western influence as taught in Mālua or indigenous influence due to fear of sorcery or ancestral spirits.

European missionaries had very different ideas about the home and domestic life. Missionaries and their wives saw local domestic architecture as a symptom of the “savage” state of the people. Margaret Whitegross Paton for example once mistook

local homes as houses for pigs.⁸⁸ Thus as Jolly has highlighted, missionaries attempted to reform the domestic space in southern Vanuatu by insisting on European architecture. The missionary home was not just to satisfy the missionaries' own longing for domestic order, cleanliness and health, but was to be a model for the local people. Margaret Paton wrote, "We must not let ourselves "down" because we are among savages but rather try to lift them up to our Christian level in all things. One's Home has so much influence on one's work and on life and character."⁸⁹

As is common throughout Christian missions in the Pacific, missionaries instituted schools to train women in domestic work in the European way.⁹⁰ There they taught them house-keeping, cleaning, sanitation, sewing, laundry, ironing, starching, and childcare as well as reading, writing and Biblical knowledge. As we have seen, Samoan missionary wives pioneered these schools for women in Vanuatu. Their training in Mālūa meant that they were knowledgeable in such domestic duties. However it was probably not until white missionary women arrived, that the intensity of such education was raised, particularly in the construction of their own homes. As we have learned, such ideals of domesticity were often filled with paradoxes not only in Samoa, but throughout the Pacific including Vanuatu. In southern Vanuatu, Jolly argues that local people emulated European missionary models only in a partial way.⁹¹ She writes that there were other models of European "homes", not only missionaries who effected changes in the indigenous relations of men and women, but traders, planters and later colonial officials.⁹²

⁸⁸ Maggie W. Paton, "Letter to a friend in Stirling, Mare, Loyalty Islands, 17 October, 1865," in Maggie W. Paton, *Letters and Sketches from the New Hebrides*, ed. Jas Paton, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1894, p. 21; also cited in Jolly, "To save the girls for brighter and better lives," p. 39.

⁸⁹ Maggie W. Paton, *Letters and Sketches*, 1894, p. 61. Also cited in Jolly, "To save the girls for brighter and better lives," p. 40.

⁹⁰ See Hyaewool Choi and Margaret Jolly (eds), *Divine Domesticities: Christian Paradoxes in Asia and the Pacific*, ANU E Press, Canberra, 2014; Patricia Grimshaw, "New England missionary wives, Hawaiian women and the 'cult of true womanhood'," *Hawaiian Journal of History* vol. 19 (1985): 71–100; Christine Ward Gailey, "Putting down sisters and wives: Tongan women and colonization," in *Women and Colonization: Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. Mora Etienne and Eleanor Leacock, Praeger, New York, 1980, pp. 294–322; Diane Langmore, *Missionary Lives, Papua, 1874–1914*, Pacific Island Monograph Series, No. 6., University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu, 1989.

⁹¹ Margaret Jolly, "To save the girls for brighter and better lives," p. 46.

⁹² Ibid.

However, I argue that there were also the Samoans, who represented another model to local ni-Vanuatu. Although they were often presented as models of civilised Christian couples, their lives and ideas about family and gender relationships were still at this early stage, likely based on Samoan indigenous ideas.

Jolly has highlighted how the iconography of darkness and light characterises Christian missions everywhere. The dominant trope of conversion was that of bringing the light to heathen darkness. Hence European and American missionary wives in southern Vanuatu saw themselves as agents of that illumination, and in particular bringing the light to these benighted women. They saw the state of local women and denigrated what they saw as their being “beasts of burden,” or “slaves” to their husbands. Hence they tried to discourage and stop customs like the strangulation of widows and infanticide and redirect women’s energies away from work outside to work inside the home, thus situating women in a separate sphere from men.⁹³ The Samoans no doubt were implicated in such a project, and saw themselves as also bringers of the light. But as shown, although Europeans and Samoans were agents of the same movement of conversion, their cultural backgrounds differed and this no doubt had an impact on the complex nature of Christian conversion. For Samoan wives in this early stage, little is known of their actual encounters with local people and particularly women. We do know however that despite the challenging conditions they had to endure, they managed to leave an imprint of themselves on the culture and people in the mission field that is still remembered today. But an imprint that continues to be overshadowed nonetheless by a history that is still dominated by European missionaries even in the islands today.

Reconciling the remnants of the past

At Anelgauhat, amongst the remnants of the old mission station, stands the *John Geddie Memorial Church* built in 1979. Entering the church one quickly sees suspended from its ceiling rafts, a huge traditional oar, once used when the local people built and sailed a huge double hulled canoe from Aneityum to Port Vila in 1998, to mark the 150 Anniversary of the arrival of John Geddie. On the altar lies a copy of Geddie’s local translation of the Bible. In front of the sanctuary is a drawing of Geddie himself with a

⁹³ Ibid.

quote saying, “When he came in 1848 there were no Christians. When he died in 1872 there were no heathens.”



Figure 39. Left: *The John Geddie Memorial Church at Anelgauhat. Photographed by Latu Latai, 23 August 2013.*

Figure 40. Right: *The oar used when they sailed a huge canoe to Port Vila, displayed to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the arrival of Geddie. Photographed by Latu Latai, 23 August 2013.*

These artefacts and the history that they present, however, occlude the important work of the Samoans. As we have seen, the Samoans who arrived in Aneityum in 1841 had already made headway in converting local people way before the arrival of Geddie. Moreover, Geddie’s translation of the Bible into Aneityumese does not acknowledge the contribution of the Samoans who were already fluent in the Aneityumese language when the white missionaries arrived. Even Simiona would have already begun translations of some of the books in the Bible by the time Geddie arrived.⁹⁴

At Anelgauhat Esther told me that when she arrived, the people had always celebrated the anniversary of the arrival of John Geddie every year in the month of July. She told me how sad she was that, despite the people’s knowledge that it was the Samoans who first arrived here, and that many died here, there was no public acknowledgment of their arrival and contribution.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ See Featunai Liuaana, “Errand of mercy: Samoan missionaries to Southern Vanuatu, 1839–1860,” in *The Covenant Makers: Islander Missionaries in the Pacific*, ed. Doug Munro and Andrew Thornley, Suva: Pacific Theological College and Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1996, pp. 41–79, p. 49.

⁹⁵ Personal interview with Esther John, Aneityum, 26 August 2013.



Figure 41. Left: Copy of the title page of John Geddie's translation of the Bible into Aneitymese. Photographed by Latu Latai, 23 August 2013.



Figure 42. Right: Drawing of John Geddie with the inscription: "When he came in 1848 there were no Christians. When he died in 1872 there were no heathens." Photographed by Latu Latai, 23 August 2013.

This however changed in 2011, when a reconciliation ceremony was held between the people of Aneityum and the people of Samoa. A delegation approved and supported by the Samoa National Council of Churches (NCC) was sent, led by Pastor Fepuleai Usufono of the missionary organisation Youth with a Mission or YWAM. The reconciliation ceremony was a momentous occasion for the people of Aneityum. At Esther's house I watched a video recording of the ceremony, and witnessed a truly moving event. The main ceremony was held at Anelgauhat at the village's central meeting place where the whole island gathered. The four main chiefs of the island on behalf of all the villages presented the final apology with presentations of symbolic gifts of food and local artefacts, climaxing in the killing of a pig, one of the most important gestures in a traditional ceremony in Vanuatu. One of the gifts presented to the Samoan delegation was the *nijab Samoa*, the pandanus textile introduced by Samoan wives, and now used as a symbol of redemption and reconciliation. After the performance of this traditional presentation and apology, Pastor Fepuleai accepted the gifts and responded on behalf of his delegation and of all the descendants of Samoan missionaries and their wives. He ended with a statement of forgiveness releasing the people of Aneityum of any burdens that they still had over the deaths of the Samoans who were badly treated and killed there. The ceremony ended as the Samoan

delegation and the people of Aneityum embraced each other in an act of renewed friendship.



Figure 43. Left: *Pastor Fepuleai Usufono, leader of the Samoan delegation, embracing one of the local chiefs during the reconciliation ceremony in 2011 on Aneityum. Taken from Reconciliation Ceremony 2011, video by Esther John, Aneityum, Vanuatu.*



Figure 44. Right: *Traditional gifts of food including the pig presented during the reconciliation. Taken from Reconciliation Ceremony 2011, video by Esther John, Aneityum, Vanuatu.*



Figure 45. Left: *The presentation of the nijab Samoa as one of the items offered. Taken from Reconciliation Ceremony 2011, video by Esther John, Aneityum, Vanuatu*

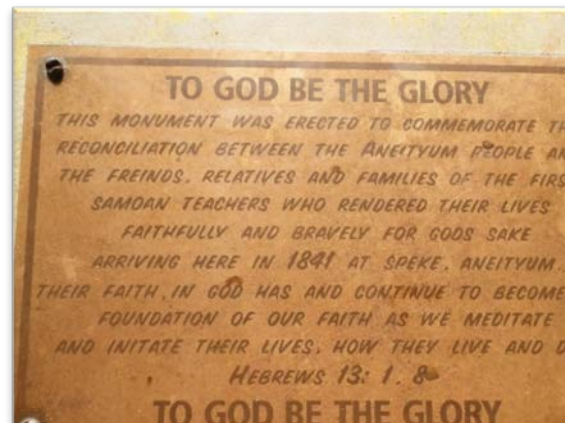


Figure 46. Right: *The plaque unveiled for the memory of the Samoans on Aneityum during the 2011 reconciliation ceremony. Photographed by Latu Latai, 23 August 2013*

From this reconciliation ceremony, a memorial stone was erected which now stands in front of the remains of the old mission church. On the plaque it reads,

This monument was erected to commemorate the reconciliation between the Aneityum people and their friends, relatives and families of the first Samoan teachers who rendered their lives faithfully and bravely for God's sake arriving here in 1841 at Speke, Aneityum. Their faith in God has and continues to become the foundation of our faith as we meditate and imitate their lives, how they lived and died.

The memories of Samoan teachers and their wives are thus being reanimated in such acts of reconciliation, paying tribute to their role in the early evangelisation of these islands. Their role was vital in what the missionaries perceived as the “breaking” of new grounds in a missionary field that was considered “dark,” “savage” and very dangerous. But as we will see, as the once dangerous mission field in the west began to experience the “coming of the light,” and the Samoans began to settle into their mission work, their presence became far more dominant. And, as will be observed in places like Tuvalu, Niue, Kiribati and PNG, Samoans began to impose their own form of Christianity that was strongly linked to the *faa-Samoa* or the “Samoan culture.” This shift in Samoan evangelism was heavily criticised by both European missionaries and foreign observers in the region, who were now seeing the Samoans as imposing their own ideas of cultural superiority.

CHAPTER 4. SINGERS OF A NEW SONG: SUCCESS AND CRITICISMS IN TUVALU AND KIRIBATI FROM 1865–1890

In 1882, Fa'ata'ape graduated from Mālua with her husband Simona and were posted to work in a parish in the village of Matautu Falealili in Samoa. After serving more than ten years in Samoa, they were accepted for foreign mission in Tuvalu where they began their missionary work on the island of Funafuti in 1895. Two years later, Caroline Martha David who accompanied her husband the renowned Australian geologist William David on a scientific expedition at Funafuti, wrote about Fa'ata'ape and Simona and their work on the island.¹ During her three months experience, Mrs David recorded thirty-one songs that were commonly sung by children at Sunday Schools, Day school, and amongst the general adult population. The songs usually had one verse which was sung repeatedly to local melodies accompanied with actions. This was typical of local compositions in which a verse is repeated as the beat and rhythm of the song gets faster and faster. Written in Samoan and in the local language, these songs ranged in subject from ones based on Biblical stories and well-known Biblical characters, to history, geography, science and astronomy. One particular song in Tuvaluan, describes Israel's journey through the wilderness,

*E toki te fale te fanauga Isalaelu, e nofonofa ai ko Isaraelu, oi, aue! Te ao faaniutu ka fa'anake savavali e! savavali, e! aue! A house was raised by the children of Israel, for Israel to dwell in. Oh! Alas! The cloud standing like a cocoa-nut palm directed their journeying, e! directed their journeying, e! oh! Alas!*²

¹ Sir Tannat William Edgeworth David was a renowned Welsh Australian geologist and Antarctic explorer. A household name in his lifetime, David's most significant achievements were discovering the major Hunter Valley coalfield in New South Wales, Australia and leading the first expedition to reach the South Magnetic Pole. In 1891 David was appointed Professor of Geology at the University of Sydney. In 1896 David went to the Pacific atoll of Funafuti as part of an expedition under Professor William Sollas of Oxford in order to take borings which it was hoped would settle the question of the formation of coral atolls. This expedition failed and in 1897 David led a second expedition which succeeded in reaching a depth of 557 feet. He then organised a third expedition in 1898 which was successful in carrying the bore to 1114 feet. The results provided support for Charles Darwin's theory of subsidence, and the expeditions made David's name as a geologist. Caroline accompanied him on the second expedition during which she wrote her well-received account titled *Funafuti, or Three Months on a Coral Island*. This book was published in 1899. See Caroline Martha David, *Funafuti or Three Months on a Coral Island: An Unscientific Account of a Scientific Expedition*, John Murray, London, 1899; David Branagan, *T.W. Edgeworth David: A Life: Geologist, Adventurer and Knight in the Old Brown Hat*, National Library of Australia, Australian Capital Territory, Canberra, 2005.

² David, *Funafuti or Three Months on a Coral Island*, p. 72. All translations of Samoan and Tuvaluan songs are given by Mrs. David who wrote that they were the work of a visiting English missionary.

Other songs were about the murder of Abel by his brother Cain, the dispersal of Israel during the Babylonian invasion, the birth of Jesus, King Saul, Paul, Timothy, Samson and Mary; the first woman disciple and the first to witness the resurrection of Jesus. Other songs were about the history of the Church; for example one about Martin Luther, the great German Reformer who began the translation of the Bible into the German language.³ There were songs about countries and well known places and cities in the world such as Paris, the river Thames, cities like Melbourne and Sydney in Australia, as well Spain and Portugal.⁴ There were songs about the planets and the moons.⁵ There were even songs, like this one in the Samoan language, to encourage people to listen clearly to the sermons on Sunday services, and not get drowsy.

Ne'i maumau o upu o le lauga, fafagu atu ia. Soia le moe, oi, aue! Ne'i maua oe le oti fa'avavau, fafagu atu ia! Soia le moe! Oi, aue! Lest you lose the words of the sermon, wake up! Leave off sleeping, oh, alas! Lest you be overtaken with eternal death, wake up! Leave off sleeping, oh, alas!⁶

In the performance of one particular favourite, Mrs. David wrote that “the natives always got so wildly excited over it, working themselves up to frenzied speed at the end.”⁷

The usage of songs was one of the ways that Samoan missionaries and their wives, like their European counterparts, introduced Christianity to local populations. These songs impressed visiting LMS missionaries on islands where the Samoans were labouring in the new mission fields of Tuvalu, Kiribati, Tokelau and Niue. Several of these songs were in the Samoan language and reflected the closeness of these island languages to

³ The lyrics of this song are in Samoan and Tuvaluan. *Finau tele o le nu'u su'esu'e mea uma e to'atele o tagata. Talu ia Lutelu na liliu le tusi sa i le gagana. Siamani me tagi ke lolomi faka tasi ma tusi i le gagana Siamani.* The people strove strongly. This is translated: “There were many enquirers regarding all things from the time of Luther, who translated the Scriptures into the German language, and demanded that the entire book should be printed in the language of Germany.” Ibid., p. 73.

⁴ The lyrics are in Samoan. *Portukali, Portukali e tuaoi ma Sepania, a e tupito, a e tupito, i nuu sisina, oi, aue! Fa'amiliona mona tupu ona tagata; a e tupito, a e tupito, a e tupito i nuu sisina, oi, aue!* Translated: “Portugal, Portugal, on the boundary of Spain, but stands, foremost, but stands foremost in the Peninsula. Oh, alas! Multiply millions to the growth of his people, which stands foremost, which stands foremost in the Peninsula, oh, alas!” Ibid., p. 75.

⁵ The lyrics are in Samoan. *E lua masina e fa'atamilo tu'u atu pianete i tua o Satuno.* Translated: “There are two moons revolving around the planets at the back of Saturn.” Ibid.

⁶ Ibid, p. 76.

⁷ Ibid., p. 65.

the Samoan language. As we will see, similarity in languages together with ancestral ties benefitted the Samoans. This enhanced their influence leading to great success in evangelisation on these island groups. But despite such success, the Samoans became increasingly criticised for the manner in which they were carrying out their mission work. Such criticisms ranged from disapproval of their strict moral discipline to allegations of excessive lifestyle and heavy-handed power over local populations. Although such criticisms mainly targeted the husbands, their wives were now increasingly perceived as women who carried themselves with an air of highhandedness and self-importance. Caroline David later wrote of Faataape,

Faataape, a pleasant and amiable woman who thoroughly appreciated the distinction of being a pastor's wife. And why not? Hadn't she a better hut than the king even, and more *kaikai* than she could eat without working for it, people to cook it for her and other people to nurse her baby, so that she could rest most of her time? Then, too, had she not a seat on the dais in church, a place of honour to which even His Majesty, King Elia of Funafuti, was not invited?"⁸

Thus as locals began to sing in tune to the new songs the Samoans had taught them, attend to their teachings and pay them the highest of respect, foreign observers and visiting LMS missionaries were becoming increasingly wary of the Samoans.

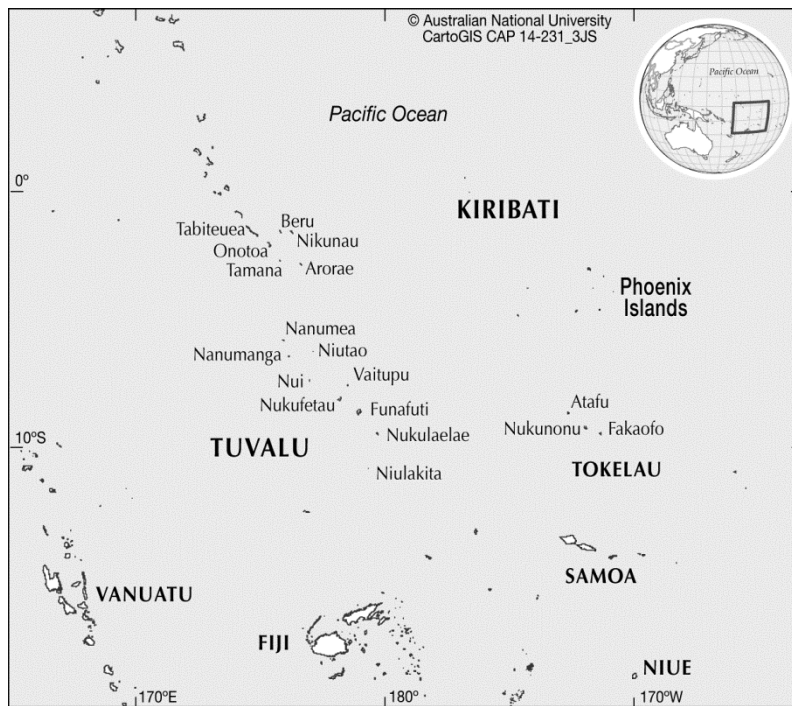
Settling into a new mission field

As the last Samoans left Southern Vanuatu and the Loyalty Islands in the 1860s, and the mission was handed over to the Presbyterian mission, the Samoan LMS mission began to shift its focus to islands such as Niue, Tokelau, Tuvalu and southern Kiribati.⁹ Except for Niue where Samoans had been labouring since the 1840s, Samoan couples were now being placed on the islands of Tokelau in 1861, Tuvalu in 1865 and the southern islands of Kiribati in 1870.¹⁰

⁸ Ibid., p. 27.

⁹ See Appendices 3–6 for the lists and information of Samoan missionary wives and their husbands on these islands.

¹⁰ While the missions in Niue and southern Kiribati were pioneered by the Samoans, in Tuvalu, Christianity was crudely introduced by Elekana, a Christian deacon from Manihiki in the Cook Islands who was lost at sea and washed up on the island of Nukulaelae in 1861. His arrival was thus accidental; he was not sent by the LMS. He was blown off course on a voyage from his home island to neighbouring Rakahanga. For eight weeks he was lost at sea and then washed up at Nukulaelae where he was welcomed. The people apparently were eager to learn about the new religion crudely introduced by



Map 4. Tuvalu, southern Kiribati, Niue and Tokelau

In comparison to the earlier decades of Samoan involvement in mission, the Samoans seemed to have fared far better on these island groups. Although the environment was different with a much more widespread group of low-lying atolls of coral origin with the common occurrence of famines and droughts,¹¹ there were no dangerous diseases like malaria and major epidemics that had impacted on the earlier group of Samoan missionaries and their wives. Accusations of “blackbirding” in the labour trade were witnessed on these islands and there were outbreaks of diseases, but there were few accounts blaming or provoking negative reactions towards the Samoans.¹²

traders, and so he taught them the gospel and literacy. He later made his way to Samoa where he convinced LMS missionaries that the people of Tuvalu were ready to receive teachers. He attended Mālūa and was ordained in May 1865 before they set sail to Tuvalu with Archibald W. Murray and two Samoan teachers in the German trading vessel *Augustita*. He was appointed to Nukufetau where there was resistance. He was later removed due to various indiscretions. See, *Te 100 Tausaga le Tala Lei I Elise, 1861–1961 – The Coming of the Gospel to the Ellice Islands*, Funafuti, 1961; Archibald W. Murray, *Forty Years Mission Work in Polynesia and New Guinea, 1835–1875*, Robert Carter & Brothers, New York, 1876, pp. 375–95; George Turner, “Narrative of Elikana [sic], a native of Manihiti,” *Juvenile Mission Magazine*, 1865, p. 341; “Elikana’s [sic] story,” trans. Jane Chalmers, *Juvenile Missionary Magazine*, June–October 1872, p. 148.

¹¹ Elekana referred to the initial reluctance of the Samoans to go to these islands because of the lack of food. See Turner, “Narrative of Elikana [sic], a native of Manihiti,” p. 341; “Elikana’s [sic] story,” p. 148.

¹² Harry E. Maude, *Slavers in Paradise: The Peruvian Labour Trade in Polynesia, 1862–1864*, Stanford University Press, Institute of Pacific Studies, The University of the South Pacific, The Australian National University Press, Stanford, Suva, Canberra 1981, pp. 74–82; Doug Munro, “The Peruvian slavers in Tuvalu, 1863: How many did they kidnap?” *Journal de la Société des Océanistes* vol. 90 (1990): 43–52, pp. 43–46.

Of the eighty-four wives who worked in Tuvalu from 1865 to 1966, only one death and two with sickness were reported. Of the eighty-two wives in Kiribati from 1870 to 1948, six were reported dead. In Niue, one wife died out of ten from 1849 to 1966, and one died out of twenty-five who worked in Tokelau from 1861 to 1961. Of all the husbands who worked on these island groups, only six were reported to have died there. There were also few incidents concerning children, with only three reported ill and only one who was sick and later died in Sydney while her parents were returning to Samoa. Samoan missionary couples thus had a far less challenging field than they had previously encountered and this translated into early success in their missionary work.

By the mid-1870s, all of the islands of Tokelau, the eight islands of the Tuvalu group and the southern islands of Kiribati which included Arorae, Nikunau, Beru, Onoatua and Tamana were occupied with Samoan missionary couples.¹³ In all of these islands the work was largely left to the Samoans. The lack of new European missionaries and financial strains faced by the LMS meant that none could reside on these islands. Tuvalu and southern Kiribati for example had no resident European missionary until the end of the nineteenth century. Thus European missionaries based in Samoa could only visit the Samoans annually. From these visits they could gather information of the work and progress of the Samoans. Similarly as we have seen in Vanuatu and the Loyalty Islands, reports from these visits were based largely on the information gathered from the Samoans during short visits. The time they spent on these islands was often brief and the fact that European missionaries only visited these islands for a day or two, meant that they were often short summaries of a whole year's work.¹⁴

Despite this lack of European supervision, the Samoans were quite effective in the progress of their work. Once they settled, they quickly set out to evangelise local

¹³ On these islands there were fifteen Samoan missionary couples with their children. Most islands had only one missionary couple while islands such as Niutao in Tuvalu, Beru and Onoatua in Kiribati had two or three due to larger populations.

¹⁴ Several things were done by missionaries on these visits. They firstly interviewed the teachers soliciting accounts of the work as well as statistics about population, church membership, deaths and births, candidates for church membership, sales of Bibles, Hymns and LMS books and finally accounts of local people's material contributions were gathered. The visiting missionary would then proceed to interview and examine candidates for church membership and decide on who would be accepted into the Church. If there were candidates for Mālua then he would interview and decide whether they were ready for acceptance or not. The missionary would then conduct a service in which Holy Communion was carried out and where new members were accepted into the church.

people, setting up schools, churches and mission stations on the various islands. Local religion was soon suppressed by the destruction of religious objects and shrines. In Tuvalu, the traditional methods of birth control, namely infanticide and abortion, as well as customs such as polygamy, tattooing, distending the earlobes, warfare and capital punishment for social deviants were discouraged.¹⁵ As we have seen, several of these customs like polygamy and tattooing existed in Samoa. Customs such as infanticide which the Samoans had encountered in southern Vanuatu were a novelty and would have been greatly condemned. But unlike the extreme resistance that we witnessed in southern Vanuatu, there was a more receptive encounter in the evangelisation of these islands.¹⁶

According to Doug Munro, the rapid success on these islands was not only due to the dominance of the Samoans, but also the favourable response of local populations who were receptive to the new religion. This he argues was due to several reasons: local people sought access to the beneficence of a more powerful God and also safety from the threat of sanctions from their old system of island-wide and household gods. Hence Christianity was welcomed as emancipation from the even greater tyranny of their traditional religion.¹⁷

However, there were also other factors that contributed to the success of the Samoans. These included the strong linguistic and pre-European links between Samoa and these island groups. As we have seen, the introduction of songs and hymns in the

¹⁵ Once birth-control methods were suppressed there was a steady increase in the Tuvaluan population for the remainder of the century—from 2,500 in 1865 to some 3,000 in 1899. See Doug Munro, "Samoan pastors in Tuvalu, 1865–1899," in *The Covenant Makers: Islander Missionaries in the Pacific*, ed. Doug Munro and Andrew Thornley, Pacific Theological College and Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva, 1996, pp. 124–57, p. 125.

¹⁶ Compared with the extraordinary racist writings about the state of women in Vanuatu, there seems to be a lack of writings on the state of women on these islands. It must be noted also that the mission on these islands was left entirely to the Samoans. The fact that there were no resident European missionaries meant that there were few writings from them.

¹⁷ John Garrett has termed the approach of the Samoans as "magisterial" and "iconoclastic" whereby forceful and dramatic measures were taken to suppress the pagan religion through the destruction of its shrines and sacred objects. Michael Goldsmith and Doug Munro however argue that in Tuvalu, despite the repressive perception of the Samoans, it was the locals themselves who were receptive to the mission. They point to religious upheavals and the outside influences of whalers and traders who arrived before the missionaries as preparing the ground for the coming of the LMS. John Garrett, *To Live Among the Stars: Christian Origins in Oceania*, World Council of Churches in association with the Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific, Geneva/Suva, 1982, p. 158; Doug Munro, "Samoan Pastors in Tuvalu, 1865–1899," pp. 124–57; "The Lagoon Islands: A History of Tuvalu, 1820–1908," Ph.D. thesis, Macquarie University, 1982, pp. 96–97; Michael Goldsmith and Doug Munro, "Conversion and church formation in Tuvalu," *Journal of Pacific History* vol. 27, no. 1 (June 1992): 44–54, pp. 45–46.

Samoa language reflects the closeness of these island languages to Samoa. Except for Kiribati, which belongs to the Micronesian linguistic group, all of the languages of Tuvalu, Niue, Tokelau and Samoa belong to the Polynesian group of languages.¹⁸ Such familiarity in languages shows how the Samoans were able to quickly communicate with local people and teach them songs in Samoan.

Likewise, there was also similarity and familiarity in culture through pre-Christian contact between Samoa and these island societies. Local oral traditions on these islands made strong references to Samoa even prior to the contact period with Europeans. A particular example of this was at Nanumea in Tuvalu where early success was witnessed in the work of Samoans. When Turner visited the island in 1874, a presentation of a *to'oto'o* or orator's staff was given by the local chief Moiono. He wrote,

Moiono ... presented me with a great curiosity. It was the "tootoo" [orator's staff] of the father of the Nanumeans. According to their traditions they are sprung from a man called Folasa, a Samoan, who was drifted away from his home and reached Nanumea. Shortly afterwards a party of Tongans who had also drifted away reached the island. Folasa married one of the Tongan woman and hence the mixed race and language. They say the present generation is the 31st from Folasa. The said "tootoo" is like ... [a] regular Samoan tulafale's [orator] tootoo, and is made of toa – a wood which does not exist on Nanumea. It is very much decayed & has been partially patched.¹⁹

¹⁸ Tuvaluan, Niuean and Tokelaun belong to the Polynesian group of languages. In Tuvalu, the inhabitants of Nui speak a mainly Kiribati dialect, while the rest of the islands, although each has a distinct dialect, they are mutually intelligible by all. Tuvaluan is historically related to Polynesian Outlier languages and is a more distant relative of Samoan and Tokelaun. However many Tuvaluans today are competent in Samoan, which functioned as the language of church and (to a lesser extent) government until recently, as well as Kiribati, the dominant language of the colony for seven decades. Similarly the languages of Tokelau and Niue are close to Samoan. The Kiribati language however, belongs to the Oceanic language which is a branch of the vast Austronesian family which includes Polynesia, Fiji, Vanuatu and others. See Jeffrey Marck, *Topics in Polynesian Language and Culture History*, Pacific Linguistics, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, ANU, Canberra, 2000; Andrew Pawley, "Polynesian languages: A subgrouping based on shared innovations in morphology," *Journal of Polynesian Society* vol. 75 (1966): 39–64; "The relationships of the Polynesian Outlier languages," *Journal of Polynesian Society* vol. 76 (1967): 259–96; Ross Clark, *Aspects of Proto-Polynesian Syntax*, Linguistic Society of New Zealand, Auckland, 1976; John Lynch, Malcolm Ross and Terry Crowley (eds), *The Oceanic Languages*, Curzon Press, Richmond, 2002. See also the major work on Polynesian comparative vocabulary, essentially a comparative dictionary: Simon J. Greenhill, Ross Clark and Bruce Biggs, *Polynesian Lexicon Project Online (POLLEX)*.

¹⁹ George Alexander Turner, "Report of a voyage through the Tokelau, Ellice, & Gilbert groups in the *John Williams* 1874," LMS, South Seas Journals, PMB MS 129 (consulted by digital copy PAMBU, ANU), p. 55.

Links between these islands were thus a common feature as visiting missionaries soon found out. On the island of Fakaofu in Tokelau, Turner was also told that the people on that island were descendants of Tuvaluans from Nanumanga who had drifted there in generations past.²⁰ Such close connections amongst these islands as well as to Samoa, meant that Samoan missionaries and their wives were received favourably. Even on the islands of Kiribati, where the language would have been different, European missionaries wrote of how quickly the Samoans settled and became fluent in the local language.²¹

Statistics collected by visiting missionaries in the 1870s shows the rapidity of conversion. A large percentage of the population were professed Christians with the majority attending churches and schools run by Samoan missionaries and their wives. Turner's visit in 1874 recorded that of a combined population of 10,760 of all the islands of Tokelau, Kiribati and Tuvalu, 687 were church members, meaning that these were people who had been admitted to receive the Holy Communion.²² These were the adult people who were now fully committed to the church. These were also people who had been thoroughly taught and trained by the Samoans for several months or years before they were recommended to the visiting missionary for acceptance. Church membership however did not include regular church attendees and children who often made up the majority of island populations.²³

Samoan missionary wives and their husbands thus entered into a missionary field that was remarkably different to the previous one in southern Vanuatu and the Loyalty Islands. Once they settled into these islands, the progress of their work was soon evident. As we have seen, the strong linguistic and genealogical connections were important factors. But there was also a willingness amongst local people to adopt the

²⁰ George Alexander Turner, "Report of a missionary voyage through the Tokelau, Ellice and Gilbert groups in the *John Williams* 1878," LMS, South Seas Journals, PMB MS 129 (consulted by digital copy PAMBU, ANU), p. 1.

²¹ At Beru, Turner wrote of how impressed he was with the fluency in the local languages of the teachers Naisili, Isaia and Luteru. One of the locals, named Tuitele, who had recently trained in Mālūa accompanied Turner on this visit. He told Turner that Naisili spoke the language most fluently. He considered Naivalika to speak it next best, and then Isaia, Samuelu and Simeona. See Turner, "Report of a missionary voyage through the Tokelau, Ellice and Gilbert groups in the *John Williams* 1878," p. 41.

²² Goldsmith and Munro, "Conversion and church formation in Tuvalu."

²³ Although missionaries often inflate their numbers, it is likely that these were correct considering the supplementary accounts of people's enthusiasm and attendance.

new religion due to the beneficence of the new God, and emancipation from their old religion. The success of the Samoans was also witnessed by visiting missionaries and other European observers by the increasing number of those admitted into the Church, the enthusiastic attendance of local people in education as well as the appearances of the people and the physical transformation on these islands.

Signs of conversion

During their annual visits in the 1870s, European missionaries in their journals reported on the transformation that they were witnessing. George Turner during his visit in 1874 reported on the progress made by the Samoans. In Tuvalu, one of the most impressive early stations was on the island of Nanumea where Tapu and Tuilona and their wives had been labouring. Turner reported that the last group of “heathens” on that island had just been converted. He wrote,

In the month of May last the principal idols were destroyed by the teachers and over 200 skulls (formerly worshipped) were buried.... All heathen customs have been given up. Schools are held morning and afternoon at which men, women and children attend.²⁴

He wrote that when they arrived on the island they

were met on the beach by a large crowd of natives, – men, women, and children. The majority of them were clothed, and all looking very friendly and good natured. It was more like a Samoan concourse of people than anything I had seen on any of these islands. All were eager to have a shake of the hand and give a friendly grin.²⁵

Turner’s encounter with the local children caused him emotions of awe and joy as he wrote,

By-and-by the children’s pleasure seemed to culminate in their joining in what made me start with mingled feelings of surprise and joy, – the well-known strains of “Le Alii e, lou alii, Le ua pele ia te au.” [Lord, my Lord, Whom who is precious to me]. It was

²⁴ Turner, “Report of a voyage through the Tokelau, Ellice, & Gilbert groups in the *John Williams* 1874,” p. 50.

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 53–54.

impossible to listen without one's heart being filled with gratitude to God for the wonders He has wrought here, as in all these islands.²⁶

Turner's report on Nanumea reflects the positive progress made by the Samoans. The last group of "heathens" on that island had relinquished their worship of ancestral gods with the destruction of idols. The friendly encounter with local Christians who were clothed and looking like a "Samoan concourse," suggests how locals had enthusiastically taken to the new religion. Turner's emotions of surprise and joy when he heard the local children joyfully singing a Samoan Christian song, shows how the Samoans had effectively used music in evangelisation. The ethnomusicologist Michael Webb argues that music and musical performances in evangelisation elicit affective responses which amplified the emotive appeal of conversion, and this is clearly apparent in the case of the Samoans' work on Nanumea.²⁷

We also see from Turner's account the progress of schools with classes twice a day in the morning and afternoon for men, women and children. Success in these schools was witnessed by the increasing number of candidates for church membership and some offering to be trained in Mālūa. At Nukufetau where Sapolu and his wife Karalina were working, Turner examined forty-nine candidates for church membership and one candidate for entrance to Mālūa. He wrote that, "I was very much pleased altogether with the way in which I found the work on this island and think that great credit is due to Sapolu."²⁸ The willingness of local people for Christian education was further witnessed by Turner on the island of Arorae in Kiribati, where Navailika and his wife were stationed. Turner wrote that around the house of Navailika were "the houses of natives who desire to be educated by him."²⁹

The literature provided by missionaries at this time and sold by the Samoans shows the lessons that they were teaching. These included *Le Auauna* (The Servant), *Tala I Tagata* (Stories about People), *Uiga Mataio* (Meaning of Mathew), *Uiga Eperu*

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Michael Webb, "'Daughters of song,' spaces and sacred sentiment and the transmission of hymnody in the early Christianisation of Melanesia," presented at the Paradoxes of Domesticity: Christian Missionaries and Women in Asia and the Pacific Conference, The Australian National University, 8–10 August 2012.

²⁸ Turner, "Report of a voyage through the Tokelau, Ellice, & Gilbert groups in the *John Williams* 1874," pp. 23–25.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 30.

(Meaning of Hebrew) and *Fesili* (Questions). The books written in Samoan, ranged in subject from good Christian living to summaries of the Gospel message as well as accounts of well-known Biblical characters. Some of the other books like *Fesili* (Questions)—a book that is still used in Pastoral Schools in Samoa today—deals with basic questions about Biblical and theological knowledge.³⁰ But the Samoans also introduced a range of other subjects. Ioane who was working at Vaitupu ordered, as well as religious books, “20 of the 2nd school sheet, 20 Kings’ school Book, 30 Arithmetics, 100 weights and measures and 100 Mull: Tablesheets; Multiplication table.”³¹ Basic arithmetic and science were thus part of the school curriculum and Samoan missionaries and their wives who were quite proficient due to their training in Mālūa, taught these lessons to children as well as adult students. Local people were also introduced to geography, philosophy and history. Hymn books were a common feature in the provisions left by missionaries and Samoan missionaries and their wives taught these hymns as well as other Christian songs that were popular amongst children. As we have observed, locals were introduced to an astonishing and varied collection of facts, through the media of both reading books and oral performance in sermons and songs.

Turner’s visit in 1874 shows the progress made in the evangelisation of these islands but he was also noticing the increasing material and visible influence of the Samoans. The majority of people were clothed and this shows the influence of Samoan wives. Several of the items left for the provisions of the Samoans included “thread and sewing material,” which Samoan missionary wives used in their sewing and domestic classes for women and girls. While the influence of wives was seen in clothing, their husbands were seen as great builders of mission houses. Turner for example described the house of Navailika and his wife at Arorae as a “comfortable home ... enclosed with wooden palings.”³²

Several years later in 1878, Turner visited again and was further impressed by the progress of the mission. On the island of Tamana in Kiribati, Turner wrote that the

³⁰ This is the *Tusi Fesili* or Book of Questions, used for Pastoral Schools. The answers which are also given are supposed to be memorised by children and then tested in an oral examination.

³¹ Turner, “Report of a voyage through the Tokelau, Ellice, & Gilbert groups in the *John Williams* 1874,” p. 23.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 30.

people were “respectfully dressed.” There he met with the teacher Samuelu and his wife and on Sunday he saw with great satisfaction the “children were all assembling in their Sunday best for the school exam: which they anticipated.”³³ Turner credited Samuelu’s persistence and industry and wrote about the great contrast to when he last visited four years earlier.³⁴ The appearance of local people and school children “respectfully dressed” and in their “Sunday best” however was due to the influence of Samuelu’s wife.

Turner also wrote about the tidy and neat state of the villages. This was despite the devastating impact of famines reported there during the 1870s. At Arorae where Naivalika and his wife were working and now joined by Esekielu and his wife, Turner wrote,

I fancy the principal credit for the clean neat state of the villages belongs to Naivalika, but the people seem to be apt pupils for it would be impossible to find cleaner villages anywhere. Naivalika’s house too with its surroundings do both him and the people great credit. What a change has come over this community during the four years since last I visited – then only a band of abt. 30 had gathered round Naivalika to listen to his teachings – now the whole population of 468 are well dressed and professing Christians.³⁵

Turner was once again impressed with the work of Navailika and credited him for the progress of the mission. However we must also take note of the influence of Samoan wives not only in the appearances of people, but also in the clean state of villages. Although Turner credited Navailika, it was undoubtedly his wife and local women who were largely responsible for the clean state of the villages. Caroline David noted this on Funafuti when she wrote,

The paths and spaces were tidily kept and I found afterwards that every Saturday the women swept and burned all the leaves and rubbish that had accumulated round the huts during the week. Each woman kept her own doorstep clean, “so to speak.”³⁶

³³ Ibid., p. 34.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 36.

³⁶ David, *Funafuti or Three Months on a Coral Island*, p. 13.

Lessons on health and sanitation were taught to the wives of students at Mālūa, and Samoan missionary wives instilled these values into local women. Moreover, Samoan wives in their traditional role in Samoa of maintaining the cleanliness and tidiness of their villages would have urged this on local women.

Turner also remarked on the continuing progress of the mission. On the island of Nanumanga, the other Samoan missionary by the name of Ioane reported to him that “the people were anxious for Bibles.”³⁷ That in the previous year “all the remainder of the population renounced heathenism publicly” and the “people do not look as if they had just received Christianity – they had advanced very rapidly.”³⁸ This enthusiasm was also noticed on the island of Vaitupu where another Ioane and his wife were labouring. There Turner recorded one of the largest schools with ninety-six enrolled children.³⁹

As we have seen with the setting up of mission stations by Samoans in southern Vanuatu and particularly on the Loyalty Islands, similar developments were now seen on these island groups. Turner reported that on Nanumanga, “A large commodious chapel built on the site of their old ‘malae’ is a great credit to them.”⁴⁰ At Nui, the teacher Kirisome was even constructing an additional house which was built and ready for plastering. He told the missionary that he had built it with the help of his school “lads.” It was to “*tali malo*,” to host guests in.⁴¹

Such impressions of the state of these islands were not confined to visiting missionaries. By the 1880s, mission stations and churches became the marvel of visiting Europeans. In 1883, the Judicial Commissioner J.R. Le Hunte on board the H.M.S. *Espiegle* wrote about the prominent buildings. At Funafuti he reported that there was a “remarkably fine Church here, and a resident Samoan Minister – as usual the most important person on the island.”⁴² On the island of Vaitupu he wrote, “There

³⁷ Turner, “Report of a missionary voyage through the Tokelau, Ellice and Gilbert groups in the *John Williams* 1878,” p. 32.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* p. 31.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁴² J.R. Le Hunte, “Report of Cruise in HMS *Espiegle*, Sydney 10th October, 1883.” Records of the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, Series 4, Inwards Correspondence—General 159/1883, 1875–1937. Public Records Office, London (consulted on microfilm at the National Library of Australia, Canberra).

is only one village, a large one with another very large Church. We visited the “King” and the resident Minister (of the London Mission), a very dignified intelligent Samoan. An elderly man with courteous address.”⁴³

He also wrote about the cleanliness of the islands in Kiribati where the villages

were remarkably well kept, a fine broad road connecting them planted the whole way along with young jack fruit and other useful trees. This, as well as several other improvements, is due to the energetic influence of the resident Samoan minister (Samuela) a pleasant intelligent man.⁴⁴

In 1884, the British colonial agent and naturalist Charles Morris Woodford also visited and remarked on the impressive scenery.⁴⁵ At Nukufetau he wrote that

besides the huts there was a church, a school & a house for the Samoan Missionary built of coral & lime. The Missionary’s house is the largest, about twenty yards long, with a verandah. The church and school is a little smaller. All three thatched with screw pine. These three buildings occupy the centre of the square and the huts from both sides.⁴⁶

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Charles Woodford worked for the British colonial government of Fiji in the early 1880s. Later civil administration was set up along the lines of the Gilbert Islands and Ellice Islands, starting in the Florida Islands, which were divided into five small districts, each under a chief responsible to Woodford. Woodford’s resources were limited and for major assistance he had to rely on ships sent by the Royal Navy. Much of the interest in capital investment that Woodford sought was diverted to Banaba Island, when its rich phosphate was discovered in 1900. In 1896, he became Resident Commissioner of the Solomon Islands Protectorate, serving from 1896 until 1915. In his book, *A Naturalist Among the Head-Hunters*, he noted that cannibalism and killing had become common, and deplored the lawlessness. He also helped in the development of commercial interest in the Solomons particularly German large-scale coconut agriculture. Woodford was worried that the Melanesians were a dying race, so he supported a plan to import labourers from India but this was refused by the India Office. Woodford left the islands in 1914, and by that time the islands were largely pacified, and head-hunting had declined. See Austen Coates, *Western Pacific Islands*, Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, London, 1970, pp. 225–26; W.J. Tennent, “Charles Morris Woodford C.M.G., 1852–1927: Pacific adventurer and forgotten Solomon Islands naturalist,” *Archives of Natural History* vol. 26, no. 3 (1992): 419–32; Jane Kent, *The Solomon Islands*, Wren, Melbourne, 1972, p. 105. See also David Russell Lawrence, *The Naturalist and his ‘Beautiful Islands’: Charles Morris Woodford in the Western Pacific*, ANU Press, Canberra, 2014; Katerina Martina Teaiwa, *Consuming Ocean Island: Stories of People and Phosphate from Banaba*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2015.

⁴⁶ He also added that “The appearance is not pleasing, as every tree has been cleared away so that there is not an atom of shade, and the glare from the bare flat coral sand is rather painful to the eyes.” See Woodford, “Journal of a voyage from Suva, Fiji, to the Gilbert group and back.”

Upon observing the people's houses he wrote that he "was surprised to see in nearly every house one or two books and generally a slate. The books were the Bible in Samoan and an English and Samoan Dictionary."⁴⁷ He also noted that the Samoans were teaching the skills of building European houses to local men. "We found amongst other things at his place a good saw-pit and workshops where he is training some of the natives in practical carpentering and housebuilding; an example which one cannot help wishing was followed generally elsewhere."⁴⁸

The physical presence of large churches and mission houses evince the progress the Samoans were having among local communities. The building of mission houses and the use of limestone shows how they had mastered such techniques in the building of European houses. The teaching of carpentry skills in workshops to local men was a sign of how these Samoan men had taken on these European techniques, skills that they had learned in Mālūa.⁴⁹ This was great news for the LMS and a positive sign for the deployment of the Samoans and as Turner suggested, would do the people "great credit."

But we also see from the materiality of conversion, a suggestive shift in the way that the Samoans were now carrying out their mission, adopting more and more a European lifestyle, living in European-designed limestone houses with open verandahs and wooden palings. It is possible that the Samoans saw the building of such European houses as instilling European civilisation in local people. Samoan missionaries and their wives knew from Mālūa the preference of white missionaries and their wives for European architecture which was seen as a more civilised way of living.⁵⁰ They were also encouraged to adopt such a lifestyle and to serve as exemplars to local people.

It could also mean that the Samoans thought that it was a way to show their status as being the most "important" people on these islands. As we have seen, mission houses were not only the most prominent buildings on these islands, they were also the central feature. The fact that there were no resident English missionaries, might mean

⁴⁷ Woodford, "Journal of a voyage from Suva, Fiji, to the Gilbert group and back."

⁴⁸ Le Hunte, "Report of cruise in HMS *Espiegle*, Sydney 10th October, 1883."

⁴⁹ See Latu Latai, "From open *fale* to mission houses: Negotiating the boundaries of domesticity in Samoa," in *Divine Domesticities: Paradoxes of Christian Modernities in Asia and the Pacific*, ed. Hyaeweol Choi and Margaret Jolly, Canberra, ANU Press, 2014, pp. 299–324.

⁵⁰ Ibid. See also Chapters 1 and 2 of this thesis.

that the Samoans most likely saw themselves as equivalent to their white counterparts. We must take note that at this stage, Samoan pastors have been ordained after much pressure from them. It could also mean that as the Samoans were increasingly hosts to missionaries and foreign visitors on these islands, the building of such houses as well as “guest houses” were therefore for practical reasons while at the same time impressing their superiors.

However, missionary accounts also show the continual importation of coconut sinnet from Samoa which means that there was still an interaction of Samoan and introduced carpentry as well as the use of local materials and design in the construction of buildings. Moreover, not every Samoan couple lived in European-style houses. A picture taken by Mrs. David of the house of Fa’ataape and her husband Simona on Funafuti suggests that some Samoans still preferred to live in houses that were largely made of local materials and shows a mixture of Samoan and local design. Interestingly, according to Mrs. David, the house was the best on Funafuti.⁵¹

Hence although the Samoans built European style houses, it was most likely that many still preferred to live in houses with a mix of Samoan and local design. Moreover, the Samoans did not entirely encourage the construction of European houses by local people. Caroline David wrote that on Funafuti,

The native teachers have not introduced partitioned houses, but the married people and the young children usually sleep in the hut; the boys sleep (in very noisy parties too) on the rocks on the windward side of the island, where they get plenty of fresh air, few mosquitoes, and sundry sudden showers. Many of the unmarried girls sleep in one of the mission buildings, which is given up to their use, the others sleep in the huts of old widows.⁵²

⁵¹ This relationship was also seen in the manner in which the Samoans lived. The Samoans saw themselves as *feagaiga* or covenants, as they were regarded in Samoa and when they moved into these islands they carried with them the same expectations and in many cases transposed them onto local populations.

⁵² David, *Funafuti or Three Months on a Coral Island*, p. 194.



THE NATIVE PASTOR'S HUT.
(The best leaf hut in Funafuti.)

Figure 47. *Faatape and Simona's house on Funafuti. Taken from Caroline David, Funafuti or Three Months on a Coral Island, 1899, p. 26.*

Such accounts show that not all Samoans encouraged completely European forms of architecture for local people, and that the openness of local houses continued. Moreover, European ideas about the family were not always enforced, and as we have seen in Samoa, indigenous ideas about family and communal living continued to persist not only with open houses but with family and communal sleeping arrangements.⁵³ The reference to unmarried girls sleeping in one of the mission buildings and the boys on the windward side of the island however, shows how the Samoans were instilling restrictions based on Christian ideas about sexuality.

In the materiality of conversion on these islands, we also see how it portrays the gendered division in the work of Samoan missionaries and their wives; the husbands dealing with the more physical work of building, while the wives were focusing on domestic skills of introducing clothing and sanitation to the villages. Visiting missionaries and colonial agents often attributed the picturesque state of these islands on Samoan missionaries, but as we have learned, it was the influence of Samoan wives and local women that led to such a state of cleanliness. It must be noted that gender roles on these islands were similar to Samoa. In Tuvalu, there was a general gender-

⁵³ See Latai, "From open *fale* to mission houses"; see also Chapters 1 and 2 of this thesis.

based division of labour, more marked in ideology than in practice. Men engaged in open sea and lagoon fishing from canoes as well as the gathering of coconuts and palm toddy and the more strenuous forms of cultivation. Women shared the activity of reef fishing and collecting and took responsibility for weaving and infant care, as well as harvesting some crops and preparing food. As in Samoa, men did the hard physical labour while women were assigned less strenuous work which included work around the homes. Samoan wives were thus able to instill these gender roles in local women, partly because local women were familiar with them because there were similarities in gender roles between Samoa and these groups of islands.

Overall, Samoan missionary wives seemed to have settled well into the new mission field with their husbands. Once they had converted local populations, they managed to rapidly gain success with the introduction of Christian education and in the building of mission stations. Wives contributed largely to the education of children and women as well as the introduction of clothing in their domestic classes. Such visible signs of conversion were seen in the appearances of local people, in the enthused singing of Christian songs, but also in the physical transformation with the prominent presence of large mission stations. However, celebrations of such success by visiting missionaries and foreign observers were soon replaced by criticisms of the Samoans' dominant presence, with allegations about their strict moral discipline and domineering attitude.

Laws on the Sabbath, clothing and dancing

The increasing presence of foreign visitors in the form of scientists, traders and colonial agents led to rising commentaries about the work of the Samoans. Soon the tone of European observers' accounts changed from positive assessment to harsh criticism and condemnation of how the Samoans were influencing and asserting their authority over local people. In 1883 at Nukulaelae Le Hunte reported that in Tuvalu, "The Ellice islanders may be described as perfectly quiet and inoffensive, their religious authorities appear to me to be excessively strict in the ordinances which they impose on them."⁵⁴

One of the early laws that was quickly enforced was the observance of the Sabbath. The extent of this law was witnessed by Le Hunte upon arrival at Arorae in Kiribati

⁵⁴ Le Hunte, "Report of Cruise in HMS *Espiegle*, Sydney 10th October, 1883."

where he wrote that, "Being Sunday the strict rules as the Sabbath keeping did not permit any canoes to come off to us."⁵⁵ Sunday was thus strictly forbidden for any type of work including collecting foreign visitors. As Mrs. David observed,

The natives never did anything on Sunday but eat, sleep, and go to church or prayer meeting. After each spiritual exercise they stretched themselves out with a sigh of relief on the floor of anyone's hut, ate what they could get, and plenty of it, in that position, and slept soundly until the church drum woke them again for another service.⁵⁶

Local people were thus obliged to observe such laws but increasingly resident traders were beginning to feel the impact on their trade, causing much resentment of the Samoans and their influence. According to Le Hunte, a Scottish trader, Mr. McKenzie, complained about being subjected "to their Sabbath-keeping regulations, and [they] would not permit him the use of a canoe to go on board any vessel that might call there on Sunday."⁵⁷ Traders were thus finding the laws of Sabbath observance intimidating and mainly blamed the Samoans. According to Le Hunte, "We found the traders, generally throughout these islands, on good terms with the natives, but in many cases, for various reasons, on sad ones with the Missionary teachers."⁵⁸

Turner reported that such laws were discouraged by the missionaries in the past but that the local people and the Samoans continued to support them. Turner wrote,

They still fine people for non-attendance at church on Sundays and on the week-day afternoons when they have service, and not only so but attempt to fine the heathen party for breaking the Sabbath. In one instance this was done, the party fined refused to pay, the police went to collect it, and a quarrel ensued in which one of the police was stabbed by one of the heathen party. This has been the cause of a great deal of bad feeling and I understand the heathen party[s] purpose leaving the island altogether and going to Gilbert Islands.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ David, *Funafuti or Three Months on a Coral Island*, p. 29.

⁵⁷ Le Hunte, "Report of Cruise in HMS *Espiegle*, Sydney 10th October, 1883."

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Turner, "Report of a missionary voyage through the Tokelau, Ellice and Gilbert groups in the *John Williams* 1878," p. 57.

Turner's report shows the extent of such laws, which included strict observance of the Sabbath and compulsory attendance at church services. These laws were heavily policed and with offenders fined, including those who had not been converted. But we should also note that although it was the Samoans who introduced these laws, it was the local people who willingly enforced them. At this stage the *kaupule* or the council of chiefly authority was already responsible for the overseeing of these laws and, as Turner noted, in policing them.⁶⁰

Like their husbands' influence on Sabbath laws, Samoan missionary wives were also increasingly criticised for their influence on clothing. Samoan missionary wives in their sewing classes taught women how to sew simple clothing like *tiputa*, an invention that began in Tahiti and was introduced in Samoa by the wives of Tahitian missionaries.⁶¹ This was often worn by women together with *lavalava* or a simple wrap worn by both men and women. Clothing was one of the first things that European missionaries in Samoa stressed to the Samoans, and Samoan missionary wives promoted this as one of the primary signs of being a civilised Christian.⁶² This they carried out not only by introducing the skills of dress-making but in how they dressed themselves, serving as exemplars of Christian womanhood. As we have seen, visiting missionaries often judged the progress of the missions by the appearance of the local people and Samoan wives were quite successful in that role.

Such embodiments however were not always seen as conforming to the standards and expectations of visiting Europeans. In 1899, Mrs. David ridiculed the appearance of Fa'ataape when attending a church service at Funafuti. She wrote,

The native pastor's wife set the example of covering by wearing a muslin Samoan gown down to her bare ankles, and managed to balance on a fuzzy knob of black hair a very perky-looking sailor-hat, decorated with the ghastly wreck of a common artificial flower. This lady, with her two youngest children, was honoured by having a seat on a mat on the floor inside the platform rails, and just outside our pew. At first I approved

⁶⁰ The missionaries also use the Samoan term *faipule* which means chiefly authority.

⁶¹ Nicholas Thomas suggests that the *tiputa* or poncho was introduced to Samoa by Tahitian teachers and their wives and somehow they managed to get the Samoans to adopt it and that from the early 1830s to the 1860s, or perhaps later, they were made and worn by Samoans, Niueans and possibly Tongans. See Nicholas Thomas, "The case of the misplaced poncho: Speculations concerning the history of cloth in Polynesian," in *Clothing the Pacific*, ed. Chloë Colchester, Berg, Oxford, 2003, pp. 79–96.

⁶² Latai, "From open *fale* to mission houses"; see also Chapters 1 and 2 of this thesis.

of the Samoan gown as being decent, but when I was obliged to observe that the lady kept it open from neck to waist, so as to nurse her infant with more ease and comfort, I concluded that a native petticoat would have been quite as serviceable, and much cheaper and more picturesque.⁶³

The influence of Fa'ataape however was seen in how the rest of the women in the congregation dressed. Caroline David continued poking further fun at their appearance as she wrote,

A few of them wore Samoan gowns made of printed calico of most diabolical patterns and colours; most of them wore lava-lavas made of gaudy handkerchiefs knotted round the waist and reaching to the knees; and all had some kind of upper garment, which usually did not effect the purpose for which it was worn, if that purpose were concealment. These upper garments were varied, but all brilliant except two, and they were undoubted chemises, worn outside with ill-concealed pride. The commonest bust-cloth was a kind of *tiputa* (tippet) like two pocket handkerchiefs, one for the chest and one for the back, just fastened together on the shoulders; the fashion was to adorn these pieces of rag with patches of all shapes and colours obtainable. And to edge them with frayed strips of rag in imitation of fringe. The favourite colours were red, white, and blue, and the general effect that of bronze statues carelessly draped with Union Jacks. All this war of unblendable colours would not have spoiled the appearance of the girls, for they can stand plenty of colour; but it was the hats that were so cruel.⁶⁴

Mrs. David's criticism thus extended to women wearing hats during Sunday services. She wrote,

Just imagine, if you can, a small Tyrolese hat perched rakishly on a huge fluffy mass of black hair, and held in place by two frayed strings of soiled white calico; the hat itself covered with scraps of red, white, blue, pink or yellow print – a veritable crazy hat, occasionally ornaments with a tarnished brass button, a draggled feather, a dirty artificial flower, or streamers of red and blue worsted braid, and sometimes all of these together! I brought one of these hats away with me, and had successfully established a new fashion in hats before leaving the island.⁶⁵

⁶³ David, *Funafuti or Three Months on a Coral Island*, p. 23.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 24.

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 24–25.

Mrs. David's criticisms not only targeted the "ghastly" appearance of such clothing and hats but also the logic of wearing them at all. She wrote,

Why should women be made to wear hats in church? They never wear them anywhere else, and if it rains on Sunday always run across to church with their precious hats carefully tucked under their tiputas, and put them on just inside the church door. If women don't need hats as a protection from the sun or rain, if they don't wear them as ornaments or to keep their heads warm, in the name of all that's sensible, why should they wear them at all? Just by way of slavish obedience to an ancient oriental custom! Tapa! As they say in Funafuti. It took us all sermon time to recover from the shock those hats had given us.⁶⁶

Mrs. David's comments are not just racist mockery about clothing but of the lack of common sense and logic in the Christian influence of the Samoans. But here we see the extraordinary paradox of Europeans promoting new clothes but then satirising them. This can be seen in relation to Homi Bhabha's ideas of mimesis, or what he has termed as "colonial mimicry." He says that colonial mimicry comes from the colonist's desire for a reformed, recognisable other, as a subject of a difference that is, as Bhabha writes, "almost the same, but not quite."⁶⁷ Such mimesis shows the racist views of colonial agents. Mrs. David, a scientist's wife who saw herself as the epitome of the correct way in which European fashion must be adorned, scorned the way Fa'ataape and local women on Funafuti dressed. Her logic about the wearing of hats was racist as likely she would not apply such satiric strictures to European women. There were no European missionary wives on these islands, and so we do not hear from them. However, similar satire from white missionary women is found in other places like Vanuatu, Hawai'i and in Samoa where an extraordinary arch superiority permeates their accounts.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 25.

⁶⁷ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, Routledge, London, 1994.

⁶⁸ See Margaret Jolly, "A saturated history of Christianity and cloth in Oceania," in *Divine Domesticities: Paradoxes of Christian Modernities in Asia and the Pacific*, ed. Choi and Jolly, pp. 429–54; To save the girls for brighter and better lives," *The Journal of Pacific History* vol. 26, no. 1 (1991): 27–48; Patricia Grimshaw, "New England missionary wives, Hawaiian women and the 'cult of true womanhood'," *Hawaiian Journal of History* vol. 19 (1985): 71–100; *Paths of Duty: American Missionary Wives in Nineteenth-Century Hawai'i*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1989; Phyllis Herda, "Hybrid identities and the transference of Hawaiian quilt," in *Hybrid Textiles: Pragmatic Creativity and Authentic Innovation in Pacific Cloth, Pacific Arts*, ed. Ping Ann Addo, Heather Young Leslie and Phyllis Herda, special Issue of *Pacific Arts Journal* in honour of Jehanne Teilhet-Fisk, n.s., vols 3–7 (2007): 37–45; Serge

Mrs. David's criticism of and sarcasm about Fa'ataape and local women was common amongst foreigners who visited islands in this region. Their influence in covering up local people, was seen as illogical, even diabolical and the manner in which they dressed themselves was often mocked. In 1893, at Nikunau the Resident Commissioner who visited the island and attended the church wrote that the 150 people who attended were "all badly or scantily dressed. Women all wore ridiculous bonnets decked out with paper and ribbons of the most gaudy colours."⁶⁹

The theme of narrow-minded bigotry, overbearing oppression and a nostalgia for a world that never was was voiced by another visiting scientist on Funafuti. He viewed the scene with utter dismay:

The population seems absolutely in the hands of the native missionaries of the London Missionary Society which rule them with a rod of iron, fine them on all possible occasions. Why they stand it I can't see—compel them to wear clothes from which they get skin diseases, consumption, and the children all dying! Yesterday was Sunday, and women all come out in mother hubbards, bonnets and hats! You never saw such guys and they went to church five times! Today they gave again cast off their fine clothes and gone back to a more scanty rig. It's a pity there can't be more common sense infused into this religious cant. As it is now, its sheer cruelty and enforcing of arbitrary rules against health and decency as the people understand it.⁷⁰

Agassiz's comments reflect how Europeans often saw the influence of the Samoans but he also went further, claiming that clothing was a factor in causing diseases, death and depopulation.

The influence of Samoan wives in introducing new clothes however shows what they felt was appropriate dress. Clothing had become a symbol of being a Christian in

Tcherkézoff, "'On cloth, gifts and nudity' regarding some European misunderstandings during early encounters in Polynesia," in *Clothing the Pacific*, ed. Colchester, pp. 51–75.

⁶⁹ Resident Commissioner to High Commissioner, "Report on Gilberts: 1893," 21 December 1893. Records of the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, Series 22, Inwards Correspondence—General 159/1883, 1875–1937. Public Records Office, London. Kiribati and Tuvalu known then as Gilbert and Ellice Islands were administered as a British protectorate from 1892–1916 as part of the British Western Pacific Territories, and from 1916–1974 as part of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands colony. The High Commissioner resided in Fiji while the Resident Commissioner Charles Swayne was appointed in Kiribati in 1892 and 1893.

⁷⁰ Agassiz, G.R. (ed.), *Letters and Recollections of Alexander Agassiz*, London, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913, p. 368.

Samoa, a way of showing reverence to the new God.⁷¹ It was not seen as something that people used for only practical purposes as Mrs. David was so adamant should be the rationale. Caroline David and Agassiz themselves observed this when, as soon as Sunday was over, people would revert to their more comfortable traditional attire during the week.⁷² But here we see the way that Europeans and Pacific islanders differed in their perceptions of clothing. Clothing as we have seen, was viewed by Europeans as a key marker of conversion and sign of the acceptance of European civilisation, yet Europeans themselves mocked islanders when such clothing were not up to their standards. However, the way in which foreign clothing was perceived and incorporated by islanders did not necessarily reflect European ideas, but involved as Susanne Küchler suggests, “the investment of indigenous preoccupations into the new materials.”⁷³ Most contemporary scholars such as Küchler, Margaret Jolly, Chloë Colchester, Nicholas Thomas and others argue that the adoption of introduced cloth and clothing was not simply a colonial imposition by foreign missionaries on passive Oceanic peoples, or a repressive disciplining of the savage bodies of heathens.⁷⁴ On the contrary, clothing was eagerly adopted and these new clothes were not just icons of Christian conversion and signs of a new sexual culture of modesty but worn as objects of beauty, dignity and power in an embrace of modernity.⁷⁵ Nicholas Thomas,

⁷¹ See Ruta Sinclair, “Samoans in Papua,” in *Polynesian Missions in Melanesia: from Samoa, Cook Islands and Tonga to Papua and New Caledonia*, ed. Ron Crocombe and Marjorie Crocombe, Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1982, pp. 17–36. See also Webb Keane on a particularly Christian sense of the indexicality of signs, between the outer surface of the body and the inner moral state of the person. Webb Keane, “The hazards of new clothes: What signs make possible,” in *The Art of Clothing: A Pacific Experience*, ed. Susanne Küchler and Graeme Were, University College of London Press, London, 2005, pp. 1–16; Anna-Karina Hermkens, “The materiality of missionisation in Collingwood Bay, Papua New Guinea,” in *Divine Domesticities: Paradoxes of Christian Modernities in Asia and the Pacific*, ed. Choi and Jolly, pp. 397–428.

⁷² David, *Funafuti or Three Months on a Coral Island*, p.25.

⁷³ Susanne Küchler, “Preface,” in *Clothing the Pacific*, ed. Colchester, p. xi.

⁷⁴ Jolly, “A saturated history of Christianity and cloth in Oceania”; “Matisse between North Africa and Oceania: Orientalism, modernism and métissage,” (being revised for journal submission); Chloë Colchester (ed.), *Clothing the Pacific*; Susanne Küchler and Graeme Were (eds), *The Art of Clothing: A Pacific Experience*, University College London Press, London, 2005; Richard Eves, “Colonialism, corporeality and character: Methodist missions and the refashioning of bodies in the Pacific,” *History and Anthropology* vol. 10, no. 1 (1996): 85–138; Jennifer Newell, *Trading Nature: Tahitians, Europeans and Ecological Exchange*, University of Hawai‘i Press, Honolulu, 2011.

⁷⁵ Margaret Jolly has highlighted the fervent desire for foreign fabrics which can be seen on early exploratory voyages; for example during Cook’s three voyages (1768–1779). She writes,

Oceanic peoples from Tahiti to Vanuatu enthusiastically exchanged food and artefacts for soft sheets and crimson comforters, fabrics of lustrous beauty and sensuous efficacy and emblems of mana or divine power. The imbrication of the material and spiritual potency of the foreigners

for example, has argued that clothes were much more than mere markers of identity, but a kind of technology toward a new way of being in the world. He argues that in Samoa, introduced clothing when adopted by Samoans, was seen as some kind of transmission of the sanctity that Samoans used to associate with the use of tapa.⁷⁶ As we have seen, the Samoans were quite taken by the new religion, and clothing was seen as a way to embrace the divine powers and wealth of the new God. Similarly on these islands, clothing could be understood in a similar way. Munro argues that one of the reasons why the Tuvaluans were so compliant with the influence of the Samoans was because they sought access to the beneficence of a more powerful God through the correct forms of worship and behaviour.⁷⁷ Correct forms of worship and behaviour in their case included the wearing of clothes.

This was similar to the idea behind the observance of the Sabbath where it was strictly taboo for worshipping the new God. As noted by Mrs. David, the fact that Sunday was forbidden for any activity meant that Saturday became a day crammed with activities where everything was done in preparation for the most sacred of days. She wrote, “I never saw a native cook, bathe, or do any work, except dress himself and eat, on a Sunday; all washing of their bodies and clothes, and all cooking was done on a Saturday.”⁷⁸

Moreover she wrote,

There is always a large amount to be done on Saturdays, because the natives eat more on Sundays and go in for a large number of services, so that Monday is a sort of

was perhaps even more obvious in the early stages of Christian conversion. Converts eagerly appropriated, wore and fashioned this new cloth as a sign of their adherence to this new God whose power eclipsed that of ancestral spirits and indigenous deities. Indigenous alacrity for introduced cloth is pervasive across Oceania attested not just in the fabrication of modest, modern clothing (such as the “mother Hubbard” island dress) but in innovative and creative textile arts such as the *tivaevae/tifaifai* of the Cook Islands and Tahiti and Hawaiian quilt. See Jolly, “A saturated history of Christianity and cloth in Oceania,” p. 432.

⁷⁶ Nicholas Thomas argues that the Samoans saw the strength and superiority of Christian people with their ships and full dress. This indicated broadly that the fully dressed body was an empowered body. And he argues that the power of that body was conferred by tapa wrapping by some kind of transmission of the sanctity that otherwise inhered in the use of tapa in more special ritual contexts. If Samoans were transforming themselves, to some extent at the instigation of foreigners, they were also effecting a shift that was internal to Samoan culture and material culture. See Nicholas Thomas, “The case of the misplaced poncho,” pp. 91–94. See also Serge Tcherkézoff, “On cloth, gifts and nudity’ regarding some European misunderstandings during early encounters in Polynesia.”

⁷⁷ Munro, “Samoan pastors in Tuvalu, 1865–1899,” p. 128.

⁷⁸ David, *Funafuti or Three Months on a Coral Island*, p. 200.

holiday after the spiritual exertions of the preceding day, and thus food is required for forty-eight hours.⁷⁹

On Saturday morning men and women would collect the food, old cocoa-nuts and all the food preparations needed. In preparation for the Sabbath the whole village was cleaned and tidied. The cleanliness and tidiness of these islands as we have seen was something that was much admired by visiting foreigners. This was partly due to such strict observance for the Sabbath. Clothing and the observance of the Sabbath therefore should be seen in the way that they reflect how islanders perceived their new found God.

Foreign observers like Mrs. David however did not confine their criticisms to religious laws but also lamented the impact of the Samoans on local songs and dance. As we have seen, song was one of the main methods that Samoans used in evangelisation and in Christian education. This method was effective as it suited local people's love of singing and dancing. But these songs were also an attempt to discourage local songs and dance forms that were considered inappropriate to new Christian morals. Although local melodies were maintained, the content and the accompanying actions were considerably transformed, a sort of taming of what was considered the "savage" nature of traditional songs and dance. Mrs. David noted for example that such restrictions also led to the ban on wearing natural flowers in church or school. During a night of dance and songs prepared by the people of Funafuti in their honour, she noticed that the local youth were forbidden to dance on their feet, and much to her displeasure she wrote, "Sitting down, and swaying the body and arms, is not our idea of dancing.... These puritanical restrictions puzzled me."⁸⁰ She also described Fa'ataape's husband's fury when, she later stood up and did a Highland Schottische dance. She wrote, "But the Samoan pastor's face was a study! He was simply furious, and would have liked to send me off to the lock-up then and there for daring to dance on my feet."⁸¹

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 205.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 67.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 70.

We cannot be certain as to the truth in the banning of stand-up dancing, as these dances continued both in Samoa and throughout these islands.⁸² But, as we have seen, with the use of local melodies and composition in the songs taught by the Samoans, there was rather a *mutual* exchange in music and musical performances on these islands. Webb argues that music and musical performances was a space of a more egalitarian and mutual cultural exchange in the process of evangelisation.⁸³ Although Webb focuses on musical exchanges between European missionaries and islanders in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, here we see another example of mutual exchange between Samoans and islanders who had a much more close linguistic and genealogical connection. Kalissa Alexeyeff in her study of dance in the Cook Islands, also argues that despite the oppressive nature of the missionaries on local dances, she sees Cook Islands dance “both as possessing continuity with past practices and as reflecting disjunctures produced by European rule.”⁸⁴ Thus we see in the performance of these songs and dance on these islands, not so much a total replacement but a blending of the new knowledge and musical styles with local melodies and musical performances.⁸⁵

The strict influence of Samoan missionaries and their wives on these islands was thus highlighted in the accounts of Europeans. But we must also note that the Samoans were strongly influenced by their formative background in Samoa. The manner in which they carried out their work was based on their training in Mālua and by the kind of Christianity that was emerging in their homeland. Many of these laws about dancing were enforced on Samoans by white missionaries, and likewise the Samoans introduced them in places where they were evangelising. When Mrs. David finally confronted the visiting English missionary about the strict nature of the Samoans she wrote,

⁸² Mrs. David also gave an example of a Samoan pastor who also wanted to stop the Rotuman boys when they got up on their feet, but a teacher by the name of Opataia restrained him, reminding him that the foreigners had been asked to give specimens of their ways of dancing. She wrote, “Poor conscientious pastor! I fear that all we sinful white foreigners enjoyed his discomfiture.” Ibid., p. 70.

⁸³ Webb, “‘Daughters of song,’ spaces and sacred sentiment and the transmission of hymnody in the early Christianisation of Melanesia.”

⁸⁴ Kalissa Alexeyeff, *Dancing from the Heart: Movement, Gender, and Cook Islands Globalization*, University of Hawai’i Press, Honolulu, 2009, p. 31.

⁸⁵ Webb, “‘Daughters of song,’ spaces and sacred sentiment and the transmission of hymnody in the early Christianisation of Melanesia.”

I thought it advisable to ask the white missionary when he came what harm he saw in wearing wild flowers, or kicking the feet about in a stand-up dance. He explained that Samoans dressed in wreaths of flowers for their native dances, that these dances lasted all night, and developed into obscene and licentious orgies of an indescribable nature; and that the pioneer missionaries thought it best to forbid altogether everything that could recall these disgraceful revels. That was the edict of Samoa: and the pastors sent out to Christianize the Ellice Islanders were all Samoans, and they enforced on their congregations the laws that had been made for Samoa.⁸⁶

As we have seen, despite the progress that Samoan missionary wives and their husbands were having, they were simultaneously criticised and strongly mocked for their strict moral discipline and domineering influence on local people. However, as we have seen, Samoan and local ideas about conversion and Christianity were distinctively different from those perceived by Europeans. Whether it was to do with Sabbath laws or in the wearing of hats and clothes, the Samoans as well as local people saw such acts in deeply religious terms. Hence, there was willingness on the part of local people who took on these laws as an essential part of the form of the Christianity to which they were aspiring. As shown in the performance of songs and dance, there was much more mutual exchange in the evangelisation of these islands than European observers acknowledged. Criticisms about the Samoans however continued as they were soon charged with much more serious allegations of involvement in local politics and trade, as well as exploiting locals for their own material gain.

Trade, temporal power and alleged excesses

By the 1870s the trade in copra had intensified on these islands and on almost all of them there were resident European and Chinese traders, who served as agents for companies in Australia and New Zealand. The presence of foreign residents meant that in addition to their work in evangelisation, the Samoans now had to deal with a rising influence from capitalist traders.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ David, *Funafuti or Three Months on a Coral Island*, p. 67.

⁸⁷ Woodford also wrote that the Samoans were “very strict with Sabbath rules and fined traders who break those rules.” See Charles M. Woodford, “Journal of a voyage from Suva, Fiji, to the Gilbert group and back. From March 4th to June 22nd 1884.”

In 1878, Turner upon visiting the islands was faced with several accusations concerning the Samoans. At Vaitupu, the German trader Mr. Nitz made several charges against Ioane. Firstly, he alleged that Ioane interfered with traders by having told the people through the deacons that they were no longer to take their copra to Nitz but to the “*The Company*”; a new venture initiated by locals, apparently together with a Mr. J.W. Williams as their agent. Nitz claimed that Ioane told the people that if they did not take their copra to the new company, they would be excluded from the church. Nitz’s allegations went so far as accusing Ioane of involvement in local politics, that no law was passed without his sanction and that the chiefs did not dare do anything without his consent. Moreover, he was “very arrogant overbearing to every-one – to the King and Chiefs and to white men.”⁸⁸

At Nui another German agent, Mr. Davies, complained about the *Kaupule* for passing laws interfering with his trade. He put the main blame on the teacher Kirisome, who turned a blind eye to such unfair laws.⁸⁹ At Niutao a Chinese trader for the firm of Sam Lee and a European named Wichcombe also made charges against Tapu for interfering with their trade.⁹⁰

Visiting missionaries were thus concerned about the conflicts arising between the Samoans and resident traders. Turner warned the Samoans and pointed out to Kirisome that as the *Kaupule* are members of the church he should try and “prevent their passing frivolous, unjust or oppressive laws.”⁹¹ Turner however was not so sparing of Ioane. Although the charges made by Nitz were unproven and denied by Ioane, Turner decided to take him off the island and replaced him with another Samoan.⁹² Despite the statistics showing his extraordinary mission success, Turner suspended him for becoming “too powerful.”⁹³

⁸⁸ Turner, “Report of a missionary voyage through the Tokelau, Ellice and Gilbert groups in the *John Williams* 1878,” p. 12.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 29.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 54.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 29.

⁹² Ibid., pp. 13–21.

⁹³ The statistics recorded by Turner show that out of a population of 423; church members were 173; children in school 96; and candidates for church memberships 12. He also recorded the contributions made by the people with \$326 to the LMS; \$108 from Bible sales; other books \$19; slates \$20; and gifts to the Samoan pastor in the value of \$359.99c. Ibid., p. 21.

Such accusations concerning the Samoans had a ring of truth in them. Certainly the Samoans were tempted to get involved in trade. They also had a powerful influence on local people. But we must also understand that it was the local chiefly authorities who were also in support and who policed these laws. Although the Samoans were perhaps guilty of exercising too much power, it must be noted that local people took on and abided by such laws. Regarding the case against Ioane, it was most likely that he was concerned with how local people could benefit in such local ventures and had their best interests in mind. Some of these allegations however show a sense of jealousy by traders of the powerful status and influence of the Samoans on these islands.⁹⁴

Moreover, local people knew that the new religion they had received was introduced by Europeans yet many of them saw such contradictions in some of the behaviour and resistance from foreigners. At Niutao, after the allegation by the Chinese and European traders, a meeting was held with the chiefs who supported their teacher. Some light however was shed on the matter and it seemed that the trouble began when the Chinese man killed a fowl on Sunday for which he was fined. Moreover, he refused to pay the fine and swore at the chief.⁹⁵

Such judgements however were often hasty and because of the brief time in which missionaries visited these islands, there was not enough time to do thorough investigations of these allegations. We must also note that, despite criticisms by European missionaries of the Samoans' involvement in politics, they themselves were guilty of playing politics in Samoa and in other societies where the LMS had evangelised.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Another example of this was a letter of complaint by Captain Ohlsen of the Auckland Schooner *Belle Brandon* given to Turner in which he claimed that the local teacher Tema was involved in persuading two of his labourers who were natives of Nukufetau to escape and then hid them on the island. Tema however denied this, saying that the allegation was because Captain Ohlsen was unhappy with him because he refused to comply with Ohlsen's wish that he should ask the chiefs to find and bring back the two men. Tema backed up his argument that this was not something that he was there to get involved in and that Ohlsen should seek the assistance of the chiefs himself. *Ibid.*, pp. 8–9.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁹⁶ The conversion of many of the islands in Polynesia was due to English missionaries attempting to convert paramount chiefs. This they did by backing up particular chiefs leading to the centralisation of political authority on these islands.

More allegations emerged on the islands of Kiribati where the Samoans were charged with being unduly involved in trade and in one case interfering with the labour trade.⁹⁷ At Onoatua a charge was made against Samoan teachers Karamelu and Simeona by Mr. Meader, a government agent of the ketch the *Patience* of Fiji. Presented to British Governor in Fiji, Sir Arthur Charles Hamilton-Gordon, the charge alleged that the Samoans prevented labourers from being shipped to Fiji. It was claimed that the Samoans were forcibly taking land from the natives, and presumed to “open the chests of returned labourers and take from them by force whatever articles they fancy.”⁹⁸ The Samoans however denied these allegations and countered with stories of the poor behaviour of Meader. A letter by Braneiser Vollerio a trader on the island also denied these allegations and instead of criticising the Samoans, he praised them. Another trader however named Redfern charged the Samoans with selling their supplies of cloth, arrowroot and tobacco for cash. He alleged that the Samoan missionary Karamelu spent most of his time in making boats for the natives and then making them pay for them and that Samuelu at Tamana sold arrowroot for cash.⁹⁹

Like traders, foreign visitors were also increasingly critical of the Samoans’ involvement in trade, questioning their wealth and excessive lifestyle on these islands. On the island of Beru in Kiribati, Woodford wrote that,

The Missionaries there are just as despotic as at Nukunau and elsewhere. They have fixed the price at which a native shall work for one of the traders at a dollar a day. This of course they are at liberty to do if they object to the natives working for the white men, but, if the natives disobey them and work for less they are fined ten bags of copra (about £2).¹⁰⁰

He went further to write that

the Missionary’s pay here is 100 dollars a year and 50 dollars a year for the wife, and what they can make by the sale of Bibles, Hymn Books and Slates.... This is however the least part of their income. All the best of the fish is as a matter of course given to

⁹⁷ Turner, “Report of a missionary voyage through the Tokelau, Ellice and Gilbert groups in the *John Williams* 1878,” pp. 49–54.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 51.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Woodford, “Journal of a voyage from Suva, Fiji, to the Gilbert group and back. From March 4th to June 22nd 1884.”

the Missionary and they demand and get as many cocoanuts as they require both for eating and to sell for copra. When we were at Nukunau the Missionary there had three houses full of copra, which he wanted to sell to the captain for cash, but as I explained above would not take trade for it. Besides this they claim half of all the fines and these they inflict themselves. The people have a blind faith in them and whatever they tell them they think must be right, and the promise of eternal punishment if their commands are disobeyed, is the means by which they work upon the feelings of the people to blindly follow all they are told to do.¹⁰¹

Woodford's criticisms thus painted the Samoans as being overpowering and exploitative of the locals for their own benefit and wellbeing. It is difficult to know whether the claim about the Samoans' influence on the cost of labour was true. However, Woodford's claim to salaries of Samoan missionaries and their wives is false as Samoan missionaries and their wives were not paid. The amounts he stated probably referred to the amounts the Samoans would accumulate from the selling of copra given to them as gifts from local people, a practice that was accepted as this was the only means of income for them. Woodford's criticisms together with those by traders however led to visiting European missionaries becoming more and more suspicious of the activities of the Samoans.

Turner's assessment of Tapu was disappointing as he wrote, "The natives here seem much behind even the natives of Nanumanga. I fear Tapu's influence has not been the best."¹⁰² Turner questioned Tapu's activities and even the amount of gifts given to him by the people. He wrote,

With regard to the question of his pay from the land, he told me that he had this year received 4000 nuts for which he got abt \$30.00. I asked O'Brien what quantity of nuts belonging to himself had Tapu sold him this year. He said abt. 4000 this year, but last year there must have been quite 40,000. Unfortunately O'B. keeps no books and I could get no reliable figures from him. He told me that it is only the collection made for him at the beginning of the year that Tapu puts down as his "faaologa", but that he is continually getting presents of nuts from the people besides this.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Turner, "Report of a missionary voyage through the Tokelau, Ellice and Gilbert groups in the *John Williams* 1878," p. 56.

¹⁰³ Ibid., pp. 57–58.

He then went further

If I remember rightly loane of Vaitupu used to do this same thing and I think it is worthy of investigation whether other of our pastors do not do the same thing. It is a puzzle to me how Kirisome of Nui got his clock, watch, fine kerosene lamps re.re. out of the meagre salary which he reports to us from year to year. Will it not be as well for us to extend to these islands at once the arrangement we are trying to introduce into Samoa – for the people to give their pastors only cash. This can easily be done on such islands as Nui, Vaitupu, Niutao re, in fact almost in all the Ellice Is, at least and this will take away from our pastors all pretext for soiling their fingers with extra selling.¹⁰⁴

Tapu and loane were thus greatly suspected of involvement in trade. Turner had observed their material wealth and questioned its validity. It seemed that LMS missionaries had faced similar issues concerning offerings to pastors in Samoa and interestingly their preference for payment in cash. As a result of the allegations made against Tapu, Turner decided that he and his wife should be returned to Samoa and replaced by Nito. Despite the Chiefs' refusal to let go of their teacher, Tapu in the end agreed to leave the island.

The result of these strong allegations, which were escalating in the 1880s, led to the LMS imposing strict rules on Samoan missionaries, forbidding them from involving in trade and politics.¹⁰⁵ It is difficult to analyse the allegations against the Samoans based on the accounts of missionaries and foreigners. But the system of payment for the Samoans at the time was a difficult one to measure. Samoan missionaries often relied on the giving hearts of the local people, which on larger islands was sufficient for survival while on others was not. The Samoans at the time were not given salaries by the LMS but were expected to live on what was offered by the local people. When Turner visited the Samoan missionary Tuilona and his wife at Nanumea, he met with the two local chiefs and told them of their duty to support the local teacher, that "we would give him his clothes but it was their duty to supply him with food."¹⁰⁶ This practice of locals supporting their missionaries was, as we have seen, introduced and encouraged by European missionaries in Samoa, and was now practised on these

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 52.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., pp. 51–52.

islands. The only things that were supplied to the teachers by the LMS on top of clothes, included an annual supply of food such as arrowroot, Iris biscuits, sugar, tobacco, cloths and threads and sewing materials for their wives.

The offerings and contribution made by local populations to Samoans was one of the most impressive signs of their embrace of the new religion. Contributions were made to the LMS as well as presents given to Samoan missionaries and their wives. These contributions were usually produce, mainly coconuts which were then sold by the teachers to local traders and the cash collected by the missionaries during their visitations. The teachers were also given their share of coconuts by the local people which they also sold and then kept the money as their salary. But on top of these contributions the Samoans were also given a range of things which included, mats, *tanoa* (wooden bowls), coconut sinnet, shirts, fowls, fathoms of European cloth etc.¹⁰⁷

Samoan missionaries were also in charge of the selling of printed materials particularly Bibles for the Bible Society and hymn books and other literature for the LMS. The money from these sales was later collected by visiting missionaries. Samoan missionaries were thus not just in charge of the spiritual side of the mission, but were also vitally involved in collecting funds, the selling of LMS literature, and also the coconuts and produce offered by the local people. The Samoans were thus heavily criticised for their involvement in trade and in local politics, but the terms of their mission contracts entailed this. Moreover, the manner in which the LMS missionaries expected them to carry out this role of acting as their “salesmen” meant that the practice was open to abuse. The common occurrence of famines and droughts was challenging and the Samoans would sometimes have had to sell contributions made to the LMS for their own wellbeing and survival.

Much of the criticism against the Samoans at this stage was targeted against the husbands. But as we have seen, Samoan wives were also accused of living a privileged lifestyle. It is true that many of these women lived comfortably as suggested by the accounts of missionaries and foreign observers. According to Mrs. David, they were accorded many services from the Church women, living like queens in finer houses than the local elites with people to cook their food and nurse their babies while they

¹⁰⁷ These were some of the items left by visiting missionaries.

sat and took their ease.¹⁰⁸ Pratt wrote that Sapolu and his wife who were on the island of Nukufetau enjoyed the comforts of a “large stone house, and retinue of 23 servants.”¹⁰⁹ Samoan wives were thus provided with domestic servants who assisted them while they attended to their classes for children and women. Such accounts show how some lived luxurious lifestyles, but as we have seen with the house of Fa’ataape and her husband on Funafuti, not all Samoans lived in elaborate European houses. Moreover, the Samoans were increasingly serving as hosts to visiting missionaries as well as colonial agents, and for hospitality domestic helpers were needed.

Such criticisms however should be seen in light of the local response to Samoan missionary couples. The increasing status of Samoan missionaries and their wives on these islands, was due to local people honouring the new representatives of God whom they had now embraced. Local chiefs did this by giving them the best things they once received from local people to the Samoans. A chief at Vaitupu for example transferred his chiefly prerogative of receiving the head of any turtle to the pastor.¹¹⁰ Hence the tributes that they now paid to the Samoans, were continuous with how people regarded their traditional priests and chiefs, who embodied their ancestral gods. This process paralleled that in Samoa and other Pacific societies with the incorporation of the new religion.

It is true that the Samoans even expected and encouraged this treatment of themselves as superior, since their “covenant” relationship with villages in Samoa meant that they were given great honour and their physical needs taken care of by the people whom they served (see Chapter 1). Like their husbands, Samoan wives were given the best things, and were treated with much respect. They had servants to assist them and nannies to help with their domestic duties. During Sunday services they, along with their children, were given seats in the front of the church. This was similar to the honour received by the wives of white missionaries, as well as visiting European women like Mrs. David. Yet significantly, when such treatment was offered to wives of

¹⁰⁸ David, *Funafuti or Three Months on a Coral Island*, p. 27.

¹⁰⁹ George Pratt, “Northwest outstations journal, 1872,” The Australian National University, Pacific Manuscript Bureau Series, Microfilm M9, p. 13.

¹¹⁰ G.M. White, *Kioa: An Ellice community in Fiji*, Department of Anthropology, University of Oregon, Eugene, 1965, p. 45.

Samoan missionaries, they were often ridiculed and mocked. As much as they attempted to portray themselves as ideal models and exemplars of Christian womanhood, Samoan wives were still judged as being inferior to European missionary wives.

Visiting missionaries however were increasingly critical of the Samoans and began to interrogate what they perceived as their excessive lifestyles. European missionaries expected the Samoans to build European buildings and emulate European civilisation yet when the Samoans claimed to possess such material things as clocks and kerosene lamps, they were looked down upon. And when the Samoans tried to live like them as “exemplars” of Christianity, they were charged for becoming too much like Europeans. Turner for example upon visiting Navailika at Arorae wrote,

In talking of his supplies he made this remark – “Ne’i galo ia te oe sina ti (tea) ma’u.”! [In case you forget some tea for me!] And he expressed great surprise when he was told that there was none for him. There is too much of this sort of thing about Naivalika. He evidently considered himself quite the equal of any missionary.¹¹¹

The racial hierarchy and Samoans’ resistance to it is very palpable here. The reactions of LMS European missionaries however shows how their views of the Samoans had changed from praise for their efforts in evangelisation to feelings of disgust when they attempted to act too much like Europeans. When for example Tapu was prepared to leave his post, Turner wrote of how the people expressed their sadness at parting from their Samoan teacher and his wife by singing *viis* or songs of praise for him. He wrote, “From Tapu’s house we had to walk to the N. end of the island to the boat when we went off. We were accompanied by a crowd of women and girls, dancing and singing ‘viis’ of Tapu. It was quite sickening.”¹¹²

Hence, despite the success of Tapu and his wife on the island where they had been labouring, Turner was quite adamant about expelling him. This was despite the fondness of the local people for the Samoans as shown in their singing of their praises.

¹¹¹ Turner, “Report of a voyage through the Tokelau, Ellice, & Gilbert groups in the *John Williams*, during 1874,” p. 32.

¹¹² Turner, “Report of a missionary voyage through the Tokelau, Ellice and Gilbert groups in the *John Williams* 1878,” p. 57.

Perhaps a sense of envy and jealousy for this familiarity and intimacy, made the white missionary feel “quite sickening.”

Recreating a new covenant

As alluded to, the manner in which the Samoans carried out their mission work was largely based on the way that it was carried out in Samoa which was, as we have seen, deeply grounded in the demands of the *FaaSamoa* or Samoan culture. The homogenous nature of these island populations also meant that the Samoans were able to gain control of the islands. Several of these islands were composed of only one village while on others there were two or three. There was far less chiefly rivalry than that witnessed in islands in southern Vanuatu where Samoans had earlier evangelised. With similarities in language and cultural practice, and acknowledged historical connections, these islands were “soft” missionary targets for the Samoans.¹¹³ But it also meant that the Samoans more easily transposed existing structures in Samoa onto these particular island societies.¹¹⁴

In Samoa the covenantal relationship between the pastor and his wife and local villages built a strong relationship between the pastor and the council of local chiefs in Samoa. As we have seen, in the appropriation of the new religion in Samoa, the pastor’s role was reserved for the spiritual domain and was not involved in local politics. However, the high regard of pastors in Samoa meant that their voice was respected by village chiefs. Although chiefs came up with new Christian laws, these laws were supported by the pastors, particularly those related to the spiritual life of the village.

Hence, Samoan pastors who worked on these islands as missionaries expected the same system and structures as at home, and likely they felt unjustly accused of becoming too involved in politics. Doug Munro argues that a similar *feagaiga* was made with the Tuvaluans. As strangers, the Samoans were incorporated within the local reciprocity system as permanently privileged guests. But in doing so, the Samoans’ pursuit of material gain led to the diversion in the flow of goods and services

¹¹³ Munro, “Samoan pastors in Tuvalu, 1865–1899,” pp. 124–57.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. See also Feleterika Nokise, “The role of Samoan LMS missionaries in the evangelization of the west Pacific, 1839–1930,” Ph.D. thesis, The Australian National University, 1980.

from the *aliki* to themselves, thus manipulating the system of church contributions. He argues that whereas pastors in Samoa recognised the status and authority of chiefs, this was the part of the *feagaiga* which they did not observe in Tuvalu.¹¹⁵ But it must be noted that it was not necessarily the case that Samoans were more powerful than local chiefly authority. The Samoans were simply supporting the laws which were enforced by local authorities as they would do in Samoa. In many cases the charges against the Samoans were because of their support for these laws. Moreover, teachers often came under the law and were also subject to the power of local chiefs. An example of this was when at Niutao, the Samoan teacher Sione had to ask permission to go to the mission ship when Turner visited in 1874.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, local chiefs and island communities were also upfront when they were dissatisfied with their missionaries and wished to get rid of them. Several Samoan couples were deposed as a result of this and were sent to Samoa because of the will of the local people. In Tokelau, Maka who worked on the island of Atafu was deposed by the people over a land dispute.¹¹⁷

The relationship between Samoan missionary couples and these local island communities should be viewed in terms of reciprocal relations as well as political hierarchies. Mrs. David noted this when upon arrival she and her husband presented bags of yams as gifts to the king, the “sub king” or local administrator and the pastor. She wrote,

We were surprised to see that these three bags of yams remained for two days where we had left them, unopened. We began to wonder if the three dignitaries were offended in any way. But on the third day the mystery was explained; the big conch was blown, and all the island assembled, the three bags of yams were carried to the state house, and equally divided among all the people according to their families. How many civilized monarchs, priests, or premiers would have parted so generously with a handsome gift!¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Munro, *Samoan pastors in Tuvalu, 1865–1899*, p. 130.

¹¹⁶ Turner, “Report of a voyage through the Tokelau, Ellice, & Gilbert groups in the *John Williams*, during 1874,” p. 27.

¹¹⁷ This case led to a deputation to Samoa of four chiefs from Fakaofu to consult the LMS and British Consul. See Turner, “Report of a missionary voyage through the Tokelau, Ellice and Gilbert groups in the *John Williams* 1878,” p. 1.

¹¹⁸ David, *Funafuti or Three Months on a Coral Island*, p. 122.

Samoan couples were often accused of taking advantage of local people and becoming wealthier than local populations. But here we see an example of the reciprocal nature of such relationships, in terms of wealth distribution. In Samoa, although the pastoral couple received the best things from the village, such wealth was always reciprocated. Even important food given to the pastor was tabooed for consumption by their children and it was usually reserved for a Sunday lunch in which the pastoral couple and important village chiefs were invited. Also when such large contributions were given to the pastor it was always expected that such contributions be reciprocated. Mrs. David witnessed this when the local women at Funafuti presented a large amount of mats and food as gifts when Fa'ataape and her husband were about to leave.¹¹⁹ This is common practice in Samoa with the exchange of material wealth. Moreover, the same principle applied to the mutual nature of the exchange between the spiritual and secular whereby the missionary couple intervened for the spiritual wellbeing of the people, while it was the responsibility of the people to cater for their physical needs.

The Samoans were thus adamant about carrying out their work as if it was in Samoa and attempted to transpose the covenantal relationship between the pastoral couple and villages in Samoa onto the new missionary fields. For Samoan wives, although they were criticised (mainly by Europeans) along with their husbands for the manner in which they carried themselves, the performance of their roles was only done in accordance with what they knew from their formative experience in Samoa. The Samoans may be criticised for their inability to contextualise their approach in different fields, but this was the form of Christianity that was performed in Samoa.¹²⁰

It must be noted that by this stage the majority of Samoan missionary couples had been working as pastoral couples in villages in Samoa for several years before offering their services to foreign mission. Some of them worked in more than one village, and they brought with them their "baggage" and their experiences in Samoa. Thus LMS missionaries who visited these islands saw a great similarity between how the Samoans carried out their missionary work in foreign fields with that of their counterparts who remained in Samoa.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

¹²⁰ Nokise, "The role of Samoan LMS missionaries in the evangelization of the west Pacific, 1839–1930."

Samoan missionaries themselves, as we have seen, were not entirely innocent. Despite the strict moral discipline they exerted over local people, some of them were accused of immorality. In 1874, during Turner's visit to these island groups, several charges were made against Samoan missionaries. At Tokelau, Samoan missionary Mafala was charged with adultery with a servant girl and was returned home with his family. Another Samoan Falaai was charged with adultery with a local woman and was returned to Samoa with his wife and five children.¹²¹ Although we do not hear the voices of Samoan wives concerning these allegations, these charges must have been heartbreaking for them, particularly the shame they would have faced upon returning home to Samoa to meet with their families and relatives. There was also an account by Turner of domestic violence involving Ioane of Nanumaga and his wife:

The story against Ioane is that he and his wife are constantly quarrelling, that in one quarrel before Mr. Powell's visit he struck her with his fist and with an "ali" leaving a scalp wound, that afterwards being ashamed of what he had done he went off out to sea alone in a canoe, intending to commit suicide in that way but that some people of the land followed him and brought him back.¹²²

Such accounts show that despite the strong image of the Samoan missionaries, these men also had shortcomings. We do not know if this case of violence was an isolated one, but it shows that perhaps such violence existed more often than not. Moreover these incidents of immorality and violence show that Samoan missionary wives also faced problems within their own homes and in their own marriages. Such cases however were few, and the majority of Samoan missionaries lived faithful and committed lives.

Samoan missionaries and their wives, in many cases, abused their power. Perhaps the fact that they were on their own, meant that the temptations to over step their mark was much more inviting than if they had remained in Samoa under the watchful eyes of their superiors.¹²³ Despite these weaknesses, as well as the many criticisms of their

¹²¹ Turner, "Report of a voyage through the Tokelau, Ellice, & Gilbert groups in the *John Williams*, during 1874," pp. 8–9.

¹²² Turner, "Report of a missionary voyage through the Tokelau, Ellice and Gilbert groups in the *John Williams* 1878," p. 61.

¹²³ Between 1865 and 1899 there were 33 deputational voyages to the group involving 22 missionaries, half of whom visited on a single occasion. Hence the Samoans were often left on their own and rising

approach, the majority of the Samoans were exceptional men and women who far exceeded the expectations put on them. They were quite successful, evident in the transformation that was seen on these islands; a transformation that soon resulted in many of the local people beginning to offer their own lives for the missionary cause.

To follow in their footsteps

The success of Samoan missionaries and their wives on these island groups was seen not only in the embrace of the new religion by local populations but also in the increasing rate of local men and women offering to be trained in Mālūa for the purpose of serving in the mission themselves. By the 1870s young Tuvaluan, Kiribati, Niuean and Tokelauan men and their wives were already being trained at Mālūa. During their visits, European missionaries were presented with gifts of taro, coconuts and pigs from families and friends of students at Mālūa, showing the support of local people for their sons and daughters in Samoa.¹²⁴ Visiting missionaries also met and examined possible candidates and their wives.¹²⁵ Some of these men and women were fluent in the Samoan language as noted by Turner at Nui where he examined three candidates and observed “all can speak Samoan.”¹²⁶ Those who passed were taken to begin training at Mālūa although several were delayed due to health reasons. A “promising couple” Petaia and his wife at Nukulaelae were asked to postpone their going to Mālūa when it was later found that the woman has been infected with ringworm.¹²⁷ Others were delayed as they were not married; there was a preference for couples rather than single men. For example, when Turner visited in 1878, he found at Nui a promising candidate named Kapiri. An examination was carried out at the school in which Kapiri received the first prize for boys. After the exams he was

conflicts were soon witnessed due to the lack of proper supervision. See Munro, “Samoan pastors in Tuvalu, 1865–1899,” pp. 135–36.

¹²⁴ When Turner visited in 1874, he received gifts from families and friends of those students at Mālūa at Nukufetau. The names of students were Ioane and Iosia. He also interviewed three candidates who wished to go to Mālūa and decided to take one named Evagelia and his wife and child. Another promising candidate was Sakaraka but he was not yet married. At Nanumanga another couple named Iosua and his wife Rosa were examined and accepted. See Turner, “Report of a missionary voyage through the Tokelau, Ellice and Gilbert groups in the *John Williams* 1878,” pp. 23, 31.

¹²⁵ Turner, “Report of a voyage through the Tokelau, Ellice, & Gilbert groups in the *John Williams*, during 1874,” p. 25.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

¹²⁷ Turner, “Report of a missionary voyage through the Tokelau, Ellice and Gilbert groups in the *John Williams* 1878,” p. 6.

married to one of the brightest girls in the school named Lusiane and prepared to leave for Mālua.¹²⁸ Lusiane received the second prize for the girls' examinations.¹²⁹

Young girls were thus increasingly aspiring to become missionary wives themselves, and most of them were chosen from the best and most well-educated girls from mission schools. By the end of the century, the most promising girls were chosen to be trained at the newly established Papauta Girls School in Samoa with the hope of marrying pastors in the future. In 1894, Mrs. Moore, who was one of the founders of Papauta, joined Newell on his annual visitation to recruit girls for Papauta.¹³⁰ Several of these girls became some of the earliest students at the school. In 1899 Mrs. David wrote about the brightest girls from Funafuti who were taken to Samoa to be trained at Papauta expressing the hope that they be "good examples to their islands when they returned."¹³¹

The increasing number of these young men and women led to the expansion of the local clergy on these island groups. Later these young couples would also join the Samoans and other Pacific islanders in the evangelisation of other islands in the western Pacific. The Samoans however continued to dominate the mission on these islands making their presence and influence the most prevalent in the history of mission in Pacific, with 177 years in Niue, 100 in Tokelau, 101 in Tuvalu and 78 in Kiribati. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Samoans were also entering a new mission field in PNG. This was to become the final frontier for the LMS and the largest field for the Samoans. It also became the place where the largest group of Samoan missionary couples was sent, and where the largest number of Samoan missionaries and their wives perished. There the Samoans encountered far greater challenges, not only with the physical environment but with what they considered the "different nature" of the people.

The first Samoan couples to work in PNG had been working on island groups such as Kiribati and Tuvalu—for example, Sumeo and his wife Evelina. Sumeo was a missionary

¹²⁸ But after the marriage her father vetoed their going to Mālua and enjoined them to wait a while. He later agreed to let them go. *Ibid.*, pp. 26–29.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹³⁰ James E. Newell, "Visit to north western out-stations with Miss Moore, 1894," *The Australian National University, Pacific Manuscript Bureau Series* (digital copy), p. 8.

¹³¹ David, *Funafuti or Three Months on a Coral Island*, pp. 88–89.

in Kiribati on the island of Onoatoa from 1865 to 1874. At the time he was married to Saleima but she died in 1874 on Onoatoa while giving birth to her son. The baby survived and later became a pastor. Sumeo then returned to Samoa and married Evelina. In 1883 they were with another Samoan couple, two of the first Samoan couples posted to PNG. Several other Samoan couples who worked on these island groups also joined them in PNG. But as they soon found out, it was a very different field than they had encountered before and the difficulties in this new mission field were soon voiced in one of the songs locals on these islands were already singing.

Niukini e, tuku toku tainamu laukaka, me se malu oe koe I te namu! Tamate, e, tuu faja malosi kit e galuega I Kabati! (New Guinea, place your mosquito net of kaka leaves to protect you from the mosquitoes! Chalmers, make strong your work in Kapati!¹³²

¹³² David, *Funafuti or Three Months on a Coral Island*, p. 74.

CHAPTER 5. THE LAST FRONTIER: PNG—A “DARK” AND “SAVAGE” MISSION FIELD 1883–1933¹

In 1898, Vaiea was in her final year at Papauta Girls’ School. Examination results listed her as an exceptional student. As part of her final assessment, she was asked to present lessons in front of a class of children, while English missionary women observed and gave their final evaluations. Mrs. Beveridge, the wife of English missionary Sidney Alexander wrote that for her assessment, Vaiea taught three separate classes in a variety of subjects.² Mrs Beveridge was so impressed that she wrote, “This young lady is distinctively intelligent, it is likely that she will become a very useful teacher.”³

After completing her training at Papauta, Vaiea married Maene, a final year student at Mālua. They submitted a request for foreign mission and, before the end of the year, were appointed to work in Papua New Guinea (PNG).⁴ Vaiea’s great joy at being called to the mission work was noted in the *Sulu Samoa* in 1898. In PNG they were posted to the village of Lelehoa in Milne Bay under the supervision of missionary Charles Abel. Vaiea and Maene were praised both by English missionaries as well as their Samoan colleagues for their diligent service. And after serving their first term of six years, they returned to Samoa in 1907 for furlough. At the *Fonotele* or the Annual General Assembly at Mālua they gave accounts of their work. Vaiea was reported as inspirational in her address to the women’s fellowship in which she talked about her experience in PNG, encouraging other Samoan women to offer their lives for missionary service.⁵

After spending five months in Samoa, they left again for their second term. Sadly however while the mission ship was at the island of Beru in Kiribati, an outbreak of

¹ The name Papua New Guinea is used throughout the last two chapters even though it was not yet a full nation until it became independent in 1975. Prior to independence, the area in which the Samoans worked was in the southern coast of New Guinea. From 1884 it became a British protectorate called British New Guinea. In 1902 it was placed under the Commonwealth of Australia. Following the passage of the Papua Act in 1905, it became the Territory of Papua, and formal Australian administration began in 1906 until independence when it was united with New Guinea in the north.

² Mrs. Beveridge arrived with her husband in Samoa in 1895.

³ *Sulu Samoa* (July 1898): 85.

⁴ *Sulu Samoa* (December 1898): 2–3.

⁵ *Sulu Samoa* (July 1907): 75.

disease infected Maene and several others.⁶ As the mission ship left Beru, Maene's illness deteriorated and he died on the evening of 20 November 1907. The following day he was buried at sea in a service led by missionary Ebenezer Hawker. His body was put to sea by fellow Samoan missionaries Alefaio and Iupeli while Vaiea and her children watched on. In the words of Peniata, a Tuvaluan missionary who was also on his way to PNG, "Vaiea was like a warrior standing with her children in the face of this great tragedy."⁷

In 1908, Vaiea was back at Lelehoa where she continued to work on her own.⁸ In an account published in the *Sulu Samoa*, Samoan missionary Ma'anaima wrote that she and her children were doing well and once again Vaiea was preoccupied with her mission work. He wrote that Vaiea said to him,

I am amazed at the love and kindness of the people that have shown to me and my children; it is something that has given me a joyful heart. The boys and girls are my hands in doing the different work in the mission. They are holding prayer services and are encouraging each other.⁹

Later Vaiea sent a letter to the *Sulu Samoa* where she reported a visit by a delegation of white missionaries. She wrote about how uncomfortable she was because of the short notice and the fact that she was awaiting the missionaries' decision about her. She wrote,

Some of the white missionaries greeted me with sympathy as a woman who had a broken heart, others did not greet me as if they do not care about a woman with black skin like me, they just rushed into the house and the compound, observing things that interested them.¹⁰

Then she overheard missionary Charles Abel saying to Peni, "Tell that woman; that we British missionaries, talked about her in our meeting, she will stay for another year in

⁶ Maene fell ill on 15 November 1907 and died several days later.

⁷ *Sulu Samoa* (February 1908): 18.

⁸ *Sulu Samoa* (March 1909): 35. Upon arrival in PNG, Vaiea and her children along with the rest of the group of Islander missionaries and their families were quarantined at Charles Abel's mission station on Kwato Island. See *Sulu Samoa* (May 1908): 78.

⁹ *Sulu Samoa* (September 1909): 135.

¹⁰ *Sulu Samoa* (August 1908): 115.

New Guinea, until we know what to do with her.”¹¹ Vaiea confessed that when she heard of this, she remembered a story about a man and his farm. She wrote,

I remember in my mind the story about a man and his farm and the plant that did not bear fruit, it was said that it should be cut down and taken away from the farm, but the gardener said, leave it for one year, if it does not bear fruit, then take it down.¹²

Vaiea was one of the many Samoan missionary wives who worked alongside their husbands in the evangelisation of PNG.¹³ As we can see from her account, many of these women who were now trained at Papauta persisted not only in their commitment to supporting their husbands but to their own calling as bearers of the Gospel. Although they were often frowned upon and not recognised as equal to their husbands, we will see that these women were not only dedicated missionary women who saw mission work as the fulfilment of their own calling but also women who indeed “bore fruits” for the mission aspirations of the LMS.

As we will learn, PNG became one of the most difficult mission fields that the Samoans had ever encountered with its enormous land mass, rugged features, strange flora and fauna, and the constant threat of diseases. Samoan letters by early Samoan missionaries and oral accounts by missionary wives are filled with impressions of the vastness and impenetrable nature of this landscape. Such obstacles were combined with the challenges of diseases which killed many Samoans in the first fifty years of their presence in New Guinea. This created for them an image of PNG as a “dark” and “savage” land. Such imagery was further perpetuated by what they considered to be the “shocking” and “sinful” nature of local people. The context in PNG was thus challenging for these women but, despite such notions of “darkness” and “savagery” many volunteered, showing how ideas of martyrdom and religious zeal had become integral to the mission from Samoa at the time. Samoan missionary wives were thus extraordinarily brave, considering the perceptions of PNG prevalent at the time. But, as we will also see, the context in PNG also situated them in circumstances that would challenge perceptions about their roles and status as “Samoan missionary wives.”

¹¹ *Sulu Samoa* (August 1908): p. 115.

¹² *Ibid.* This story is probably a reference to Jesus’ teachings about a tree that did not bear good fruit which must be cut down and thrown into the fire, see Matthew 7:19.

¹³ See Appendix 7 for the list and information of Samoan missionary wives and their husbands in PNG.

A vast and challenging mission field

Samoan missionary wives began their mission activities in PNG, with the arrival of the first two Samoan missionary wives Evelina and Siu with their husbands Sumeo and Timoteo in 1883. The Samoans were the last island mission group in PNG, arriving twelve years after the LMS missionary Samuel McFarlane had arrived with Loyalty Islander missionaries in the Torres Straits in 1871.¹⁴ Although the Samoans were the last to arrive, they were no less pioneering. According to David Wetherell, missionary expansion in New Guinea, as in other parts of Oceania, would have been difficult without the Samoans.¹⁵

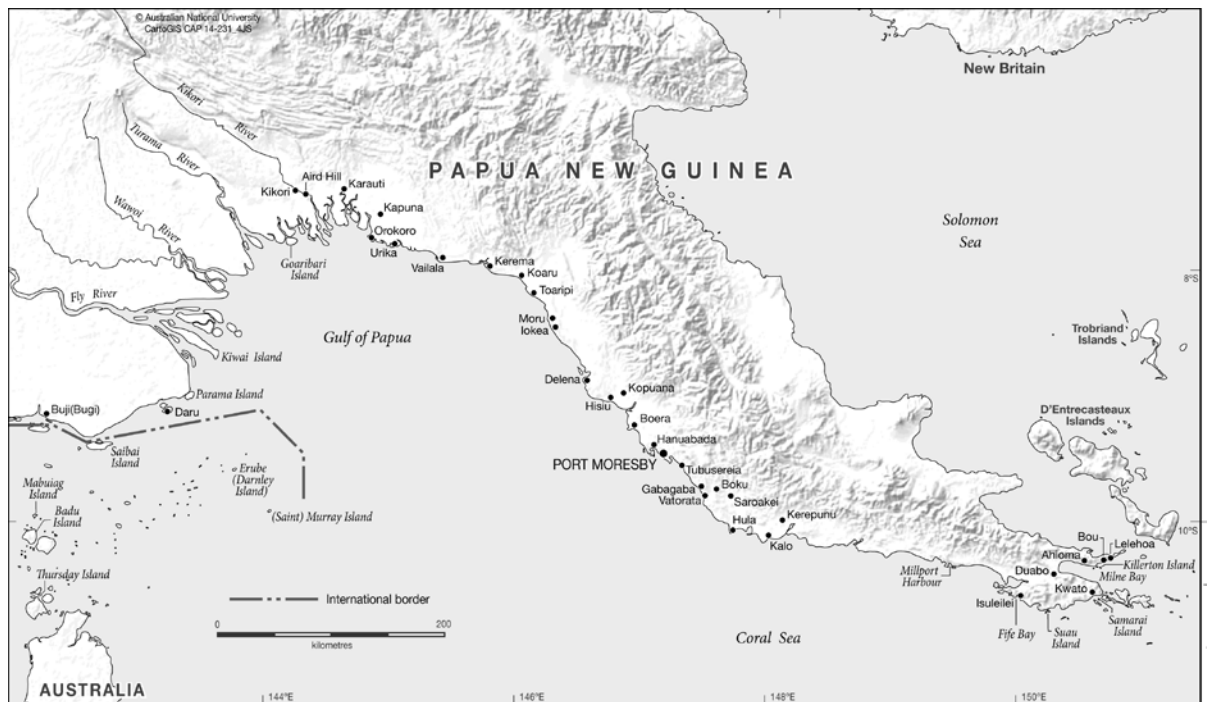
During their time in PNG, until the last Samoans left in 1979, Samoan missionaries and their wives were posted along the southern coast of PNG, an area of about 700 kilometres in length, from the Torres Strait Islands and the Gulf Delta in the west, to Milne Bay in the far-east. Some of the most common places where Samoans worked are shown in Figure 39. These included the Torres Strait islands such as Saibai, Mabuig and Darnley,¹⁶ islands closer to the mainland like Daru, Parama, Kiwai, Goaribari and places in the Gulf Delta, like Kikori, Aird Hill, Kapuna, Urika, Orokoro; places along the coast towards Port Moresby like Vailala, Kerema, Moru, Delena, and all the way east from Tubusereia, Gabagaba, Vatorata, Hula, to islands and villages around Kwato and Milne Bay.

The environment in these places was very different and unfamiliar to the Samoans, particularly in the Gulf with its large rivers and swampy areas. For the Samoans this new physical environment was like nothing they had encountered before. Most of them had not been exposed to such a large land mass; and coming from the small islands of Samoa, they would have found PNG quite an intimidating place.

¹⁴ The Rarotongans arrived in 1872 and Niueans in 1875. See David Wetherell, "Pioneers and patriarchs: Samoans in a non-conformist mission district in Papua, 1890–1917," *The Journal of Pacific History* vol. 15, no. 3 (1980): 130–54; Feleterika Nokise, "The role of Samoan LMS missionaries in the evangelisation of the south west Pacific 1839–1930," Ph.D. thesis, The Australian National University, 1983.

¹⁵ Wetherell, "Pioneers and patriarchs," p. 130. The Samoans only arrived in the Torres Strait in 1892 and had to leave at the end of 1914 when the Church of England took over at the beginning of 1915. Although they were only there for a short time they do remain in memory. See Anna Shnukal's forthcoming work on Samoans in the Torres Strait.

¹⁶ Daru is now part of PNG, while Darnley is part of Australian territory.



Map 5. PNG showing places where the Samoans worked

My own experience when attempting to take a flight in 2013 from Port Moresby to the Gulf where my parents had worked shows how even in contemporary times, travelling in PNG is still a huge challenge, particularly in the Gulf which is still inaccessible by roads. After two failed attempts due to bad weather and engine problems, I finally managed to take a flight and landed safely at Kikori, one of the few airstrips in the region. During the flight and upon flying over the Gulf region, I came to feel even from above, a sense of the awe and wonder that early Samoan missionary wives and their husbands must have felt when arriving at this great land. In the words of Samasoni Sulufaiga who took a similar flight from Port Moresby to the Gulf in the early 1970s,

Looking down at the long swerving brown coloured rivers is a sight of wonder. It affirms the common saying in that part of the country where walking is a rare thing and the only way to get around is through the rivers. These rivers, although they look peaceful from above, they are really violent. I believe they are rough ... and no doubt they are inhabited with crocodiles and other large creatures that threaten people's lives. But those are the rivers, where many of the soldiers who offered their lives from Samoa paddled and bailed water out of their canoes.¹⁷

¹⁷ Enele S. Samasoni, *O le Lupe i Vaoese*, Mālua Press, Apia, 1994, p. 54.



Figures 48a and b. *Images of the Gulf region taken during a flight from Port Moresby to the Gulf, 2013. Photographed by Latu Latai, 3 August 2013*

Hence even in the latter half of the twentieth century, Samoan missionary wives and their husbands often wrote and talked about the unfamiliar environment. Taeipo who arrived with her husband in 1952 spoke about the large geographical differences between Samoa and PNG. She said, “When we travelled, it is not like our country where there is continuous land. But when you go there, there is swamp. They call it swamp, but they are huge rivers to us.”¹⁸

Lupeline who arrived with her husband several years later describes the country as so vast that “you get so tired of travelling in boats.”¹⁹ When they first arrived, they had to pass through many rivers before arriving at the village where they were posted. Traversing this new mission field was very challenging, as the dispersal of people was great and the distances between villages were vast. The only means of commuting were by foot and the use of local dugout canoes and boats both with outboard motors.

Apart from the unfamiliar yet enthralling geographical features of PNG, the Samoans also encountered new types of flora and fauna, with strange animals and dangerous reptiles such as crocodiles, snakes and of course an abundance of mosquitoes. Missionary wives often talked about how they found it hard to familiarise themselves with the new environment.²⁰ Taeipo said when she arrived,

The people always make sure that we were safe from crocodiles. When we travelled on those rivers ... you get startled when you look down and see a snake speed off.

¹⁸ Personal interview with Taeipo Aiono, Samoa, 3 April 2013. Also in Taeleipu Aiono, *Papua Niukini mo Iesu*, Le Lamepa Press, Apia, n.d., pp. 26–30.

¹⁹ Personal interview with Lupeline Tagaloa, Samoa, 29 March 2013.

²⁰ Personal interview with Silomiga Faiai, Samoa, 16 December 2004.

Some snakes swim deep while others swim on the surface of the water. We always talked about the greatness of God's love. We should have been bitten by snakes, but none of us were ever bitten.²¹

She went on to describe other things like blood-sucking leeches and the general challenges of living in an extraordinarily foreign land.

Samoan missionary wives and their husbands were thus introduced to a place that was remarkably different from their homeland. Their accounts throughout the decades reflect the challenging nature of the new mission field not only in terms of its size but of the physical obstacles like rivers and swamps that hampered travelling and communication as well as the constant fear of getting killed by crocodiles and poisonous snakes. On top of this was the constant challenge of mosquitoes. In 1895, Faasiu wrote,

Mosquitoes is one thing that is so abundant in this country, no wonder the people in this village use bags made of nets to sleep in; as who would be patient with so much mosquitoes, when the mosquitoes come, it is like the roaring sound of an approaching army, you are only scared.²²

At Moru, Alesa wrote in 1914 about their continuing struggles with mosquitoes. He wrote that "there is only one refuge and that is the mosquitoes-net. There are more hours spent inside the mosquitoes-nets than hours outside."²³



Figures 49a and b. *Images showing water everywhere which gives rise to an abundance of mosquitoes. Left and right: On the Kikori River in the Gulf on my way to visit places like Aird Hill and Karaulti. Photographed by Latu Latai 6 August 2013*

²¹ Personal interview with Taeipo Aiono, Samoa, 3 April 2013.

²² He went on to write that it is no wonder recent arrivals suffer from itching "it is not a little itchy, but an itchy with a pain that cannot be compared." See *Sulu Samoa* (May 1895): 68.

²³ *Sulu Samoa* (May 1914): 70.



Figure 50. Left: Arriving at Samoa village where my parents worked. The village is named after many Samoan missionaries who worked there. Photographed by Latu Latai, 7 August 2013

Figure 51. Right: A view of Aird Hill and just over the mountain is the Mission station built by Benjamin T. Butcher. Photographed by Latu Latai, 7 August 2013

The danger of mosquitoes was that one particular type known as the *Anopheles* carried the deadly malaria virus which killed many of the early Samoans. We have witnessed this with the Samoans in southern Vanuatu, but the situation in PNG was far worse, costing the lives of many including other Islander missionaries and their families. Most common in letters by the Samoans as the cause of death was *fiva toto* (blood fever) or “black-water fever,” a complication of malaria. Malaria however was not the only killer, as introduced diseases such as influenza also caused havoc for the Samoans.

According to historians such as Wetherell, Feleterika Nokise and Ruta Sinclair, death and illness dogged the Islander missionaries and their wives from the start.²⁴ Of the recorded cases during the first fifty years of Samoan presence in PNG, from 1883 to 1933, thirty-nine Samoan missionaries were reported dead. This meant that thirty-nine Samoan women were left without husbands. During this same period, twenty-four Samoan missionary wives were recorded dead, making a total death toll of sixty-three adults. For children, there were seven reported cases but there could be more as the records were poorly documented. In several places in Gabagaba and Tubusereia where I visited with local guides, many of the graves of Samoans and their children, were

²⁴ Wetherell, “Pioneers and patriarchs,” p. 133; Ruta Sinclair, “Samoans in Papua,” in *Polynesian Missions in Melanesia*, ed. Ron Crocombe and Marjorie Crocombe, Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva, 1982, pp. 17–36, p. 17; Nokise, “The role of Samoan LMS missionaries in the evangelisation of the south west Pacific 1839–1930.”

without gravestones and some appeared to be graves for groups rather than individuals.²⁵



Figure 52. Left: *Local Deacon Idau Tauhura showing me unmarked graves of Samoans at Tubusereia. Photographed by Latu Latai, 1 August 2013*

Figure 53. Right: *Local Elder Hari Bore standing at the sight of Samoan unmarked graves at Gabagaba. Photographed by Latu Latai, 28 July 2013*

However, the recorded cases do show the severity of the suffering. A group of Samoan missionaries and their wives who arrived at Kwato station in 1891 suddenly fell ill from an outbreak of influenza and two of them died. Samoan missionary Ma'anaima who was part of this group later reported that when they arrived all of them fell sick and two of them, including his own wife Toe, died.²⁶ Henry M. Dauncey wrote that the other who died was "Enari the senior of the party."²⁷ Those who survived however continued to suffer and later died from either malaria or influenza. In 1893 Frederick W. Walker reported that,

Toma ... lost his wife at the close of the year ... one of the new men Taleni died on 27 December, and a week later, Mataese who was at Killerton Is. lost a three-month old

²⁵ Personal interview with Deacon Idau Tauhura, Tubusereia, 31 July 2013. Personal interview with Hari Bore, Gabagaba, 27 July 2013. In 1899, with the establishment of the Lawes College to train local men for missionary work at Vatorata, its chapel was dedicated to the lives of many Islander missionaries who had died in PNG. Samoan missionary Isaia Taesali wrote that on the windows of the building were inscribed the names of many Islander missionaries including the Samoans. On 28 July 1935 at the celebration of the 35th anniversary of Lawes College, the Rev. F.J. Searl recounted the history of the college and the vision of William G. Lawes for this school to train local Papuans to build on the work of those Islanders who had died for the evangelisation of their country. See *Sulu Samoa* (January 1901): 16; (November–December 1935): 76.

²⁶ *Sulu Samoa* (January 1907): 11.

²⁷ Henry M. Dauncey to Ralph W. Thompson, January 1892, Papua Letters, London Mission Society, the Archives of the Council for World Mission, 1775–1940, also cited in Ruta Sinclair, "Samoans in Papua," p. 17.

daughter ... the wife of Areli who was suffering from fever gave birth to a child who only lived a few hours. This made four deaths in as many weeks.²⁸

Several years later in 1899, seven Samoans died including the pioneering Siu, the wife of Timoteo, Paia the wife of Peau, Isola the two year old daughter of Fauolo and Mele and Samoan missionary Peteru.²⁹ Most tragic were the deaths of Mataese, his wife Filitusa and their three-month-old daughter.

The terrible mortality of these early years did not ease throughout the next three decades of the twentieth century. In 1901, a further two Samoan missionaries Reupena and Uinipareti died. Ma'anaima also reported that Noama, the wife of Tuvaluan missionary Peniata was seriously ill while Vaiea had just miraculously recovered.³⁰ Later that year, a whole group of new Samoan missionaries and their families got sick upon arrival. Everyone recovered except Imele the wife of Fania who died several days later. She was buried on the island of Saibai before she began any work on the mainland.³¹

Things continued to get worse as not a year went by without a Samoan or another Islander missionary or wife being reported dead. Some of the worst years were in 1905 when four Samoan husbands died and 1917 when five Samoan wives and three husbands died, making a total of eight in one year. Included in those who died was Siatigi the wife of Iese who died while giving birth to twins; the twins later died as well.³²

Although introduced diseases killed many Samoans, it was malaria that was the cause of so much suffering in the early period. Malaria was an excruciatingly painful disease that killed many within days of infection.³³ Fa'asiu related an account of a British man

²⁸ Frederick W. Walker to Ralph W. Thompson, January 1892. Papua Reports, LMS. Cited in Sinclair, "Samoans in Papua," p. 17. In 1896, Areli and Vaega's child died at birth.

²⁹ Enele S. Samasoni, *O le Lupe I Vaoese: O le Tala I le Galuega I Papua*, Mālua Printing Press, Apia, 1994, p. 128.

³⁰ *Sulu Samoa* (March 1901): 40.

³¹ Imele was sick on 28 May and died several days later on 9 June. *Sulu Samoa* (January 1902): 13.

³² LMS, "Samoan District Committee, Minutes of Meeting 1917," Pacific Manuscript Bureau, ANU, PMB 96.

³³ Missionary Hunt reported that the death of Areli in 1896 was sudden. Tofili wrote that Uinipareti who began to get sick on 9 March 1901 died three days later. And Peniata reported that Reupena who died on 15 May 1901 was sick for only five days. Samuelu I. and white missionary Pryce Jones also

in Port Moresby who committed suicide by shooting himself because he couldn't bear the pain of the disease. He wrote, "Behold! The terrible state of the disease in this country, it makes one want to be relieved quickly from the pains."³⁴ None of the Samoans however resorted to such measures although many experienced and witnessed first-hand the miseries of malaria. In 1906, Anipale and his wife Siata who were working at Toaripi, became ill with malaria. Anipale died while Siata's condition worsened. In the words of Samuelu, "Her whole body was lifeless, it was cold, her face hardened, her teeth grinding, she could no longer speak or see, all signs of someone who was dying, just a little breathing."³⁵

Samuelu's description of Siata's condition vividly shows the painful symptoms of severe malaria. Samuelu wrote that in the evening all the Samoan couples in their district gathered to support her in what seemed like her final hours. They held a prayer watch that night but in the morning she "miraculously" recovered. She later returned to Samoa with her daughter, Mele.³⁶

The lack of knowledge and awareness of the Samoans about malaria led to many being infected in the early stages. Early Samoans were not aware at the time that the *Anopheles*, which did not exist in Samoa was responsible for the spread of the virus. On top of this was their lack of knowledge about the symptoms of the disease, particularly the early chills that hit the body before the fever began. A Samoan was apt to walk in the rain, or in Abel's words "sit for half an hour on his verandah in the teeth of a strong wind."³⁷ Anti-malarial drugs like quinine were distributed but the side effects of the medicine meant that the Samoans often failed to take them regularly. In interviewing former Samoan missionaries and wives, they all related how taking the medicine was hard because of its taste, as well as the nauseous effect they felt afterwards. In the latter years however the Samoans became keenly aware of the

reported Iopu who became sick on 27 May and died on 5 June 1909. T. Feliki also reported that Apineru at Daru who was sick for three weeks, died on 14 February 1912. Peniata also reported the death of Vaega, the wife of Aso who became sick on 22 June 1913 and died on 3 July. See *Sulu Samoa* (July 1896): 254; (September 1901): 102; (September 1909): 133; (June 1912): 154; (December 1913): 182.

³⁴ *Sulu Samoa* (December 1893): 182.

³⁵ *Sulu Samoa* (January 1907): 11.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Charles W. Abel, *Savage Life in New Guinea The Papuan in Many Moods*, LMS, London, 1901, p. 169.

dangers, and thus tried to protect themselves leading to greater improvement in health.³⁸

Samoans also died at sea while they were on their way to and from PNG from infectious diseases like influenza. We have seen this with Maene who died while returning with Vaiea after their furlough in Samoa.³⁹ Another case was in 1900, when four Samoan missionaries; Peau, Neemia, Siutu, Toma and two of the Samoan missionaries' children died while they were near the shores of New Zealand on their way to Samoa. All were buried in Auckland while their wives and the rest of the group continued on.⁴⁰ This must have been heartrending for the wives who were anticipating spending time in Samoa with their husbands. These cases reveal the harsh reality of travelling and of epidemic diseases at the time. They also show the extreme risks of undertaking such a vocation in this period.

But one of the most tragic cases was in 1931, when a disease outbreak killed seven Islander missionaries and their wives while at their annual conference at Moru. Those who died included two Tuvaluan teachers, one Tokelauan couple, and two Samoans: Pulega, the wife of Tuliau, and Faaleo, the wife of Solo.⁴¹ Later Solo gave a sad account of their return voyage to Samoa. He wrote that their group included women and children who had lost their husbands, husbands who had lost their wives, and children who had lost one or both of their parents. In total there were twenty-five of them, seventeen children and eight adults. Upon arrival in Sydney, news of this sad voyage was published in a newspaper highlighting the tragedy of the many children who were left without parents.⁴² When Islander missionaries and their wives gathered again at Moru the following year, Luaao the wife of Setu wrote that it was an extremely sombre

³⁸ See Wetherell, "Pioneers and patriarchs"; Sinclair, "Samoans in Papua"; Nokise, "The role of Samoan LMS missionaries in the evangelisation of the south west Pacific 1839–1930."

³⁹ *Sulu Samoa* (February 1908): 18.

⁴⁰ *Sulu Samoa* (January 1901): 16.

⁴¹ The Tuvaluan teachers were Tausi and Ripine and the Tokelauan couple was Opa and Tausese. *Sulu Samoa* (May–June 1932): 36.

⁴² *Sulu Samoa* (November–December 1932): 82. Also on this voyage were the children of Reuelu and Fita who had both died, and the Tokelauan Vaniale and his children whose wife Lesia had also died.

occasion as they remembered many who had been taken away since their last gathering.⁴³

The impact of diseases shows that everyone, including children, suffered greatly. In many cases Samoans contracted malaria or influenza upon arrival and died soon after.⁴⁴ Some had only been working in PNG for a short period before they became sick and died.⁴⁵ The wives who survived were faced with the heartbreaking reality of not only the death of their husbands but also of enduring the traumatic pain of losing their children at very young ages. Samoan wives thus experienced the difficulty of bearing and raising children in PNG. Many were recently married before departing for mission, so many of the wives were pregnant on arrival. To be exposed to such dangerous diseases thus proved fatal for many of their children.

Accounts of the deaths of Samoans were published in the *Sulu Samoa* and also related by those who survived and returned to Samoa. During the Annual General Assembly at Mālūa, Samoan missionaries and their wives gave accounts of their mission experiences. In front of the women's assembly, Samoan wives also gave personal accounts of their mission work. Some of the notable accounts were by Fa'afoa whose husband Timoteo had died in PNG; in 1911 she gave a moving account of the loss of her husband.⁴⁶ In 1923 in front of an audience of Samoan women Lea also gave a sad account of how they had only worked for two years in PNG before her husband Enosa died.⁴⁷ In these women's gatherings, the names of the wives who had died in foreign mission were also read out. Such moving accounts gave those at home a glimpse of the tragic reality of missionary work.

But despite such tragedies, Samoan missionary wives were extraordinarily brave and persistent. Epenesa, the wife of Tipa, who worked at Mauada at the Fly River, urged

⁴³ *Sulu Samoa* (May–June 1933): 43. In 1928, Initia Nemaia gave an account of their meeting in which they remembered the death of Sau Ripine. During a memorial service, Taulafo Falemaa, encouraged the women that despite malaria and other diseases, as well as the dangerous animals and the darkness of the people, they should be strong and be faithful to their calling. *Sulu Samoa* (April 1928): 46.

⁴⁴ *Sulu Samoa* (January 1907): 11.

⁴⁵ There are several examples of these cases. For example, Reupena who worked for two years until he died in 1901; Uinipareti who had been working with his wife Ema at Sualo died in 1901 after working there for only one and a half years.

⁴⁶ *Sulu Samoa* (May 1911): 95.

⁴⁷ *Sulu Samoa* (September 1923): 104.

her husband in her dying wish to go back and continue the work in Papua. “Tipa, continue to be strong in the work in New Guinea, do not stay in Samoa, but return to our work at Mauada.”⁴⁸ Vaiea as we have seen was also determined to work in PNG despite the loss of her husband.

The heartbreaking accounts of the deaths of the Samoans thus presented PNG as a dangerous missionary field. As we will see, the Samoans, through their written accounts, began to portray these physical and health challenges as “dark” and “savage.” But, as the early Samoans continued to work in PNG, they also came to realise that the physical environment and diseases were not the only challenges; there were the people themselves and what they considered to be their “shocking” customs. Hence, the “dark” and “savage” mission field was soon equated by the Samoans with the state of the spiritual “darkness” of its people.

Encountering a “savage” people and the call to tame the new mission field

The early impressions by the Samoans of the people in PNG were harsh. They criticised what they considered to be their “appalling” customs and religious beliefs. It is important to note that at this stage, much had been transformed in the religious views and beliefs of the Samoans. As we have seen, Samoan missionaries and their wives in their training at Mālua and Papauta, had absorbed much Biblical knowledge as well as Christian values and morals. Hence this is reflected in much of their writings and perceptions of the cultural and religious practices in PNG.

In the early decades of their mission, the Samoans wrote about the many local religious customs and practices they found to be “senseless superstitions.”⁴⁹ Filemoni and Mataese who were at Milne Bay, wrote about how “appalled they were at the people’s stories of origins traced to animals.”⁵⁰ Paulo who was at Dogura wrote about how people “were engrossed by religious taboos such as the spilling of blood.” For example when a pig was killed or when a woman gave birth to a child, the whole

⁴⁸ *Sulu Samoa* (November 1900): 4.

⁴⁹ Almost all the letters by Samoan missionaries at this stage refer to these customs and practices as irrational untrue and pointless. Such a view resulted in their destruction of local religious artefacts and their fearless attitudes towards local priests.

⁵⁰ *Sulu Samoa* (July 1896): 136 and 235.

village would cease working.⁵¹ Ieremia and Fuaau at Moru wrote about how people believed that the spirits of their ancestors dwelt in the mountains.⁵² Such religious beliefs and practices were considered to be “absurd” by the Samoans.

Other religious practices were adjudged by the Samoans as “shocking” in particular those associated with death rituals. One of the most graphic descriptions of a death ritual was given by Naite who at Samarai island in 1902. He wrote,

This is the main idol of worship by the people in this region where we are working. When someone dies, then pagan customs are performed. They will sit the dead as if he is alive, then beautiful feathers are brought to adorn the dead with other decorations, making the dead look as if it was alive. Coconuts are then scraped and the oil from it is squeezed on the body until it glistens; the shredded coconut left over is then kept, packed in a piece of cloth and hung on the ceiling of the house until the day when they go out fishing for a feast. They will take the packet of shredded coconut and then scatter it in the sea. If there is a big catch then it means that the dead is pleased.⁵³

He further wrote that in mourning, the relatives of the deceased paint their bodies in charcoal for three years during which time they do not bathe. The gardens and crops of the deceased are left to rot, while others are pulled from the ground. Naite then wrote to those in Samoa, “Can you see how these people live in the shadow of extreme darkness?”⁵⁴ Samoan practices concerning death rituals had long been condemned in Samoa since the arrival of white missionaries. And although ancestral worship was part of the religion of Samoa before the advent of Christianity, such practices concerning the preservation of the dead for worship was a novelty for them.

But one of the most profound preoccupations in their writings was to do with the treatment of women in PNG. Samoan missionaries and their wives expressed astonishment and gave graphic descriptions of what they considered “degrading” customs related to women. As we have seen in accounts by European missionaries and

⁵¹ *Sulu Samoa* (November 1908): 172.

⁵² *Sulu Samoa* (September 1913): 139.

⁵³ *Sulu Samoa* (July 1902): 92.

⁵⁴ *Sulu Samoa* (July 1902): 92. He continued writing, “Arise and light your lamps and put them on top of the lampstand so that it will shine to those in all the houses, but do not put them under the bushel where the wheat is weighed.”

their wives about women in southern Vanuatu, a similar tone is now heard in the accounts of the Samoans concerning women in PNG.

In 1899, Tuvaluan missionary Uele at Fife Bay wrote about women who gave birth in the bush where the baby was sometimes left abandoned.⁵⁵ In other cases the woman in labour was left under the house on her own. He wrote about how these practices were heartbreaking for him. “The woman in labour is left under the house without anyone caring if she would live or die. When she is hungry, food is tied to a stick and then given to her.”⁵⁶

Such birthing practices although seen by the Samoans (as well as other Islander missionaries) as horrific, were based on local religious beliefs about pollution, whereby the woman and the baby were protected from harm, even from close relatives. But the Samoans at this stage, had been evangelised for more than half a century and such practices were seen as “savage” and cruel in their eyes. Even practices such as the tattooing of women which once thrived in Samoa before the arrival of Christianity were greatly condemned. Fa’asiu wrote about the tattooing of women at Hisiu.

Their faces are all tattooed beginning from the head down to their feet ... one cannot see the good features even of a woman with a beautiful face ... because it is hidden by the tattoo, it makes them shockingly ugly ... damages their faces, but also, the pain they endure.... I can hear their weeping ... the sound of the tapping, on the head and the nose and the eyes which are all tattooed. I can only pity them.⁵⁷

Faasiu’s “pity” for the women was probably based on the fact that although women were also tattooed in Samoa, they were only tattooed on the thighs, not on the face as at Hisiu and other parts of PNG.

Samoan missionary wives themselves in their accounts of women at Mālūa also talked about the shocking treatment of women not only about customs relating to birthing and tattooing, but also heavy labour, arranged marriage, polygamy and death rituals.

⁵⁵ *Sulu Samoa* (July 1899): 203. He also wrote about thunder and when a woman is sick—her brothers will come and beat up the husband.

⁵⁶ *Sulu Samoa* (January 1901): 14.

⁵⁷ *Sulu Samoa* (May 1895): 67.

Fuatupe the wife of Tofili in 1914 said that women in PNG were in a “sad state of enslavement.”

The burden of women is that they carry the responsibility of caring for the whole family, as well as looking after the children.... When she is about to give birth, she is put in a space separated with mats where a fire is lit keeping her warm with her child until they are strong.... When their husbands die, their heads are shaven ... [they are tied] ... with ropes, then they wear long *titi* [grass skirts] and walk around wailing.⁵⁸

Sanitoa the wife of Iosua in her address in 1923 dwelled on the suffering that women faced when their husbands died. She said that “women suffer extreme pain ... they ... scratch their shaven heads with *pipi* shells [shell fish shells] as they wail on top of their husbands’ graves.”⁵⁹

In general Samoan missionary wives and their husbands in their graphic descriptions presented women’s situation as the epitome of the darkness in PNG. We must note however that by this time practices such as tattooing and polygamy had long been condemned by missionaries in Samoa. Moreover, practices to do with birthing and self-mutilation at death were a novelty to the Samoans. Samoan missionary wives also saw the heavy labour that local women did as very different to the work of women in Samoa. Such perceptions of the treatment of local women continued into the latter part of the twentieth century as we will see in the confrontations between Samoan wives and local people in PNG concerning the treatment of women (see Chapter 6).

Samoans thus found many customs and practices relating to religion and gender relations in PNG extremely “savage,” but they were also critical of local social and political structures. In 1896, Ma’anaima wrote about the lack of social hierarchy and order within PNG societies. “Their chiefs are not honoured; they are not respected like chiefs in Samoa. The chief is only known when there is war as he is a brave warrior; or during big feasts as he owns many pigs.”⁶⁰

Fa’asiu even wrote about what he considered to be the “wretched” state of families.

⁵⁸ *Sulu Samoa* (July 1914): 108.

⁵⁹ *Sulu Samoa* (September 1923): 104.

⁶⁰ *Sulu Samoa* (July 1896): 136.

The children are not kind to their parents when they are old and weak, they do not look after their parents but they search for their own food. When they grow up and get married, they do not think about food for the parents and the times when their parents looked after them when they were young. This is a very bad custom here.⁶¹

He went on to write that parents do not instruct their children and there was no sense of sharing among members within the family. He wrote that even children have their own separate gardens, which upon death are destroyed and cut down.⁶² Such depictions however were over-drawn as later accounts by Samoan missionaries and wives show that the Papuans indeed shared food and that family bonds were strong in PNG. Sinclair argues that such reactions by the Samoans were because they found the egalitarianism of Melanesia strange after their own close-knit hierarchical society.⁶³ This is likely true that Samoans' early perceptions of New Guinea were not only of a "dark" and "savage" field but of a chaotic and disorderly society. Even the diversity of local languages in PNG was linked by the Samoans to the people's lack of order and "darkness." Fa'asiu wrote,

It is their darkness that has led them to their beliefs. My opinion is this is the "Babel" that is established in their hearts as they are in a bad state and also they have so many languages. It is a "dark Babel", but it will one day become a spiritual Babel, when the Lord in his power destroys their bad beliefs, and God's governance shines into their hearts.⁶⁴

The Samoans came from a place where there was only one language. The majority of places where the Samoans had recently worked like Tuvalu, Kiribati, Tokelau and Niue, had little to no linguistic diversity. Hence they must have found the extreme diversity in PNG so challenging that those like Fa'asiu equated it with a "dark Babel!"

The image of PNG as a "dark," "savage" and "chaotic" field was clear in the writings of the Samoans. Fa'asiu, who was an early prolific writer, sums it up as he wrote, "There are so many difficult things in this country. Like the many difficult things in the sea and

⁶¹ *Sulu Samoa* (December 1893): 178.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Sinclair, "Samoans in Papua," p. 19.

⁶⁴ *Sulu Samoa* (May 1895): 67.

the land and water, so are the many bad customs and the stubbornness of the people.”⁶⁵

To the Samoans the only way to counter these “bad” customs and “stubborn” practices was to evangelise and convert them. Faasiu wrote that

if the sun of righteousness is shone, the story about Jesus, then they will abandon their inappropriate customs, but carry out righteous customs like people of the light; because the reason why they do these, is ... the darkness upon them; as in the words of the Apostle John: “Their eyes are blinded by the darkness, they do not know where they are going.”⁶⁶

Samoan missionaries and their wives thus set out to transform local people. Despite the challenging nature of PNG, they were quite determined to confront it. But, as we have seen, the enormous challenges of PNG meant that the work was hard and soon they began to plead to those in Samoa to join them. Fa’asiu wrote to the students at Mālua, “You must remember the harvest that is so large, but the workers are few;... implore first the Lord who owns the land and who owns the wheat on the land to send workers for his wheat and gather them at his permanent wheat-storehouses in heaven.”⁶⁷

In 1899, Naite wrote,

Brothers, where are you digging gold? It is true, the gold in Samoa is almost pure. But in New Guinea, there are thousands and thousands of good gold buried in the earth, they are still mixed with bad things. Hence, I wait for you my brothers in Samoa. There is only a few of us facing the digging of the gold.⁶⁸

In 1901, Tuvaluan missionary Uele and his wife Kataraina wrote,

We are now in a village inland of Kapakapa [Gabagaba], the village is very far inland. This is a new district ... of New Guinea. It is only us beginning to clear this forest. How will it be done? Are there any brave and strong young men and women to help us in this difficult work? Let those strong young

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 68.

⁶⁶ *Sulu Samoa* (December 1893): 182.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 182.

⁶⁸ *Sulu Samoa* (July 1899): 184.

men in Mālūa, come and help clear this forest.... Remember this difficult work in your prayers.⁶⁹

These extracts are examples of many such letters written by Samoan missionaries and their wives appealing to those back home to join in the effort to evangelise PNG. The tone of the letters reflects a sense of the enormity of the task they were facing but it also portrays an image of PNG as a “savage” land: a huge “wheat field” that needed to be harvested; a “dark forest” that needed to be cleared in order for the light to penetrate; a land mixed with “gold” and “bad things” with the need for many diggers to extract the pure gold buried deep in the earth. Such strong metaphors suffused letters by the Samoans. Some of the metaphors like “wheat” and “gold” reflect introduced Biblical idioms which the Samoans had come to learn in Mālūa and now used in their descriptions of PNG. They also show how they used them theologically to describe not only the harsh physical environment but also the social and moral challenges therein.

But such metaphors were also combined with the language of war: the mission in PNG was portrayed as a spiritual battle with the devil. Fa’asiu wrote,

The devil wishes that the fever and other difficult things that are in this country are to cause fear to the army of fighters of Jesus. So that he [the devil] will be able to run free with the thousands and thousands of people in this country, so that they won’t be able to hear the story of salvation.⁷⁰

Such representations of PNG were not confined to the Samoans but they were also common among English missionaries. Alongside the appeals of the Samoans were the many requests by English missionaries.⁷¹ Archibald E. Hunt who was visiting the Samoans in PNG also wrote a pleading letter to Samoa,

⁶⁹ *Sulu Samoa* (May 1901): 55.

⁷⁰ *Sulu Samoa* (December 1893): 182.

⁷¹ Letters of request by English missionaries James Chalmers, William Lawes, Abel and Hunt in Port Moresby asked for three Samoans for Port Moresby, one for the school at Kwato, one for Saroa at Gabagaba, one needed inland of Vatorata, and one to assist Chalmers in the Fly River. After a meeting of LMS white missionaries at Gabagaba, Hunt and Chalmers especially encouraged returning Samoans to urge those in Samoa to volunteer for mission. Koae reported that before he departed Chalmers told him, “When you go to Samoa, remember to strongly encourage the hearts of the young pastors, and the church in Samoa to be strong in the work in New Guinea.” In 1898 English missionaries continued asking for Samoan teachers. Chalmers wrote asking for three teachers. Lawes who was now the Secretary of the Papua District Council (PDC) in New Guinea reported on the great impact of the

Samoa, awake! There is a New Guinea person standing on the beach calling out to you. "Come to New Guinea and help us." What is Samoa's answer to this call? Mālūa, awake! Do not sit in silence.... There is here a place to take up war against the dark things. Stand up and be warriors for this difficult fight.⁷²

In 1898 the Samoan LMS Church answered this call with the arrival of more Samoan couples. James Chalmers in particular expressed his joy at the teachers who had just arrived.⁷³ In 1911 missionaries reported that there were forty-four Samoan couples in PNG, showing the increased support from Samoa.⁷⁴ But despite the annual supply of Samoans at this stage, missionaries in PNG continued to send requests. In Samoa, LMS missionaries in their sermons during the *Fonotele* at Mālūa also encouraged Samoan pastors and their wives to heed this call. Missionary J.W. Sibree in his sermon at the *Fonotele* in 1911 challenged the Samoans by recounting the history of Samoan involvement in the mission and then asking the gathering,

Do you think that your work these days is enough, if you compare the great things that your forefathers did?... have you answered the call from PNG for teachers? It is true there are 44 (F.S) Samoan pastors there. But what about the three that just went to New Guinea? 3! Only three. The Missionaries in New Guinea wanted 10.⁷⁵

Then he preached about how PNG should become Samoa's *tofi*, their God-given duty and responsibility. "We should not be discouraged, or go backward, we will not rest

Samoans and that they needed more of them; Abel in Kwato wanted three while Lawes wanted eleven couples. See *Sulu Samoa* (July 1896): 254; (October 1896): 260; (August 1898): 109; (August 1898): 110.

⁷² He also added a similar reference to gold mining:

There is gold in some parts of New Guinea. If white people know about this gold, they will come in numbers in order to have. They do not think about sickness and difficult things, but only the gold they will have that they think about it. We should do likewise. 'Do not think of sickness or other things... but think about the souls of people that we will have.' This is better than pearls, or gold. Hence, 'don't come in two or three,' as if Samoa has little love, but show your abundant love, come in great numbers, like 20 or 30 per journey." See *Sulu Samoa* (October 1896): 261.

⁷³ Chalmers' only disappointment was the lack of those who could speak English. Although English was taught at Mālūa, early Samoan missionaries were not always fully fluent in the language. *Sulu Samoa* (August 1898): 109–110.

⁷⁴ *Sulu Samoa* (July 1911): 103–106.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

until New Guinea is covered with the light, like when the seabed is covered with the sea.”⁷⁶

English missionaries both in Samoa and PNG thus encouraged Samoans to offer their services. Such calls, as we have seen, appealed to generational as well as national genealogies and loyalties. Letters of applications by Samoan missionary couples for PNG from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century reflect the willing responses of Samoans to offer their lives for the evangelisation of PNG. As in the words of Ierome who wrote in 1911 to the Committee for Foreign Mission,

My request in front of you is not to tie me down, but to release me to go this very year; because I am willing to begin this work as a representative of Samoa to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I am waiting on your side, but my wife and I and our families – there are no concerns.⁷⁷

At this stage, many of the students at Mālua were married to girls trained at Papauta. Like Vaiea many were touched by the accounts of women in PNG and were inspired to follow in their footsteps. As we have seen the language of work and war was used effectively leading to many who volunteered. Hence, despite the extremely “dark” portrayals of PNG as a land of danger and of a “savage” people, many volunteered and offered their lives for the mission. By the early decades of the twentieth century, the Samoans came to dominate the mission in PNG. Their admirable willingness and enthusiasm to bring the “light” to the Papuan people, however was soon tainted by their aggressive and violent approach in their evangelisation of PNG.

Confronting the “savage”: violence and early success

The early accounts by the Samoans show their incredible zeal to destroy local beliefs and customs they found to be “pagan.” Samoans often lamented the fear of local people due to their religious beliefs, hence they targeted the local priesthood like magicians and sorcerers whom they saw as the advocates of local religious customs and beliefs. In 1896, Mataese wrote about his confrontation with a rain-maker at Killerton Island. At a local feast he attended, he wrote that after saying a thanksgiving

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Letter by Ierome to Committee for Foreign Mission, 31 January 1911, LMS, Letters in Samoan 1874–1946, Pacific Manuscript Bureau, ANU, PMB MS 1278–05, (digital copy).

prayer he asked for the rain-maker to stand up, but knowing what the Samoan missionary would do, the rain-maker was too afraid to reveal himself. Then Mataese said to the gathering, "Stop this nonsense that man cannot rule over the things of God; stop wasting your pigs on this lying person, he cannot rule the rain, only God rules over our bodies and our spirits."⁷⁸

The Samoans were thus hostile in their encounter with local religion. They not only attempted to discredit local religious beliefs but also to destroy the powers and authority of the local priesthood. This they did by preaching about the authority of only one God, the Christian God. This is despite the fact that often spiritual figures or ancestral spirits were seen to have both positive and negative powers. In demonstrating their spiritual superiority the Samoans also destroyed local "idols" and other sacred objects, which were seen as the embodiments of gods or ancestral beings. Samoans were known to cut down posts in the villages embellished with carvings which were erotic in detail.⁷⁹ At other times they would throw out sacred objects to test the ability of local religious priests saying if your god is stronger than mine, let him kill me!⁸⁰ Ma'anaima, who was also renowned for his confrontations with these religious men once picked up a sorcerer's *hautabu* or magic stone and heaved it into Milne Bay.⁸¹ As carvings and idols were believed to embody magical potency, the Samoans destroyed many sacred objects. Masks, paintings and carvings were assailed because they were held in Old Testament teaching to be "idolatry," an offence in the eyes of God. The Samoans were trained by evangelical missionaries, dissenters of the Anglican tradition who broke away from the continual use of icons, statues and religious images in worship, such as the Christian Catholic tradition. Thus the Samoans were acting upon lessons learnt during their mission training at Mālūa. English missionaries themselves were encouraging such practices in PNG, as related by

⁷⁸ *Sulu Samoa* (July 1896): 235.

⁷⁹ Wetherell, "Pioneers and patriarchs," p. 134.

⁸⁰ Vaoita Alesana, interviewed by David Wetherell, Leone Samatau, Tutuila, 1 October 1971; T. Afatoa, interview by David Wetherell, Saroa, PNG, 16 February 1971. Quoted in Wetherell, "Pioneers and patriarchs," p. 142.

⁸¹ Charles W. Abel, Diary, 11 February 1906, Abel Papers, University of Papua New Guinea. See also Wetherell, "Pioneers and patriarchs," p. 140.

Paulo when he accompanied missionary Henry Percy Schlencker on a visit to Borgu where they encountered huge idols in 1905.⁸²

There is no question that aggressiveness and violence were early features of Samoan evangelism in PNG and they were soon criticised for their high-handed approach, not only in confronting local religion but also in their attempts to convert local people. In 1898, Ne'emias wrote about how when he first arrived at Kopuana at Kabadi, he asked the people whether they wanted him to work in their village. But the people replied, "The reason why we don't want the Samoans is because they are violent, they beat us, break our pots, beat our children and cause violence."⁸³ The use of violence however was widespread, including by other Islander missionaries. Even before the arrival of the Samoans, Lawes raised this concern when he complained that, "The teacher shouts and storms, scolds and whacks the desk with his stick, until the poor little mortals are half-frightened out of their wits. One cannot wonder that they don't care to come to school, the wonder is that they learn anything at all."⁸⁴

The use of force by Islander missionaries thus abounds in the accounts of LMS English missionaries and foreign observers. In the early decades, two Papuan dancers at Keabada were imprisoned by an Islander missionary for nine weeks for refusing to stop dancing.⁸⁵ At Kerepunu two Islanders, most likely Samoans were sentenced to four and six months' gaol respectively for assaults upon Papuans.⁸⁶ In some cases Islander missionaries resorted to the use of sticks and firearms. Samoan missionary Tuata, at Duabo in Milne Bay was accused by villagers of punishing their children unreasonably.⁸⁷ Another Samoan Fo'isaga was removed for "beating the natives."⁸⁸ At Maipua, Latoro (probably Rarotongan), seeing Papuans fishing on Sunday, discharged

⁸² *Sulu Samoa* (June 1905): 66.

⁸³ *Sulu Samoa* (August 1898): 104.

⁸⁴ William G. Lawes, Journal 23 July 1877, LMS, New Guinea Collection, PMB MS 707 (microfilm).

⁸⁵ *British New Guinea Annual Report*, 1898–1899, p. 67, PMB DOC 312 (microfilm). Cited in Wetherell, "Pioneers and patriarchs," pp.148–49.

⁸⁶ Albert Pearse to Ralph W. Thompson, Kerepunu, 11 June 1906, LMS Letters, Papua Letters, National Library of Australia, Canberra, PMB MS 40 (microfilm).

⁸⁷ Charles W. Abel to Ralph W. Thompson, 21 Nov. 1910, LMS Letters, Papua Letters, National Library of Australia, Canberra, PMB MS 40 (microfilm).

⁸⁸ David Wetherell, "Christian mission in Eastern New Guinea 1877–1942," Ph.D. thesis, The Australian National University, 1974, p. 90.

his shotgun with the subsequent remark, "Well, they had no right to go fishing on Sunday, besides it was only number five shot."⁸⁹ Another boy was shot by a Polynesian for singing on the Sabbath. He later recovered after his assailant had nursed him back to health.⁹⁰

According to David Wetherell, the violence was "used more extensively by Samoans than any other immigrant group in British New Guinea."⁹¹ But, as clearly seen, the violence characterises all Islander missionaries at the time. Perhaps the reason why the Samoans stood out was because once they arrived they soon dominated the mission in PNG, and because of their numbers, more incidents of violence were attributed to them.⁹²

Several reasons could be attributed to the violence of the Samoans in particular. Wetherell argues that their violence was due to the status of Samoan missionaries as *feagaiga* or covenants in Samoa. Thus the reason for Samoan violence lay in Samoan assumptions. "If deprived of food the *faifeau* [pastor or Samoan missionary] probably felt their position was threatened, and by using physical force attempted to protect their status."⁹³ It is unlikely that such a claim to violence was entirely due to the status of the Samoans as *feagaiga*. Rather there were many complex reasons for such violence.

The early Samoans and Rarotongans were often used by English missionaries to break down traditional religious systems. The Samoans, like their other Polynesian counterparts, were heavily built men, and in the beginning their muscular energy enabled them swiftly to overwhelm brawling Papuans, separate warriors and enforce reconciliation.⁹⁴ English missionaries often praised the peace-keeping activities of

⁸⁹ Cited in Wetherell, "Pioneers and patriarchs," p. 149.

⁹⁰ John H.P. Murray, Diary, 3 Feb. 1906, Sydney, Mitchell Library.

⁹¹ Wetherell, "Christian mission in Eastern New Guinea 1877–1942," pp. 81, 87, 90.

⁹² There is also a great possibility that other Islander missionaries often termed as "Polynesian teachers" or "South Sea Islanders" were grouped together as Samoans. Whatever the case violence was definitely a feature in the early period of evangelisation amongst all Islander missionaries.

⁹³ Wetherell, "Pioneers and patriarchs," p. 148.

⁹⁴ The records of mission stations in southern New Guinea provides ample acknowledgement of the peace-making activities of the Samoans and Rarotongans. The Polynesians were often acknowledged for this and the risks they sometimes ran in rescuing people in difficulties. See Wetherell, "Pioneers and patriarchs," p. 134.

Islander missionaries, yet when stability and progress were achieved, Samoan violence was then greatly condemned.

Another reason is the perception of PNG as a violent place. Ruta Sinclair writes that one of the greatest legends in Samoa is that the cannibals of Papua ate Samoans in the early days.⁹⁵ This is despite the fact that none of the Samoans were killed or cannibalised by local Papuans. Accounts of cannibalism and attacks on foreigners however were known to the Samoans. Perhaps such a legend derived from the stories of the Cook Islanders who were massacred at Kalo in 1881 and allegedly eaten.⁹⁶ This was later perpetuated with the killing of Chalmers by the people of Dopima. The early Samoans thus knew about stories of cannibalism. Ma'anaima himself once showed Marriot a tree marked with thirty notches, each for a cannibal meal formerly held there.⁹⁷ Cannibalism was understandably seen by the Samoans as a threat to their lives.

But the Samoans themselves, despite their large muscular bodies, had threats of violence from local people. Ma'anaima for example had threats of poison and warnings of violence at Bou. The Samoan missionary Fetui and his wife at Aird Hill were also threatened with death in 1914 with hundreds of bows and arrows found in a plan to attack the mission station.⁹⁸ Hence there was a perception of the violence of PNG and of its people, and it was perhaps this that influenced the Samoans to be forceful and violent.

Such perceptions of PNG as well as of the Melanesian region in general however can be traced to early European explorers who according to Margaret Jolly characterised islanders as endemically hostile, both in their indigenous relations and in response to foreign visitors. Melanesian men were imaged as warriors, men of war who were

⁹⁵ Sinclair, "Samoans in Papua," p. 17.

⁹⁶ Elena Govor, Chris Ballard and Deveni Temu, *The Kalo Massacre and Reprisal, 1881: A Collection of Documents*, The Australian National University, Canberra, 2014.

⁹⁷ Wetherell, "Pioneers and patriarchs," p. 141.

⁹⁸ *Sulu Samoa* (August 1914): 114. Fetui wrote that he was concerned about people from the inland who were trying to attack them and was worried about the safety of his wife and children. He also wrote about the lack of missionaries. Only he and Benjamin T. Butcher were working at Aird Hill. He also referred to the need for a missionary where Chalmers had been killed.

typically seen armed with arrows and spears.⁹⁹ Such perceptions of PNG and of Melanesian societies, as Jolly argues, continue to linger on in how violence is perceived in the Pacific today.

But it is also important to note that such violence was due in part to the religious fervour of the Samoans and their belief in Christianity as the true religion. The Samoans, as we have seen in their writings, were determined and passionate. Such determination is shown in their use of the language of “work” and “war.” Hence there was a genuine zeal amongst them to destroy old religious beliefs in PNG. In the words of the pioneering Timoteo, “The gardens of New Guinea must be wiped out. Useful things are to be grown.”¹⁰⁰

Moreover, there was frustration caused by the sense of the enormity of the task they faced and the slow progress in PNG. As Ma’anaima explained, the evangelisation of PNG “is like a plant that is grown under a deep forest that it is hard to grow; because it is shaded under a forest of many pagan people with their dark customs that are piled up overshadowing the Gospel.”¹⁰¹

Unlike other places where the Samoans worked like Tuvalu, Kiribati and Tokelau, the Papuans showed little interest in their religious teachings. Naite reported,

The work here is extremely hard. It is hard because of the different attitudes of these people. They do not show any kindness, even those who come to church. When we do our service, many do not listen properly. Some of them sleep during a sermon that I spent time preparing with all my heart. The work here is only for those with patience and endurance.¹⁰²

Wetherell went on to claim that the violent behaviour of the Samoans was also at odds with the dissenting traditions to which most LMS agents belong.¹⁰³ Although such a claim is true of their values, and it was certainly the case that white missionaries

⁹⁹ Margaret Jolly, “Epilogue: Further reflections on violence in Melanesia,” in *Reflections on Violence in Melanesia*, ed. Dinnen Sinclair and Allison Ley, Hawkins Press and Asia Pacific Press, ANU, 2000, pp. 305–24, p. 307; “Men of war, men of peace,” forthcoming.

¹⁰⁰ *Sulu Samoa* (April 1895): 54.

¹⁰¹ *Sulu Samoa* (October 1896): 262.

¹⁰² *Sulu Samoa* (July 1899): 183.

¹⁰³ Wetherell, “Pioneers and patriarchs,” p. 148.

portrayed themselves as men of peace, the history of the LMS mission throughout the Pacific saw how they allowed for violence and even for the trade of arms and guns in order to achieve political stability in their mission fields.¹⁰⁴ Hence, although LMS missionaries condemned violence, in reality in the Pacific they allowed for or even promoted violence in order to achieve their purpose. Christine Weir has shown how white Methodist missionaries in New Britain, allowed for violence by Fijian missionaries in order to achieve peace.¹⁰⁵ Hence the gap between pacific ideals and armed “pacification” is often the eclipse of one practice or form of violence by another. So in PNG, the claim that Samoans were the most violent is unfair. In 1919, Samoan missionary Peni wrote to those in Samoa and admitted that everyone, including white missionaries themselves, was embroiled in violence. He wrote,

I do not blame your concern, if you have heard stories about things that are done in Papua. No one is innocent, missionaries from Europe, or Polynesians, even Papuan teachers. I say this, not just with the beating that is rightful, but the beating that is excessive, or words that slipped out in a matter of a minute. One needs to get used to the language and behaviour of the people then he will be able to bear the challenges and the anger.¹⁰⁶

Peni thus revealed the difficulties and the frustrations of working in a very challenging environment not only with physical obstacles, but also with social and linguistic barriers. But, as he mentioned, although the Samoans were often blamed for being violent and aggressive, others including white missionaries themselves were not entirely innocent.

Unlike their husbands, Samoan wives at this stage were not known to be violent. Samoan wives however had the same frustrations and determinations as their husbands. In their addresses to the women in Mālūa they talked about how they were resolute in eradicating local practices, particularly the ones related to the treatment of women. As Vau the wife of Isaia in 1923 said to the women at Mālūa, “In my work I

¹⁰⁴ See Kerry R. Howe, *Where the Waves Fall*, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney and London, 1984.

¹⁰⁵ Christine Weir, “‘The Gospel came ... fighting is ceasing among us’: Methodist representations of violence in Fiji and New Britain, 1830–1930,” in *Reflections on Violence in Melanesia*, ed. Dinnen and Ley, pp. 35–52.

¹⁰⁶ *Sulu Samoa* (January–February 1919): 17.

tried hard to wipe out these pagan practices ... the burden that women carry and the many works they do and in looking after children.”¹⁰⁷

Hence, although Samoan wives at this early stage were not reported as aggressive, there are no records as to whether they disapproved of the force exercised by their husbands. Perhaps the missionary couples were perceived as complementary. The husbands dealt with the more dangerous, combative side of the work, attempting to convert locals by travelling and visiting villages. They were often exposed to the physical dangers and the indifference or even resistance of people which resulted in violent confrontations, while wives remained in the safety of the domestic space perhaps emulating the more Christian ideal of wife and mother. Many of them saw their influence in how they portrayed themselves as Christian and civilised women in their homes as “object lessons” for local women to emulate.¹⁰⁸ In the words of Lusa the wife of Poloaiga, “My belief is that the reason why my work was blessed, was because of the kindness of the wife of the pastor. The heathens are happy and become close because of a kind and loving heart.”¹⁰⁹

The presence of “kind and loving” Samoan wives thus offered a significant contrast to the combative aggression of their husbands. Lusa’s words suggest a certain perception of what a missionary wife was, someone who was mild and kind, in order to lure the “savage.” But it is important to note that this does not mean that they were less determined in eradicating customs they perceived to be “pagan.” The manner in which

¹⁰⁷ *Sulu Samoa* (July 1913): 109.

¹⁰⁸ Diane Langmore, “The object lesson of a civilised, Christian home,” in *Family and Gender in the Pacific: Domestic Contradictions and the Colonial Impact*, ed. Margaret Jolly and Martha Macintyre, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989, pp. 84–94; *Missionary Lives, Papua, 1874–1914*, Pacific Island Monograph Series, No. 6., University of Hawai‘i Press, Honolulu, 1989; “A neglected force: White women missionaries in Papua 1874–1914,” *The Journal of Pacific History* vol. 17, no. 3, 1982, pp. 138–57; Hyaewol Choi, “The missionary home as a pulpit: Domestic paradoxes in early twentieth century Korea,” in *Divine Domesticities: Paradoxes of Christian Modernities in Asia and the Pacific*, ed. Hyaewol Choi and Margaret Jolly, Canberra, ANU Press, 2014, pp. 29–56; Latu Latai, “From open *fale* to mission houses: Negotiating the boundaries of domesticity in Samoa,” in *Divine Domesticities: Paradoxes of Christian Modernities in Asia and the Pacific*, ed. Hyaewol Choi and Margaret Jolly, Canberra, ANU Press, 2014, pp. 299–324; Margaret Jolly, “A saturated history of Christianity and cloth in Oceania,” in *Divine Domesticities: Paradoxes of Christian Modernities in Asia and the Pacific*, ed. Hyaewol Choi and Margaret Jolly, Canberra, ANU Press, 2014, pp. 429–54.

¹⁰⁹ *Sulu Samoa* (July 1916): 80.

they influenced the local people concentrated more on building their homes as a sight of attraction for local women and children.¹¹⁰

It is possible also that not all Samoan missionary wives at this stage were timid or mild. Certainly several missionary wives in the latter part of the twentieth century did admit to administering corporal punishment in their Sunday and Day Schools. Such behaviour was a norm in Samoa right up until the 1980s. As Sinclair points out, the Samoans both in Samoa and in PNG, saw nothing wrong with using corporal punishment as part of Samoan discipline.¹¹¹ Even those Samoan missionary wives whom I interviewed about their work in the 1950s to the 1970s, said that they were doing it “out of love.” It is most likely therefore that early Samoan wives did carry out acts of violence particularly on children. The lack of emphasis on the violence perpetuated by women at this early stage is perhaps linked to what Jolly argues as the artificial distinction drawn by colonial and mission agents between domestic and public spheres in which violence that occurs in this realm (in this case involving women and children) is relegated to the “domestic” or “private” realm.¹¹² Hence in missionary accounts, more focus was given to the violence of men in the “public” sphere rather than the realm of women they perceived as “domestic.”¹¹³

Overall, the exercise of violence by the Samoans, particularly the husbands was widespread at this early stage. But it is also important to note that, despite our own negative judgments of the violent behaviour of the Samoans, in some places in New Guinea the Samoans are still respected today by local people for the manner in which they carried out their mission. According to Sinclair, the Papuans themselves certainly

¹¹⁰ Langmore, “The object lesson of a civilised, Christian home”; *Missionary Lives, Papua, 1874–1914*; “A neglected force: White women missionaries in Papua 1874–1914: Choi, “The missionary home as a pulpit”; Latai, “From open *fale* to mission houses”; Jolly, “A saturated history of Christianity and cloth in Oceania.”

¹¹¹ Sinclair, “Samoans in Papua,” p. 25.

¹¹² Margaret Jolly argues that this separation remains central to how violence is represented and responded to in the Pacific islands today. The focus of media and official discourse was usually on the “public” violence of criminals, aggrieved landowners, secessionist rebels, security forces and tribal warriors. See Margaret Jolly, “Epilogue: Further reflections on violence in Melanesia,” in *Reflections on Violence in Melanesia*, ed. Dinnen and Ley, pp. 305–24.

¹¹³ This however is no longer the case given the enormous attention on domestic gender violence in PNG and in the Pacific. See Margaret Jolly, “Introduction: Engendering violence in Papua New Guinea: Persons, power and perilous transformations,” in *Engendering Violence in Papua New Guinea*, ed. Margaret Jolly, Christine Stewart and Carolyn Brewer, ANU E Press, Canberra, 2012, pp. 1–46.

admired the Samoans “who considered physical prowess as a virtue.”¹¹⁴ This is the same impression I found during my visits where locals often reminisced about and expressed respect for the distinct “discipline” of the Samoans who worked amongst them.

The impact of the use of force by the Samoans was soon shown by the transformation they were witnessing. By the beginning of the twentieth century the progress of the mission was shown by the Samoans in areas where they worked. In places like Kwato, Fife Bay, Hula, Vatorata, Saroa and Port Moresby, the Samoans reported “improvements” in the attitudes of the people. At Kwato district, Apelu reported that people were beginning to be “friendly,” that they were now sending their children to schools, and were beginning to give freely to the church and look after their pastors.¹¹⁵ Tofili at Fife Bay wrote that the people in his church could read and write and they had a school of about eighty students. In his estimation, the church there was like that in Samoa with people more respectful during worship and some of his bright students taking turns to preach on Sundays.¹¹⁶ At Saroa, Mataio wrote that the people were now supporting their work, looking after them by providing them with food. In his own village, the local chief Tanukare and his wife Bakui were their great assistants in banning local dancing and other “pagan” customs.¹¹⁷ Samoan missionaries in these places were thus beginning to see a change in the attitudes of people. Ma’anaima at Kwato wrote that “the people’s fierceness has gone, except when you are too harsh on them. We can now go around and not be harmed, all doors are opened for the preaching of the Gospel.”¹¹⁸

Ma’anaima thus shows that harshness was counter-productive and therefore perhaps evidenced a change in the way that they carried out their work. This change led to more success and receptiveness from local people.

¹¹⁴ Sinclair, “Samoans in Papua,” p. 20.

¹¹⁵ *Sulu Samoa* (July 1899): 184. At the same time, Toma at Waralaea also wrote that people were changing. “They like to come to church and are now sending their children to school. They no longer look angry and unfriendly. There are no more wars/fightings as British laws are now enforced.” Ibid.

¹¹⁶ *Sulu Samoa* (November 1901): 129.

¹¹⁷ *Sulu Samoa* (August 1898): 105.

¹¹⁸ *Sulu Samoa* (January 1907): 11.



Figures 54a, b, c and d. Images of Kwato station in 1915 and 1916 showing progress of the mission. Kwato was where several Samoans like Ma'anaima and his wife Eme worked. Eme was known for her sewing classes from where William MacGregor ordered police uniforms in 1898. One of the images shows the son of Abel commanding what seems to be a group of local trained police at Kwato. Photos by Miss Eva Rousseau from Australia who was employed as a tutor to Charles Abel's children in 1915 and 1916. Held at the Abel's Collection University of PNG Library.

The Samoans had also introduced the *Faiga-Me*, a practice which began in Samoa and was started by the Samoans in Tuvalu and other fields, in which villages within a district gathered to collect offerings to support the Church. In PNG, this was developed into a week of festivities with dancing and sports competitions. Toma at Waralaea Milne Bay wrote of how the people were now enjoying the *Faiga-Me*.¹¹⁹ Ma'anaima reported a great gathering of about 500 people at Kwato station.¹²⁰ Similar progress was also witnessed in the areas west of Port Moresby, at Hisiu, Delena and Moru as well as islands in the Torres Straits.¹²¹ As the fierceness of the Papuans receded and the Samoans began to take control of the mission field, they began to further their influence on the people.

¹¹⁹ *Sulu Samoa* (July 1899): 184.

¹²⁰ *Sulu Samoa* (May 1908) 78.

¹²¹ In 1894, Faasiu reported of the good progress of the mission at Hisiu. But as Faasiu wrote this was also the result of the work of Rarotongan and Niuean missionaries as well as the pioneering work of the Lifuan and Marean teachers. In 1908, a letter from Faavae in Darnley Island wrote about the progress of the mission there. He wrote that there was now a ban on traditional dancing which was something that had "enslaved them." *Sulu Samoa* (March 1895): 34; (April 1908): 52.

Samoa missionary wives also made great strides in their work once they settled into the field. As we have learned with Vaiea, many of these women were trained as teachers. In 1916 at the *Au Toeaina* or Elders Council meeting it was agreed that graduates of Papauta should be recognised as qualified teachers in pastoral schools in Samoa.¹²² Thus many of the Samoan wives in PNG at this stage were trained teachers.

Teleai, the wife of Tovia, told the women at Mālūa about her school which had 170 boys and girls. Apart from the basic subjects such as reading and writing she also taught women how to weave mats and fans in the Samoan style, as well as how to make *lolo* or Samoan coconut oil.¹²³ Samoan wives also ran women's fellowships in which they conducted Bible studies and taught women how to weave Samoan crafts and how to sew and make introduced clothes. Early Samoans wrote about their frustration at the nakedness of the people and encouraged them to clothe their bodies. As Fauolo wrote in 1898,

It is a shameful thing in front of God not to have clothes, it is a sign of sheer darkness. They [Papuan] told me that they are poor. But I said to them that there are many ways to get clothes for them. Now they have accepted my advice and many have clothes.¹²⁴

Boxes of clothing and materials were sent from Samoa in the effort to "cover" the Papuans. In their accounts Samoan wives expressed their gratitude to those at Mālūa and Papauta for sending clothes and boxes of materials. Thus, as we have seen in places like Tuvalu, Samoan wives in PNG soon used their domestic skills to teach local girls and women sewing.

Samoa wives also continued in their role in educating children and in evangelising women. Despite the extraordinary conditions in which they worked, many of them persevered. Some of the early Samoan wives who were recognised for their work included Vaoita the wife of Alesana who was renowned for her contribution at Lawes College, and was a popular teacher there from 1904.¹²⁵ Ma'anaima and his wife Eme

¹²² *Sulu Samoa* (January 1916): 2.

¹²³ *Sulu Samoa* (July 1913): 109.

¹²⁴ *Sulu Samoa* (n.m. 1898): 37.

¹²⁵ LMS, "Papuan District Committee, Minutes of Meeting, LMS, 1931." Vaoita was the second wife of Alesana whose first wife Vaiese died in PNG in 1904. Alesana went back to Samoa and married Vaoita

were also held in high regard for their work at Kwato which was considered to be the most advanced of all LMS schools at the time. Sir William MacGregor who was then the administrator of British New Guinea at the time is recorded as ordering 100 trade boxes from Ma'anaima's class and 100 police uniforms sewn by Eme's sewing class.¹²⁶

Samoan wives were thus often held in high regard and as we have seen, many were committed in their role as wives; "help mates" in encountering the savagery of PNG. However, while Samoan wives and their husbands were increasingly recognised for the impact they were having, they were also increasingly criticised for attempting to impose their *FaaSamoa* on the local people. They were depicted as stern, authoritarian and paternalistic, treating the Papuans like children. Such criticisms of the Samoans, as we will see, were also based on racial ideals held by Europeans who were vilifying the Samoans' assertion of their authority over local Papuans as well as their claim to be treated like European missionaries in PNG. We have seen this in Tuvalu, and now it was surfacing in PNG.

Increasing criticisms and strained relations: Jesus is not a Samoan or Papalagi

In a sermon during the *Fono Tele* in Mālua in 1911, Sibree praised the hard work of the Samoans in PNG while at the same time criticising the way in which they tried to impose the *FaaSamoa*. He said,

The thing that is wrong about Samoan missionaries ... is that they try to take the *FaaSamoa*, and Samoan ways of thinking, or *Faapapalagi* in their work.... I had known some Samoan missionaries in the Ellice and Kiribati islands, they were good and righteous people but they were not useful to the work, their people had retreated because of this one thing. (I know there are many like these in New Guinea.) They have forgotten that Jesus is not a Samoan, or a Papalagi, his Church also is not Samoan or Palagi.¹²⁷

who was an exceptional student at Papauta. She was especially mentioned as one of the most impressive students and an excellent prospective teacher. At the end of year exams she came second in her class. See *Sulu Samoa*, (November 1901): 125.

¹²⁶ Charles W. Abel, Papua Report, LMS, 1898, p. 12. Also in Sinclair, "Samoans in Papua," p. 34.

¹²⁷ He also added "Although it is the same Gospel ... there are different ways in which the Gospel should be told, because of the different people ... New Guinea is different, Samoa is different, Tokelauans are different, Kiribati is different." *Sulu Samoa* (July 1911): 103–106.

Sibree's sermon shows that the Samoans were imposing a kind of Christianity that was closely linked to the *FaaSamoa* as well as to *Faapapalagi* or ways of the white people. As Sibree noted, this was a criticism of the Samoans in Tuvalu and Kiribati, and it was once again arising in PNG.

Much criticism of the Samoans was due to their insistence on the manner in which they were expected to be treated. The Samoans insisted that they be given the same privileges as in Samoa. During district festive gatherings such as *Faiga Me* or a celebration of a new church, the Samoans were known to eat separately according to the *faaSamoa* and seldom participated in tribal celebrations. The Samoans also expected that local people should take care of their needs. Talatonu for example related during their district conference, how he stressed to each village the status of the pastor as the covenant or *feagaiga*. He wrote that he said to the people, "The pastor, is the *feagaiga* of the village; The pastor works every day from the morning to the evening to educate children in order that they be wise, hence the village should care for the pastor every day."¹²⁸

Talatonu thus stressed to the locals that it was their responsibility to care for their pastors. As we saw earlier in Tuvalu, these expectations stemmed from their background in Samoa where the pastor and his wife's material needs were entirely catered for by the villagers in their covenantal relationship. They were given a major portion from a fishing catch or the most important part of the meat from a hunt, they lived in the best house, food and other provisions were taken care of, and so when they went to PNG they expected to receive the same treatment.¹²⁹

The Samoans were thus criticised for their emphasis on their status which was part of the *FaaSamoa*. This was also linked to the manner in which they carried themselves as well as their excessive emphasis on clothing. The Foreign Secretary of the LMS Ralph W. Thompson wrote after a visit to New Guinea in 1897 of the difference between the missionaries' "frank and easy English manner" and the Samoans, who were "stiff, and

¹²⁸ *Sulu Samoa* (September–October 1936): 71.

¹²⁹ Wetherell, "Christian mission in Eastern New Guinea 1877–1942," p. 80; Sione Latukefu, "Pacific Islander missionaries," in *Covenant Makers: Islander Missionaries in the Pacific*, ed. Doug Munro and Andrew Thornley, Pacific Theological College, Suva, 1996, pp. 17–40, p. 29.

standing on their dignity constantly.”¹³⁰ On a number of occasions Chalmers noted that the pastors tended to “ape the Popish system” or imitate the “solemn neck tied missionary” in their insistence on the title Reverend.¹³¹ On Sundays the husbands “appeared ... among pandanus-clad worshippers clad in waistcoat, neckerchief and collar. Sometimes he wore a frock coat and held an umbrella.” The wife on the other hand, would be seen as “stiff, orthodox, surrounded by black crepe and frills to the ankles.”¹³² MacGregor’s description of Samoan wives was harsher describing them as “great swells, big, ugly and in hats with great ostrich feathers.”¹³³



Figure 55. Pioneering missionary Sumeo and his family. Posted to PNG in 1883. The woman in the photo is possibly Evelina, his second wife. Sumeo died in PNG in 1900 while Evelina possibly returned home. The boy in the photo is probably Sumeo’s son to his first wife Saleima who died on the island of Onoatua Kiribati when they were missionaries there. The boy later became a pastor himself. The photo shows what seems like the Samoans’ emphasis on clothing which was often satirised by European observers. Photo held at the University of Southern California Digital Library.

¹³⁰ Ralph W. Thompson to Henry M. Dauncey, London, 10 March 1905, cited in Wetherell, “Pioneers and patriarchs,” p. 146.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Wetherell, “Christian mission in Eastern New Guinea 1877–1942,” p. 73.

¹³³ William MacGregor, Diary, 28 December 1890, Diaries 1890-1892 (microfilm), National Library of Australia. Cited in Wetherell, “Christian mission in Eastern New Guinea 1877–1942,” p. 73.

Once again Samoan missionary wives were regarded as overbearing with an air of high-mindedness and self-importance. When they accompanied their husbands on trips they were often described as strutting with a certain air of grandeur. This was a sight for the Papuans, but one Samoan wife said she “detested peeping villagers who found her an object of curiosity.”¹³⁴ Such descriptions depict the Samoans as proud, imposing their superiority on local people. The way that the Samoans dressed was seen as maintaining “status.” Their excessive emphasis on clothing was seen as a mockery compared with that of the more simply clad Europeans.¹³⁵ Such satire of Samoans’ new clothes by Europeans, as we have seen in Tuvalu, continued in PNG.

Several scholars have given reasons for this behaviour by the Samoans in PNG. According to Wetherell, “As the Samoan believed intensely in his cultural alliance with European Christianity, so he knew that the closer he resembled the Anglo-Saxon, the more respect would be accorded to him by Papuans.”¹³⁶ Although there is some truth in Wetherell’s assessment, it is also important to note that the adoption of clothes and the manner in which the Samoans dressed also reflected the particular form of Christianity that was developing in Samoa. Clothing like many other aspects of European religion and civilisation have been appropriated in what Nokise has termed *Kerisiano FaaSamoa* or Samoanised Christianity. Wearing trousers, *lavalava*, white shirt, black tie and a white waistcoat became their standard form of dress in accordance with their status as representatives of God in Samoa.¹³⁷ According to Sinclair, the fondness of the Samoans of European clothing may have been seen as preposterous by European missionaries and foreign observers, but to the Samoans this was seen as “showing reverence to God.”¹³⁸

Sibree’s criticism thus shows how the Samoans had integrated both aspects of *FaaSamoa* and *Faapapalagi* in what they considered to be their superior form of

¹³⁴ T. Afatoa, interview by David Wetherell, Saroa, 16 February 1971. Cited in Wetherell, “Christian mission in Eastern New Guinea 1877–1942,” p. 76.

¹³⁵ Wetherell, “Christian mission in Eastern New Guinea 1877–1942,” p. 73; “Pioneers and patriarchs”; Nokise, “The role of Samoan LMS missionaries in the evangelisation of the South West Pacific 1839–1930”; Sinclair, “Samoans in Papua,” pp. 19–20; Latukefu, “Pacific Islander missionaries,” p. 30.

¹³⁶ Wetherell, “Christian mission in Eastern New Guinea 1877–1942,” p. 76.

¹³⁷ Nokise, “The role of Samoan LMS missionaries in the evangelisation of the South West Pacific 1839–1930,” p. 150.

¹³⁸ Sinclair, “Samoans in Papua,” pp. 19–20; Latukefu, “Pacific Islander missionaries,” p. 30.

Christianity. But such criticisms also show the contradictions in European missionary ideas. Early missionaries and their wives who brought Christianity to Samoa stressed the importance of proper clothing and the Samoans had accepted this as part of being a “civilised” and “proper” Christian. This was also how Samoan missionaries and their wives were taught and trained at Mālūa and Papāuta. But the more the Samoans tried to exert themselves as exemplars of what a Christian should be, the more they were criticised and looked down upon. Such criticisms were particularly harsh for Samoan wives.

It is also true that the Samoans were forceful and quite demanding of local people. But it is also important to know that the Samoans were trying to teach locals to be self-sufficient. The Samoans learned early on that people were interested in coming to the mission for the wealth of European material objects, food and tobacco that were distributed.¹³⁹ The Samoans found it hard to break such habits and insisted that the Papuans should come out of their own free will. Thus they insisted that locals should not rely on the pastors to provide these things. They also stressed to them not to rely on the LMS to build their churches or fund their Christmas festivities and *Faiga-Me*. The Samoans thus encouraged the Papuans to take ownership of their churches, encouraging them not only to take care of their pastors but also to contribute to the LMS.¹⁴⁰ This was the way the Church developed in Samoa, and in other places where Samoans worked, hence the Samoans insisted that the Papuans should do likewise. Samoan missionaries were thus criticised for introducing a kind of Christianity that was intensely linked to the *FaaSamoa*. But the Samoans were also attempting as in the church in Samoa, for the Papuan people to be self-sufficient. In Samoa, this self-sufficiency, as we have seen, resulted in the greater sense of independence from white

¹³⁹ At Delena in 1829, Sione wrote that in the past the people loved dancing, but now they dance once a year. He also wrote that in the past people were only interested in the mission because of tobacco, but that there was a change in attitude as they were beginning to come willingly. *Sulu Samoa* (January 1929): 11–13.

¹⁴⁰ Talatōnu in particular said to the people that their offering should no longer be according to free will but there be a set amount. Hence, although Samoans encouraged Papuans to join the mission out of their free will they also stressed set offerings in order to boost competition. But local Papuans also played into the pride of Islander missionaries. Tuumalo wrote for example about a common practice introduced by Rarotōngans which were songs of praise for pastors. These songs were sung at such gatherings by the villagers and then the pastors would reward them with gifts of food and money. Tuumalo wrote that they were now trying to discourage this because it took a lot of time, and it has proved very expensive for the pastors. *Sulu Samoa* (September–October 1936): 71.

missionaries and perhaps in PNG, the Samoans were also encouraging such mentality upon local people.

The reputation of the Samoans in PNG was thus complex and contradictory, with accounts praising their work while at the same time heavily criticising it. But white missionaries were also weary of the Samoans' increasing demand that they be treated as equal to white missionaries. It is important to note that the mission church in Samoa was now largely funded by the Samoans themselves. The local clergy in Samoa had been ordained for several years now and white missionaries were slowly handing over authority to the Samoans.¹⁴¹ Hence Samoan pastors and their wives were increasingly asserting their rights to equal treatment with white missionaries and their wives. We have noted this attitude of the Samoans in the mission in Tuvalu and Kiribati, but the difference there was that the Samoans worked mainly on their own. In PNG they were now under the authority and scrutiny of white missionaries.¹⁴²

In 1913 demands by Samoans for better treatment in terms of their salaries as well as better conditions on mission ships were raised at the *Fonotele* in Mālūa.¹⁴³ At the time a delegation from the LMS Directors in London led by W.F. Adeney was present, and during the conference, the Samoans raised the matter about the salaries of Samoan missionaries in which Adeney, in a biting remark, responded, "I know this matter; but I also know that there are many pastors who are saving their money in banks in Sydney;

¹⁴¹ In 1875 the General Assembly or *Fonotele*, which included all Samoan pastors was instituted as a consultative body; 18 years later the *Fonotele* was strengthened by the addition of laymen from the village churches. In 1906 the *Au Toeaina* or Elder's Council was created with 45 members, most of whom were elected by the 150 ruling pastors. Hence more markedly than elsewhere, the pastors in Samoa developed an independence which placed them on a footing comparable with English missionaries. See Norman Goodall, *A History of the London Missionary Society 1895–1945*, London, 1954, p. 367; LMS, "Samoa District Committee, Minutes of Meeting, 3–8 May 1909."

¹⁴² It must be noted that even Samoan elders themselves in Samoa were criticising this mixing of the mission with the *faaSamoa*. In 1923, in a sermon at Mālūa, Sopoaga one of the Samoan Elders in Samoa stressed the need for the Samoans and white missionaries to work together and for Samoa to send the right teachers. He also stressed the need for the church not to be influenced by the *FaaSamoa* and the *FaaMatai*. He said, "Do not muddle the ways of the Church with the ways of the *FaaSamoa*. The Church should be honoured without mixing with ways of the country. We must remember there is a big gap and difference between the Church and Jesus Christ its foundation, and the ways of the world." *Sulu Samoa* (October 1923): 116–18.

¹⁴³ *Sulu Samoa* (June 1913): 93.

but despite this, I will inform the Au Matutua (Directors) about this very issue, and my view is that it will be done.”¹⁴⁴

We cannot be certain as to the truth of Adeney’s allegation but in that meeting the Samoans were truly dissatisfied with the way that their missionaries were treated. In that meeting the Samoans also raised the issue about the poor conditions of the rooms in which the Samoans stayed on the mission ship, the *John Williams*.¹⁴⁵

But despite these voices of concern from the Samoans, missionaries in PNG continued to demand a higher standard of quality Samoan missionaries. In 1916, in response to this demand, the Samoan District Council (SDC) assured the Papua District Committee (PDC) that “we shall be able to send our best man for the increasingly important positions they will be called to fill in the future work in the mission.”¹⁴⁶

Relations between Samoans and English missionaries were thus strained as the Samoans began to appreciate and even celebrate their demographic and political dominance. This added to the English critique of their harsh approach imposing a kind of Christianity that was seen as disrespectful of local cultural contexts. Such an approach clashed with the views of white missionaries in PNG who were at this stage beginning to see the need to appreciate the cultural values of local people.¹⁴⁷ Hence, despite the success of the Samoans, English missionaries were increasingly weary of the proud manner in which the Samoans carried themselves.

The voices of women are not heard in such debates but there is little doubt that they shared many of the views of their husbands. Most of them experienced the same difficulties of travelling and in raising their children in PNG. Under such extraordinary circumstances many continued to work and were quite successful in what was expected of them. Hence they felt that better care and treatment should be given to them as much as to white missionary wives.

¹⁴⁴ *Sulu Samoa* (December 1913): 178.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ LMS, “Samoan District Committee, Minutes of Meeting 18–19 December 1916.”

¹⁴⁷ See Diane Langmore and others on changing attitudes of English missionaries on local Papuan customs; *Missionary Lives, Papua, 1874–1914*, Pacific Island Monograph Series, No. 6, University of Hawai’i Press, Honolulu, 1989.

It is also difficult to assess what Samoan wives thought about the criticisms of themselves or the way that they were portrayed by European missionaries and foreign observers. It is most unlikely that they would have read such texts as these were in personal letters and diaries of white missionaries. Such criticisms, however, were harsh considering the sacrifices these women made. But, as we have seen in the words of Vaiea quoted at the start of this chapter, Samoan missionary wives often felt that they were looked down upon. Vaiea certainly felt intimidated by some of the white missionaries who visited her and, as she said, she felt like a plant that if it does not bear fruit was about to be “cut down and thrown away.”

But, as we have learned, many of these women were not “cut down” or “thrown away.” White missionaries knew how valuable they were; many of them worked on their own once their husbands died. Such deployment of Samoan wives shows the value they held in times when there were increasingly, urgent demands for Islander missionaries. But such circumstances, tragic as they were, also thrust these women into situations they had never experienced before such as being in charge of running churches in villages on their own. Thus, in PNG, we see that ideals about the roles and status of Samoan women as missionary wives were subverted and certain boundaries and perceptions about them were challenged.

Extraordinary women in extraordinary times

As we have seen, many of the Samoan missionary wives in PNG came from Papauta where they were trained by single missionary women. These English women were inspirational to the girls who aspired to become missionaries but, because of LMS policies, the only access they had to such a vocation was through their marriage to students at Mālūa.¹⁴⁸ Vaiea wrote in 1908 about common remarks amongst students at Mālūa about this. She wrote that during the time of examinations,

When the wife studies for the women’s exams, the husband would say: “Madam, if Tiu does not pass, Eleni will also not pass....” Damn! How repulsive! But never mind, as Peter once said: God does not prejudice people, he loves everyone who calls upon His name. And another thing, at the resurrection of Jesus, it was the woman, Mary Magdalene, whom Jesus first revealed to. Hence we women know the love of the

¹⁴⁸ Latai, “From open *fale* to mission houses.”

Lord.... But the thing that brings joy: God loves those whose parents have died and women whose husbands have died. The Lord uses those who are insignificant for his work, and reveals his loving heart to those who seemed weak and unwise.¹⁴⁹

Samoan missionary wives thus knew that their involvement in mission was subject to their husbands. But, as we gather from the words of Vaiea, many of them surely knew that their worth and their contributions were equally as important as those of their husbands. Vaiea was one of the few Samoan women at this stage whose writings were published in the *Sulu Samoa*. She expressed such sentiments about the importance of the woman in her exegesis of the Bible and her celebration of Mary Magdalene. Hence, although the status of these women was considered lower than that of their husbands, many of them knew of the significant value they held in the mission. Much of what was achieved at this early stage was due to their diligence and perseverance in assisting their husbands, and at times taking over on their own when their husbands died. PNG thus unintentionally and tragically provided for them the opportunity to work as missionaries on their own. Despite the sad context in which this occurred many of these women ended up fulfilling such personal aspirations, and spiritual ambitions.

In 1911 Vaiea went back to Samoa with her children.¹⁵⁰ The following year at the *Fonotele* she requested to return to PNG but this time she wanted to go as an ordained missionary. After a unanimous decision by the missionaries and Elders of the Church she was ordained along with a group of other Samoan missionaries and their wives on 14 October 1912. Her title was *Faifeau Tamaita'i mo Niu Kini*, Woman Pastor for New Guinea. Vaiea thus became the first ever ordained Samoan woman.¹⁵¹ Leiataua wrote of this historical occasion,

How joyful and thankful are the Christian brotherhood those who truly know about the usefulness of this new position. This year marks the first time that a Samoan woman is ordained to be called "Woman Pastor for New Guinea"... It is true that it is now almost a hundred years since the arrival of the *lotu* ... in Samoa. There had never

¹⁴⁹ *Sulu Samoa* (August 1908): 115.

¹⁵⁰ *Sulu Samoa* (March 1911): 44.

¹⁵¹ *Sulu Samoa* (January 1913): 9.

been a Samoan woman ordained and allowed to go to foreign countries, or in Samoa, to do on her own the work of Jesus Christ, no one.¹⁵²

Vaiea's ordination was a rare case which was never to be repeated in the LMS Church in Samoa. Vaiea was thus unique in her willingness to return to PNG as an ordained woman missionary, but it is likely that her views and aspirations were common amongst Samoan wives whose husbands had died in PNG at the time.

Another extraordinary woman was Tafu'e; although not ordained she continued to work on her own at Toaripi when her husband died. In 1913, Mrs. Ellice in a letter addressed to women in Samoa, gave an inspirational account of her work. She reported that missionary Dauncey who was in charge of the district expressed his joy with the work of Tafu'e. She wrote that "she has 89 boys and 76 girls in her school. The church there is well. More are being added to those who are eager for Jesus. Sundays are observed and several dark practices have been wiped out freeing them."¹⁵³

For the next sixteen years Tafu'e continued working on her own until she died on 30 September 1929. According to the Samoans of her district, she fell from her *fale popo* or copra house and injured her hand. She was helped by Totemese but the infection got worse. Despite the efforts of Missionary Rankin to save her she died. She was buried together with Lailoa, the wife of Laupepa who had also died there. After her death, Samoan missionaries wrote about how she was much loved by everyone including Dauncey who praised her commitment. Iosia wrote, "Although she was greatly hindered in her effort, she was determined to serve God.... She became a mother to the workers as she assisted in the physical side of the mission, especially with the sicknesses of the pastors' wives."¹⁵⁴

Tafu'e like Vaiea was an extraordinary woman. Their work seemed to break the boundaries of those perceived to be pertinent for a Samoan missionary wife. For Tafu'e she was an industrious woman producing copra, making a living for herself and the people she was working with. Although there was a continuing paradox in the domestic project in Samoa increasing women's public roles, particularly with the

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ *Sulu Samoa* (September 1913): 150.

¹⁵⁴ *Sulu Samoa* (March 1930): 45.

training of girls at Papauta, such work by a pastor's wife would have been seen as absurd in Samoa.¹⁵⁵ But this shows that Samoan wives in PNG were exposed to situations where gender boundaries were broken. Beyond the context in Samoa, where these gender boundaries were strictly observed, these women were accepted as missionaries on their own.

Most Samoan women in PNG at this stage however continued to work in their capacity as missionary wives to their husbands. By the 1920s and 1930s the Samoans were reporting on great improvement in areas where they worked. At Delena, Sione wrote in 1929 that they were now busy with the running of their schools. With the help of their wives they were now teaching boys and girls in Bible lessons and in other secular subjects. The wives were also teaching craft making to girls and women—such as weaving mats, fans and baskets etc. He wrote that church buildings were now beginning to rise with a change from locally designed and built churches to new concrete ones.¹⁵⁶ In 1935, S. Tu'umalo at Waima in Delena wrote that many of the pagan customs were eroding, "The work has been blessed; the churches are full, church members are many ... many people are happy, they are able to come near and under the tree of Jesus and his Kingdom."¹⁵⁷

At Hula, Talatonu Niutoa wrote about the success of their Christmas gathering and *Faiga-Me* in 1935. In the celebration, a new church was blessed and village offerings were read out. Those who achieved the set amount were given a prize of flags and tobacco presented by missionary Short. The gathering was a success as he wrote, "The whole field was filled, each village with a uniform, of silk wraps and silk dresses, it was a marvellous sight."¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ Latai, "From open *fale* to mission houses."

¹⁵⁶ He also wrote that they had a representative to the white Missionary meetings Simona through whom they requested that they have an annual meeting for all Polynesian missionaries. The motion was accepted. He also noted the increasing number of Papuan teachers now looking after many of the villages without teachers. This was the result of the success of Lawes College now at Fife Bay where more and more students were attending under Turner (Vatorata). He wrote that in the Port Moresby district many of the villages had been looked after by Papuan teachers for some time now. In Daru, Misi Raeli was also trying to hand over the work to Papuans while Polynesians moved to districts where there was still less progress. *Sulu Samoa* (January 1929): 11–13.

¹⁵⁷ *Sulu Samoa* (September–October 1935): 2.

¹⁵⁸ *Sulu Samoa* (September–October 1936): 71. By now the term missionary (MS – Misionare Samoa) was given to Samoan teachers.

Such impressive uniforms must have been due to the influence of Samoan and other Islander wives. In 1934, Faagu gave an impressive account of the mission in Daru district. He wrote,

My opinion is this district is far ahead in terms of the things of the church. The attitude of the people, they have kindness in their eyes and joy in attending church services, they also give freely to the pastors, and to any person. They do not cry for payment as they were used to. Everyone from old to the children are neat and tidy. This is why I am so proud because of the garden that was grown by past fathers and continued to be up-kept by the brothers who come here together with the prayers of our beloved country, and grown by our loving Father.¹⁵⁹

Faagu wrote that his wife and he were the twenty-first Samoans there, thus the long presence of the Samoans at this district revealed the impact they had.¹⁶⁰ Korua wrote in 1934 that, of all the villages in Daru, Mabudawane was the most impressive. He said that this village should be an example for other villages as, “they have been able to leave behind many of their customs, and their love of the Light of Christ is profound.”¹⁶¹ He also wrote, “They are also the most educated as now they have more people who have become teachers, some are working as medical doctors, some at boarding schools, while others are working for the government.”¹⁶²

After about fifty years of Samoan involvement in PNG the Samoans had come to have a very significant impact on PNG. Although other Islander missionaries from Rarotonga, Niue, Tokelau and Tuvalu also contributed, the Samoans stood out for the manner in which they carried out their work.¹⁶³ By 1930, the Samoan LMS Church had

¹⁵⁹ *Sulu Samoa* (July–August 1934): 63.

¹⁶⁰ He also reported that their district now had mostly Papuan teachers and they were the only Samoan couple and now there were twelve Papuan teachers—eight of whom were trained at Lawes College and four lay preachers.

¹⁶¹ *Sulu Samoa* (July–August 1934): 63.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ It must be noted that the early success of the mission in PNG was also connected to the British colonial government’s influence. Samoan missionaries noted this in the early period. Faasiu wrote in 1895 about the influence and help of the British government in deterring practices like cannibalism. But he acknowledged that there were many villages along the coast and inland which did not have teachers, and at these places, people still engaged in war and such practices as cannibalism. In 1914, Alesana at Moru reported the government takeover of education with a policy of compulsory education for children between 5 and 14 years of age. Sione in 1928 also wrote about the Australian government’s involvement in providing prizes for students at each school to boost competition. But despite this some Samoans were also apprehensive about government involvement. Fa’avae for

sent out the largest group of Samoan missionary couples to PNG, totalling 290.¹⁶⁴ This was about 75 percent of the total number of Samoan missionaries sent overseas by this time. The first fifty years was the most intensive period of Samoan mission in PNG. The increased number of the Samoans coupled with their tenacity was having a profound impact. However, as we have seen, as they came to dominate the mission in PNG English missionaries also became increasingly weary with the manner in which they were carrying out their work. Such concerns led to the SDC regretfully informing the PDC in 1926 “that only one candidate has come forward complying with the conditions laid down in their resolution of March 1925.”¹⁶⁵ In trying to solve this problem the SDC considered the important qualities of the pastors’ wives. In 1928, the SDC asked the PDC whether they would consider candidates offering for services whose wife could speak English.¹⁶⁶ Hence, the wives of pastors became a significant consideration in the appointment of Samoan missionary couples to PNG.

As we will see, the next wave of Samoan missionary wives in PNG would see many of them from Papauta who were far more advanced in their education, not only as trained and qualified teachers but also as mid-wives and nurses. Their educational and professional backgrounds were seen as valuable in the selection of the “right” missionary couple for PNG. Hence Samoan wives became even more crucial in the continuing efforts to “civilise” the Papuans. Many of them soon began working as professional teachers in mission and government schools and nurses in local hospitals in PNG. Such a shift continued to challenge ideals about the roles and status of a Samoan missionary wife. But, as we will see, the *FaaSamoa* and its conservative notions about the status of wives of pastors in Samoa persisted and the aspirations of women such as Vaiea were not heard of again.

example in 1908 was uneasy about how the Government was now taking over the school and he reflected on how their work was not complete without their involvement in the education of people. To them the schools were not run as efficiently as before and as a result the Reverend Benjamin T. Butcher had taken the matter to the government in Brisbane with a request for the schools to be given back to the mission. *Sulu Samoa* (March 1895): 34; (May 1914): 69; (April 1908): 52.

¹⁶⁴ According to Nokise the number of Samoan missionaries to PNG at this time was 175. My own research suggests otherwise. Nokise, “The role of Samoan LMS missionaries in the evangelisation of the South West Pacific 1839–1930,” p. 3.

¹⁶⁵ LMS, “Samoan District Committee, Minutes of Meeting 22 December 1926.”

¹⁶⁶ LMS, “Samoan District Committee, Minutes of Meeting 9–11 October 1928.”

CHAPTER 6. THE FINAL WAVE: THE PROJECT TO “UPLIFT” WOMEN IN PNG 1933–1979

In 1931, Lauli'i with her husband Faagu offered themselves for missionary work in Papua New Guinea (PNG). Lauli'i's inspiration for missionary work was likely derived from her background. She was the daughter of Ieremia and Tautu'u who worked as missionaries at Iokea, a village in the district of Moru in PNG from 1906. In 1908 Lauli'i's mother Tautu'u died from complications of malaria. Two years later, her father remarried Fesuaiga, the widow of another Samoan missionary named Iopu who had worked in the same district and had died from malaria in 1909. Lauli'i's father with his new wife Fesuaiga continued working in Moru until they returned to Samoa in 1918. Lauli'i thus spent her adult years in Samoa but she never forgot her childhood experiences in PNG. Her decision to go back to the place where her parents had worked and where her mother had died shows her willingness to continue the work of her parents as well as her own commitment to the evangelisation of PNG.

Upon arrival in PNG, Lauli'i and Faagu were located in Daru, which was one of the most successful districts for the mission. In 1940, almost a decade after they arrived, Samoan missionary Aketi gave a rousing account of the mission there. He described full Sunday worship and how congregations were attentive and respectful. He also wrote glowingly of the generosity of the people.

The people look after us by providing us with food.... Every week, a deacon inspects our kitchen house to see whether there is enough food for the week. Food is then supplied until there is enough, except when there is a famine ... but they do not forget to check and give assistance for our physical needs. We do not pay, they also do not wait for payment. They also take care of our children ... they do all these things willingly without being told.¹

Aketi reported on how the people had also taken ownership of the church. They were now paying for the work of Papuan teachers in Daru as well as those who were evangelising in other parts of the mainland. Moreover, he saw order and proper governance of their affairs. He wrote that “before they had no chiefs, no governments but now they have those who govern and make decisions.”²

¹ *Sulu Samoa* (September 1940): 142.

² *Sulu Samoa* (September 1940): 142.

Aketi also reported on the great work of Lau'i'i who had formed a committee of women for the promotion of hygiene in the village where she worked. In shared uniform the committee carried out visits every Wednesdays and Saturdays in which they inspected the sanitation of the village and peoples' houses. He wrote,

They inspect houses to see whether the floors are cleaned, whether a shelf is built to store pots, kettles, bowls; whether there are new mats for the house, whether the kitchen is clean, the rubbish burned, used tins and cans thrown away, and whether pillows and mosquito nets are washed. In the morning, they supervise the drinking of children's medicines. They give assistance in birthing, give advice to pregnant women and lessons on child care. Some days when Lau'i'i is busy, the women do the work themselves. This makes the government representative in Daru, and the doctor who takes care of this region very happy. I believe this is also the first Women's Committee in the whole of PNG.³

The impact of the work of Lau'i'i and her women's committee was evident in the appearance of the village as well as the people. Aketi wrote that the people were very clean and tidy,

They bathe, change their clothes, comb their hair, others like to practise European styles.... Sunday clothes are kept cleaned, and are not used for everyday use. It's amazing how clean they are when they come to bring food to the Pastor, the food is brought with plates that have been washed cleanly.... When they smile their teeth are beautiful and white between lips that are pitch black. I have seen some with tooth brushes and toothpaste.⁴

Aketi also dwelled on the pride and a spirit of competitiveness amongst villages, not only in their offerings during the *Faiga Me* but also in their sports, dancing and singing competitions. Later, in 1946, Aketi reported on their *Faiga Me* which involved a whole

³ Ibid., Penelope Schoeffel suggests that the Tolai women in East New Britain under the Methodist mission were among the first Papua New Guinean women to form Christian women's fellowships in the 1920s. Since the 1870s, wives of European and Pacific Islander missionaries offered religious instruction, domestic training, literacy classes, and new skills such as mat making to Tolai women. By the 1920s, the ministry was mainly indigenous and the wives of these men encouraged the formation of women's groups in their parishes. These were the earliest collectivities of Tolai women who did not form groups in pre-missionary times but were among the first Papua New Guinean women to do so as Christians. See Penelope Schoeffel, "Women's associations in the rural economy of the South Pacific: Case studies from Western Samoa and East New Britain Province, Papua New Guinea," Occasional Paper 19, South Pacific Commission, Noumea, 1983, pp. 11–12.

⁴ *Sulu Samoa* (September 1940): 142.

week of festivities, including a choir-singing competition where villagers were adorned with beautiful and colourful uniforms.⁵ Lauli'i, with the help of other Samoan wives and wives of local Papuan teachers designed and sewed the uniforms. He wrote: "The choirs' uniforms looked striking, and the performances impressive. They were well taught and competitive."⁶

Lauli'i was part of the new wave of Samoan missionary wives who worked in PNG from the 1930s onwards. Like Lauli'i, many were descendants or relatives of previous missionaries in PNG and were inspired to continue the work of their parents and predecessors. Many of them continued to be moved by successive accounts of returning missionaries and their wives. When they arrived in PNG many of them found that in several areas, much progress had been made and their work seemed to consolidate the efforts of their predecessors. This consolidation saw further transformation in places like Daru. As reflected in the descriptions by Aketi, notions of "savagery" and "darkness," encountered in the earlier period were now being gradually replaced by notions of Christian civilisation signalled by the material transformation in dress, housing, health and cleanliness of the people. Such transformation shows the continual link made by the Samoans between the physical and spiritual transformation in PNG. Samoan wives played a significant role in such transformation. Most of them were educated at Papauta and Atauloma where training in nursing and sanitation were pioneered in Samoa. These women also came from a period in Samoa when women organisations such as the Women's Health Committees and the Samoan London Missionary Society's (LMS) Church's Women's Conference were at their prime.⁷ As we gather from Aketi's accounts, Samoan missionary wives

⁵ *Sulu Samoa* (April 1946): 62.

⁶ Ibid. He also wrote that during their *Faiga Me* the village with the largest offering had its name engraved on a shield which was brought from Sydney. Ieremia wrote that, "This practice of paying the salaries of their own pastors had been going on for four years, but it has been two years since they competed for the Shield."

⁷ At this stage the Samoan LMS Church's Women's Fellowship was one of the most thriving organisations in Samoa. As we have seen, this organisation had always been involved in supporting Samoan missionaries in PNG by sending supplies of clothes and money. Hence they were well organised and financially self-sufficient. In 1945, a letter from the New Zealand Ladies (Women's) Auxiliary group expressed their appreciation and admiration of the Samoan LMS Women's Fellowship's success in governing and funding their own organisation without assistance from the LMS Church. In 1949, a letter from the women of the LMS in London expressed their gratitude to the TPT or *Tautua Puapuaga Tagata* (Serving People in Suffering), a branch of the Samoa LMS Church Women's Fellowship for the gift of £160-16s-9d that they had donated for the aid work of the LMS amongst the people in Germany who suffered from WWII. The Samoan LMS women's fellowship was thus able to make donations worldwide.

like Lauli'i were industrious, preoccupied with organising health committees, conducting inspections, improving sanitation and the general health of the people. On top of these, they also organised and ran women's groups where they continued to teach domestic skills in sewing, weaving and cooking. Many of these women were also qualified teachers in Samoa and were posted to work in mission as well as government-run schools in PNG.

As we will see, the roles of this new wave of Samoan missionary wives were much more expansive. They did not just focus on the spiritual side of the mission, but more and more on the development of secular education and health in PNG. This saw the shift in the roles of Samoan wives as more of them entered into the public space working in places away from the mission station and domestic sphere. Hence we will see how this shift complicated the larger project of the mission to domesticate women. The efforts of Samoan wives to transform the roles and status of women in PNG continued to be a challenge as local ideas about gender continued to persevere. Such challenges, as we have seen elsewhere, were due to the values that local women held dear in their own customs and traditions as well as the continual paradoxes inherent in the lives of Samoan missionary wives. Moreover, despite stories of success by the Samoans, we will see that the vastness of the mission field in PNG meant that the impact of the mission was sporadic and in many places Samoan missionary wives still found themselves facing similar challenges to those earlier years. Hence, we will see how the perduring notions of "darkness" and "savagery" continued to persist, particularly in remote and impenetrable places like the Gulf and the deep interior.

Progress and the persisting image of "savagery" in the Gulf and the "dark" interior

As the new wave of Samoan missionary wives arrived in the 1930s, the situation in PNG was beginning to improve. A notable improvement in the health of Samoans is shown by the significant drop in the number of deaths during the last five decades of Samoans in PNG from 1933 to 1979. For the first thirty years from 1883 to 1913, about 57 Samoan husbands and wives died. The next 30 years from 1913 to 1933 saw a drop

See *Sulu Samoa* (October 1945): 156; (December 1949): 183. For the development of women's groups and organisations in Samoa, see Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop, *Tama'ita'i Samoa: Their Stories*, Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva, 1998; Penelope Schoeffel, "The origin and development of contemporary women's associations of Western Samoa," *Journal of Pacific Studies*, vol. 1, no. 3 (1977): 1–22.

to about 21 deaths; and for the next 46 years from 1933 to 1979 about 13 deaths.⁸ This drop was due to better treatment of malaria and other infectious diseases, and much more awareness about how to take care and avoid contracting them. There was also some progress in the relationship between Samoans and English missionaries, with decreasing concerns raised about the performance of the Samoans.⁹ But, although there was some improvement in working relations, persistent tensions were still witnessed concerning the Samoans' insistence on equal treatment both in terms of their salary and the amount of work they were doing compared to white missionaries. Sea travel, however, did not improve despite the fact that there were no further accounts of death during travel to and from PNG in contrast to earlier periods.¹⁰ Saifoloi who travelled to PNG in 1946 wrote of the terrible conditions on their voyage when fourteen couples with their children were made to occupy one room and many ended up staying on the deck beneath a tarpaulin that had holes in it. Those on the deck were exposed to the cold and wind, and when it rained, the water seeped through the tarpaulin. Those who occupied the cabin suffered from the heat and the overcrowding. When they arrived in PNG, he wrote that their bodies were weak from sickness and the lack of rest. He urged the LMS, "We ask the Committee in charge of

⁸ Breakdown of recorded Samoan deaths: 1883–1913: 42 husbands and 15 wives; 1913–1933: 10 husbands and 11 wives; 1933–1979: 13 husbands. Children overall 13 recorded deaths.

⁹ Attempts at reconciling such differences were seen in the 1940s when English missionaries began to give support and assistance to the annual South Seas Conference. The conference, which brought Islander missionaries and their wives together in fellowship and to discuss issues and concerns relating to their work, was now attended by all Islander missionaries from the Gulf in the west to Fife Bay in the east. In support of this, Islander missionaries were given travelling allowances to attend the conference and a representative of the English missionaries also attended, showing their support. During these conferences, the wives of Islander missionaries also conducted their own services with local women in which they encouraged each other in the work of the church. *Sulu Samoa* (September 1940): 132.

¹⁰ We must also note that sea travel was still difficult at this stage. Samoan missionaries either travelled on the mission ship the *John Williams* or company ships which frequented the Pacific at the time. For the *John Williams*, its route was usually via Tuvalu, Kiribati and Suva before heading straight to PNG. On company ships the usual route would be via Auckland, Sydney and Brisbane before PNG. In some cases, conditions were comfortable but on others it was terrible, as Faoliu reported on their voyage on the *Lark* from Apia to Suva in 1940. He wrote, "Our bodies were laid on the deck, with a tarpaulin that hung low with the weight of the rain, as it was raining heavily during the days of our journey, the water leaked from the tarpaulin and kept us awake like a cloud that was full of water." See *Sulu Samoa* (January 1941): 11–12. See also Frances Steel, *Oceania Under Steam: Sea Transport and the Cultures of Colonialism, c. 1870–1914*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2011.

travel not to send pastors for this work in this ship. There are not enough rooms for passengers for such a long voyage as this.”¹¹

After heeding such complaints, the LMS finally purchased the new mission ship the *John Williams VI* in 1949.¹² In his report of its inaugural voyage to PNG, Fuafiva wrote that conditions were far better and their voyage took just thirteen days and thirteen hours, much faster than previous ships which took more than a month.¹³ But despite some improvements, sea travel at the time was still a harrowing experience, particularly for Samoan wives. Many of them left Samoa shortly after marriage; hence many had young babies while others were in the early stages of pregnancy. Lupeline who travelled on the *John Williams* in the 1950s talked about the long journey and the difficulty she faced as she was pregnant along another Samoan wife.

There were times when it rained and the sea was rough. Oh! The waves would splash onto the ship. Ruti and I we were both carrying. And were always seasick and it was such a long journey. When we arrived and left the ship it was like although we were walking on land we still felt the swaying of the ship.¹⁴

Sea travel thus continued to be a challenge until the 1960s when the Samoans began to travel by planes.

In terms of the progress of the mission, the new group of Samoans would find that, in general, churches in PNG were thriving, particularly in places where the LMS had a stronghold and where Islanders had been working for many years. We have seen this in Daru but this was also witnessed in other areas along the coast particularly from the central south towards the east to Fife Bay. Lupeli reported in 1949 on how they were welcomed at Kwato, Fife Bay, Isuleilei, Lawes College, Gabagaba, and Port Moresby by floats of traditional warriors in decorated canoes. There was also much feasting,

¹¹ *Sulu Samoa* (January 1947): 62–64. On its return voyage the returning Samoan missionary Misifoa complained that there were only 9 beds for the 44 men, women and children returning to Samoa. Request was made to the white missionaries in Port Moresby for a solution but nothing was done. The Captain suggested that the ship make two trips but as most were eager to return to Samoa, they all had to bear the over-crowding and harshness of the conditions of the ship. See *Sulu Samoa* (December 1946): 190.

¹² The new ship was purchased with the donation of the children in Samoa which amounted to £2524-7s-8d. *Sulu Samoa* (May 1949): 68.

¹³ *Sulu Samoa* (September 1949): 134.

¹⁴ Personal interview with Lupeline Tagaloa, Samoa, 29 March 2013.

dancing, games, Boy Scouts' and Girl Guides' parades and services of worship.¹⁵ Such extravagant welcomes, which were to celebrate the arrival of the new mission ship the *John Williams VI*, were also viewed by the new arrivals as signs of the progress of the mission in these areas. Instead of the resistance that Islander missionaries and their families faced in the earlier period, this time they were welcomed with much fanfare. Fuafiva wrote, "It is amazing how wonderful the welcome that awaited us with all the worship, dancing and feastings ... the people were very much like Samoans in their kind and friendly nature."¹⁶



Figure 56. *Traditional war canoes at Kwato taken by Eva Rousseau around 1916 during a celebration or festivity. Perhaps a similar scene was witnessed by the Samoans when they were welcomed by a flotilla of Papuan war canoes in this eastern part of the region in the 1940s. Photo by Miss Eva Rousseau from Australia who was employed as a tutor to Charles Abel's children in 1915 and 1916. Held at the Abel's Collection University of PNG Library.*

The new group of Samoans was thus impressed with the transformation they were witnessing. It is interesting to note how characteristics such as "friendly" and "kind" were selected as good, and identified not only as part of Christian transformation but also of being Samoan. Hence their judgement of the progress of local people was based on how local people were akin to the progress of Samoans as Christians. In these

¹⁵ *Sulu Samoa* (May 1949): 75–78.

¹⁶ *Sulu Samoa* (September 1949): 134.

places, the newly arrived group of Samoan women expressed their appreciation of the work of those who went before them. Tumanu who was at Gabagaba in the 1940s told of how when she arrived the “people were already good Christians.”¹⁷ Lusa who also worked there in the 1950s tells, “The village where I was placed already had good sanitation. The women were experts at weaving baskets ... they were also prayerful. The people like to read the Bible....They were also good at interpreting the words of the Bible and listening to the Gospel.”¹⁸

Lusa told me that they were about the fourth Samoan missionary couple at Gabagaba and that progress had been made because of the many Samoans who had worked there prior to them. Mere, who worked at Mabuadan in Daru in the 1950s, also talked extensively about the successful impact of the previous Samoans. She said, “I was grateful and thankful for the work of my previous sisters. I was young in the work. In the past the work was heavy for those women, but during our time, the work was easier as we only concentrated on conducting worship and teaching the Gospel.”¹⁹

Mere talked about how the people took great care of them. Even when she was left alone with her children when her husband was away on his visits, she felt no fear as the people looked after their needs and supplied them with food.²⁰ Lusa witnessed the good nature of the Papuans as she said,

The funny thing, I think it was something that the Samoan pastors taught them; when we went away for a visit, the children would come and supply our house with firewood. We never had to instruct. The boys just came and gathered the firewood while the girls collected water. In the morning the children and the women would come and clean the pastor’s compound, and the whole village. These were the good attitudes of the Papuans. When they went fishing, they would always bring food for the pastor.²¹

The impact of the work of previous Samoans was thus acknowledged by the new group of Samoan wives. As we can see, early attempts by the Samoans to transpose ideas of

¹⁷ Personal interview with Lusa Fuatai, Samoa, 20 December 2004.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Personal interview with Mere Tiai, Wellington, 25 January 2005.

²⁰ Personal interview with Mere Tiai.

²¹ Personal interview with Lusa Fuatai.

a *feagaiga* or covenant between the missionary and the village seemed to have been taken on by local people: thus, while the missionary assumed the role of looking after the spiritual lives of the people, they in turn took care of the physical needs of the missionary and his family.

However, not every Samoan missionary wife in this period had such a warm introduction to PNG. Upon arrival in PNG the Samoans would find that despite fifty years of Samoan involvement in the evangelisation of PNG, the mission although thriving in some areas, still had not penetrated far inland. Moreover, the Gulf, which was one of the most difficult regions, was hardly evangelised. Samoan missionaries who were working in the Gulf continued to face the same challenges as those experienced in the earlier period.

Solo and Faaleo who continued to work around the mouth of the Fly River in the Gulf in the 1930s expressed frustration at the slow progress of the people. One of the difficulties they were facing was how material motivations continued to be a factor in conversion. He wrote that the people “consider coming to schools as ‘work’ but since they don’t get any pay, they do not see the point, preferring to work for the *papalagi* where they get paid with tobacco. The people prefer the old days when missionaries gave them tobacco, corned beef and clothes.”²²

Thus, we see how European material wealth which was initially introduced by missionaries continued to be a barrier to the efforts of the Samoans as they tried to encourage people to come willingly in these areas. Local people had associated the mission with European wealth and when they did not get any “pay” they opted to work for Europeans instead.²³ Saifoloi and Mafa who were at Urika also wrote in 1935 that in order to attract people they hosted a Christmas feast. He wrote that on the day, Urika was overcrowded with people as they attended to the feasting, dancing and

²²*Sulu Samoa* (May 1930): 76.

²³ The beginning of the twentieth century saw the increase in copra plantations and mining in PNG which gave local Papuans increasing opportunities for paid work. Copra had been manufactured from coconuts since the late-nineteenth century. Originally established by German colonists, they were superseded by Australian interests following World War II. Both the Australian and German plantations thrived, providing opulent living conditions for expatriates. Grand mansions were built on the plantations, complete with luxury furnishings. Mining began with the first significant discovery of gold on Sudest Island, Milne Bay in 1888. By 1894, gold and copper mining also began in the Gulf, particularly along the Fly River. See Hank Nelson, *Black, White and Gold: Goldmining in Papua New Guinea, 1878–1930*, Australian National University Press, 1976.

games after which gifts of tobacco were distributed. Although they felt that it was a success he also wrote that people only came because of the food and tobacco.²⁴ Solo and Urika thus continued to express their frustration. Solo wrote that it was only because of government laws that people attended schools “for fear of getting punished.”²⁵ Hence they showed little interest when they came to their schools. Solo wrote, “When I tell them to come and write on their stone tablets and try to learn, they complain and turn away, meaning they are not interested; it is only when I attempt to hit them that they would gather their tablets to write.”²⁶

The exercise of force and corporal punishment at schools thus continued to be a feature in the work of the Samoans, but as Solo also mentioned, this was also supported by government laws that enforced local people to attend their schools.

The accounts of the Samoans in the Gulf during this period continued to reflect earlier challenges faced by the Samoans.²⁷ Samoan wives like Olivia and Silomiga, who were posted in the Gulf in the 1950s, continued to witness the prevalence of ancient customs in these places which ranged from locals’ performances of “erotic and sexual” dancing, to sorcery and ancestral worship. Dancing in their eyes was the most popular obsession going on all night until morning. All-night dances however were quite common in the western Pacific as well as in Samoa. Although the movements might have been seen as erotic, they were often performed in celebration of major life milestones such as birth, circumcision, marriage and death. Because of their Christian training in Samoa, the Samoans found it quite hard to understand the intense interest of Papuans in these dances. As we have seen, Islander missionaries were quite adamant in banning such dances and, in many cases they used force to break them up. Attempts to eradicate erotic dancing were a common feature in the work of the LMS

²⁴ *Sulu Samoa* (July–August 1935): 63.

²⁵ *Sulu Samoa* (May 1930): 76.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ In his assessment of the Gulf in 1935, Saifoloi wrote, “I think it will take another hundred years in the future before all the people in this part will convert, it is because there are no pastors for the hundreds and hundreds of villages in the forest and coastal villages too.” Moreover, there were still many places where the mission had not reached and those who had just joined were often astounded by the many places yet to be evangelized. As Fakaogo wrote in 1936, “Our beloved Church, I had thought that the Gospel of Jesus Christ had completely enlightened the mass of New Guinea.... Please let it be known that the work is nowhere near complete, there are still so many mountains and valleys.” *Sulu Samoa* (July–August 1935): 54; (September–October 1936): 77.

not only in Samoa but in other places where LMS British missionaries first began their mission in the early nineteenth century.²⁸

Another practice which Olivia and Silomiga witnessed concerned the dead: when people died, they were exposed on platforms until there were only skeletons which were then stored in special houses.²⁹ Much has been written about death rituals and the preservation of skeletons which shows how such practices were integral to the religious beliefs of local people in the continual power and presence of the spirits of their ancestors and deceased relatives in their lives.³⁰ Such practices however were greatly condemned by the mission and also by the colonial government. According to Olivia, both white missionaries and the Australian Administration at the time worked hard to abolish such practices. Often this was legitimised on grounds of health and sanitation as much as Christian religion. Her husband was enjoined to make sure that after a funeral service, the body was soon buried. Upon reflection, Olivia and Silomiga expressed shock at the prevalence of these customs despite the years of mission in the region. Images of the “dark” and “savage” nature of local customs thus continued to prevail in their impressions of the Gulf.

²⁸ Kalissa Alexeyeff, *Dancing from the Heart: Movement, Gender, and Cook Islands Globalization*, University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu, 2009, pp. 36–46.

²⁹ Olivia Latai, “Personal story of my work in Papua New Guinea,” unpublished, Sydney, January 2005, p. 6; Personal interview with Silomiga Faiai.

³⁰ On the different methods used in the treatment of corpses in diverse parts of New Guinea see Margaret Mead, *The Mountain Arapesh*, vol. 1., Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, 2002, pp. 37–38. On Manus Islands see Reo F. Fortune, *Manus Religion: An Ethnological Study of the Manus Natives of the Admiralty Islands*, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, 1935, p. 13. On Massim see Maria Lepowsky, “Death and exchange: Mortuary ritual on Vanatinai (Sudest Island),” in *Death Rituals and Life in the Societies of the Kula Ring*, ed. Frederick H. Damon and Roy Wagner, North Illinois University Press, DeKalb, 1989, pp. 199–229. On “double funerals” see Robert Hertz, “A contribution to the study of the collective representation of death,” in *Death and the Right Hand*, trans. Rodney Needham and Claudia Needham, Routledge, London, 1960, pp. 29–88. See also Maurice Bloch and Jonathan Parry (eds), *Death and the Regeneration of Life*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1982. On how deceased are revealed in folklore, dreams, and visions to respond to their descendants’ offerings and influence their fortunes and misfortunes see Pamela J. Stewart and Andrew J. Strathern, “Dreaming and ghosts among the Hagen and Duna of the Southern Highlands, Papua New Guinea,” in *Dream Travelers: Sleep Experiences and Culture in the Western Pacific*, ed. Roger Ivar Lohmann, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2003, pp. 42–59; K. Burrige, *Mambu: A Melanesian Millennium*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1995, p. 252. On the Tangu of northeast see Roger Ivar Lohmann “The role of dreams in religious enculturation among the Asabano of Papua New Guinea,” *Ethos* vol. 28, no. 1 (2000): 75–102; “Supernatural encounters of the Asabano in two traditions and three states of consciousness,” in *Dream Travelers*, ed. Lohmann, pp. 188–210.

Moreover, Samoan wives in the Gulf also continued to experience the harsh challenges of the physical environment.³¹ Silomiga told of how travelling was difficult, especially when there was something urgent, like when one became ill and had to seek help from the nearest hospital.³² Olivia told of how, when she had contractions for her second baby, two young men had to paddle from Karaulti to the main station at Aird Hill to inform the missionary to send his boat to take her to the hospital at Kapuna (see Map 1). The distance was about sixty miles and it took the whole day for these young men to paddle.³³ Several of the women told of how this was a major worry for them, especially when their children succumbed to fever.³⁴

Despite improvement in mortality and progress in the mission in some areas, offering to serve in PNG continued to be a challenging and difficult experience. Samoan missionary wives who arrived in the 1950s often lamented the “darkness” of the Gulf and many of the areas inland along the coast. Several of the Samoan wives that I interviewed expressed their fear of the inland or the “bush” as they called it. White and Samoan missionaries continued to visit these interior regions and although Samoan wives remained within the confines of the villages they worked in, they developed foreboding images of the bush. Lagisi who worked in Gabagaba in the 1950s said, “The mountain is dark, the people kill each other ... those people were heathens.... Sometimes they come to the villages where we were working with arrows.

³¹ Although there were few accounts of deaths due to malaria at this period, Samoan wives in the Gulf continued to be cautious of contracting the disease. Mere wrote that during the heavy rainy seasons, they walked around with fans to scare off the mosquitoes. It was hard to do any work, and sometimes she had to do her ironing inside a mosquito net. According to Olivia, “In the swamps of the Kikori river they were in constant danger of malaria, crocodiles as well as snakes.” See Mere Tiai, “Personal story of my work in Papua New Guinea: 1956–1962,” unpublished, Wellington, n.d. p. 3; Olivia Latai, “Personal story of my work in Papua New Guinea,” pp. 3–4.

³² Personal interview with Silomiga Faiai.

³³ Olivia Latai, “Personal story of my work in Papua New Guinea,” p. 11.

³⁴ Olivia related how her new-born baby survived cerebral malaria, the worst strain of malaria that usually ended in death. Silomiga told of how her four-month-old baby came down with fever and almost died. She told of how it was difficult for them to find a doctor and they had to travel by canoe to find medical help. They finally got help from a nun who was a nurse at a Catholic mission station deep inland. Moreover, because of such distances in the Gulf, many Samoans were stationed in isolated places with only Papuans in their midst. Mere and Olivia spoke of how they sometimes felt lonely at these places when their husbands went on visits that lasted several weeks. Olivia Latai, “Personal story of my work in Papua New Guinea,” p. 15; personal interview with Silomiga Faiai.

But God is a loving God as we were never attacked.”³⁵ Mere also wrote from Daru, “The villages in the bush were very poor. The people there were fierce and savage. They like to lure the missionaries and then eat them. But villages in the coast where the Gospel first arrived were more progressive.”³⁶

A particular contrast is thus constructed in how Samoan wives saw the coast where the mission had progressed as against the impenetrable places in the Gulf and the inland where it was “dark” and “savage.” In these areas, ideas about cannibalism and violence continued to saturate notions of the social and physical challenges. Despite the reported success in some parts of PNG, such dark images continued to persist even into the mid-twentieth century. Hence many who volunteered in this latter period were still inspired to offer their services for the continual effort to bring the “light” to those areas which were still in “darkness.” Some of them like Lau’i who grew up in PNG and experienced the challenges of the mission, nevertheless chose to go back and continued to follow in the work of their parents.

A new wave of Samoan missionary wives: Generations and genealogies

As we have seen in the earlier account of Lau’i, many of the Samoans who volunteered in this latter period were influenced by their families’ background, where parents, grandparents and other relatives had previously been missionaries in PNG. Several of them were born there and grew up in PNG before they returned to Samoa at the end of their parents’ mission. Thus mission work became a family tradition. Sons and daughters of Samoan missionaries followed their parents’ and relatives’ footsteps. Just as being a pastor became a family tradition in Samoa, so it was with being a missionary overseas.³⁷ There were many examples of this pattern. Timoteo M. who worked in PNG from 1900 was the son of Timoteo and Siu who were one of the first two Samoan missionary couples in PNG in 1883. Tema Korua who worked in Daru in the 1950s with his wife Olita, was the son of Korua and Perelini who were also missionaries in Daru from 1913 to 1933. There was also Urika who worked with his wife Oomi at

³⁵ Personal interview with Lagisi Leota, Auckland, 7 March 2012. This Christian iconography also continues to exert a major influence in other places like Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, where the “dark bus” is linked to heathenism; savagery and underdevelopment.

³⁶ Personal interview with Mere Tiai.

³⁷ Nokise, “The role of Samoan LMS missionaries in the evangelisation of the South West Pacific 1839–1930,” Ph.D. thesis, The Australian National University, 1983, p. 45.

Saroa from 1968 until they returned in 1971. Urika was the son of Saifoloi Leleua and Mafa who, as we saw, worked at Urika from 1934 until Saifoloi died in 1950. Urika was also the grandson of Saifoloi and his wife who were appointed to PNG in 1908. Urika's family thus had one of the longest associations with the mission in PNG.

This trend was not only confined to the men's families but also it also characterised women's genealogies. Lili Maina, the wife of Livigisitone who worked at Lawes College in Fife Bay in the 1950s, was the daughter of Maina and Luama who worked near the Fly River from 1898 to 1911. Silomiga Faiai, who with her husband Ailani, worked in PNG from 1960 to 1966, was the great-granddaughter of Manualii and Siuta, who had been Samoan missionaries in PNG in the early-twentieth century. Silomiga told of how she visited the grave of her great-grandmother who died and was buried in PNG.³⁸ Mere also told of how when she and her husband applied for mission work in 1953, this inspired her sister and her husband to offer their services the following year.³⁹ Such a pattern shows how Samoan women were often motivated because of the inspirations and influence of their own families. Tumanu who worked in PNG from 1946, told of how her stepmother, who was a pastor's wife, influenced their decision to go. She said, "I was happy to go, because I was the one who told my husband to submit a letter. My stepmother persuaded me; she was a pastor's wife. She told us when we graduated from Mālūa; 'If you don't find a parish here, offer to go to Papua.'" ⁴⁰

For others, the motivation to go for the mission was based on their own deep sense of calling. We have learned that the sermons and personal accounts of returning Samoan missionaries and their wives at Mālūa was a source of inspiration for those who had gone in the previous period. This continued to be a motivation for the new wave of Samoan missionary wives. Olivia related how she felt her calling as a young girl as she listened the stories and sermons of returning Samoans from PNG in the 1940s and 1950s. Olivia said,

Mālūa and Papauta were always the first to receive these pastors returning from work in foreign countries. I listened to their stories about their work in Papua New Guinea. It

³⁸ Personal interview with Silomiga Faiai.

³⁹ Personal interview with Mere Tiai.

⁴⁰ Personal interview with Tumanu Alesana, Samoa, 21 December 2004.

created a feeling in me to go.... Then I married a student from Mālūa ... he asked me if I wanted to go to Papua New Guinea...I was happy, we got married and went.⁴¹

Many Samoan missionary wives that I interviewed felt that as Christians, it was their obligation to go on mission. Hence, although the motivation to go may seem to have been the initiative of men, many of these women also saw mission work as a fulfilment of their own Christian calling and personal aspirations.

But we must also note that there was an increasing sense of “status” attached to being a wife of a Samoan missionary. For Samoan families, men and women who offered to go to Mālūa and Papauta were seen as their *taulaga tagata* “human offerings” or “sacrifices” for the work of God. Being a pastor and a pastor’s wife was seen as a privilege which brought honour and pride. To be a missionary overseas was an even greater honour. Offering to go to PNG was perceived in Samoa as the ultimate calling which brought honour to one’s family and to the country as a whole. Here we see the application of Samoan principles in their decision-making.⁴² Accounts by wives of Samoan missionaries in the mid-twentieth century reflect this. Lagisi who left in 1951 said, “When I was prepared to leave for Papua, many in Samoa said how fortunate I was.... My mother was afraid, she was worried.... But my father was overjoyed.” He told me; “You are privileged to go. If you die in Papua, that is the most blessed thing. How fortunate you are.” In those days when people talked about going to Papua, you also hear stories of people being beaten there. But my father said, “Oh you are fortunate, you are blessed. You are going to Papua to do the work of the Lord. Remember, everyone dies, all of us, we die. No one lives for ever. But be faithful to the work. Be faithful to the work!”⁴³

Hence Christian notions about sacrifice and martyrdom continued to persist in the perception of PNG in Samoa. This is despite the improvement in the mortality rate of Samoans in PNG and the fact that no Samoan was ever killed there. For many of these

⁴¹ Personal interview with Olivia Latai, Samoa, 14 April 2003.

⁴² See also Nokise, “The role of Samoan LMS missionaries in the evangelisation of the South West Pacific 1839–1930,” p. 55; Ruta Sinclair, “Samoans in Papua,” in *Polynesian Missions in Melanesia*, ed. Ron Crocombe and Marjorie Crocombe, Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva, 1982, pp. 17–36; David Wetherell, “Pioneers and patriarchs: Samoans in a non-conformist mission district in Papua, 1890–1917,” vol. 15, no. 3 (1980): 130–54.

⁴³ Personal interview with Lagisi Leota.

women, however, the sacrifice was not just based on ideas about the dangers of PNG, but also leaving behind the comfort of home, their loved ones and, in many cases, their children. This was particularly so when the LMS put restrictions on the number of children a couple could take in the 1940s. Oomi said that when they were about to leave, she heard that having children was a hindrance to the work especially because of malaria and other diseases. Apisaloma the son of Taeipo stated that missionaries and their wives prioritised the Gospel; that one of the reasons why they left some of their children was that they might be disruptive to their work. Peseta the daughter of Tesimale and Tauese suggested that one of the reasons why her older siblings were left behind was because there were too many of them. Whatever the reasons, leaving behind their children was extremely hard for many of the women. Paulo the son of Tema and Olita, said that her grandmother who raised him said that her mother wrote back saying that, "She was crying the whole time on the ship to Papua. She was thinking of me. She didn't want to leave me."⁴⁴ Paulo related how difficult this was for him and the impact this had on his life. He said,

At that time I was not even one year old, I was about eight or nine months. I think that this was the same experience with other children like me. Because I was not the only one, there were many like me. In a sense I grew up with only a mother figure, my grandmother. I had no father. There was no father figure, you know, for me.... When my parents returned I was not close to them. They returned when I was seven to eight years old.... They tried to take me back but I wasn't comfortable with them. This was my world now. My world revolved around my grandmother. That was the person who created my life. In 1960 when my grandmother died, I was 10 years old. That was a delicate age for a child. And it was like my whole world collapsed when my mother died, my grandmother.⁴⁵

Samoan missionary wives thus endured a lot of sacrifices in fulfilling their calling. But as we have seen, this also had an emotional and psychological effect on many of the children who were left behind. Missionary work throughout the Pacific had a great

⁴⁴ Personal interview with Paulo Koria, Samoa, 28 March 2013.

⁴⁵ Ibid. Apisaloma also related how his older brother was affected when he was left behind. He said,

My older brother, even more recently, he is still angry. When my parents left he was taken to Afega. And even when my parents returned he didn't come back here, he stayed there. There was a big impact on him mentally. People asked him why didn't he go to his parents ... but he grew up by himself and he felt more like a sense of inferiority." Personal interview with Apisaloma, Samoa, 2 April 2013.

personal impact on missionary women as well as their husbands. European missionary wives also had to leave their children behind or send them back to their homelands for fear of “physical and spiritual contamination.”⁴⁶ For many missionary women including Samoans, this was often a traumatic and an emotional part of being a missionary wife overseas. Such experiences reveal the poignancy of the missionary project but also evince the persisting paradox in the mission project to “domesticate” women. The portrayals of missionary wives as ideal mothers and wives, were often confounded by their leaving behind or sending their children home. Moreover, this was further complicated by their employment of local nannies and servants to look after their children and carry out their domestic duties.⁴⁷ In PNG, Samoan missionary wives followed a similar pattern. But a far more dramatic shift was also seen in their roles in PNG. Many of them were trained teachers, nurses and mid-wives from Papauta, whose professional skills were vital to the expanded priorities of the mission in PNG at this stage which included building a strong education system and an effective health-care service. Samoan missionaries and their wives thus filled the need for the development of these areas in PNG. This shift in the roles expected of Samoan wives in PNG led to their dramatic movement into the public sphere, working in public spaces away from the domestic sphere as ideal mothers and wives.

Samoan missionary wives and the expanded mission in PNG

Early Samoan missionaries and their wives were pioneering educators and health care providers in PNG.⁴⁸ For the Samoans, their training in Mālūa and Papauta meant that they were able to teach literacy, basic numeracy, geography and science as well as imparting the many skills that they had—domestic skills by women and building and carpentry skills by their husbands. Moreover, their basic training in health care in Samoa (particularly the wives) meant that they also provided basic services in general hygiene, remedies for the sick and primary care for children in some places. As we

⁴⁶ Latu Latai, “From open *fale* to mission houses: Negotiating the boundaries of domesticity in Samoa,” in *Divine Domesticities: Paradoxes of Christian Modernities in Asia and the Pacific*, ed. Hyaeweol Choi and Margaret Jolly, Canberra, ANU Press, 2014, pp. 299–324.

⁴⁷ Latu Latai, “From open *fale* to mission houses.”

⁴⁸ Sinclair, “Samoans in Papua”; Nokise, “The role of Samoan LMS missionaries in the evangelisation of the South West Pacific 1839–1930”; Wetherell, “Pioneers and patriarchs.”

have seen with the work of Lau'i'i, they also introduced women's health committees in areas where they worked to promote health and general sanitation.⁴⁹

The new group of Samoan missionary wives was different in that, unlike their husbands and previous wives, many were qualified teachers and nurses in Samoa. Girls from Papauta were the first recognised teachers in Samoa when they were given formal acknowledgement by the Church in 1916. Later in 1938, the Samoa Teachers Training College was established with students from Papauta.⁵⁰ Similarly, early training in nursing and midwifery also began at Papauta which laid the foundation for the government training of nurses in Samoa in 1919.⁵¹ Many of the Samoan wives in this latter group, who were graduates of Papauta, were trained teachers and nurses. Many worked in public schools and hospitals in Samoa before marrying students at Mālua. Hence, the make-up of this new group of Samoan missionary wives reflects a new development in the roles of women in Samoa which saw the rise of more women working in the public sphere.⁵² When these women went on mission, their professional roles continued and were even expanded in PNG as the focus of the mission as well as the colonial government continued to be on the improvement of education and health care services.

By the mid-twentieth century, education was becoming a priority for the colonial administration in PNG as the country was gearing towards independence. New schools were established with the purpose of training the first group of leaders for a future independent country.⁵³ Prior to the 1960s, the administration had always funded primary education at the expense of secondary, technical and higher education.⁵⁴ In

⁴⁹ For the state of public health and gender in PNG see, Donald Denoon with Kathleen Dugan and Leslie Marshall, *Public Health in Papua New Guinea: Medical Possibilities and Social Constraint, 1884–1984*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989; "Medical care and gender in the Pacific: Domestic contradictions and the colonial impact," in *Family and Gender in the Pacific: Domestic Contradictions and the Colonial Impact*, ed. Margaret Jolly and Martha Macintyre, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, pp. 95–107.

⁵⁰ Fairbairn-Dunlop, *Tama'ita'i Samoa: Their Stories*.

⁵¹ LMS, "Samoan District Committee, Minutes of Meeting 3–12 June 1919," Pacific Manuscript Bureau, ANU, PMB 96 (microfilm). See also Fairbairn-Dunlop, *Tama'ita'i Samoa: Their Stories*.

⁵² Latu Latai, "From open *fale* to mission houses."

⁵³ On the large debates about independence and decolonisation of PNG see Donald Denoon, *A Trial Separation: Australia and the Decolonisation of Papua New Guinea*, ANU E Press, Canberra, 2005.

⁵⁴ Ann Turner, *Historical Dictionary of Papua New Guinea*, Oceania Historical Dictionaries, Series No. 4, The Scarecrow Press, London, 1994, p. 75.

the 1960s, a policy was introduced promoting post-primary education.⁵⁵ New high schools as well as technical schools were established and many Samoan missionary couples were appointed to look after them. This also saw the shift from basic primary education ran by missions to the more formal schools now run by the colonial government.

The majority of Samoan wives in this period became full-time teachers in local government schools. Several of the wives interviewed related how surprised they were at the work they were appointed to do when they arrived. Taeipo said that she only found out that they were to become full-time teachers when they arrived and were appointed to look after the school at Tureture. "You know, when we arrived.... It was funny ... we were surprised when they told us, that we were going to teach at the local school. So we knew then that when pastors and their wives went, they would become teachers."⁵⁶

Olivia who was a former teacher at Papauta said that she spent her first year teaching fulltime at the school at Aird Hill.⁵⁷ Later in 1963, they were shifted to establish a new boarding school for girls at Karaulti. By the end of that year, her husband with the help of village men had completed building classrooms, a dormitory for girls, and a house for boys. Olivia related how she had to have her Teacher's Training Certificate sent from Samoa in order to have their school recognised by the government and to get help for grants and trained teachers.⁵⁸ The school began with forty boarding girls and twenty boys, not including day children from Karaulti and nearby villages.⁵⁹ The shift from basic mission schools to the more formal education system now ran by the government thus saw the shift of Samoan wives from work within the confines of the mission home to the more public arena as professional teachers for government schools.

⁵⁵ Ibid. According to Olivia Latai, high schools were established in the Gulf to cater for those students who had finished their primary education. She said that such a school was established at Aird Hill station in 1965 by Nicholas and Catherine, a couple from England. Personal interview with Olivia Latai.

⁵⁶ Personal interview with Taeipo Aiono, Samoa, 3 April 2013.

⁵⁷ Olivia Latai, "Personal story of my work in Papua New Guinea," p. 2.

⁵⁸ Olivia wrote that as a result, two qualified female teachers were sent from Moru to assist with her school. Their names were Susan Karava and Tore Ware. Ibid., p. 8.

⁵⁹ Ibid.



Figures 57a, b and c. *Remnants of Olivia Latai's boarding school for girls at Karaulti and the gas cylinder once and still used for school and church services. Photographed by Latu Latai, 7 August 2013*

This shift was also apparent for those Samoan wives who were qualified nurses. Many ended up working in local mission and government hospitals in PNG. Aialaisa, the wife of Ekeroma, who was one of the first qualified nurses in Samoa ran the clinic at Lawes College in the 1940s. The story goes that when she took her sick husband to the mission hospital at Kwato, she saw that a patient was about to be taken to a bed that had not been made up and so she intervened and prepared it. When the doctor saw it he immediately knew it had not been made by his Papuan nurses. When he found out that Aialaisa had done it and that she was a trained nurse, he instructed his nurses to learn from her—thus reinscribing the sense of superiority of Samoan training over Papuan nurses.⁶⁰

Lagisi who also worked as a nurse in Samoa said that she was appointed to work at a small LMS hospital at Moru while her husband was appointed teacher at Koaru. Lupeline said that she worked with English nurses at the mission hospital in Orokororo while her husband was in charge of the local school. Others took charge of newly established clinics, like Ruta who ran a small clinic in Momivave. For these women, not only did they work in public places like hospitals but we also see here an increasing separation in the specific occupations that they and their husbands pursued. Hence, often husbands and wives worked in completely different areas, only to come together in their pastoral work in the evenings and during weekends.

⁶⁰ Sinclair, "Samoans in Papua," p. 35.



Figure 58. Left: Lagisi and her husband with her women's fellowship in their uniform at Moru. Photo from the Lagisi family collection. Photographer and date unknown

Figure 59. Right: Lagisi with her child in front of their house at Moru. Photo from the Lagisi family collection. Lagisi Puni Leota's photo collection. Photographer and date unknown

Many of the wives who were not qualified nurses still carried out basic health and medical treatments in villages where they worked. In some cases they were even expected to perform medical procedures they were not trained for. Lagisi said that Samoan wives like "Lusa and Taeipo who were teachers in Samoa became mid-wives in PNG."⁶¹ In many cases, Samoan wives were deployed as both nurses and teachers. Mere said that when they arrived, she was appointed to look after the local government school and was both a teacher and a local nurse to the villages within her district. She said that during the week she taught at the local school while, at the same time, she made calls to women in labour and assisted those who were sick.

In 1949, due to the increasing demand for nurses in PNG, a number of qualified Samoan single nurses were sent by the Samoan LMS Church at the request of the Papua District Council (PDC) to work at Gemo Island, Port Moresby, Kapuna and other government and mission hospitals.⁶² The most well-known Samoan nurses in the 1950s and 1960s included the long serving Initia, Sasa, Luania and Faamata who worked at Gemo Island and Ofeira and Poia who worked under the supervision of the Reverend Dr. Peter Calvert and his doctor wife Linne at Kapuna in the Gulf.⁶³

As we can see, the demands by the LMS mission and the colonial government for the development of public health and education led to the changing roles of Samoan

⁶¹ Personal interview with Lagisi Leota.

⁶² *Sulu Samoa* (May 1951): 75; Sinclair, "Samoans in Papua," p. 35.

⁶³ *Sulu Samoa* (May 1951): 75; Personal interview with Mere Tiai; Olivia Latai, "Personal story of my work in Papua New Guinea," p. 5. See also rare documentary film about the leprosarium run on Gemo Island, PNG, by the LMS called *The Happy Island* produced by Maslyn Williams and Sam Benson of the Commonwealth Film Unit and directed by Ann Gurr. In the film are Samoan nurses Luania and Faamata.

missionary wives at this latter stage in PNG. As a result Samoan wives were increasingly entering the public sphere working as teachers and nurses. However, the fact that these women took on these professions did not mean that their traditional role as wives of missionaries in the mission ceased. Many continued to emphasise and advocate mission ideals of “domesticity” amongst local women in their women’s fellowship organisation, focusing on the simultaneous development of their spiritual and social lives. Many were still confronted by the state of women in PNG and continued to focus on uplifting their status to become, as they insisted, better wives and mothers.

Confronting gender relations in PNG

As we have learned in Chapter 5, Samoan missionaries and their wives in PNG found especially confronting local customs which they saw as subjugating women. These included birthing practices, polygamy, arranged marriages, bride price and heavy labour performed by local women. Such practices, as we have seen in Vanuatu, were viewed by European missionaries and foreign observers as markers of the “low status of women” (see Chapter 3). Similarly, the Samoans deplored the treatment of women in PNG and attempted to uplift and improve their status. But, despite their earlier attempts, such practices continued to prevail during this latter period of Samoan mission work in PNG.

Samoan wives during this period told of how they continued to confront local customs where women give birth on the beach, underneath people’s houses, or in the bush. They also talked about the continuing practices of polygamy and arranged marriages in which even local lay preachers, deacons and pastors were still engaged. Moreover, Samoan wives continued to be surprised and often shocked at the amount of physical work that women did. In the words of Lagisi, “The mother does all the work. It is not like Samoa where they are respected, but over there, they do all the work.... I don’t remember what the men did. They dance, but don’t do much work.”⁶⁴

Mere said that women cook, chop firewood and climb coconut trees.

⁶⁴ Personal interview with Lagisi Leota.

Even the earth oven ... women do this. The woman chops the firewood. The woman climbs the coconut tree, even a very high coconut tree. The woman climbs it and then husks the coconuts. The fathers and men did not seem to do any work. When they go to the garden, the mother does all the work and then carries the heavy load of food and looks after the children.⁶⁵

Mere's assessment is based on the gender division of labour in Samoa where young men climb coconuts, chop firewood and do the heavy cooking like preparing earth ovens. Hence as former Samoan missionary Isaia said, "Women in PNG were like *taule'ale'a* or young men in Samoa."⁶⁶ Peseta said that in her opinion women in PNG were like "slaves." She talked about how they even took their babies everywhere they went.

They have a basket, it's called a *haua*, where they put their babies in.... So wherever the woman goes to do her chores, the baby is there, inside the basket. It hangs from her head as she walks. When they go fishing they hang them on trees. The baby hangs there while they fish! Then they come back with shell fish, crabs, build a fire, but the baby is still hanging there.... Then the whole family comes and eats on the beach.

Because where ever the woman goes, the baby hangs there.⁶⁷

Peseta, who was a daughter of Samoan missionaries, was thus astounded at the work that women did in PNG which she saw not just as extremely demanding but as a sign of their low status.

The Samoans in this period continued to witness dramatic differences in gender roles and values of womanhood in PNG. Women in Samoa mostly did lighter work in and around the home. And although as wives they accompanied their husbands to the gardens, most of the heavy work was done by their husbands, such as planting, digging and carrying heavy loads. In their status as "sisters" according to the *feagaiga* or covenant, Samoan women remained mainly within the confines of the home doing light chores like weaving, weeding, cleaning and fishing within the safety of the lagoons (see Chapter 1). Hence it is not surprising that these women found the work that women did in PNG very demanding.

⁶⁵ Mere Tiai, "Personal story of my work in Papua New Guinea: 1956–1962," p. 2.

⁶⁶ Personal interview with Isaia Tiatia, Samoa, 21 March 2013.

⁶⁷ Personal interview with Peseta Taunese Fiavaai, Samoa, 30 March 2013.

In many cases these women questioned local people about such practices. Oomi said that one day she asked the local women why it was that when they go to the gardens, the only thing that the man carries is a spear, while the woman carries everything including the baby. According to Oomi, they replied that the man must be ready for when there is an attack from an enemy.⁶⁸ Thus they concluded that Papuans' believe that the man is the guardian of his family, and hence the woman does all the work while he sits with his arrow to protect them from danger such as attacks from other people or wild animals.⁶⁹ Yet such customs prevailed despite the fact that attacks from wild animals were rare and warfare had been ended by colonial "pacification" in many areas.

Despite the reactions of Samoan women criticising women's heavy work, Papuan women continued to value their own status and roles within their communities. Jemima Mowbray's study on women's work in PNG has shown how there was (and is) much investment and pride in being recognised as a hard-working woman. Significant value was placed on their labour. She argues this is in contrast to the way in which indigenous women's work in the Pacific had been ignored or devalued by outside observers. Europeans failed to read women's work for what it might tell them of women's crucial, active role within indigenous culture.⁷⁰ Hence in colonial PNG, both the mission and the administration attempted to "uplift the native woman" to improve

⁶⁸ Most societies in PNG are patrilineal and male-dominated. Men are considered hunters and warriors while women are labourers, gardeners and mothers who are in charge of the food supply for the family. Yet in some areas, notably Milne Bay, Massim women enjoyed considerable respect and authority. And in some parts of PNG men also do hard physical work as well as work in the gardens. See Anne Dickson-Waiko, "The missing rib: Mobilising church women for change in Papua New Guinea," *Oceania* vol. 74, nos 1–2 (2003): 98–119; "Milne Bay women," in *Oral Traditions in Melanesia*, ed. Donald Denoon and Roderick Lacey, University of Papua New Guinea, Port Moresby, 1981, pp. 188–203, p. 189; Elizabeth Cox and Louis Aitsi, "Papua New Guinea," in *Pacific Women – Roles and Status of Women in Pacific Societies*, ed. Taiafoni Tongamoa, Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva, 1988, pp. 22–37; Katherine Lepani, *Islands of Love, Islands of Risk: Culture and HIV in the Trobriands*, Vanderbilt University Press, Nashville, 2012. See also Margaret Jolly, Helen Lee, Katherine Lepani, Anna Naupa and Michelle Rooney, *Falling Through the Net: Gender and Social Protection in the Pacific*, Discussion Paper, UN Women, 25 September 2015; Richard E. Reid, "John Henry Holmes in Papua: Changing missionary perspectives on indigenous cultures, 1890–1914," *The Journal of Pacific History* vol. 13, no. 3 (1978): 173–87, p. 184; David Wetherell, "Creating an indigenous Christian leadership in Papua: Three missions compared," *The Journal of Pacific History*, vol. 47, no. 2 (2012): 163–85.

⁶⁹ Mere Tiai, "Personal story of my work in Papua New Guinea: 1956–1962," p. 2; Personal interview with Abel Vetenge, Pacific Theological College, Suva, 2005.

⁷⁰ Jemima Mowbray, "'*Ol meri bilong wok*' (hard-working women): Women, work and domesticity in Papua New Guinea," in *Divine Domesticities*, ed. Choi and Jolly, pp. 167–98.

her status by focusing on the project to “domesticate” women.⁷¹ However, as Anne Dickson-Waiko insists the indigenous gender division of labour in PNG was understood as complementary and was not easily categorised within clearly distinguished “domestic” or “public” domains.⁷²

The Samoans also initially perceived the work of local women as degrading and attempted to transform what they saw to be their poor treatment. However, over time the Samoans came to see how local women valued their work. Those interviewed related how local women were conscious of their cultural roles and considered it a shame or disgrace if they did not perform their duties. According to Mere, “There were times when I talked to the men saying that for women to climb trees and chop the woods, is not a good sight. But they said that it is a disgrace and a defeat for the wife if the husband does this work; they will be mocked.”⁷³

Samoan missionary wives thus came to realise how cultural expectations configured local women’s embodied performance. Even in giving birth it was customary that a Papuan woman in labour should show great strength. According to Lusa, some would go to the plantation, give birth and then come back carrying their new born. She said that Papuan women “were always strong, not like us.”⁷⁴ Several Samoan wives admired the strength of local women and this was often a cause of discomfort for them. Mere said that sometimes when they went to fetch water at the local pool, she was often embarrassed as she was the only one there with her husband to carry her buckets of water. She said that at the pool, “the women were always there to gather water. But it was only me and Tia’i who were there as a couple, then Tia’i would carry the heavy load while I carried something light.”⁷⁵

Local Papuans were also conscious of how their customs clashed with Christian teachings and Samoan ideas about gender roles. In fact in PNG, bathing and carrying

⁷¹ Mowbray, “‘*Ol meri bilong wok*’ (hard-working women).”

⁷² Anne Dickson-Waiko, “Colonial enclaves and domestic spaces in British New Guinea,” in *Britishness Abroad: Transnational Movements and Imperial Cultures*, ed. Kate Darian Smith, Patricia Grimshaw and Stuart Macintyre, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2007, pp. 205–230, p. 212. See also Marilyn Strathern, *Gender of the Gift: Problems with Women and Problems with Society in Melanesia*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1988.

⁷³ Personal interview with Mere Tiai.

⁷⁴ Personal interview with Lusa Fuatai.

⁷⁵ Personal interview with Mere Tiai.

water were often gender segregated. Such a clash in gender roles led to interesting encounters. Lusa told of a revealing conversation she had with Papuan men.

One day they were talking about the Genesis story. During the discussion they started laughing, and said, that they think that the Papuans have misinterpreted the Bible. Then I asked them why? They said, because the Bible says that in the beginning God punished Adam that he shall eat his food with sweat while the woman shall bear her children with great pain. But in Papua, the woman takes all the sweating and gives birth as well, but the man just sits. Then I told them; that is your custom, those are your ways, you just want to sit and let the women do all the work. Then they all laughed.⁷⁶

The clash between Christian teachings and local values shows the complexities of conversion. The laughter of the men was perhaps partly because they saw the benefits of local customs for them. In some cases however, local values were challenged leading perhaps to some change of behaviour. Olivia told an interesting story about when she gave birth at Kapuna hospital,

When I went into the labour room, there were several women awaiting their turn. None of them moved, no one cried or screamed. But not long after I arrived, I began weeping and screaming. Oh! What happened next; all the Papuan women began screaming and crying. Afterwards we all laughed and the nurses said that I had given a bad example to Papuan women because when they give birth they never cry, but now they were weeping and crying.⁷⁷

Some Samoan wives continued to find women's work and status in PNG very challenging. They not only saw the amount of hard work that women did as demeaning but also criticised other practices that separated women and men. Samoan missionary wives found that gendered segregation in PNG even extended to meal times where men ate first before women. Oomi describes how unhappy she was when they first arrived and witnessed this. For example when they were at a district fellowship, the pastors including her husband ate first while all the wives had to wait and sing songs. She said,

⁷⁶ Personal interview with Lusa Fuatai.

⁷⁷ Olivia Latai, "Personal story of my work in Papua New Guinea," pp. 11–12.

The first time when we attended these fellowships, it was announced that the mothers will wait while the men eat first. I was unhappy, I was upset with this thing, because I also wanted to eat where the men were, like the usual custom in a family where everyone eats together. Then one day, we had a meal, and then I told them about our custom, like how it was taught at Mālúa, where everyone eats together, father, mother and the children.⁷⁸

Oomi's reaction to what she interpreted as an unequal treatment of women was not only based on examples taught at Mālúa but also on Samoan customs whereby eating arrangements are not based on gender but on rank hierarchy, whereby chiefs and their sisters in a covenantal relation are served first, before the younger untitled brothers and their wives.

In defiance, Oomi said that one day she decided not to eat with the women but joined the men. But in doing so she was perhaps seen by local women as "like a man." She continued to do this while trying to influence women during her Bible studies. Oomi talked about how she used Biblical stories of influential women to highlight this message about the importance of women.

When we did our Bible study, then I looked for a topic to tell them what I wanted to say to the mothers, that they are not different from the fathers. We often talked about women at the resurrection of Jesus, important women in the New Testament. They were the first missionaries who first spread word of the Gospel of the resurrection. Those are some of the stories ... that we used, as well as other women in the Bible. To try and tell them about the importance of women.⁷⁹

Despite her efforts however, Oomi and her husband said that they later realised the challenges in trying to change local people's cultural values and that they also had to acknowledge the fact that women in the Bible were also marginalised. Oomi said,

Well I think they were used to their own culture which I had no power over, if that is their culture, then it is hard to change it quickly, that's the way they live. And I didn't

⁷⁸ Personal interview with Oomi Saifoloi, Melbourne, 27 February 2012. The stress on "eating together" is a very important trope of Christian conversion in other places such as Vanuatu where, before Christianity, separate cooking fires and men's houses were forbidden to women. See Margaret Jolly, "Sacred spaces: churches, men's houses and households in South Pentecost, Vanuatu," in *Family and Gender in the Pacific*, ed. Jolly and Macintyre, pp. 213–35.

⁷⁹ Personal interview with Oomi Saifoloi.

want to force it in my work as a mother. But as you know the culture of Israel, well, women were not really important as well.⁸⁰

Although many Samoan wives were often dismayed at the treatment of women, and although some like Oomi tried to change such practices, they also later realised that gender separation did not necessarily mean that women were treated badly. Samoan wives acknowledged and even admired the closeness of the husband and wife relationship in PNG. Both Oomi and her husband Urika agreed that the heavy work that the women did, and other practices that they saw as devaluing women, did not mean that they were treated badly by their husbands. They said that husbands and their wives were always close.

The man always gives great support to his wife and children.... They are close, it does not mean that they are not close. It is because of their culture, when they eat the men eat first. But there is always closeness in the relationships between couples in Papua. That is how we saw it.⁸¹

This is interesting since often in foreign depictions, women's hard work, gender separation and even gender violence were often closely connected. Holly Wardlow in her study of the Huli people in PNG has shown that despite such gender separation, for example the separate living arrangements between husbands and wives, in the pre-Christian past, a moral and fertile union was still celebrated.⁸² Wardlow thus argues that gender separation per se does not mean the subjugation of women. Moreover, Wardlow argues that the promotion by missionaries of Christian marriage and of nucleated families cohabiting has not only proved difficult for Huli husbands and wives but has also contributed to increased domestic violence against women.⁸³

Samoan missionary wives thus came to realise that Papuan women also held an important place in their societies, and this was shown in the value they put on the work and roles that they did in their local communities. Mere wrote, "The status of women in Papua was high. Although they were like slaves, but it shows the strength of

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Personal interview with Oomi Saifoloi and Urika Saifoloi, Melbourne, 27 February 2012.

⁸² Such moral and fertile union as she argues require the rigorous separation of men and women, husbands and wives, subduing and containing uncontrolled desires.

⁸³ Holly Wardlow, "Paradoxical intimacies: The Christian creation of the Huli domestic sphere," in *Divine Domesticities*, ed. Choi and Jolly, pp. 325–46.

their hearts in facing their culture. They were known for their bravery and happy hearts in working for the good of their husbands and families.”⁸⁴

Samoan missionary wives in this latter period continued to confront differences in gender relations in PNG. As we have seen, their ideas of the roles and status of women were not only based on Christian ideas of gender, but also on the roles and status of women in Samoa. The missionary project to uplift the status of women in PNG was thus a complex one for Samoan wives. Their attempts to challenge local customs which they saw as subjugating women were met with local resistance and they realised that local women were proud of their own traditional roles. But, the project to “uplift” women still involved the attempt to lighten the work that women did. This was to be achieved by concentrating women in the “domestic” sphere, training them as proper mothers and wives in the home. They continued to focus on domestic classes, on cooking, sewing and other activities with women at the mission stations, as well their full-time professions as teachers and nurses. This increased the load of work for Samoan wives but also contributed to the work load for local women in PNG.

The mission to uplift women: a paradoxical project

As we have seen, the expanded role of Samoan wives in PNG meant that a lot of them now worked as fulltime teachers and nurses in public schools and hospitals. However, despite their professional work, these women also continued to focus on the spiritual and social development of women.

Samoan missionary wives often talked about the many activities they carried out in their women’s groups which included organising Bible studies and classes in domestic skills such as sewing, handicrafts and cooking. Mere said that every week she ran a Bible study class and a sewing class for women. She also organised a netball team and a women’s guild together with other Samoan wives in their district.⁸⁵ Lupeline said that, in addition to her work at the mission hospital, she was also preoccupied with the many activities of her women’s fellowship. She said, “I also worked with the mothers in our sewing classes. We also planted pandanus and cultivated them for weaving

⁸⁴ Mere Tiai, “Personal story of my work in Papua New Guinea: 1956–1962,” p. 2.

⁸⁵ Personal interview with Mere Tiai.

tablemats and in making other handicrafts. We also held regular meetings and fellowships in which I led Bible classes ... other days we had sports.”⁸⁶

Silomiga related how she had a similar program but they also had “fun” nights during which they danced and told stories.⁸⁷ Sisavai’i on the other hand said that she ran a monthly program at Meii which included Bible Studies on the first week, handicrafts on the second, sports day on the third, and visits to the sick on the fourth week.⁸⁸ Sisavai’i related how they enjoyed visiting the sick and the old people taking with them yams, tapioca, and firewood.⁸⁹ When she and her husband moved to the head station in Port Moresby, they held combined fellowships three times a year with all the women in the district in which they had Bible studies, drama, sports and public shows where the women displayed handicrafts, agricultural produce and cooking.



Figure 60. Left: Gigiwabu Damai, wife of Papuan pastor the Reverend Ew Damai. They worked together with Olivia Latai at Dopima in running women's group activities. She pointed to the woven partition behind her as having a “mixture of Kikori and Samoan designs.” Photographed by Latu Latai, Kikori, 9 August 2013

Figure 61. Right: A meeting with one of the oldest ladies who still prays in Samoan at Ero village, Aird Hill. She presented me with a pandanus bag, one of the artefacts women learned in their weaving groups. Photographer unknown, Aird Hill, 6 August 2013

In their women’s groups, Samoan wives also introduced Samoan methods of weaving using pandanus and coconut leaves. They also introduced new methods of cooking like *fa’alifu*, which is boiled taro, banana or breadfruit simmered in a generous amount of coconut cream. The Samoans in the early period took with them many Samoan variants of taro, banana and breadfruit, and these were used as ingredients in teaching

⁸⁶ Personal interview with Lupeline Tagalao.

⁸⁷ Personal interview with Silomiga Faiai.

⁸⁸ Personal Interview with Sisavaii Samasoni, Samoa, 15 December 2004.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

Samoan cooking. In addition Samoan wives also introduced Samoan dancing and songs in their “fun” nights which were performed in Church celebrations and festivities.



Figure 62. Left: Local pandanus textile introduced by Samoan wives to the Kikori, Gulf region. Photographed by Latu Latai, 12 August 2013

Figure 63. Right: Samoan pandanus textiles (*falalili'i* and *papa*) that Lagisi said she introduced and taught local women at Gabagaba. These ones were dried out in the sun in front of their house at Gabagaba in the 1950s with her son playing on them. Lagisi Puni Leota's photo collection. Photographer and date unknown

Samoan wives thus not only introduced European domestic skills like sewing, crocheting and baking but also Samoan skills in weaving and cooking. Samoan women are still remembered today by many for the pandanus textiles they taught—like Samoan fans, mats and baskets—as well as the Samoan songs and dances they introduced to local women.

On top of these activities, Samoan wives also organised fundraising for their church women's projects. Mere wrote that the women in her church sold fish and coconut to raise funds for their *Faiga-Me*. Sisavaii related how Lusa and her women's fellowship sold copra.⁹⁰ When I was at Gabagaba, local women also told me how Lusa organised the selling of their handicrafts in Port Moresby to raise funds. Olivia and her fellowship at Karaulti sold bundles of sago at the local market. She said that when they arrived, she was saddened when two women died because their babies were not properly delivered. This inspired her to raise funds for an outboard motor to take women to the hospital when they were sick or about to give birth.⁹¹ The boat was also used to take women's produce to be sold at the markets in nearby towns. According to Olivia, this

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Olivia Latai, “Personal story of my work in Papua New Guinea,” p. 18.

was the main reason for women's fundraising activities in their district, to help women take their produce to the markets at Kikori and even Port Moresby.⁹²

Apart from organising and leading activities for older women, Samoan missionary wives also continued to run Sunday schools and organise programs for young girls. Several women ran Girl Guides groups in which girls were taught domestic skills and were encouraged in their education.⁹³ Several Samoan wives were also musical and conducted choirs. Olivia told of how her small choir often sang Christmas carols on Christmas Eve at the government town in Kikori, where many people came and gave them Christmas gifts.⁹⁴ Silomiga, who was at Moru station, told of how she enjoyed her choir practices with the children in the evenings. This was work they continued from the practices of Siulagi and Rosa who were the previous Samoan missionaries there in the 1950s. According to Siulagi Kavora, named after the Samoan missionary, and a former General Secretary of the United Church of PNG or UNPNG, "Siulagi and Rosa brought with them a wealth of musical talents ... Siulagi wrote some songs in my language, and they are still part of our hymn book."⁹⁵



Figure 64a and b. Women from Aird Hill arriving at Kikori town on local dugout canoes run by outboard motors with their produce of sago and other vegetables to sell. Photographed by Latu Latai, 10 August 2013

⁹² Ibid., p. 35.

⁹³ Girl Guides and Rangers in PNG were began in the 1930s by Mrs. Chatterton and Mrs. Ure in Port Moresby. See Dickson-Waiko, "The missing rib," p. 107.

⁹⁴ Olivia Latai, "Personal story of my work in Papua New Guinea," p. 29.

⁹⁵ Personal interview with Siulagi Kavora, Suva, 27 February 2005.



Figure 65. Left: Kikori Market where Olivia and her Sunday School choir sang Christmas carols in the 1960s. Photographed by Latu Latai, 6 August 2013

Figure 66. Right: Local women selling their produce at Kikori market. Photographed by Latu Latai, 6 August 2013

Samoan wives were thus involved in many activities within the mission. Mere, gave an interesting summary of her typical day in PNG. At 6 A.M. the children would gather at the pastor's house for morning devotion, followed by primary school which started at 8 A.M. until they broke up at noon for lunch. At 1 P.M., classes resumed until 3 P.M. In the evening especially on Sundays, she led Bible studies for women. This does not include her women's programs during the week and on weekends.⁹⁶

The work for Samoan missionary wives in PNG was thus diverse and extremely demanding. Several of them believe that, compared to their white counterparts, the bulk of the work fell on them and their husbands. Oomi said,

The wives of white pastors didn't really like to mix together with the mothers.... During our conferences, they didn't like to participate. They would only come for one day. But the bulk of the work fell on us in doing Bible studies as well as classes for the women in the district.⁹⁷

The majority of the Samoans were still under the authority of white missionaries and their wives and although several wives told of how they worked well together with their superior white counterparts, there was general dissatisfaction amongst the Samoans about the amount of work that they did. Several Samoan wives talked about the hard work of their husbands compared to white missionaries. On top of their

⁹⁶ Personal interview with Mere Tiai.

⁹⁷ Personal interview with Oomi Saifoloi.

pastoral work in villages, they were also in charge of schools and conducted long visitations inland and throughout the districts.⁹⁸

Taeipo reported that one day, Samoan missionary Aitaoto confronted the missionary about this and then threw stones at him and said, "Look at you, we give you our reports, then you go and present our reports but you didn't go." The hierarchical nature of the mission thus at times proved too much for some. Mere said that she knew of others like Siulagi and Pa'apa'a who also fought and argued with their white missionaries; sometimes their arguments ended in physical fights where they had to be broken apart.

For some Samoan wives, the lack of participation and involvement of white missionary wives with their activities was due to what they believe was their aversion to local people. Oomi said that white missionary wives were

like that ... we knew how they didn't like being near the people. Even when we ate, I could see that they didn't want to eat ... but to us ... we just joined in. This is the true word that I am telling. That was one thing that we saw ... white people put their noses up ... it was because of the odour of the people.... I also disliked it in the beginning, but as time passes, you get used to it.⁹⁹

Oomi thus shows how white missionary women's aversion was a factor in their lack of involvement with local women but she also admits that she also held such feelings of distaste at first. But unlike white missionary women, she later changed as she "got used to it." Racial ideas thus continued in the mission work in PNG, not only amongst Europeans but also with Samoan wives and their aversion to local people. Such aversion moreover shows how much European notions of racial hierarchy were absorbed by the Samoans.

⁹⁸ Taeipo talked about how white missionaries never offered their boats to help with the work of their husbands. She said, "They never gave us their boat, only when we wrote to them. Even with food and other things. They did their own thing, they often went with their families on holiday trips. But our poor husbands they walked everywhere!" Taeipo went further to say that, despite the hard work of their husbands, they were often not acknowledged by the white missionaries. "The reports that our poor husbands wrote ... when they went on their visitations inland, it was such a difficult work. But when white missionaries had their meetings, meetings of the PDC, then they presented the reports as if they were the ones who went, but these were the reports of Samoan and Niuean pastors. Oh we all knew!" Personal interview with Taeipo Aiono.

⁹⁹ Personal interview with Oomi Saifolo.

Overall, the work of Samoan wives as we have seen was both expansive and demanding. Not only did these women work as full-time teachers and nurses in schools and hospitals but they also continued in the previous roles as missionary wives focusing on the project to domesticate local women. Still, many employed young Papuan girls who lived with them, taking care of their domestic duties as well as their children as they attended to their many responsibilities. Lagisi talked about how she taught the girls who stayed with her to be clean and to make Samoan food. “I taught them how to do the *saka*, or *faalifu*.... I taught them how to clean the dishes, to wash in water and then rinse again in another clean water. They were very respectful and always careful that they didn’t make mistakes.”¹⁰⁰ Lupeline talked about the girls who stayed with them and how they looked after her children. She said that “they never put my children down. They carry them all the time.”¹⁰¹

The deployment of girls to carry out their own domestic duties thus further complicated the project to “domesticate” local women. As these women continued to advocate the ideals of a Christian woman as wives and mothers in their women’s groups, their own lives reflected a different ideal of woman, one who was working in the public place while her domestic duties were taken care of by local girls.

But the greatest paradox in all this was the fact that, instead of lightening the work of local women, the mission project rather added more work for local women. Many of the activities that Samoan wives organised took time from women’s pre-existing work, while at the same time added more work to their usual responsibilities in raising their families and working in their gardens. In their fundraising activities, local women had to collect coconuts, fish and make sago on top of weaving, sewing and crocheting handicrafts to be sold. As Mere wrote, “Even in the work of God, it is the mothers who were the strength of the village. They fish and collect the coconuts for the *Faiga Me* offering. It is the mothers who do all this.”¹⁰²

Mowbray argues that in the colonial period, women continued to undertake their earlier roles while at the same time assuming responsibility for new domestic duties introduced by the missions. This, she argues, was further perpetuated by colonial

¹⁰⁰ Personal interview with Lagisi Leota.

¹⁰¹ Personal interview with Lupeline Tagaloa.

¹⁰² Personal interview with Mere Tiiai.

policies on land and labour that added to and intensified women's work. For example the relocation of villages increased the distances that women had to walk to gardens. Moreover, men, not women, were employed as indentured and later waged labourers on plantations, in mines and in towns, even as domestic servants, and men alone gained the new knowledge of agricultural extension and modern education and assumed leadership roles in church and state. Men's absence thus increased work for women. Meanwhile women's work in subsistence continued while at the same time they were excluded and marginalised from waged labour and the commodity sector.¹⁰³ Mowbray's argument is based on Dickson-Waiko's point that missions and colonial government introduced domestic and public domains in PNG and that colonial policies excluded women from public spaces of commodity economy and state, so that the village came to equal the "domestic" and the town the "public."¹⁰⁴ Hence, in the project to uplift local women by lightening their work, both the mission and the colonial administration actually increased women's labour.

The work of Samoan wives however, had an unintended impact on local women. In their project to domesticate women, Samoan wives also inadvertently led the way for the introduction of women into the public sphere, opening ways for women to participate in an increasingly capitalist economy. As we saw, Samoan wives also contributed and assisted local women in promoting their agricultural produce and handicrafts in public shows. They introduced fundraising activities for women's projects assisting with ways to earn cash by improving their access to local markets. Even those local girls who carried out the domestic duties of Samoan wives, who were trained in domestic duties, became some of the first women in PNG to work as professionals in the public sphere. Many of these girls were brought to the mission by their parents to be educated and thus were given greater opportunities for a broader education. This was a similar situation to that of the young boys who lived with Samoan couples as helpers. Nevertheless, many of the girls formed warm relationships

¹⁰³ Mowbray argues that the colonial "civilising project" in PNG was paradoxical in that although colonial officers regarded the heavy work involved in subsistence as the source of indigenous women's low status, the administration simultaneously introduced a range of policies and programs that added to and intensified women's work. See Mowbray, "'*Oi meri bilong wok*' (Hard-working women)."

¹⁰⁴ Anne Dickson-Waiko, "Women, individual human rights, community rights: Tensions within the Papua New Guinea state," in *Women's Rights and Human Rights: International Historical Perspectives*, ed. Patricia Grimshaw, Katie Holmes and Marilyn Lake, Hampshire Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2001, pp. 49–70; "Colonial enclaves and domestic spaces in British New Guinea."

with Samoan missionaries and their wives. I have met several of them during my visits in PNG. Some of them became wives of Papuan pastors, while others became nurses and teachers, adding to the growing group of educated and professional women in PNG.¹⁰⁵ Thus although Samoan missionary wives portrayed and encouraged domesticity for women, as teachers and nurses, they became role models for the younger generation of women in places where they worked.



Figure 67. Left: Meeting with local primary school teachers and nurses at Karaulti. They were former students of Olivia Latai. Photographer unknown, 7 August 2013

Figure 68. Right: Meeting Mr. Ken (standing in the middle) on the Kikori River, on my way to Airdhill. He is a former student of Olivia Latai at Karaulti and is a retired army officer and commander of the PNG Army. Photographed by Latu Latai, 6 August 2013

Dickson-Waiko, has acknowledged how the church in PNG was a major catalyst for change in women in PNG. Different church missions provided opportunities for women to organise as women and as citizens and paved the way for women to be more active in their communities. And paradoxically, although the church had always been the bastions of the cult of domesticity and mission stations were the base for the so-called “civilising mission,” the church also provided opportunities and space for women to move out of their homes and into the public sphere.¹⁰⁶ She argues that this important shift occurred as early as the 1920s in a few areas such as Kwato¹⁰⁷ and more widely in

¹⁰⁵ This was similar to the emergence of the children of Papuan pastors as the educated elite in PNG. N.D. Oram has shown how the privileged positions of pastors’ children in PNG led to the emergence of an educated elite. He argues that these children often got the best form of education available, gained in particular through their boarding at mission head stations. Boarding brought them into contact with a European way of life and the use in some measure of the English language. Members of the first generations were chosen by the missionaries because of their intelligence and willingness to learn; and marriages with members of the other pastors’ families increased their privilege. N.D. Oram, “The London Missionary Society pastorate and the emergence of an educated elite in Papua,” *The Journal of Pacific History*, vol. 6 (1971): 115–32.

¹⁰⁶ See Dickson-Waiko, “The missing rib.”

¹⁰⁷ See Salmah-Evalina Lawrence, Ph.D. thesis, in progress.

the early 1950s during which time, some Christian denominations began to provide avenues in through which women could organise themselves within the institutional framework of the church. This was under the leadership of the wives of pastors and ministers and laid the foundations for the active participation of PNG women in civil society and signalled a fundamental change in focus for these churches, away from inward spiritual concerns to issues of public interest which affected the community.¹⁰⁸ Although Dickson-Waiko witnesses the role of mission churches in general, we need to acknowledge that this fundamental change was also influenced by Samoan missionary wives who assisted women in an increasingly capitalist economy by promoting a push for women to work in the formal public sphere.



Figure 69. Left: Former students of Olivia Latai at Aird Hill in the mission house built by Benjamin T. Butcher. The two ladies next to me are Wadu Kaivao and Bebu Tito, who performed Samoan songs and dances taught to them by Olivia. Photographer unknown, 6 August 2013

Figure 70. Right: Ladies of the Uniting Church of Papua Womens' fellowship at Ero, Aird Hill. Photographed by Latu Latai, 6 August 2013

Thus the contribution of Samoan missionary wives was filled with many paradoxes, but they clearly played an important role in the project to uplift women in PNG. Their increasing public roles inspired local women to expand their own horizons, while their activities within women's groups gave local women access to new ways of dealing with the challenges of an increasingly capitalist economy. Samoan missionary wives thus provided new avenues for women in a country that was rapidly changing as it was poised to become independent. When they arrived they saw how Papuan women were very different from them. In Samoa, as we have seen, women received special privileges and honorary status as sisters as well as wives of Samoan pastors. In Samoa the work that women did was less strenuous, thus the sight of local women doing

¹⁰⁸ See Dickson-Waiko, "The missing rib."

heavy duties like carrying water from the river, planting crops and climbing coconut trees must have seemed shocking to them and they attempted to confront local ideas about the necessary work and value of women. Although there were conflicting ideas in how they portrayed themselves—as wives in domestic and as professional women in public spaces—Samoan women can be seen as challenging the constraints of Papuan culture for the “advancement” of women. In a society and a culture that seemed to privilege men, they were some of the first to fully confront such ingrained notions of gender in PNG.¹⁰⁹

Towards independence

The mid-twentieth century was a time of political decolonisation in the Pacific. Samoa was the first to gain its independence in 1962, the same year in which the Samoa LMS Church gained its own independence. During its annual Church conference in May, the name was officially changed to the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (CCCS). The movement for independence was something that the Samoans had been aspiring to since the latter half of the nineteenth century when Samoan “teachers” became the first clergy in the Pacific to be ordained and when its General Assembly was inaugurated in 1875. Financially the Samoan LMS Church was able to be self-sufficient early on, and despite some resistance from white missionaries in Samoa, the LMS was generally relieved to be free of another financial burden.¹¹⁰ At the same time, the Samoan LMS Women’s Fellowship was also a well-established and a financially autonomous organisation within the Church. Hence, Samoan missionaries and their

¹⁰⁹ But despite such opportunities provided by the mission in PNG, Papuan women continue to struggle to participate in a country that several decades after its independence still continues to privilege men over women. According to Dickson-Waiko, despite much rhetoric in PNG about women’s participation at independence, women continued to suffer from neglect and to be confined to a now entrenched private and domestic sphere. The promise of equality for women was part of the political idealism evident in the first decade of a new nation. But the state became a highly-masculinised body politic. She argues that part of the difficulty was the way women are constructed as citizens. In practice women have been incorporated into the state as mothers rather than as citizens with the same rights as male citizens. While citizenship is supposed to be an individual’s relationship with the state, women entered the political domain as sexed beings and this construction interferes with and even sabotages their claims for equal citizenship. See Anne Dickson-Waiko, “Women, individual human rights, community rights: Tensions within the Papua New Guinea state,” in *Women’s Rights and Human Rights; International Historical Perspectives*, ed. Patricia Grimshaw, Katie Holmes and Marilyn Lake, Hampshire Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2001, pp. 49–70, pp. 50–55; “The missing rib.”

¹¹⁰ Felix M. Keesing, *Modern Samoa: Its Government and Changing Life*, Stanford University Press, California, 1934, pp. 402–403. See also Featuna’i B. Luaana, “Samoa Tula’i: Ecclesiastical and political face of Samoa’s independence, 1900–1962,” Ph.D. thesis, The Australian National University, 2001.

wives during this latter part of the twentieth century came at a time in Samoa when the role of white missionaries was diminishing while Samoans increasingly came to lead their own affairs. Such a development in the Church in Samoa was one of the reasons that caused tensions between Samoans and their European superiors in PNG. But with this “independent” mindset, Samoan missionaries and their wives also played an important part in the movement towards independence of the LMS mission Church in PNG. According to Siulagi Kavora, the former General Secretary of the Uniting Church of PNG,

Samoan missionaries in their work in bringing the Church and Gospel was just like what was happening in Samoa. Whatever was happening in Samoa ... it was just like Samoa in Papua. They helped us towards understanding self-government and independence. In a way ... we were ready because of the way they prepared us in how to make decisions and how to work together in unity, and they helped us into a new era with Papua Ekalesia.¹¹¹

In 1950, the first meeting of Papuan representatives of district church councils was held at Delena to discuss a constitution for the Papuan church assembly. They discussed the establishment of a self-governing Church, a college for the training of pastors and financial support. During this period, LMS missionaries, both European and Samoan, felt an increasing sense of playing a supporting role to the Papuans. Percy Chatterton¹¹² who was in charge of Delena district wrote in 1955, “Fourteen years earlier I had been the big boss. Later I had become a kind of captain coach. Now I

¹¹¹ Personal interview with Siulagi Kavora, Suva, 27 February 2005.

¹¹² Sir Percy Chatterton was both a missionary and politician in PNG. He first became a lay missionary teacher in Port Moresby in 1923; he ran the LMS school in Hanuabada, Port Moresby while his wife taught infants. In 1939 they were transferred to Delena where he was appointed district missionary. He was ordained in 1943 and in 1957 ministered at Koki to the migrants from other parts of PNG. In 1962 he played a major part in the transformation of the mission into the country’s first wholly self-governing church, the Papua Ekalesia, and began a two-year secondment to the British and Foreign Bible Society to translate the Bible into Motu. When he retired in 1963, he then embarked on a new career in 1964 as a member of the House of Assembly for the Central Special electorate. He was re-elected in 1968 in the Port Moresby electorate. He devoted his energies to the unfortunate and underprivileged and warned of the danger of economic colonialism, urging that certain occupations be reserved for indigenous employees, fighting for adequate low-cost housing, and advocating the appointment of an ombudsman. He was appointed OBE in 1972, the year he retired from politics. See his personal memoir, *Day that I have Loved: Percy Chatterton’s Papua*, Pacific Publications, Sydney, 1974.

found myself more a sort of ecclesiastical linesman, blowing the whistle when I deemed the ball had gone out of play.”¹¹³

As the Papuans took on the leadership of their church, the Samoans and other Islanders shifted to the periphery. Their presence had been profound and now it was time for them to leave and hand over the work to local people. Now their main work was to encourage local people to take a leading role in their church. Finally in 1962, the LMS Board at its meeting in May announced that, “the churches which had been gathered as a result of the missionary effort of the Society in Papua are to form an autonomous church to be known as the Papua Ekalesia.”¹¹⁴

In the 1970s, the last Samoans finally began to leave PNG. As they began to move out, many felt that they had in some way contributed to the progress and development of PNG, particularly when it finally celebrated its independence in 1975. Many of the leading Papuan figures in the country were those educated and influenced by them. Ebia Olevale, a student of Taeleipu and Teipo, became the Minister of Education and later of Justice in the early years of independence. Tom Koraea, a student of Anesone and Sepetia, became a Member of Parliament and a well-known business man. Tau Boka, a student of Fuatai and Lusa, became the Teaching Service Commissioner. Sere Potoi, also a student of Fuatai and Lusa, became Commissioner of Labour. Mairi Mehutu, a student of Niu and Tafagamanu, became a well-known Radio Announcer. Albert Maori Kiki, a student of Fiavaai and Elisapeta, became Minister of Foreign Affairs and then Deputy Prime Minister.¹¹⁵ There were many others, doctors, lawyers, teachers and nurses who were also educated and influenced by Samoans. Many Papuans today attribute their success to the Samoans and other Islander missionaries. Former missionary wives told of how when regional meetings are held in Samoa, the

¹¹³ Bernard Thorogood, *Gales of Change: Responding to a Shifting Missionary Context: The Story of the London Missionary Society 1845–1977*, World Council of Churches, Geneva, 1994, p. 159.

¹¹⁴ *Missionary Magazine and Chronicles* (August 1962): 158. In October, the LMS asked the people to pray for the Church in Papua as it prepared for the great service of inauguration of the Papua Ekalesia to take place in Port Moresby on the 21 November 1962. *Missionary Magazine and Chronicles* (August 1962): 198.

¹¹⁵ See Albert Maori Kiki, *Kiki, Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime: A New Guinea Autobiography*, Cheshire, Melbourne Australia, 1968.

Papuan representatives who are now lawyers and doctors would always come and visit them, showing their appreciation of the contribution of the Samoans.¹¹⁶

As the last group of Samoans left the shores of PNG, they felt not only a great sense of satisfaction but also of sadness. In the words of Olivia,

As we were about to leave and in seeing the people standing there waving goodbye, I was truly humbled and thought to myself whether I had been useful to them. But I also felt that there was nothing more I could do. I told myself, "You had done your best, and offered yourself completely. The Papuans were moving up to their own level.... Then I thought to myself that my work was done, leave the Lord's work to Him; there are other people who can carry it on and continue the work."¹¹⁷

The Samoans had contributed close to a century of mission work in PNG and although they had a great impact on the Church in PNG, they were also immensely influenced by their experiences there. In 1972, the Papuans celebrated the centenary of the arrival of Christianity. A delegation from Samoa was invited as one of the many special guests, which included former Samoan missionaries and their wives. Sulufaiga and Sivavaii who were one of the last few Samoan missionary couples working in PNG at the time witnessed a moving account of this celebration and the reunion between these former Samoan missionary couples and Papuans. He wrote,

I witnessed an emotional reunion. The whole airport at Kerema was filled with people. Even the District Commissioner was there to welcome the Samoans. As they embraced each other, there were tears of joy. It was a beautiful sight as old Papuan men and women held hands with their Samoan parents. The most surprising thing was that they still remembered each other's names. Even the Samoans spoke in Papuan languages without a stutter.¹¹⁸

Fading memories

Gabagaba is about an hour's drive east of Port Moresby. Before I arrived I heard so much about how the people of this village valued the Samoans and was looking forward to seeing the village and talking to the people. I arrived and met with Pastor

¹¹⁶ Personal interview with Lusa Fuatai, 20–21 December 2004; personal interview with Mere Tiai.

¹¹⁷ Personal interview with Olivia Latai.

¹¹⁸ Enele S. Samasoni, *O le Lupe i Vaoese*, Mālua Printing Press, Apia, 1994, p. 59.

Toea Gaugau and his wife Sina Risi at the Pastor's residence. The Pastor's big blue house is situated at the east end of the village. The house is made of hard wood with an iron roof and glass louvred-windows. Next to it is the big church with a memorial stone in front paying tribute to the Samoans who worked as missionaries there. Behind the mission ground is a small stream. According to local elders, what is now the mission ground was where the stream once ran. When the Samoans arrived, they reclaimed the land by filling it with sand. Local elderly women told me that when they were young, one of their punishments involved having to fill bags with sand from the beach and then dumping it on the mission ground. This piece of land was thus built on the sweat and hard work of local people. Elderly men and women talked about how the Samoans' were very strict. The men talked about the building of the pastor's house and how hard the work was. They said that the Samoan missionary Fuatai tried to lift the spirits of the people but many were discouraged. Then one day Fuatai began the work. People started bringing in the wood to start cutting. The work was tiring for many and soon people began to wander off despite Fuatai's insistence. Then a miracle happened. Lightning struck and soon all the wood was cut. The people were amazed and shouted that this was truly a miracle from God. People were encouraged again and continued the work until the house was completed. Later one of the elders presented me with a piece of wood that was cut by the lightning strike. This he said they still keep at the altar of the church as a reminder of that great miracle, as well as the unwavering strength and faith of their Samoan pastors.

While Samoan missionary men were remembered in such fantastical, miraculous accounts, their wives were remembered for their work in promoting hygiene and good sanitation in the village. The women told of how Samoan missionary wives were strict about cleanliness by introducing health committees who did weekly inspections to check the state of hygiene in people's houses. Women talked about the work of Samoan wives in teaching them how to weave mats, fans, baskets and other crafts. These they sold in order to fundraise for their programs and activities in the Church. I was presented with a fan of Samoan design. This they said was the design taught to them by Samoan wives which they still weave today. Upon closer examination, however, I realised that the design was slightly altered with specific features of Papuan pattern added. They also talked of the fond memories of the times they learned and performed Samoan songs and dancing. These were happy memories as they talked

about the grace and eloquence of these Samoan women in performing their traditional Samoan dancing. But they also said that many of the Samoan wives were also great dancers and singers of their own local traditions. Then I remembered accounts of returning Samoan wives performing Papuan dances in Papuan costumes in front of audiences in Mālua and Papauta.

Despite such talk of the hard-line approach of Samoan missionaries and their wives, these elderly men and women reminisced with a great sense of gratitude about the influence of Samoans who worked amongst them. During my stay with Pastor Toea and his family, he often talked about how the old people in the village compared the church of today to the time of the Samoans, that the Samoans brought great change to the village and did so much for the progress of Gabagaba. On one occasion, Pastor Toea admitted that this sometimes can prove challenging for their own work as they try to implement new changes to fit with the current context in PNG. He said he often feels intimidated and is made to feel that the Samoan presence is still strong within the minds of the older generation in the village.



Figure 71. Left: *The pastor's house at Gabagaba, built by Samoan missionary Fuata'i. Photographed by Latu Latai, 28 July 2013*



Figure 72. Right: *The stream, that was redirected when the mission land was reclaimed by sand, now runs behind the pastor's house. Photographed by Latu Latai, 28 July 2013*

On my last night at Gabagaba, I was sitting with Pastor Toea in front of the front porch of their house when we started seeing elderly men and women make their way toward the front of the mission ground. By dusk the whole ground was filled with all the elders of the village and soon the singing began, first with Peroveta songs taught by Rarotongan missionaries and their wives and then climaxing in the singing of Samoan hymns, traditional songs and dance. Now and then the main leader and conductor

asked people if they remembered this song or this hymn. He would start humming the tune, then an old lady would burst out with the words of the first line, then soon everyone joined in as the lyrics began to flood their memories.



Figure 73. Left: *Elders of the Church at Gabagaba presenting the piece of wood that was cut by lightning, now kept inside the church to remind the people of that miracle. The mats we are sitting on are also those which were introduced by Samoan wives. Photographer unknown, 29 July 2013*



Figure 74. Right: *With Pastor Toea, his wife Sina Risi, their son and one of the elders of the Church at Gabagaba. Photographer unknown, 29 July 2013*



Figure 75. Left: *A typical Samoan fan. Photographed by Latu Latai, 7 October 2015*



Figure 76. Right: *"Samoan fan" gifted to me at Gabagaba. Photographed by Latu Latai, 7 October 2015*

Sometimes I would join in the singing of a song with which I was familiar. At other times, I could only vaguely remember the songs as they are no longer performed in Samoa today. The singing and dancing went on all night. I remembered how the Papuans love to dance, and I also remembered that this was a Sunday evening. I wondered what Samoan missionaries would have done. The women began to get up and started performing Samoan dances. The more they danced, the more they remembered the actions and soon these elderly men and women began to sway and move like elders in my own village in Samoa. I looked around and saw children and young people who had been gathering around, watching, laughing, giggling,

applauding as the elders of their village sang and danced to foreign tunes using dance actions that were unfamiliar. I wonder then, whether they know or have heard of the Samoans who once worked amongst their elders and walked on these grounds they now reclaimed.

CONCLUSION

The main aim of this thesis is to recuperate the presence and experiences of Samoan missionary wives in the evangelisation of the western Pacific. This follows the trajectory in Pacific history and in other disciplines since the 1960s to bring voice and agency to Pacific Islanders. Although this attempt to highlight the agency of Pacific Islanders has succeeded to some extent,¹ the resonance of indigenous voices has more rarely been heard through the use of sources in Pacific languages. As Chris Ballard has recently argued,² Pacific historians have often overlooked textual and oral sources in indigenous languages and have, with some important exceptions (like Greg Denning³ and Anne Salmond⁴) failed to embrace Oceanic ways of telling the past and their different criteria for adjudicating historical facts or truths. Inspired by the re-visioning of Hawaiian history accomplished by Noenoe Silva⁵ in using Hawaiian language sources, I have relied on both texts and interviews in Samoan to tell the story of Samoan missionary women's engagement in the evangelisation of the western Pacific. I have also benefitted from the insights of participant observation in Vanuatu and PNG through the embodied experience of the past in place and of historical traces in the materiality of everyday life. All of this has helped to deliver a more complex and more nuanced picture of the experiences of Samoan missionary wives in evangelisation, showing how this was influenced as much by *FaaSamoa* as by introducing Christian ideals.

Central to the argument of this thesis is an interrogation of how the gender ideologies promoted by European missions such as the LMS shaped the experiences of Samoan missionary wives. Such ideologies which focused on the separation of the roles of men and women in the public and domestic spheres were often compromised in the

¹ On history that sees the creative agency of Pacific Islanders in "fatal contact" narratives see David A. Chappell, "Active agents versus passive victims: Decolonized historiography or problematic paradigm?" *The Contemporary Pacific*, vol. 7, no. 2 (1995): 303–26.

² Christopher Ballard, "Oceanic historicities," *The Contemporary Pacific*, vol. 26, no. 1 (2014): 95–154.

³ Greg Denning, *Beach Crossings: Voyaging Across Times, Cultures and Self*, Miegunyah Press/Melbourne University Publishing, Carlton, Victoria, 2004; *Islands and Beaches: Discourse on a Silent Land*, Melbourne University Press, Victoria, 1980.

⁴ Anne Salmond, *Between Worlds*, Viking, Auckland, 1998; *Two Worlds: First Meetings between Maori and Europeans 1642–1772*, Viking, Auckland, 1991.

⁵ Noenoe Silva, *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2004.

context of missions in the Pacific. In Samoa the ideals of domesticity promoted by English missionaries and their wives were often not fully realised even in their own lived experiences. Their promotion of the roles of women as “wives” and “mothers” in the home was confounded by the environment of the mission in Samoa, initially by sending their own children back home to avoid perceived bodily and moral contamination and later by the widespread use of local women as domestic helpers. These British women in fact primarily pursued their religious vocation, converting women and working in more public roles as teachers and nurses. The paradoxical nature of this project, whereby ideals were often confounded in practice, meant that their impact in Samoa was complex especially for those Samoan missionary wives who were early trained to become models of Christian mothers for local women to emulate. But perhaps even more important was how the project to “domesticate” Samoan women was contested by Samoan ideals and practices in gender relations, and especially by the centrality of the sacred covenant in the relation between sisters and brothers.

Christian conversion in Samoa was highly successful, and many Samoan women eagerly embraced the new religion. But conversion entailed not only rupture but continuity in Samoan indigenous ideas about religion, status, hierarchy and gender relations in Samoa. Christianity was thus appropriated into local systems and structures. So indigenous concepts such as the *feagaiga* (the sacred covenant between sister and brother), crucial to gender relations in Samoa, was transposed onto the pastor and his wife. Consequently this played a crucial role in the elevation of the pastor and his wife in Samoa, diminishing the powerful status of Samoan women as sisters. This transformation was further enhanced by the training of Samoan women as missionary wives and teachers in Mālua as Samoans progressively valued the literate education of their children. Christianity and Samoan values and practices thus converged and creolised. By the turn of the nineteenth century the Samoan pastor and his wife were amongst the most influential figures in Samoan society. For the wives of Samoan pastors, the establishment of boarding schools for girls like Papauta continued to enhance their status, creating a new elite of women in Samoan society who were sought after as wives of male students at Mālua. Consequently, the training of girls at Papauta ushered in a “new woman” in Samoa in the twentieth century. Trained in feminised professions such as nursing and teaching, graduates of Papauta became the

first women in Samoa to work in such professions in public schools and hospitals, revealing again the paradoxes in the project of domesticity.⁶ Papauta a school founded on domestic ideals to train future mothers and wives in order to “raise” the Samoan nation, rather promoted the education of professional women working largely in the public sphere.

This analysis of the transformation of Samoan pastors’ wives since the introduction of Christianity is important to our understanding of the impact of Samoan missionary wives in the western Pacific. We have seen Samoan wives in different mission fields and in different periods from the early nineteenth to the latter half of the twentieth century. Their experiences varied from time to time and place to place, influenced both by the transformations ongoing back in Samoa and the different character and trajectories of their mission fields.

For the early group of Samoan wives in Vanuatu and the Loyalty Islands in the first half of the nineteenth century, their introduction to foreign missionary work was filled with many challenges: the extraordinary impact of diseases both indigenous and introduced and the violence created as a consequence of the sandalwood trade and by indigenous resistance often based on perceptions that missionaries were the purveyors of disease. Samoan wives, their husbands and children thus confronted a “dangerous” missionary field. Moreover, the remarkable differences in customary practices between these island cultures and that of the Samoans were confronting. The arduous character of women’s work, together with infanticide, the live burial of elderly people and widow strangulation shocked them and, since such practices were absent in pre-Christian Samoa, led to perceptions of a “savage” people. For several Samoan wives, such customs led to their tragic deaths, as when they refused demands to marry local chiefs on the deaths of their husbands. Such differences in customs often focused on the divergent status of women in Vanuatu and Samoa. White missionaries and their wives often saw ni-Vanuatu women as lower in status due to customs such as “widow strangulation” and the heavy labour they performed outside the home. Given the esteemed status of Samoan women as “sisters,” doubtless many Samoan women would have held similar views to their white superiors. Still, the dual status of Samoan

⁶ Margaret Jolly and Hyaewool Choi (eds.), *Divine Domesticities: Paradoxes of Christian Modernities in Asia and the Pacific*, ANU E Press, Canberra, 2014.

women as both esteemed sisters and wives, meant that they would have been able to relate far better to local women than the wives of white missionaries: as wives in Samoa they were involved in assisting in the heavy labour carried out by their husbands beyond the home. Moreover, there were some consonances between Samoan and ni-Vanuatu practices, in contrast to the marked differences between Europeans and ni-Vanuatu. This included polygamy, a common practice in pre-Christian Samoa as well as Vanuatu and which many missionary wives would have experienced before conversion. There was also similarity between Samoans and ni-Vanuatu in how they understood the divine nature of diseases, although major epidemics did not occur in Samoa until the Spanish Flu Epidemic of 1918. The killings of the Samoans by ni-Vanuatu should thus be seen in light of local people's understanding of the divine causes of diseases, and perhaps their seeing epidemics as the result of their gods' anger for their espousing a new religion. This also suggests a different understanding of the killing of Samoan widows, as prompted by indigenous theologies that wives should be killed to join their husbands in the afterlife. Similarly, the customary practices of infanticide and the live burial of elderly people alongside widow strangulation, which for European missionaries were all marks of the "low" and "degrading" state of people in Vanuatu, could also be seen in a different light—as a way of ending suffering and joining their loved ones and ancestors in the afterlife.

Other consonances between the Samoans and ni-Vanuatu were obvious in material life. In the evangelisation of these islands, we witness not only the spreading of the Gospel and the attempt to convert local people to Christianity, but also exchanges in everyday knowledge, technology and skills. Oral traditions and embodied knowledge are found in the remnants of settlements named after Samoans: the designs of houses, canoes, pandanus crafts and introduced plant species. These suggest how Samoans lived a daily life that is largely obscured in the writings of white missionaries that focused rather on physical and material transformations which conformed with European architecture and clothes. The memories of the influences of Samoan wives in the weaving of pandanus textiles such as "mats" and "thatches" are living testimonies to their continuing significance for ni-Vanuatu today. Through these remnants of their work we see that, despite the overwhelming violence and tragedies that saturate missionary accounts, Samoans and local ni-Vanuatu sustained a mutual relationship in

exchanges of cultural and material knowledge.⁷ Hence, despite the immense challenges of the mission in Vanuatu (and the Loyalty Islands) we can appreciate how the Samoans eventually gained some traction in these places and continue to be remembered by local people in oral traditions today, especially in relation to “the coming of the light.”

The tragedies and challenges for Samoans in Vanuatu and the Loyalty Islands were in striking contrast to the success of the Samoans we witnessed in Tuvalu and Kiribati in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The Samoans fared far better in these islands leading to greater and faster success in evangelisation. This was due to a range of factors, including far fewer indigenous and introduced diseases and a much lower rate of morbidity and mortality. But equally important was the linguistic and cultural cognacy and the shared history between Samoa and these islands. The indigenised Christianity which had developed by this stage in Samoa was more readily transplantable to this insular context given the shared pre-colonial character of hierarchy and gender relations. The success of the Samoans on these islands was often depicted in the materiality of conversion, in the construction of mission buildings and the physical changes in the lived environment and the appearance of local people. Though barely acknowledged, Samoan wives were central to such visible transformations—the introduction of European-style clothes, health and hygiene were celebrated by visiting European missionaries and foreign observers. But, alongside such praise, the Samoans were also heavily criticised for their overbearing influence on local people, their strict observance of Christian laws and their excessive livelihoods. Samoan wives in particular were the objects of savage racist satire, critiquing them as women of leisure, and zealous evangelists for new Christian clothes, which they and local converts were seen to wear badly. Such satire reveals the ironies and racist double standards in European views.

Much was transplanted from Mālua, particularly in ideals about the divergent roles of mothers and fathers or the character of conjugal relations as encouraged by European missionaries. But these Christian ideas of domesticity were articulated with pre-

⁷ Similar mutual or unidirectional exchanges also occurred between Pacific Islander missionaries and the Tubetube people of PNG. See Martha Macintyre, “Better homes and gardens,” in *Family and Gender in the Pacific: Domestic Contradictions and the Colonial Impact*, ed. Margaret Jolly and Martha Macintyre, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989, pp. 156–69.

Christian forms in both mission fields and Samoa itself. The form of Christianity that was emerging in Samoa was increasingly influencing the work of the Samoans on these islands, and caused frictions in the relations between the Samoans and their white superiors. In Tuvalu and Kiribati, there was an increasing sense of independence of the Samoans from white missionaries. This was a reflection of the rising power of Samoan pastors and their wives in the mission church in Samoa. In 1875, they became the first group to be granted ordination in Samoa and a General Assembly was instituted in which the governance of the church fell largely into the hands of the Samoans. The wives of Samoan pastors were able to form the first “national” women’s fellowship which was parallel to the General Assembly. This growing sense of Samoan independence was further highlighted in the final frontier of the Samoan mission in PNG where the racial hierarchy of the mission and the sense of superiority of white missionaries and their wives were again challenged.

PNG was the destination for the majority of the Samoan missionaries where many died mainly from both indigenous and introduced diseases. Accounts written by the Samoans reveal their impressions: the vastness and impenetrable nature of landscape; the challenges of deadly diseases like malaria and introduced flu and measles were combined with perceptions of the “sinful darkness” of customary practice, especially around the treatment of women. In PNG, we hear once again the discourses of “darkness” and “savagery” earlier heard in Vanuatu. This time however, we hear it not just from white missionaries and their wives but from Samoan wives and their husbands. The voices of Samoan missionary wives thus became amplified in this latter period, articulating a strong contrast between the “lower” treatment of women in PNG and the “esteemed” status of women in Samoa. Such contrasts were grounded in their indigenous culture and gender relations. But by this stage, Samoans had also internalised much of the Christian racial ideals introduced by English missionaries. Such racial perceptions played a part in the superior attitude of the Samoans and were reflected in the heavy-handed and authoritarian manner in which they carried out their work. But such racial ideals were also based on the Samoan insistence on the superiority of *FaaSamoa*.

In PNG, Samoan wives invested their time and energy in the project to “uplift” women. But this project to uplift and “domesticate” local women was yet again filled with

many paradoxes. In their missionary work they continued to emphasise the ideals of Christian domesticity in their classes for girls and in their women's groups. But, as with the development of Papauta, many of these women became nurses and teachers in PNG, working largely in public places like mission and government schools and hospitals. Their roles in PNG were thus dramatically expanded, working beyond the horizon of a domestic sphere. Such paradoxes in the lives of Samoan wives in PNG mirrored the changing roles of women in Samoa.

One of the prime reasons for the LMS's persistence in the deployment of Samoan wives was in order that they become role models of the "ideal" wife for other indigenous women in the western Pacific to aspire to and emulate. Samoan missionary wives were perceived as exemplifying "Polynesian" women who in colonial writings were seen as closer to the idealised western "woman" than their "Melanesian" counterparts. Thus they were an integral part of the larger Christian project to "uplift" women in the western Pacific. They were among the first Polynesian women to travel to these places and experience the very different "state" of women in this region. Although it is difficult to speculate on the perceptions of ni-Vanuatu women by the earliest group of Samoan wives, there seems to have been more mutuality in their relationships. This was remarkably different to the latter group of Samoan wives in PNG in the twentieth century; their negative perceptions of Papuan women were much more pronounced. I argue that this was due to the transformation that was occurring in Samoa and the internalisation of a racial hierarchy that was introduced and propagated by white missionaries and their wives.⁸ The racial and racist hierarchical categorisation of Pacific women, which began with European exploratory voyages was perpetuated in the evangelisation of the Pacific, particularly with the deployment of Polynesian wives. Samoan wives themselves suffered and were heavily satirised in the mission fields when they tried to usurp the authority of whites and enforce their own sense of superiority over local women. As much as they tried to become ideal Christian civilised wives, they were never seen as equals to their white superiors, nor the ideal English missionary wife.

⁸ But see Helen Gardner on racial views of missionaries. Helen Gardner, *Gathering for God: George Brown in Oceania*, Otago University Press, Otago, 2006; "The 'Faculty of Faith': Evangelical missionaries, social anthropologists, and the claim for human unity in the 19th century," in *Foreign Bodies: Oceania and the Science of Race 1750–1940*, ed. Bronwen Douglas and Chris Ballard, ANU E Press, Canberra, 2008, pp. 259–82.

Samoan missionary wives participated in one of the most influential movements that transformed the Pacific in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Their contribution to that movement was significant in the sacrifices they made and in the struggles and challenges they encountered in often strange and foreign lands. Their motives for mission varied: a desire for adventure, a sense of honour and Samoan pride, a developing notion of Christian “martyrdom” in Samoa, a willingness to follow in the footsteps of their predecessors, and for most a deep commitment to spread the Gospel. Whatever their motivations, all of them were “keepers of a covenant” in the sense that they carried with them their indigenous identity as *feagaiga*, taking with them the honour of their families, relatives and villages back home. They were also “keepers of the new covenant” in their identity as wives of their husbands, together representing the honour of their country, their Church and their God. Samoan missionary wives were not only a product of their Christian training but also of their own *FaaSamoa*. They were Christian women trained in the ways of the *Papalagi* but they were also Samoans who celebrated their own identity as Samoan women.

APPENDICES

The information recorded in the following appendices are taken from my own reading of missionary magazines particularly the *Sulu Samoa* and the *Samoa Reporter*, Minutes of meetings and correspondences of LMS missionaries and from personal interviews with former Samoan missionary wives, husbands, relatives and descendants.

Appendix 1. Samoan Missionaries and their Wives in Rotuma and Southern Vanuatu 1839–1861

Years in Mission	Names	Information
1839	Leiataua Lauina	Posted to Rotuma. From Lepuia'i Manono. One of the first Samoan missionaries. Worked at Falefa then offered to go on mission in 1839. Went on the inaugural voyage on the <i>Camden</i> and was left on Rotuma.
1839	Sa'u	Posted to Rotuma. He joined Leiataua at Rotuma being the first Samoan missionaries.
1839	Lalolagi Samoanamao	Posted to Vanuatu on Tanna. From Malie. Worked at Salesatele Falealili, one of the first Samoan teachers working in Samoa. He then worked at Lealatele and Safotu and Matautu, 1833–39. He then offered to go on mission. He was appointed to Tanna with Mose and Salamea in 1839. First Samoan teacher from his village of Malie. He returned to Samoa in 1841 and built a church at his village of Malie.
1839	Salamea	Posted to Vanuatu on Tanna. From Faleula. Died due to disease epidemic at Port Resolution, Tanna, 1843.
1839	Mose	Posted to Vanuatu on Tanna. ¹
1840	Atamu and Wife	Posted to Vanuatu on Aniwa, and then Tanna. Worked together with Iona on Aniwa. Because they were blamed for disease outbreak, they left in 1843 and ended up in Tanna. They revived the mission there. Turner found them there in 1845.
1840	Taniela	Posted to Vanuatu on Erromango and later to New Caledonia at Kunie. From Mulifanua and Tufulele. Left at Erromango with Lasalo in May 1840. He also worked at Kunie, 1841–42. Killed by local people at the Isle of Pines on board the sandalwood brig the <i>Star</i> as they tried to escape to Samoa.
1840	Lasalo	Posted to Vanuatu (Erromango), New Caledonia (Kunie) From Apolima. Dropped off at Erromango with Taniela. He also worked at Kunie New Caledonia, 1841–42. Killed by local people at the Isle of Pines on board the sandalwood brig the <i>Star</i> as they tried to escape.
1840	Apolo and Wife	Posted to Vanuatu on Tanna and then Aneityum. George Turner visited him while he was working on Aneityum in 1845. He worked together with Simiona and assisted John Geddie. One day he and Simiona were about to be buried alive by the people when the main chief died—as is their custom. They offered the fruits of their huge gardens which saved their lives.

¹ There were two Samoans named Mose who went in 1839, one from Iva and the other from Saleimoa. We cannot be sure as to who was posted to Tanna. The other Mose however returned to Samoa after Williams was killed, and possibly returned and was later posted to Efate.

Latu Latai

1840	Faleese	Posted to Vanuatu on Tanna.
1841	Samuela and Wife	Posted to Vanuatu on Futuna. First Samoan at Futuna. Left there with his wife and daughter in 1841. They were all killed in 1843 by locals who blamed them for a disease outbreak. Samuela was killed in his garden while his wife and daughter were killed at their house. The people ate Samuela and his wife's bodies while the daughter was thrown to the sea with the other Samoan teacher Apela.
1841	Apela	Posted to Vanuatu on Futuna. Described by Turner as a humble and loving man. Left with Samuela on Futuna in 1841. He was killed while returning from their garden with Apela's daughter. Their bodies thrown to the sea.
1841	Tavita and Wife	Posted to Vanuatu on Aneityum. They were the first Samoans on Aneityum together with Fuataiese. They were also the first to die there. Tavita due to dropsy; his wife from TB. But according to the <i>Samoan Reporter</i> Tavita died of dysentery from a blood haemorrhage and his wife from a disease of the stomach. The locals wanted their bodies thrown into the sea according to their custom but Fuataiese and Simiona convinced the people not to and they were properly buried in graves near their houses. They were the first to be buried on Aneityum.
1841	Fuataiese and Wife	Posted to Vanuatu on Aneityum. One of the first Samoan missionaries on Aneityum.
1842	Pita	Posted to Vanuatu on Tanna, and then Aneityum. He was reported to have soon died there.
1842	Simiona and Wife	Posted to Vanuatu on Aneityum. He was on the fourth missionary voyage in 1842. He worked there for 18 years. Geddie wrote highly of him. When Geddie arrived he was fluent in the local language. Turner referred to him as his interpreter in 1859. He was the main assistant to Geddie in relation to the locals as he was well respected. He died in 1960 due to a measles outbreak. Geddie wrote, "His life was that of a Christian, and his latter end was peace. I feel his loss very much. He gave me much valuable assistance. I was attached to him, as he shared with us many of the early trials of the Mission."
1843	Iona and Wife	Posted to Vanuatu on Aniwa and later on Tanna and Lifou at the Loyalty Islands. From Falefa. Left Aniwa with Atamu and ended up in Tanna where they revived the mission there. Later offered to work on Lifou.
1845	Tagipo	Posted to Vanuatu on Tanna. Left there to assist with the mission in 1845.
1845	Ioane	Posted to Vanuatu on Tanna. Appointed to assist the work on Tanna. Reported sick in 1846 but recovered. He was reportedly attacked while praying in the bush. He returned later to Samoa. He could be the same Ioane from Aiga i le Tai who went in the inaugural mission in 1839 but returned when Williams was killed.
1845	Setefano and Wife	Posted to Vanuatu on Efate at the village of Olotapu and Erakor. Appointed there with Mose, Taavili and Sipi as the first teachers there. They met with Samoan warrior and chief So'oalo. Setefano was chosen to work at So'oalo's village together with Mose. When Turner visited in 1848, Setefano was heartbroken with the death of his wife due to dropsy (sanatoto). He wanted to continue working despite his loss. When visited again in 1854 he was the only teacher alive. All others died due to sickness, or killed by local

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people. He was returned to Samoa on this visit with So'oalo who assisted the teachers. He was the last Samoan there before it was handed over to the Presbyterian mission.

1845	Mose and Wife	Posted to Vanuatu on Efate at the village of Olatapu and Erakor. First at Efate and worked with Setefano under the assistance of So'oalo. He assisted with rescuing traders such as John Jones who were attacked by locals. Letter left by Jones. Gatoloai Peseta Sio wrote of his visit to Mose's commemoration Stone at the celebration of the 100 th anniversary of the church at Efate.
1845	Taavili and Wife	Posted to Vanuatu on Efate. One of the first Samoans there. He was appointed to begin the work at the village of Pango, where he died. A commemoration stone of him has been erected there.
1845	Sili	Posted to Vanuatu on Efate at the village of Fila. One of the first Samoans there. Appointed to work with Taavili at Pango. When he became ill the local men came to kill him so that the disease would not spread.
1846	Lealamanu'a	Posted to Vanuatu on Efate. Turner reported his death in 1848. He was sick after a tree fell on him in February 1848 due to a storm. He died peacefully surrounded by teachers and chiefs of the village. He urged the chiefs to accept the new religion and encouraged his fellow teachers before he died.
1846	Taili and Wife	Posted to Vanuatu on Efate at the village of Mele. Felt sick and died in 1847. Only at Mele for one year. The chief there stole his property tried to force his wife to marry him. She refused and ran into the sea to swim to the other teachers but drowned.
1846	Ratai and Wife	Posted to Vanuatu on Efate at the village of Fila. He died at Fila due to illness in 1847.
1846	Sepania or Sefanaia and Wife	Posted to Vanuatu on Efate at the village of Eratap. Peseta Sio told of his grave at Erokoa at Efate.
1852	Amosa and Wife	Posted to Vanuatu. Worked in Vanuatu from 1852–1856. Later moved to Niue.
1852	Sakaio and Wife	Posted first to Vanuatu. First worked in Vanuatu from 1852–1856 then shifted to Niue.
1854	Elia and Wife	Posted to Vanuatu on Erromango. His wife died on the Loyalty Islands while seeking refuge from diseases on Erromango. One of the few Samoans whose letters were translated in the <i>Samoan Reporter</i> and some have survived. Later believed to have worked at Niue.
1854	Va'a and Wife	Posted to Vanuatu on Erromango. Died at the Loyalty Islands while seeking refuge from disease at Erromango.
1854	Isaaka and Wife	Posted to Vanuatu on Erromango. Two of his children died in the Loyalty Islands while seeking refuge from disease at Erromango.
1855	Mailei and Wife	Posted to Vanuatu on Erromango. Two of his children died in the Loyalty Islands while seeking refuge from disease at Erromango. One of the few Samoans whose letters have survived.

Total: 2 at Rotuma and 31 at Vanuatu: Number of wives unsure but could be the same number.

Appendix 2. Samoan Missionaries and their Wives in New Caledonia and Loyalty Islands 1840–1869

Years in mission	Names	Information
1842	Noa	Posted to New Caledonia at Tuauru. He replaced Mataio who had died. He and Taunga from Rarotonga were the last teachers at Tuauru. Visited by missionaries and were hard working. They were attacked in 1843 by the chief of the Island of Pines. They managed to calm them and their lives were spared. They were shifted when visited in 1845.
1840	Mataio	Posted to New Caledonia at Tuauru and later at the Isle of Pines. From Manono. He was one of the first Samoans to die due to disease in 1841.
1840	Pagisa	Posted to New Caledonia. From the village of Pago, Tutuila.
1846	Fili and Wife	Posted to the Loyalty Islands at Toka and Mare. Established a successful mission on these islands with impressive mission houses and churches reported by visiting missionaries in 1852. Fili died in 1852 and his wife and children returned to Samoa but local people were sad to farewell them.
1846	Mita and Wife	Posted to the Loyalty Islands on Toka and Mare. Worked together with Fili. They established a successful mission on these islands with impressive mission houses and churches reported by visiting missionaries in 1852.
1854	Isaaka and Wife	Posted to the Loyalty Islands on Lifou An account of how they survived their trip from Lifou to Mare with Tanielu. Lifouans were amazed at their bravery.
1857	Sepetaia and Wife	Posted to the Loyalty Islands
1859	Saria and Wife	Posted to the Loyalty Islands
1841	Tataio	Posted to the Loyalty Islands on Mare. From Sapapalii. Visited by Turner in 1845 and found he was the only one alive. In 1841 they tried to warn off the sandalwood ship the <i>Brigand</i> from going ashore for “women.” The ship was later attacked. The people were happy and looked after him. Turner wanted him returned to Samoa but he refused.
1841	Taniela	Posted to the Loyaty Islands on Mare. From Tutuila. Died in 1844 due to TB.
1846	Solia and Wife	Posted to the Loyalty Islands on Mare and Toka. From Falelatai. First worked on Mare then at Tiga in 1852 and Toka until they returned in 1859. They had worked there for 13 years. Turner reported on the beautiful church Solia built on Toka, 40 x 20 feet. People were sad when they farewelled him and his wife and daughters. Sana was one of the names of the daughters. Solia died at Falelatai and his wife remarried another teacher Iose who worked at Salailua Savaii. The wife died in Somerset, Cape York Australia. A letter by Sana her daughter who married a Scottish Police magistrate at Sommerset.
1841	Iona and Wife	Posted first to Vanuatu on Aniwa then Tanna, then to the Loyalty Islands on Lifou. From Falefa. On Aniwa, 1841–42 and then escaped to Tanna in 1843. In 1845 they were on their way to Samoa but when the mission ship visited Lifou they saw that only Paoo was there as the other Samoan Sakaria had committed

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adultery. Ioan and his wife decided to stay there and assist Paoo.

1854	Tanielu	Posted to the Loyalty Islands on Lifou
1846	Iosia	Posted to the Loyalty Islands on Mare
1842	Taume	Posted to the Loyalty Islands on Uvea
1842	Simi	Posted to the Loyalty Islands on Uvea
1857	Toma	Posted to the Loyalty Islands on Lifou
	Iosefa	Posted to New Caledonia at Tauru

Total: 19 Samoan missionaries including Lasalo, Iona and Taniela who also worked both in Vanuatu and Loyalty Islands. Number of wives unsure, but likely close to the number of husbands.

Appendix 3. Samoan Missionaries and their Wives in Tuvalu 1865–1966

Years in mission	Names	Information
1865	Matatia and Wife	Posted to Tuvalu. One of the first Samoan missionary couples in Tuvalu.
1865	Ioane Esekielu and Wife	Posted to Tuvalu on Nukulaelae, Nanumanga. From Tau Tutuila. One of the first Samoan missionary couples there. Ioane was Rarotongan Taunga's student in Tutuila before he entered Mālūa in 1862. He graduated in 1865 then posted to Tuvalu the same year. Posted first to Nanumanga, Nukulaelae then Vaitupu. They returned in 1888 where they retired. Ioane died on 4 March 1901. George A. Turner visited him at Nukulaelae and found him away at Vaitupu. Was warned for leaving the mission. Visited again by Turner in 1878. Mentioned that he was from Manua. He had been there since 10 May 1865—now 13 years.
1865	Peni and Wife	Posted to Tuvalu on Vaitupu. Left with Kirisome in 1865 on the mission ship the <i>Dayspring</i> . Visited in 1870 and he was sick. Reported as hard-working with great progress. He was returned because of sickness. People were sad to part with him and his family. Later posted to Vaitupu to replace Ioane who was accused of involving in politics in 1878.
1865	Mose Kirisome and Salota	Posted to Tuvalu on Nui. From Manono and Fasitootai. Worked there from 1865 – 1899. Trained at Mālūa on 24 February 1862. Mose's father was a teacher at Salani. They were married on 17 January 1865. Worked in Tuvalu for 34 years and returned to Samoa in 1899. Had two children in Tuvalu—Iuriano and Tamatoa. They also became teachers and worked in the Kiribati. Kirisome died on 22 February 1907 and Tamatoa on 16 August 1911. Mose tried to ban local customs like dancing and polygamy. As a result he was criticised by white settlers like Robert Water nicknamed 'Bob' who had lived there for many years. Water became a barrier to Kirisome's work and finally left with 3 of his wives as he became tired of Kirisome's preaching. Visited by Turner in 1874 and 1878 where he witnessed how their work prospered.
1869	Tema and Wife	Posted to Tuvalu on Funafuti from 1869–1893. Tema was the son of Toga who was also at Mālūa. After graduating from Mālūa he was appointed to Paepaeala. They worked also at Vailuutai. They were appointed to Funafuti in 1869 and worked there for 20 years. When visited by Turner in 1874 their mission was described as impressive. Returned to Samoa but wanted to go back. His wife was sick. They then accepted a call to Saipipi. Tema later died in Samoa of measles on 30 October 1893. Described as a humble and loving man.
1870	Tapu and Wife	Posted to Tuvalu on Niutao and Nanumea. One of the first Samoan couples on Niutao in 1870. They were accompanied by Sione a Niuean teacher. When visited by Turner in 1878 at Niutao, Tapu was charged with allegations of trade. He was given a poor assessment and they were returned to Samoa.
1871	Sapolu and Karalina	Posted to Tuvalu on Nukufetau. From Vaiala. Sapolu entered Mālūa in 1854, graduated in 1858 and posted to Lalomalava, then Lalomanu. Worked in Samoa for 13 years then posted to Nukufetau. They were the second Samoan couple there. Visits by Turner in the 1870s show how he was impressed with their work. They trained some of the earliest students from Tuvalu to be trained in Mālūa. One of them was Iosia who trained under English missionary Powell.

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		Sapolu and Karalina returned to Samoa after 10 years and were posted to Vaovai then Solosolo. They retired to their village of Vaiala. Sapolu died 24 February 1912.
1874	Ioane and Wife	Posted to Tuvalu on Vaitupu. Turner visited them at Vaitupu in 1878 and Ioane was accused of involvement in trade.
1874	Sione and Wife	Posted to Tuvalu on Niutao. Visited by Turner in 1874 and met with his wife and family—doing well.
1874	Timoteo and Wife	Posted to Tuvalu on Nanumanga. They travelled together on board the <i>John Williams</i> in 1874 with their children.
1874?	Tuilona and Wife	Posted to Tuvalu on Nanumea. One of first Samoan couples there but year of their arrival is unsure. When visited by Turner in 1874 they were doing well.
1875	Ioane and Wife	Posted to Tuvalu on Nanumanga. From Saanapu. They worked at Nanumanga, 1875–85. Ioane was described by visiting white missionaries as exceptional. His first sermon was on the theme “Make Holy the Sabbath” in which he urged the people to rest on Sunday. The next Friday he preached on the “God above all gods.” After the sermon the locals came to him that they were afraid to destroy their gods. He told them to bring their gods and then he burned them all. Upon realising that none was harmed as a result, the people then also offered the houses they used for worship to be destroyed. The people also brought relics of their ancestors and weapons. Ioane told the young men to dig a hole to bury all relics while the weapons he stuck to the ground surrounding his house. Ioane also went through all the houses clearing out any “pagan” object. The locals were in awe that he was not harmed by their gods. This led to conversion of many. Ioane also turned pagan places of worship into chapels for the new religion. He was praised by white missionaries.
1884	Emosi and Ilaisa	Posted to Tuvalu. From Samauga. Their daughter Lakena was born there in 1885. Lakena was brought to Samoa by Miss Schultze and trained at Papauta. She also became a teacher there and wellknown as the “Samoan Angel.”
1887	Neemia and Sulata	Posted to Tuvalu on Vaitupu. Graduated from Mālūa in 1885, then posted to Vailele until 1887. They were asked to work at Vaitupu to help pay the debt to a German company who almost took the island. They helped establish a preparatory school (Aoga Faamasani) in 1905. When visited in 1907, their children had died. They were also called by Aunuu, a village in Tutuila. Neemia died in 1913.
1890	Luteru and Wife	Posted to Tuvalu on Nanumanga
1894	Toevai Maulolo and Situlia Onofia	Posted to Kiribati at Onoatua, and Tuvalu at Nukulaelae. From Afega. Worked at Onoatua 1894–1902. Returned to Samoa and went back to Nukulaelae in 1912–18 to replace Saufatu who had died. Returned to Samoa in 1918. Situlia died 26 March 1942, while Toevai died 17 May 1944.
1895	Tipa and Wife	Posted to Tuvalu at Nukulaelae
1895	Ieremia and Wife	Posted to Tuvalu at Vaitupu. Mentioned that he had been working there and about to return to Samoa due to sickness.
1895	Simona and Fa’ataape	Posted to Tuvalu at Funafuti. They graduated from Mālūa 1882 and were posted to Matautu Falealili, then to Funafuti in 1895. They left on 3 June 1895. Their son was sick and soon returned to Samoa and died. They probably went back. Later recorded in 1898 as wanting to return but came down with fever and died. He said farewell to his

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wife Faataape and children.

1895	Uele and Wife	Posted to Tuvalu at Vaitupu and later to Kiribati at Nikunau. From Utualii. Uele entered Mālūa in 1891 and became a student leader. In 1895 they were posted to Vaitupu until 1900 when they were shifted to Nikunau and worked there from 1900–1903. They returned to Samoa and Uele died Christmas 1903 at Utualii.
1895	Isaia and Wife	Posted to Tuvalu at Nukulaelae. Recorded that they were at Fagalo, Apia District when they were appointed to Nukulaelae.
1895	Luteru and Tua	Posted to Tuvalu at Niutao. They were at Nofoalii, Aana when they were posted to Niutao. When visited in 1900 Luteru was ill. When visited again in 1903, the village was mourning his death.
1895	Iafeta and Wife	Posted to Tuvalu at Nanumanga
1897	Manu and Karite	Posted to Tuvalu. Worked first at Avao Matautu before they were posted to Tuvalu. Returned in 1902 and posted to Fasitootai. Karite died in an accident in 1919. Manu died 20 June 1929. He wrote about the death of his wife and his 3 children when they went to visit his family. Also killed in this disaster were 2 <i>papalagi</i> and 2 <i>papalagi</i> kids, 14 Samoans.
1898	Tuuga and Wife	Posted to Tuvalu at Vaitupu. Ordained 9 October 1898 and posted to Vaitupu the same year. They returned to Samoa in 1903 because of sickness.
1899	Saua and Siamoa	Posted to Tuvalu at Nui, 1899–1902. Graduated from Mālūa in 1890 and posted to Siufaga Falelatai in 1891. Worked there for 6 years before they were posted to Tuvalu in 1899. They reported on the main problems they faced which were famine and the lack of a port for supply of food. They returned to Samoa in 1902 when sick. Saua died 12 May 1903.
1900	Peni and Sivaiee	Posted to Tuvalu at Funafuti from 1900–1935. Peni was considered an impressive teacher. His wife Savaiee renowned for her work on teaching music and singing. She was a student of Papauta where she was taught music. In 1913 a visit witnessed the beautiful singing of their church. They returned in 1935. There was also an account of a Holy Spirit revival at one of their services where about 50 people were converted. In 1916 she delivered an account of her mission at the women's assembly at Mālūa. Savaiee died in Moataa, 8 January 1938.
1900	Utulaelae and Menime	Posted to Tuvalu at Funafuti and Vaitupu. Utulaelae was a teacher at Tuasivi before they were posted to Funafuti in 1900. Moved to Vaitupu in 1903 to replace Tuuga who returned to Samoa due to sickness. They built a church which was dedicated 1 July 1909. Returned to Samoa in 1914. In 1919 they were posted to Lano where Utulaelae died the same year. He was probably born at Utulaelae, the island which he was named after. Hence it is possible that he was a son of previous missionaries in Tuvalu.
1900	Isaia and Wife	Posted to Tuvalu at Nukulaelae. From Fogapoa. Graduated from Mālūa in 1885, then posted to Avata Falealupo before being posted to Nukulaelae. They worked there for 8 years then returned and posted to Saleaula until the volcano eruption in Savaii. They moved to Fogapoa where Isaia died March 1911.
1900	Asotasi and Faatau	Posted to Tuvalu at Nanumanga. From Faleasiu. Worked at Nanumanga, 1900–1907. He was known for building the big church there designed after the Jubilee at Mālūa. The church was dedicated in 1907 after which he returned to Samoa as he was ill. Nanumanga requested for him to go back but he was called to Savaia Lefaga. He

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		died at Faleasiu 10 January 1915. He wrote a letter where he referred to taro shoots he took with him to Tuvalu. The taro were growing well and the village looked after them.
1902	Sofara and Wife	Posted to Tuvalu at Nukulaelae with wife and children, 1902–1912. When visited in 1907 they were busy cleaning up after a big cyclone that damaged everything except the teacher's house. They returned to Samoa in 1908. Probably went back as there was a mention of their return to Samoa in 1912.
1903	Laupepa and Wife	Posted to Tuvalu at Nukufetau. They returned to Samoa in 1903 and were replaced by Moe Elisara and his wife.
1903	Uele Simona and Siatua	Posted to Tuvalu at Nui. They worked previously at Saipipi, Levi and Fatausi. Uele died in Mālua on 6 August 1953 aged over 100 years.
1903	Moe Elisara and Ita	Posted to Tuvalu at Nukufetau. From Salailua. Worked in Samoa at Toalepaipai Lealatele, then Sasina before being posted to Nukufetau in 1903. When visited in 1907 some of their children had died. When visited in 1909 he was well with his wife. Returned to Samoa in 1910 as Moe was ill. He died 23 June 1911 at Salailua.
1903	Ieremia Aviu and Mane	Posted to Tuvalu at Nanumea. From Ituotane. Posted to Nanumea in 1903 to replace Manu who returned for furlough in 1902. When visited in 1906, their work was progressing well. His letter: account of the struggles to convert people. Visited in 1907—remarkable progress—new church finished with iron roof and new ceiling.
1903	Panapa and Sara	Posted to Tuvalu at Niutao. From Ituotane. They were married in 1895. First worked at Fagae for 7 years. They were posted to Niutao in 1903 where they replaced Luteru when he died. Worked there for 17 years then returned to Satoalepai. Sara died 10 April 1938 at Satoalepai. He wrote a letter about the Samoan language and how it was praised in Tuvalu. He was also sad about the loss of the Samoan language in Samoa, especially with new pastors. He also reported on a major measles outbreak on the island in 1907.
1903	Nusi and Salafaia	Posted to Tuvalu at Nanumanga. From Fasitooouta. Graduated in 1903 and posted to Nanumanga until 1912. They returned to Samoa with children.
1905	Monise and Faailo	Posted to Tuvalu at Vaitupu. From Malie. Graduated from Mālua in 1896 then posted to Iva in 1902. Posted to Vaitupu in 1905 as a teacher at Motufoua, a preparatory school (Aoga Faamasani). Returned for furlough in 1912 and went back in 1913. Returned to Samoa in 1919 and posted to Solosolo. Monise died 8 May 1929 at Malie.
1905	Iapesa and Wife	Posted to Tuvalu at Vaitupu. From Mutiatele. Worked as a teacher at Vaitupu preparatory school (Aoga Faamasani).
1906	Se'ese Faraimo and Sivao	Posted to Tuvalu at Nui. From Fasitooouta and Saleimoa. They were married at Saleimoa by missionary John Marriot on 21 December 1901. Worked at Nui in 1906; then again in 1913 after furlough in Samoa. Se'ese died on Nui 20 October 1925. He wrote a letter of his journey with family to Nui in 1913 where they went to Suva where they preached to many people from Kiribati and Samoa. Then they stopped at Noumea, New Caledonia where people he reported spoke the French language. They were also welcomed by Loyalty Islanders who asked them to attend their services. They were also given many gifts. They also stopped at the Solomon Islands, Niue and Vanuatu. They also preached, witnessed the beautiful churches, but they also saw many pubs, more than stores. They also saw many white convicts.

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1906	Malaefou and Wife	Posted to Tuvalu at Vaitupu as a teacher
1906	Ieremia and Niue	Posted to Tuvalu at Nukufetau, then Tokelau at Fakaofu. Niue was the daughter of Moe and Ita Elisaia who were missionaries in Tuvalu.
1906	Saufatu and Fasi	Posted to Tuvalu at Nukulaelae. Trained at Mālūa from 1903–1906 before being posted to Nukulaelae. They worked there until Saufatu died 6 July 1912. He was buried there. They were replaced by Toevai Maulolo and his wife.
1907	Seese and wife	Posted to Tuvalu at Nui. Visited in 1907 and reported that they were both well and well-versed with the language.
1907	Petaia and Wife	Posted to Tuvalu at Nanumea. They were to assist Ieremia and his wife. They were still there in 1939.
1908	Uta and Faasau/Faasa	Posted to Tuvalu at Nanumea. From Satitua Falealili. They resigned at a meeting at Vaitupu in 1912. Faasa delivered an account of her mission at the women's assembly at Mālūa in 1913.
1908	Poloie and Pekina	Posted to Tuvalu at Nanumea and later at Nanumanga. From Itutane. After Nanumea they were transferred to Nanumanga in 1909. They later returned to Samoa when Pekina was ill. He wrote a letter about the 40 th anniversary of the church at Niutao.
1909	Sosene and Wife	Posted to Tuvalu at Nanumanga
1911	I. Isaia and Luisa	Posted to Tuvalu at Nukufetau. He wrote a letter dated 7 November 1911 about their voyage to Tuvalu where they stopped at Levuka Fiji and met Samoans there. They exchanged gifts. Upon arrival in Tuvalu they met Saufatu and wife at Nukulaelae, then Peni and Vaiee and kids, Peika and wife, Uele and wife and Taniela and wife at Funafuti. They witnessed the success of the mission and how laws were enforced. Finally they arrived at Nukufetau where they stayed. Tipasa, who was there, boarded the ship for Papua.
1912	Faavae and Sulu/Salu	First posted to PNG, then Tuvalu. Worked in the Torres Strait. Returned and then appointed to Tuvalu. They were there for one year as Sulu was weak in body. Returned to Samoa in 1913.
1918	Farani Ilaoa Mate and Pa'uufi	Posted to Tuvalu at Nanumanga. From Solosolo/Vaotupua. First worked at Faleula for 6 years after graduating from Mālūa. They were called to Tau Manua for 9 years. Then Avata Falealupo for 9 years. In 1918 they were posted to Nanumanga and worked there from 1918–1928. Returned and worked at Eva for 5 years. Pa'uufi gave an address of her work at the women's assembly during the General Assembly in 1929. Farani died 16 January 1954 and Pa'uufi died 6 July 1957.
1928	Ioane and Iaeli	Posted to Tuvalu at Niutao and then Vaitupu. They were replaced by Tofiga and wife.
1928	Esera and Maamui	Posted to Tuvalu at Nanumanga and then Funafuti. Worked at Nanumanga from 1928–35; they replaced Farani Ilaoa and wife. They were at Funafuti in 1939.
1929	Saua and Faioso	Posted to Tuvalu at Nui. Saua was born 21 February 1893 at Si'ufaga Falelatai. He entered Mālūa in 1921, married Faioso in 1923 and worked in Tuvalu from 1925–1939. Returned to Samoa in 1945. Worked in Suva from 1954–1962 and then lived in Bau island until he died. Died in Bau Fiji on 3 December 1977 aged 84 years.
1932	Fiti Sopoaga Lauvi A. Siniva	Posted to Tuvalu at Vaitupu. From Saanapu and Levi Saleimoa. They were married in 1932. They were called to work as teachers at the school at Motufua at Vaitupu. Returned in 1838 and taught at

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		Leulumoega Fou and Māluafou. Fiti died in 1949.
1934	Unifareti Iosefa and Asimanogi	Posted to Tuvalu at Nanumea. From Leufisa. Graduated from Mālua in 1928. They taught at Mālua from 1929–1934, then posted to Nanumea from 1934–54. Unifareti mentioned how in 1941, they were evacuated to Lakena as American soldiers occupied Nanumea. He mentioned how the mission ship escaped Japanese bombing and the church was destroyed. They returned to Samoa in 1954 and were posted to Toamua until 1958 when they were posted to Olosega Manua from 1959–66. Asimanogi died in 1969 and Unifareti died on 3 February 1975 at Leufisa.
1935	Solo and Pisila	First posted to PNG and then Tuvalu at Nukulaelae. Solo wrote letter about World War II, the Japanese air attacks and United States' occupation in Tuvalu, the building of an airport, Japanese air raid at Funafuti where one person died and others injured. The church was also damaged.
1935	Siu Petaia and Aliimau	Posted to Tuvalu at Nanumanga. From Olosega/Saanapu. Trained at Mālua from 1925–31. Then worked at Fagasa Tutuila from 1932–34. Worked at Nanumanga from 1935–45. Returned to Samoa and called to Malaaloa Tutuila and worked there from 1947–56. They also looked after the Atauloma Girls' School from 1957–60. Then they were called to Futiga 1960–1967. They travelled to Los Angeles, America where Siu died.
1939	Paulo and Wife	Posted to Tuvalu
1939	Tofiga and Wife	Posted to Tuvalu at Niutao
1951	Samuelu Peni and Malili/Eseta	Posted first to PNG and then Tuvalu at Funafuti and Nukufetau. In New Guinea from 1940–1947 then posted to Funafuti from 1951–1966. Malili fell ill in 1952 then returned to Faatoia and died 21 January 1953. Samuelu then married Eseta 22 September 1953 then returned to Tuvalu and worked for 10 years. They returned in 1966 and posted to Papa Puleia. Samuelu died in 1978. His parents also worked in Tuvalu.
1940	Fialua and Wife	Posted to Tuvalu at Vaitupu. Worked as a teacher at the school at Motufua.
1943	Mavaega and Saliga	Posted to Tuvalu at Nanumanga and then Tokelau. Graduated from Mālua in 1943 then offered for mission.
1945	Uale and Wife	Posted to Tuvalu at Nanumanga
1946	Maeli Rimoni and Fuapepe	Posted to Tuvalu at Funafuti. From Poutasi. Maeli was born in Kiribati at Arorae where his parents Rimoni and Failelei worked from 1911–1930. Went to Mālua in 1940 and when graduated they were posted to Vinifou then to Funafuti in 1946. They were known as influential with the people and youth.
1946	Siueva Lealaisalanoa and Vaoafi	Posted to Tuvalu. From Fasitootai. Trained at Mālua from 1936–40. Siueva became a teacher at Nuuausala, then called by Siufaga Falelatai and worked there from 1941–43. They worked in Tuvalu from 1946–57. Returned to Samoa and looked after church land at Tufulele from 1958–60. Later posted to Vaipapa in 1974. Siueva died in 1975.
1946	Iati Imo and Naofofoga Paogosue and Malama	Posted to Tuvalu at Nukulaelae. From Leulumoega Tuai/Poutasi. His first wife Naofofoga died in May 1947. He returned with 2 children (Ola and Naofofoga) and married Malama Meleisea from Poutasi in December 1947. They returned to Tuvalu in 1948. Returned to Samoa in 1955 and returned to Tuvalu the same year in June. They finally returned to Samoa in 1963 and were posted to

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Tanugamanono where he died in 1973.

1949	Sekone and Avaee	Posted to Tuvalu at Niutao. They were married in 1948 when Sekone graduated from Mālūa. They worked as teachers at Leulumoega College then were posted to Niutao in 1949. In 1951 there was an epidemic outbreak and Avaee was instrumental in treating the locals and was able to save many lives. They also helped in providing electricity on the island for the first time. They bought an engine/generator from Fiji and an electric piano. Avaee taught music and choir. They also built a water tank to deal with the shortage of water. Returned for furlough in 1957 and called by Fagaloa in 1959. They worked there until 1961. Later called by parish in Christchurch, New Zealand in 1967, then Northshore in 1975. They also founded a parish in Westmere in 1976. Sekone died in 1977.
1954	Enoka Alesana and Usoalii	Posted to Tuvalu at Nanumea. They worked there from 1954–66. They were the last Samoans. Upon their return to Samoa they were called to Pavaiai Tutuila.
1955	Suasua Setu and Kopi	Posted to Tuvalu at Nanumanga. From Saanapu/Manunu.
1957	Manu Tusani and Lanuola	Posted to Tuvalu at Vaitupu. From Savaia Lefaga. Graduated from Mālūa in 1950. Worked at Motufua Vaitupu.
	Sepania and Wife	Tuvalu (Nanumea) posted to Nanumea; his letter tells of the completion of the church there.
	Paulo and Wife	Posted to Tuvalu at Vaitupu. From Faleseela. When graduated from Mālūa he was posted to Samatau then to Vaitupu. They later returned to Samoa and posted to Sapoe Falealili, Fatausi, then Tifitifi Aana. Paulo died at Faleseela in 1900.
	Nito and Wife	Posted to Tuvalu at Niutao. First posted to Vailoa Faleata for 3 years, then to Niutao where he worked for 10 years. Later posted to Luatuanuu in Samoa and worked there for 4 years. He died there, 25 May 1898.
1870	Mataio and Wife	Posted to Tuvalu at Nukufetau. First Samoans to Nukufetau.

Total: 75 Samoan missionaries; 77 Samoan wives as 2 remarried.

Appendix 4. Samoan Missionaries and their Wives in Kiribati 1865–1948

Years in mission	Names	Information
1865	Sumeo and Saleima/Evelina	Posted to Kiribati and PNG. From the village of Levili. Worked on Onoatoa from 1865–74. Saleima felt ill and died there on Onoatoa. Her baby son Anetateru survived and later became a pastor. Sumeo was later appointed to PNG with his second wife Evelina in 1883 until he died in PNG in 1888.
1870	Iupeli and wife	Posted to Kiribati at Onoatoa
1872	Simona and wife	Posted to Kiribati at Onoatoa and Nikunau. From Utualii. He was in a preparatory class (<i>suitama</i>) at Mālūa from 1865 before he was accepted and carried out pastoral training from 1868–71. They were posted to Solaua. Then they requested to go on mission and were accepted to work at Onoatoa. They were on furlough to Samoa in 1892. Returned and worked at Nikunau from 1898–1903. Returned to Samoa and died 27 August 1907. When visited by Turner in 1878, he was charged with allegations of involvement in trade.
1872	Samuelu and Wife	Posted to Kiribati at Tamana, Arorae and Beru. From Siufaga. First worked at Leone Tutuila in 1869. Appointed to work at Tamana in 1872 and was there for 10 years. Samuelu built the church and pastor's house there. Shifted to Arorae in 1882 and worked there for 4 years and then returned to Siufaga to rest. Went back and worked at Arorae at the end of 1886 and worked there for 10 years. Returned to Samoa on furlough in 1897 but was still inspired for the work. They returned for the fourth time and worked on Beru for one and a half years. In all the islands where they worked, Samuelu built churches and houses for the pastors. He also dug water holes because water was a problem. In 1901 they returned to Samoa as Samuelu was ill. He died on 10 March 1903.
1874	Navailika and Wife	Posted to Kiribati at Arorae. From Afega. Worked in Kiribati for 12 years. When visited by Turner in 1874 they were asked whether to join the ABCFM mission in the northern islands and he agreed. Visited again by Turner in 1878 and was there with Esekielu. Navailika died at Afega in Samoa, 25 September in 1937.
1874	Lilo and Wife	Posted to Kiribati at Nikunau
1874	Lemuelu and Wife	Posted to Kiribati at Nikunau
1874	Laofie and Wife	Posted to Kiribati at Nikunau
1874	Elisaia and Wife	Posted to Kiribati at Beru. When visited by Turner in 1872, they were asked to move to another island but the people objected.
1874	Naisili and Wife	Posted to Kiribati at Beru
1874	Esia and Wife	Posted to Kiribati at Beru
1874	F. Kaisara and Wife	Posted to Kiribati at Nikunau. Visited by Turner in 1874 and reported ill.
1874	Isaia and Wife	Posted to Kiribati at Beru
1874	Karamelu and Wife	Posted to Kiribati at Onoatoa. Visited by Turner in 1878 and found the wife was sick. She recovered and they were prepared to return to Samoa.
1874	Simeona and Wife	Posted to Kiribati at Onoatoa

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1878	Tuitele and Wife	Posted to Kiribati at Onoatoa
1878	Esekielu and Wife	Posted to Kiribati at Arorae. Visited by Turner in 1878 and witnessed great progress of their work.
1878	Ioane and Wife	Posted to Kiribati at Nikunau. Visited by Turner in 1878 and witnessed great progress of their work.
1878	Iosia and Wife	Posted to Kiribati at Nikunau
1878	Luteru and Wife	Posted to Kiribati at Beru
1890	Nuutai Sauasili and Wife	Posted to Kiribati at Onotoa. From Ofu Manua. Worked at Fagasa and then went to Kiribati until 1890. Returned and worked at Papauta at the beginning of the school. They retired to Ofu. Nuutai was also appointed by the United States government to work as a Judge in Tutuila. He died on 9 June 1929 at his home island of Ofu.
1894	Iakopo and Wife	Posted to Kiribati at Nikunau. Returned to Samoa in October 1901.
1895	Uele and Maria	Posted first to Tuvalu at Vaitupu and to Kiribati at Nikunau. From Utualii. Uele trained at Mālūa in 1891 where he was reported as a good student. He was appointed as a leader (<i>ta'ita'i</i>). Upon graduation they were accepted for foreign mission in Tuvalu and worked there at Vaitupu from 1895–1900. They were shifted to Nikunau and worked together with Iosua and his wife. Iosua was the pastor while Uele worked as teacher for the school while awaiting another one. Returned to Samoa in 1903 with the hope of returning, but Uele died at Utualii on 26 December 1903.
1895	Lilogo and Tipani	Posted to Kiribati at Arorae. Visited in 1900 and they were well and the mission in good progress. When visited by Marriot in 1901, he saw that their preparatory school (Aoga Faamasani) was in good order. Lilogo wrote about the influence of western materials on people who had gone overseas as labourers and brought foreign goods back.
1896	Tasesa and Mafa	Posted to Kiribati at Tamana and Nikunau. Trained at Mālūa from 1891–1895. They only worked in Kiribati for 3 years but there was great report of their work. They began the Au Taumafai or the Bible study group called “Seekers” with 10 people. They had a church membership of about 100. Their congregation’s <i>Faiga-Me</i> contribution was always the largest. It was also reported that many Roman Catholic adherents were converted to the LMS mission during their time. Tasesa died at Nikunau in 1900. He was described as a humble man who loved the people. His hard work caused him ill health (<i>anutoto</i>) which ended his life. The people were greatly saddened by his death. He was buried at the village of Lugata where they worked.
1897	Ieru and Seruia	Posted to Kiribati at Beru. From Gataivai/Tokelau. Ieru was in the preparatory class (<i>suitama</i>) at Mālūa in 1884. Then he taught at Tuasivi in 1891. He entered for pastoral training at Mālūa from 1894. They were appointed to establish the preparatory school (Aoga Faamasani) at Beru. They also taught at Tusipa. In 1917 they returned to Samoa and taught at Tuasivi and Gautavai in 1923. Seruia died at Gautavai in 1923 and Ieru died on 29 July 1936 at Gautavai aged 70 years.
1898	Faiva and Elisapeta	Posted to Kiribati at Onoatoa. Trained at Mālūa from 1895–1898 before going on mission. Faiva died in 1950 and Elisapeta died on 10 April 1962.
1898	Nemaia and Wife	Posted to Kiribati at Beru

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1898	Enosa and Wife/Mere	Posted to Kiribati at Arorae and Onoatoa. Visited by missionaries in 1903 and their work was progressing well. Upon arrival, his first wife had died and they were holding her funeral. In 1904 he was married to Mere from Utualii, the daughter of pastor Simona who was also a missionary in Kiribati. After they returned to Kiribati and worked at Onoatoa. In 1909 Enosa built an impressive house for the pastor which enthused the people. In 1912 they bid farewell and returned to Samoa. Mere delivered an account of her mission at the women's assembly at Mālua in 1913.
1900	Apelu and Wife	Posted to Kiribati at Onoatoa. Left for Kiribati on the new <i>John Williams IV</i> inaugural voyage on 4 October 1900. Appointed at Onoatoa to replace Maeli and his wife, as Maeli was appointed to be the teacher for the whole island. Apelu died while working there in 1901. He was sick for 3 months before he died.
1900	Maeli and Ainoama and Taveta	Posted to Kiribati at Onoatoa, Arorae and Banaba. They were appointed to be teachers for the whole island. They also worked at Arorae until 1905 when they returned on furlough. They returned and worked until they were appointed to begin the work on Banaba in 1912. In 1922 Ainoama died then he returned to Samoa and married Taveta. He wrote about house building in Kiribati.
1900	Alefaio and Wife	Posted to Kiribati at Beru and Tuvalu at Vaitupu and Funafuti. They taught at Motofoua. They also worked at Olosega in Samoa. Alefaio died in 1949.
1900	Elisaia and Monise	Posted to Kiribati at Beru. Trained in Mālua and ordained on 10 November 1900 in Apia for mission work in the west.
1900	Peleti and Wife	Posted to Kiribati at Beru and Onoatoa. From Faleasiu. Left Samoa together with three other on 4 October 1900 on the inaugural voyage of the <i>John Williams IV</i> . In 1901 they were appointed to Onoatoa where Maeli and his wife had formerly worked.
1900	Sale and Wife	Posted to Kiribati at Tamana. Reported on a visit in 1900 the great progress of their work. This was the place where Tasesa and Mafa used to work. Children were well educated. The youth were learned of the Bible. An examination of the children at his congregation showed that almost all the children had full marks.
1901	F. Neemia and Wife	Posted to Kiribati at Onoatoa. From the village of Safa'atoa Lefaga. Worked in Kiribati for 6 years. Returned to Samoa and died in February 1914.
1901	Iosua and Sivale	Posted to Kiribati at Nikunau and Onoatoa. From Falealili. Left for Kiribati on 4 October 1900. They replaced Iakopo and his wife who returned to Samoa. They later worked at Onoatoa before they returned to Samoa in 1905.
1901	Iuriano Kirisome and Nesa	Posted to Kiribati at Beru. From Safaatoa Lefaga. Iuriano was born on Nui Tuvalu in 1878 while his parents Kirisome and Salota were missionaries there. He went to Samoa in 1895 with the hope of being trained at Mālua. He taught at Tusipa from 1900–1901 and called to Beru at the end of 1901 to teach at the schools in Kiribati. He returned to Samoa in 1908 and called to Pata Falelatai and worked there from 1913–19. He was appointed to look after the Printing Press at Mālua and then the Director of the <i>Sulu Samoa</i> until 1941 when he was called to Saanapu. He died on 5 February 1947 at his family village at Safaatoa while Nesa died the same year on 6 November at Safaatoa.
1901	Iupeli and Sera	Posted to Kiribati at Beru. Iupeli was appointed as a teacher (Faifeau Faiaoga) at the preparatory school (Aoga Faamasani) at

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Beru in 1901. They returned to Samoa on furlough in 1907 for a few months before they went back to resume their work. They taught there until they returned to Samoa in 1948. They were reported being there during WWII from 1939–1945. In 1952, they were invited especially from Kiribati to be special guests at the commemoration of the Kiribati Church's centenary. Iupeli mentioned during this visit that at this stage all the islands of Kiribati had Kiribati pastors.

1901	Apelu and Muna	Posted to Kiribati at Beru
1901	Saaga and Wife	Posted to Kiribati at Beru
1902	Sakaria Saena and Wife	Posted to Kiribati at Onoatua. From the village of Tuanai. Sakaria rebuilt a new church as the old church by Mulifanua was decaying. During their time a lot of Catholic members were converted to the LMS. They helped rebuild the town and peoples' houses. They also improved the health of the people. The people were used to low houses built on the earth but they introduced higher houses. They were much loved by the people. They returned twice to Kiribati. Sakaria died at Tuanai on 24 August 1944.
1902	Efaraimo and Pepa	Posted to Kiribati at Arorae and Tamana. From Sapapalii/Fagalii/Faatoia. Called to Kiribati in 1901 to replace Tasesa who died. On the mission ship to Kiribati in 1902. They worked on Arorae and then Tamana from 1910–1915. Returned to Samoa on furlough and then went back in 1917 and appointed to the northern islands (likely working with the ABCFM). They were the first Samoans there. Returned in 1925 and retired at Sapapalii. They were appointed in 1931 at Tafaigata until 1941 when he died. Pepa died on 20 February 1953.
1903	Tavita Ailolo and Wife	Posted to Kiribati at Nikunau. From Faleatiu/Faasaleleaga. They were ordained on 21 June 1903 and left to work in Kiribati. Five were appointed to Tuvalu while they were the only couple for Kiribati. In 1910 they returned to Samoa where they worked at Faleatiu and Vailuutai for 6 years. They later worked at Safaatoa Lefaga for 5 years, and then he became a chief (Chief Ailolo) and served as a deacon until he died on 20 February 1957 at Faleatiu.
1903	Nusi and Salafaia	Posted to Kiribati at Beru and Onoatua. Nusi was from Fasitootua while Salafaia from Sapoe. They were married on 7 December 1901 at Sapoe Falealili by pastor Kirisome. In 1903 their request was accepted to work as missionaries at Beru to be teachers. They were shifted to Onoatua in 1909. They worked in Kiribati for ten years. They returned and worked at Utualii until they resigned because of old age. Salafaia delivered an account of her mission at the women's assembly at Mālua in 1913. Nusi died on 13 February 1948.
1905	Mane. F.A. and Wife	Posted to Kiribati. Left on 18 June 1905
1908	Sanerivi and Wife	Posted to Kiribati at Beru. From Falealili. Left on 6 November 1908. In 1910 they were the only Samoan couple on the island while the other 7 were Kiribatis. It was reported on a missionary visit in 1909 that their work was exceptional in comparison to the Kiribati teachers. His students were the most intelligent. The only challenge was the many who were ill from epidemics.
1908	Iuliano and wife	Posted to Kiribati at Nikunau. Reported to be returning to Samoa in 1908.
1909	Faatonu and Tofi	Posted to Kiribati at Onoatua and Beru. Reported on a missionary

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visit in 1909 they were happy with their work. He was appointed to be a delegate to the General Assembly that was held at Vaitupu Tuvalu on the 21–30 June 1915. Faatonu was the secretary at this assembly.

1909	Peni and Wife	Posted to Kiribati at Arorae and Onoatua. They were reported to be well by a missionary visit in 1909. They were loved by the people.
1909	Roma and Wife	Posted to Kiribati at Onoatua. Reported by a missionary visit in 1909 that they were both well and making good progress.
1911	Rimoni and Failelei	Posted to Kiribati at Beru, Arorae, Onoatua and Ocean Island. From Vaivase/Vaiee/Salani. Rimoni was educated at Rongorongo in 1896. (It could be that he was a son of a former Samoan missionary.) In the preparatory class (<i>suitama</i>) at Mālūa from 1898–1902. Rimoni was reported to be a ‘servant’ of (Misi Moreli) in 1903 and student at Mālūa in 1904. In 1905 he was married to Failelei. They graduated from Mālūa in 1905 and were chosen to be teachers at the School at Rongorongo (Aoga Faamasani) from 1908–1911. Then they were appointed to be teachers at the School in Beru until Rimoni was appointed pastor at Onoatua. They were later shifted to Arorae. Returned to Samoa for furlough in 1920. Rimoni delivered an account of his mission at the General Assembly at Mālūa in 1921. Returned and worked at Banaba until 1930 when they returned to Samoa. They later worked at Poutasi Falealili in 1933 until 1956 when they retired. Rimoni died at Vaivase in 1966.
1911	Kiso and Wife	Posted to Kiribati at Beru and Arorae. From Leulumoega. Accepted to the Leulumoega School on 23 July 1903 and at Mālūa on 2 August 1905. Finished Mālūa on 28 June 1909 and appointed to Beru in 1911, and then Arorae in 1913. They returned to Samoa and stayed with their family for 10 years and then worked at Taga from 24 December 1926. They worked there for 5 years and then left due to illness. Kiso died on 23 July 1936.
1911	Siaosi and Faoa’aai	Posted to Kiribati at Arorae and Beru. Left for Beru on October 1911. Siaosi looked after the preparatory school (Aoga Faamasani) at Arorae. Misi Kirifi witnessed in 1913 on a visit the good state of the boys at the school.
1912	Mate and Saluvale	Posted to Kiribati at Banaba and Ocean Island. Returned to Samoa in 1934 when Saluvale died. Mate wrote a letter about his wife’s death.
1913	Tepa Faletoesa and Aiga	Posted to Kiribati at Beru. Left in November for Kiribati. They were appointed to Kiribati because of the wish of the Kiribati Church for someone specialised in looking after the printing press. They also worked at the Rongorongo school on Beru. They returned to Samoa in October 1914 and were 6 weeks in Sydney as their daughter Sooletaua was ill. She died and was buried in Sydney.
1913	Veli and Siaea	Posted to Kiribati and left on 5 November 1913
1914	L. Patu and Ulu	Posted to Kiribati at Beru. From Saleimoa. Trained at Mālūa from 1910–1914 then appointed to work at Rongorongo School in Kiribati. Returned to Samoa in 1919 and worked at Saleimoa for a year and half as there was no pastor there. A pastor was appointed and then he assisted there until he died on 29 December 1955.
1915	Isopo and Wife	Posted to Kiribati
1915	Timoteo and Wife	Posted to Kiribati. Those in Kiribati expressed gratitude when he

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arrived with his wife.

1915	Faala'ila'i and Utuimalae	Posted to Kiribati. From Saleimoa. Arrived together with Isopo and Timoteo.
1917	Tamatoa Kirisome and Kasia and Sinatala	Posted to Kiribati at Beru, Banaba and Arorae. From Saanapu/Nofoalii/Falevao. Tamatoa was born in Nui Tuvalu while his parents Kirisome Mose and Salote were missionaries there. He was from Saanapu. Trained at Mālūa from 1910–15 where he married Kasia from Nofoalii. Finished Mālūa and then appointed to look after the preparatory class (Aoga Faamasani) at Mālūa. Appointed to Kiribati in 1917. Tamatoa was a teacher at Rongorongo Beru. They returned on furlough to Samoa in 1926 where his wife Kaisa died. They had 3 children. In 1927 he was married to Sinatala from Falevao and then returned to Kiribati until 1936 when they returned for furlough. On January 1937 they received a telegram to return on the steamer <i>Tofua</i> to Kiribati as they were needed for the work there. They finally retired to Samoa in 1948. They, with Iupeli and Sera, were the last Samoan missionary couples in Kiribati. Tamatoa died at Saanapu on 31 July 1956. Sinatala also died there.
1917	Rusia and Sunema	Posted to Kiribati at Beru and Ocean Island. Finished Mālūa in 1917 and then appointed to Kiribati. Rusia was a teacher at Rongorongo Beru. They were there for over 20 years. Sunema died there on 24 November 1937. Rusia and his children returned in 1938. He was at Ocean Island in 1939.
1917	N.S. Manu and A. Karite	Posted to Kiribati. Worked previously at Mālūafou school in 1903. He was in the preparatory class at Mālūa (<i>suitama</i>) from 1905–1910 and trained as a pastor from 1912–17. Manu married A. Karite in 1916. Manu was sickly and this disrupted their work. In 1917 they were called to Kiribati. Returned in 1924 and then called to Salani. Left Salani in 1926 as Manu was ill and retired to his family at Lalomanu. They were at Fasitootai in 1929. In 1940 Manu was appointed Secretary of the Aana District. He died on 6 December 1948 at Fasitootai.
1920	Finau and Tua	Posted to Kiribati at Beru. Finau was a teacher at Rongorongo.
1920	Iese and Leata	Posted to Kiribati. Returned and worked at Vailoa Faleata for 12 years. Iese died on 11 June 1939 while at Vailoa.
1920	Esau and Ela	Posted to Kiribati. From Leonē. Worked at Samalaeulu Savaii from 1918–1920, then offered to go to Kiribati. Returned in 1928. Esau died at Leonē Apia in 1966.
1929	Apisaloma and Feiloaiga	Posted to Kiribati at Arorae, Banaba and Ocean island. Apisaloma died in 1938.
1929	Tomasi and Wife	Posted to Kiribati at Tamana
n.d.	Iuta and Faaletaua	Posted to Kiribati at Beru. After Mālūa they worked at Manunu for 6 years. They were appointed to Beru where they worked for 2 and half years and returned to Samoa because of illness. They were later appointed to Mulinuu where Faaletaua fell sick and died on 8 December 1908.
n.d.	Talamoni	Posted to Kiribati
n.d.	Liuvao	Posted to Kiribati

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n.d.	Asera	Posted to Kiribati
n.d.	Iopu	Posted to Kiribati

Total: 74 Samoan missionaries. 75 Samoan wives as one died and husband remarried and went back.

Appendix 5. Samoan Missionaries and their Wives in Tokelau 1861–1958

Years in mission	Names	Information
1861	Mafala and Sapeta	Posted to Tokelau at Fakaofu and Atafu. From the village of Samauga Lefagaoalii. Taken with Maka to begin mission there. They were rejected and then shifted to Atafu where they established the church. Second attempt at Fakaofu failed as the king rejected them and told people there that if they wish to convert they had to travel to Atafu. Those who travelled ended up in Apia in 1863. Their accounts of Samoa and the love of the people there changed the mind of the king who accepted the new religion in 1863. Misi Eli visited in 1871 and witnessed success. At Fakaofu there were 44 church members of a population of 211. At Atafu 54 were church members with a population of 150. When visited in 1874 by George A. Turner, Mafala was charged with adultery with a servant girl. They were returned to Samoa.
1863	Sakaio and Tuanai	Went to Tokelau on the second trip with Mafala and Sapeta
1870	Tinai and Ane	Posted to Tokelau at Atafu. From Fusi Safotulafai. Trained at Mālūa in 1868 and graduated in 1872. Posted to Faleseela Lefaga then to Atafu. Later posted to Satapuala and then Foalalo. Died at his family village 6 June 1904.
1898	Ioane K and Sainima	Posted to Tokelau at Atafu. From Falevao/Saasaai. Graduated from Mālūa and then posted to Atafu for 9 years. Returned in 1907 and assisted the pastor Manase and his wife at his home village of Falevao. Later they assisted Peiata and his wife at Saasaai until Ioane died 11 April 1919.
1900	Panapa and Pesiki	Posted to Tokelau at Fakaofu
1900	Lameko and Wife	Posted to Tokelau at Fakaofu. Also worked at Olosega. When visited in 1903 Lameko was mourning the loss of his wife. They were also posted to Fakaofu to replace Panapa who had retired.
1908	Laau Tanielu and Sara	Posted to Tokelau at Atafu. From Safotu. Graduated from Mālūa in 1894. Worked at Avata for 4 years then posted to Atafu and worked there for 20 years. Tanielu became an elder there. Sara gave an account of her work at the women's assembly at Mālūa in 1916. Sara died 23 January 1934 and Tanielu died 5 June 1939.
1911	Ieremia and Niue	Posted first to Tuvalu and then Tokelau at Fakaofu
1874	Kirisome and Wife	Posted to Tokelau. Turner visited him in 1874 while he was working there.
1874	Falaaiiki and Wife	Posted to Tokelau at Atafu. G.A. Turner visited him in 1874 and Falaaiiki was charged with adultery with a local woman. Turner thought he was innocent but people did not want him.
1929	Timoteo and Vaiola or Viola	Posted to Tokelau at Atafu. From Moataa. Visited in 1932 and they were both well. Visited in 1934 and reported to have committed a great sin (most probably adultery).
1929	Uale and Ruta	Posted to Tokelau at Fakaofu
1931	Sopoga and Luisa	Posted to Tokelau at Fakaofu.
1934	Uili Isara and Tagivale Sio	Posted to Tokelau at Atafu. Worked in Moataa from 1930–1934. Posted to Atafu. Returned in 1941 and retired in Samoa.
1935	Telesō and Siniva	Posted to Tokelau at Fakaofu. Graduated from Mālūa in 1927 and posted to Asili, Afao and Amaluia in Tutuila in 1929. Ordained on

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		16 July 1935 and posted to Fakaofo. Returned and worked at Tuanaimoto. Called to Fagalii in 1942 where Telesō died 6 April 1944.
1937	Koria and Perelini	Posted to Tokelau at Swains Island and later to PNG. From Saleimoa.
1941	M. Folau Li'o and Leatuga	Posted Tokelau at Fakaofo. Graduated from Mālua in 1930 then worked at Luatuanuu. Posted to Fakaofo in 1941. Returned and worked at Lotofaga in 1943. Leatuga died in 1967 and Folau died in 1971.
1958	Lonetona and Laamauga	Posted to Tokelau at Atafu
n.d	Maalaelu and Wife	Posted to Tokelau at Fakaofo. From Faleasiu. Worked in Fakaofo and then returned and worked at Utualii. Maalaelu became ill and retired to their village of Faleasiu. Maalaelu died 25 November 1903.
n.d	Mavaega and Saliga	Posted first to Tuvalu and then moved to Tokelau. They also worked at Olosega.
n.d	Apelu and Wife	Posted to Tokelau
n.d	Iapese and wife	Posted to Tokelau
n.d	Etuale and Pala	Posted to Tokelau
n.d	Kaio and Ana	Posted to Tokelau

Total: 24 Samoan missionaries. About the same number of Samoan wives.

Appendix 6. Samoan Missionaries and their Wives in Niue 1849–1964

Years in mission	Names	Information
1849	Paulo Aniseko Faasavalu and Wife	Posted to Niue at Alofi. Paulo was the first Samoan missionary in Niue. He also began the translation of the Bible into Niuean using the Samoan translation with the help of other Samoan missionaries. He began with the book of Mark which was given to missionary William Lawes to check, revised then sent to London to print while he began with the book of Matthew. When New Testament was finished in 1868 credit was paid to Lawes, but the beginning of the translation was Paulo with his expertise on the local language. He also built the first Church in 1852. It is not known when his wife joined him.
1852	Samuela and Wife	Posted to Niue at Alofi. Visited in 1859 by Turner and his work was progressing well with his wife and children. The village looked tidy and many were converted.
1852	Paula and Wife	Posted to Niue at Alofi. Left with Murray in 1852 to assist Paulo. He was a great assistant to Paulo. His wife died in 1859 while there and he then returned to Samoa when he was quite old. Elia who previously worked in Vanuatu replaced him.
1859	Amosa and Wife	Posted first to Vanuatu and then Niue. Turner visited them in Niue in 1859 and were both well.
1857	Sakaio and Wife	Posted first to Vanuatu and then Niue
1859	Elia and Wife	Posted first to Vanuatu then Niue. They were appointed to Niue to replace Paula who had returned to Samoa as his wife had died.
1890	Neemia and Wife	Posted to Niue. Returned to Samoa when Neemia was sick. Neemia preached at the Jubilee Hall at Mālūa and told accounts of the work in Niue in 1990.
1896	Luka and Wife	Left for Niue in 1896 after preaching at the Jubilee
1900	Luteru and Wife	Posted to Niue. Trained at Mālūa then worked in Samoa at Siufaga, Satupaitea, Salelavalu, Lepuia'i and Fusi Anoamaa before they offered to go to Niue. They returned to Samoa and Luteru died in Samoa 13 November 1901.
1964	Sekuini Solomona and Faatamalii	Posted to Niue at Avatele. Left for Niue with children on Fiji Airways to Suva to await the <i>Tofua</i> for Niue.

Total: 10 Samoan missionaries and about the same number of wives.

Appendix 7. Samoan Missionaries and their Wives in PNG and the Torres Strait 1883–1979

Years in mission	Names	Information
1883	Sumeo and Evelina	Trained at Mālūa. From the village of Levili. Previously worked in Kiribati with first wife Saleima who died there. Remarried Evelina and posted to PNG in 1883. First Samoans in PNG. They worked at Kabadi (Orokoro). Sumeo died in PNG in 1888.
1883	Timoteo Koae and wife and Siu	Trained in Mālūa from 1873–77. Timoteo won first prize of final year class. First Samoans in PNG. Posted to PNG at Kabadi and Vanuara in 1883. Translated local Bible. Returned for furlough in Samoa in 1890 and returned to PNG until they went back to Samoa for another furlough in 1896. By this time his first wife had died. In Samoa he married Siu whose husband, a Samoan pastor had also died. In 1897 they went back to PNG. In 1898, Timoteo wrote a letter in the <i>Sulu</i> , urging for Samoans to come to PNG. Also mentioned by Neemia who took him to his village near Kabadi. Neemia wrote that Timoteo prayed and preached to the new village in the local language. He died at Kabadi in 1899. Siu and their child survived the returned trip to Samoa on the <i>John Williams</i> in 1900. Siu first married Samoan pastor Migao in 1890. They graduated from Mālūa in 1891 and then worked at Asili, Afao and Amaluia in Tutuila. Migao died in 1896 and in that year she married Timoteo and returned with him to PNG in 1897. When Timoteo died in PNG, she returned to Samoa and married Moli at Patamea in 1901. Siu died in 1950.
1884	Filemoni and Penina	Posted to PNG in 1884. From Manua/Saolufata. Worked in Milne Bay, Higeal 1898–1900. Transferred to Mita in 1893. In 1898 Filemoni wrote an account in the <i>Sulu</i> from Milne Bay urging more Samoan missionaries to offer. Filemoni was reported sick and returned to Samoa 3 September 1901. He died on November 1901 at Saluafata, Samoa. It was reported that their child was brought home from PNG in 1903.
1886	Alefaio and Wife	From the village of Foauga. Appointed to PNG in 1886.
1887	Neemia and Solonaima	Worked at Saibai in the Torres Strait in 1887. Neemia died in October 1907. After Neemia's death Solonaima lived with missionary William Saville at Milport Harbour. Solonaima delivered an emotional account of her experience at the women's assembly at Mālūa in 1908.
1888	Afaaso and wife	Worked in PNG in 1888
1888	Afato and Wife	Worked in PNG in 1888
1888	Alesana A. and Sene	Appointed to PNG in 1888. At Gabagaba in 1907. Sene at Fife Bay in 1913 by herself as Alesana had died. A great report of her work. She returned in 1915.
1888	Asafo and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1888
1888	Ekeroma and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1888
1888	Elia and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1888
1888	Lii and Seira	Trained at Mālūa from 1878–82. From Fasitooouta and Nofoalii. After Mālūa they worked in Samoa at Samauga. Appointed to PNG in 1888. Worked at Matapaila, Kabadi in 1888. Left for Samoa on

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furlough in 1900. Returned and worked at Vatorata in 1901. Retired of old age in 1908. Seira delivered an account of her work at the women's assembly at Mālūa in 1908.

1889	Tailo and Wife	Educated at Mālūa, 1886–1889. Appointed to PNG in 1889.
1889	Timoti and Wife	Educated at Mālūa, 1885–1888. Worked in PNG from 1889.
1889	Eneri and and Vi	Trained at Mālūa, 1885–88. From Lano. Worked at Siufaga, Faga after Mālūa. They were then posted to PNG in 1889 and worked at Morabe (Kabadi). Left for Samoa on furlough in 1897 due to Vi's illness. They retired in Samoa until Eneri died on 17 August 1909; a tree fell on him while he was working on his garden at Lano.
1890	Sepania and Wife	Educated at Mālūa from 1886–89. Appointed to PNG in 1890.
1891	Alesano and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1891
1891	Enari and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1891. Enari was reported dead in January 1892 soon after arrival. Described as one of the senior of the new group of Samoans
1891	Falaïmo and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1891
1891	Timu and Wife	Educated at Mālūa, 1877–90. Worked in PNG in 1891.
1891	Fausia and Wife	Worked in PNG in 1891. Left for Samoa in 1897.
1891	Toma and Aleni	From the village of Afega. Educated at Mālūa from 1885–1890. Worked in PNG, at Waralaea Milne Bay from 1891–1899 for a total of 9 years. Translated the Bible in the local language. Left for Samoa on furlough in 1900. Toma died of influenza on the <i>John Williams'</i> return trip 20 May 1900. His children died on the same trip. Aleni survived. Toma was buried along with other Samoans who died on this trip at a memorial in Auckland New Zealand.
1891	Iosefa Oleasoeleva	Appointed to PNG in 1891. Left in 1901.
1871	Iose and wife	Iose was a pastor at Salailua in Samoa. He was married to the widow of Solia who worked in the early mission in the Loyalty Islands in the 1840s and 1850s. After they got married they travelled with missionary Murray to the Loyalty Islands at Lifou where her mother served as an interpreter for Murray. Then in 1871, they travelled together with Murray and other Loyalty Islanders to begin the work in PNG. According to Sana Solia, they did not go to New Guinea because it was difficult but landed at Somerset on 16 October 1871. Iose later died from fever while rescuing other teachers in the Torres Strait (she did not mention what the incident was). He was buried on Naghir Island in February 1872. Iose's wife (and Sana Solia's mother) died in Sommerset, Cape York, Australia and is buried there. She most likely spent her last years with her daughter and her husband.
1891	Isaia Pati and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1891. Appointed to Mabuïag in 1897. Returned to Samo in 1920.
1891	Gasese and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1891. Returned to Samoa in 1895.
1891	Petuela and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1891. Petuela died in 1895.
1891	Iosefata and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1891. Returned to Samoa in 1896.
1892	Faoliu and Wife	Trained at Mālūa, 1888–1891. Appointed to PNG in 1892.
1892	Finau and Tuuaga	Trained at Mālūa, 1887–90. From Lefaga village. Appointed to PNG in 1892. Worked at Murray Island in the Torres Strait in 1897. Also worked at Naggi Island. Mentioned in the <i>Sulu</i> October 1895 as

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		having finished his big house where there was a big celebration during the <i>Faiga Me</i> . Report of the impressive church he built and its commemoration on 7 November 1901 on Murray island. Returned to Samoa in 1903 with 4 children. Worked again at Salani in Samoa. Finau died on 29 December 1928.
1903	Finau and Orepa	Were married in Samoa by Peters of the LMS and four of their children were born on Murray Island. Their son Semaki married a local woman, Asau from Tudu (Warrior Island), in 1903 on Thursday Island. Semaki was in 1903 working for James Mills from Samoa, very famous in Torres Strait.
1892	Foisaga and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1892
1892	Iuta and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1892
1892	Neemia and Faufau	Trained at Mālua from 1889–92. Worked in the Torres Strait in 1892 and Kopuana in 1894. Reappointed to Torres Strait in 1898 and transferred to Kabadi where Faufau fell sick. Mentioned in <i>Sulu</i> August 1898 having moved to Lii, Kopuana near Kabadi. Transferred to Boera and worked there from 1899–1900. Returned to Samoa. Neemia died on 28 June 1900 due to sudden illness on the <i>John Willaims'</i> return trip in 1900. Faufau survived the trip. Neemia is buried in Auckland, New Zealand.
1892	Vaitupu and Wife	Trained at Mālua, 1889–92. From the village of Apia. Worked at Suau in PNG in 1892, left for Samoa on furlough in 1900, returned to PNG in 1901. They worked at the eastern side of PNG until Vaitupu died in 1905.
1892	Filimoni and Wife	Worked in PNG in 1892. Died in 1905.
1892	Isaia and Seluia	Trained at Mālua, 1888–1891. Worked at Mabuia in the Torres Strait from 1892. They served for 19 years there from August 1892 until their repatriation in April 1913. Calmers, when he visited them in 1893, professed himself well pleased with mission work done. He wrote that "Isaia, the Samoan teacher and his wife, are good workers. The school was always good, but now it has advanced wonderfully." Isaia also organised the building of the new wooden church, which was opened with much fanfare in 1897. He also translated the four Gospels, the catechism and a number of hymns into Kala Lagaw Ya. The Lifuan pastor, Elia, had translated the Gospel of Mark, a catechism, one hundred hymns and the Lord's Prayer into Kalaw Kawaw Ya, the Saibai dialect of the western language and Isaia was in the process of rendering these into the Mabuyag dialect during the visit of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition in 1898. His collaborators were Tom Nabua, Peter Papi and Ned Waria, who were also the expedition's main informants. <i>Evangelia Iesu Keriso Mataion Minarpalaizinga</i> was published in London in 1900. Butcher also lived in Isaia's house while on Mabuyag but the two men did not get on well. Most, if not all, of Isaia's children were born on Mabuyag and on 13 August 1904, a few days after the death of his son, Fuatau, Isaia applied for two years furlough, citing the ill-health of wife, Seluia, and their grief over the deaths of three of his children during the past 18 months: Benjamin (aged two years 1 month) and Fuatau (aged two); his only daughter, Nancy Mabuia, born in August 1896 had died of diarrhoea on Thursday Island on 1 December 1897. Benjamin, born 1 January 1901 died 20 February 1903, is buried at Mabuyag, a little apart from the others in the main cemetery. According to the Rev. Henry Moore Dauncey, Isaia, Seluia and their seven surviving children returned to Samoa on

furlough in 1906, taking some young Mabuyag men with them. Isaia appears to have complained to the Samoan District Committee about his treatment on Mabuyag, for Butcher and Riley were instructed by the Papuan District Committee meeting of March 1908 to write “a plain and unvarnished account of the matter.” Isaia and Seluia were much admired by the local people: Gisu and Sanawai named a daughter after her and the name continues to recent times in related families. This information was through personal communication with Anna Schnukal 2015. See also Anna Schnukal, “The LMS missionary B.T. Butcher on Mabuyag, 1905–1906,” in *Memoirs of the Queensland Museum – Culture* 8(2): 203–233, Queensland Museum, Brisbane, 2015.

1892	Ma'anaima Moselupe and Eme/Safua	Trained at Mālūa, 1887–91. Ma'anaima is from Papa Sataua while Eme from Tufulele while Safua from Niue. Worked in PNG at Bou, Kwato, Milne Bay from 1892. Ma'anaima was appointed principal of the School at Kwato in 1899. He was well known for his musical influence. Their 5-year-old daughter Ane died there in 1902. Another daughter died in 1904 and Eme died on 10 March the same year. This time they were at Iokea. Ma'anaima remarried Safua daughter of a Niuean named Lupo, Deacon of Samoan Church in Suva, Fiji, 21 Oct 1905. Reappointed with Safua to Duabo in 1905. Wrote a report from Kwato in 1899 and in October 1906. Ma'anaima died 23 July 1910.
1892	Leva and Wife	Worked in PNG from 1892 and left for Samoa in 1912
1892	Iotamo Iosefa and Olana	Trained at Mālūa, 1888–91. From Manua/Fagatogo. Worked at the Torres Strait from 1892–97. Later moved to Erube or Darnley Island and were there around 1895. He wrote about the <i>Faiga Me</i> offering and celebration of Finau's new house at Murray Island. Returned to Samoa with 3 children.
1892	Peau and Paia	Trained at Mālūa from 1891. Began work in PNG, at the Vatorata School from 1892–99. Assisted Lawes at the seminary at Vatorata. Wrote an account in <i>Sulu</i> August 1898 about the need for teachers and their work at the school at Vatorata. Paia was reported sick and died 2 Nov 1899. Paia was praised for her good work. Bad report of Peau. Peau reported expelled due to immoral behaviour in 1893. Peau died on board the <i>John Williams</i> on 1 May 1900 of pneumonia. Memorial in Auckland NZ of his death with others in 1901.
1893	Teleni and Wife	Trained at Mālūa, 1890–93. Ordained 11 June 1893. Appointed to PNG in 1893. Worked at Mita. Mentioned in <i>Sulu</i> December 1893 as staying with Filemoni to acclimatise and learn the language. Died 27 December 1893.
1893	Areli and Vaega	Trained at Mālūa, 1889–92. Ordained 11 June 1893. Worked at Kwato in PNG from 1893. Vaega gave birth to a child who lived a few hours. Areli died at Kwato from brain haemorrhage in 1896. Vaega returned to Samoa.
1893	Peni V. and Senetima	Trained at Mālūa, 1889–92. Ordained 11 June 1893. Worked in PNG from November 1893. Left for Samoa on furlough in 1908. Senetima delivered an account of her experience at the women's assembly at Mālūa in 1908. Returned to PNG and worked at Kwato in 1909. Mentioned in <i>Sulu</i> December 1893 as staying with Filemoni to orientate to the language and to local customs. They were appointed to Rabe. At Suau in 1913 and Isuleilei from 1916 to 1919. Returned to Fife Bay after furlough in 1923. There in 1929

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1899	V. Peni	Offered for mission in 1899. Finally retired to Samoa in 1930 after serving 31 years in PNG.
1893	Faasiu and Tuli	Trained at Mālua, 1890–93. Worked at Morabi in PNG from 1893. Transferred to Hisiu, Kabadi in 1894. Faasiu wrote an account from Hisiu in <i>Sulu</i> May 1895. Wrote an account in <i>Sulu</i> August 1898 about the difficulty of the work. Supervised by white missionary Henry M. Dauncey. Returned to PNG after furlough in Samoa in 1907 and reappointed to Delena district. They were still there in 1911 under Dauncey. In 1914 their 15-year-old son Anesone died. Faasiu died of cancer on 19 December 1917 at Port Moresby Hospital. Regarded as a great missionary. Tuli and their 4 children returned to Samoa on 21 May 1918.
1893	Mataese and Filitusa	Trained at Mālua, 1889–93. From Ofu Manua. Ordained 11 June 1893. Worked at Killerton Island, Milne Bay in PNG from 1893. Mataese died 1 May 1899. He died at Kwato station but buried at Killerton Island. Praised by Charles Abel as a diligent teacher. They also lost a 3-month-old daughter.
1894	Ionatana and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1894
1895	Feata and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1895
1895	Uelesi and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1895. Returned to Samoa in 1905.
1896	Eleasaro and Wife	Educated at Mālua, 1892–95. Appointed to PNG in 1896 and posted to Milne Bay. Returned to Samoa and worked at Pavaiai where Eleasaro died 8 July 1914.
1896	Ierupaala and I’a	Worked previously at Manase Safotu for 2 years before they were appointed to PNG. Worked in PNG at Morabi from 1896. Wrote an account of Timoteo in October 1905. They built a new church at Morabi which was commemorated on 31 October 1906. Left for Samoa on furlough in 1906. They travelled on the steamer <i>Atua</i> . Returned to PNG and worked at Delena in 1907. After their mission they returned and worked in Samoa. I’a died at Safune 23 April 1913.
1896	Mataio and Susana(Alesi)	Trained at Mālua from 1883. Illness led to study suspended and returned to Nui. Return to complete study at Mālua 1891, graduated in 1893. Pastor at Amouli Tutuila in 1894. Appointed to PNG Vatorata in 1897. Wrote account from Saroa in <i>Sulu</i> 1898 urging for more teachers. Transferred to Pari, Port Moresby in 1902. Mataio died 6 March 1908 at Port Moresby. Worked at Saroa and Pari for 12 years, 1896–1908. Also at GabaGaba in 1900. Susana returned to Samoa with 2 children.
1897	Fale and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1897
1897	Lafi and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1897
1897	Luteru Timoti and Paleni	Trained at Mālua from 1892–96. Appointed to PNG in 1897. Worked at Ukaukana, Kabadi District (Tubusereia) from 1896. Died 14 Nov. 1898 from malaria. Paleni and their children returned to Samoa.
1897	Fauolo and Mele	Trained at Mālua, 1893–96. From Fusi Safotulafai. Appointed to PNG in 1897. Worked at Pari, Port Moresby from 1897. Dismissed in 1903 due to immorality and returned to Samoa. Went back in 1904 and worked at Bari until 1915 when he returned to Samoa to seek reinstatement. Their daughter Isota died at Pari 17 May 1899 at age 2. He received a banana shoot from Samoa called <i>fa’i soaa</i> which missionary Lawes took and grew at Vatorata. It grew and

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became known in PNG as *Fa'i Samoa* or Samoan banana.

1897	Apelu and Wife	Trained at Mālūa, 1888–92. Worked at Vaitogi Tutuila. Appointed to PNG in 1897. Worked at Kwato until they returned in 1901. They then worked at Vailoa.
1898	Maene and Vaiea	Trained at Mālūa from 1891–96. From Falealili. Ordained 23 October 1897. Vaiea was an exceptional student at Papauta. In 1898 she was reported to be a teacher for young children at Papauta. Appointed to Ahioma, East Bay, PNG in 1898. Worked at Lelehoa, Milne Bay. Left for Samoa on furlough in 1907. Vaiea gave an account of their work at a women's gathering in Papauta. Vaiea gave a word of encouragement to the women. Maene died 20 November 1907 on board the <i>John Williams</i> while in Kiribati on their way back to PNG. He was buried at sea, and Vaiea continued on to PNG with her children. Vaiea worked on her own at Kwato. Vaiea reported sick but recovered and returned to Samoa in 1910 due to illness. On 14 October 1912, she was ordained as the first Samoan woman missionary and to be posted again to PNG.
1898	Naite and Sose	Trained at Mālūa, 1893–96. From Ituotane. Ordained 23 October 1897. Appointed to Kwato PNG in 1898. At Samarai in 1899. Sose died in PNG from malaria on 26 April 1905. Naite continued working at Delena under missionary Henry M. Dauncey. He was still there in 1911.
1898	Reupena and Malama	Trained at Mālūa and then worked in Tutuila. From Manua Tutuila. Appointed to PNG in 1898. Worked at Fife Bay, (Tureture, Gadaisu) Isuleilei District for two years. Reported dead on 15 May 1901, after a sudden sickness of just 5 days.
1898	Taesaili/Taesali Isaia and Wife	Trained at Mālūa, 1894–97. From Aana. Ordained 23 October 1897. Appointed to Delena PNG in 1898.
1898	Tuuaga and Wife	Ordained for PNG in 1898
1898	Siutu and Malu	Trained at Mālūa, 1894–97. From Ituotane/Saleimoa. Ordained 23 October 1897. Appointed to Port Moresby PNG in 1898. To return in 1900 due to illness. Siutu died on 5 June in 1900 during return trip to Samoa on the <i>John Williams</i> while in the shores of NZ in Auckland. Malu survived the trip and went back to her village of Saleimoa. She died 31 August 1901.
1898	Tipa and Epenesa	Trained at Mālūa, 1887–91. From Faasaleleaga. Appointed to Nukulaelae, Tuvalu in 1891. Returned to Samoa due to personal problems in 1895. Offered and appointed to PNG in 1898. Ordained for PNG 1898. Appointed to Mauata, Fly River in 1898. Returned to Samoa in 1900 due to Epenesa's illness. Both survived the return trip of the <i>John Williams</i> in which several Samoans died. Epenesa died at Saasaai, 13 August 1900. Epenesa was praised for her work in PNG.
1898	Leupena and Wife	Trained at Mālūa 1893–96. From Tutuila. Ordained in 1897. Appointed to Fife Bay, Isuleilei District in 1898. Died 25 May 1901.
1898	Levi and Selaina	Trained at Mālūa, 1893–96. From Tutuila. Ordained 1898. Appointed to the Fly River PNG in 1898. Appointed by Chalmers to Bugi in 1898. Left for Samoa on furlough in 1909. Returned to PNG and posted to Darnley Island in the Torres Straits in 1910. Returned on the steamer <i>Atua</i> , and worked at Atauloma for 3 years then at Aloau. Levi died on April 8 1931 at Manua.
1898	Maina and Luama	Trained at Mālūa, 1894–98. From Moataa, Apia. Ordained for PNG in 1898. Appointed to Fly River PNG in 1898. Also worked at

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Tureture. Report of a new impressive church built by Maina at Tureture on 12 December 1906. Left for Samoa on furlough in 1910/1911. Luama delivered an account of her work at the women's assembly at Mālūa in 1913.

1898	Alefaio and Penina	Appointed to PNG and arrived in 1898. Left in 1916.
1898	Peteru and Wife	Trained at Mālūa, 1893–96. From Falealili. Ordained 23 October 1897. Appointed to PNG Delena in 1898. Died at Kabadi on 13 June 1900. Present–Lij, Ieru, Faasiu and Taesali Sulu. Wife returned to Samoa on the <i>John Williams</i> in 1900. ²
1899	Luteru and Faato'a	Trained at Mālūa, 1895–98. From Aana. Ordained 24 October 1899. Appointed to Port Moresby PNG in 1899. Replaced Siutu who was sick. They also worked at Tubusereia where Luteru died 9 February 1905.
1899	Peleti and Wife	Trained at Mālūa, 1896–99. From Mālūa. Ordained 24 October 1899. Appointed to PNG in Nov 1899.
1899	Sale and Wife	From Mālūa. Mentioned in PNG in 1899.
1899	Saua and Wife	Mentioned in PNG in 1899
1899	Fareti and Wife	Trained at Mālūa, 1895–99. From Ituotane. Ordained 24 October 1899. Worked in Fly River PNG in 1899. Transferred to Fife Bay in 1900. Fareti died after a sudden sickness on 11 March 1901 while working at Suaealo for one and a half years.
1899	Uinipareti and Ema	Trained at Mālūa, 1895–98. From Ituotane. Worked in Suau PNG in 1899. Died 11 March 1901 due to illness.
1899	Ioela and Wife	Arrived in PNG in 1899. Left for Samoa in 1907.
1899	Poloaiga Sioane and Lusa	Trained at Mālūa, 1895–98. From Moataa/Sapapalii. Ordained 24 October 1899. Appointed to Vatorata to replace Peau and Paia. Reported well in 1901. On furlough to Samoa in 1908. Lusa delivered an address of her mission at the women's assembly at Mālūa in 1908. Returned to PNG and worked on Darnley Island in 1909. Also worked at Mabouz and Badu Islands in the Torres Straits. Returned to Samoa and Lusa gave an account of her work at the women's assembly at Mālūa in 1916.
1899	Faavae and Sulu/Salu	Trained at Mālūa, 1895–98. From Apia. Ordained 24 October 1899. Appointed to Port Moresby in 1899 and worked at Hanuabada. Their child Neemia died 4 August 1901 aged 14 months. Transferred to Torres Strait at Barnley Island in 1909. Left for Samoa in 1910 on furlough. Salu gave an account at the women's assembly at Mālūa during the <i>Fonotele</i> . They were called to work at Motufoua in Tuvalu in 1912 and returned in 1913 because of illness. They were called to Tafitoala in 1914 where he died in 1937.
1899	Tofili and Fuatupe	Trained at Mālūa, 1896–99. From Manua. Ordained 24 October 1899. Worked at Fife Bay in 1899. They replaced Mataese at Killerton Island, Milne Bay in 1900. Appointed Vatorata 1901. At Isuleilei in 1907. Returned to Samoa due to sickness in 1910. Went back to PNG but returned to Samoa in 1913 due to illness. Fuatupe gave an address of her work at the women's assembly in 1914.
1899	Samuelu and Maria	Trained at Mālūa, 1896–99. From Tutuila. Born Manua. Ordained

² Another Peteru also from Falealili. Appointed and ordained for PNG in 1898. Mentioned in PNG in 1899. Died 1 August 1899. See *Sulu* 1899–March 1900.

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		24 October 1899. Worked at Killerton Island in 1899. Transferred to Waraleia in 1901. Return to PNG after furlough in Samoa in 1907. Maria died in 1917. Samuelu returned to Samoa in 1919 with their one child.
1899	Uelese and Sone	From Nofaalii/Vavau. Worked in Moru and were there when Chalmers was killed. Their two children died there; sons Poela in 1901 and Hauna in 1906. They returned to Samoa in 1910 with three children Teuila, Esene and Emmy. Uelese died at Nofaalii in 1917.
1900	Manualii and Siuta	In PNG in the early-twentieth century. Siuta died in PNG. Great-grandmother of Silomiga Faia who also worked in PNG in the 1860s
1900	Isaako and Wife	At PNG at the turn of the twentieth century. Isaako said to have children to a Pari woman.
1900	Timoteo M. and Faafoa	Trained at Mālua, 1896–99. Son of Timoteo and Siu. Appointed to Kabadi in 1900. Left for Samoa on furlough in 1908. Returned to PNG and appointed to Delena in 1909. Timoteo died soon after—possibly 1910. Faafoa mentioned in <i>Sulu</i> April 1907. She gave an emotional account of her work and the death of her husband in PNG at the women’s assembly at Mālua in 1911. Timoteo was the son of Timoteo Koea who was one of the first Samoans in PNG. He was born there. Upon his return to Samoa he entered Mālua and graduated in 1900. They were appointed to PNG and posted to where his father worked at Kabadi. When he arrived local people at Kabadi were amazed at his inaugural sermon in which he preached in the local language. They worked at Kabadi until he died in 1911.
1900	Ieru and Wife	Mentioned in PNG in 1900. He built a new church at Morapi Kabadi which was commemorated in 1906.
1900	Moe T. and Wife	Trained at Mālua, 1890–1893. Appointed to PNG in 1900.
1900	Taleni and Wife	Taleni died in PNG on 27 December 1900
1900	Iakopo and Wife	Arrived in PNG in 1900. Left in 1910.
1900	Fania and Imele	Trained at Mālua from 1895–1899. Ready and appointed to PNG Saibai in 1900. Imele was reported sick 18 May and died 9 June 1901. She was buried on the island of Saipai. Fania was reappointed to Maula, at the Fly River in 1905. Returned to Samoa and worked under missionary Newell at Mālua. He died 31 December 1914.
1900	Apineru and Vaepa	Trained at Mālua. Vaepa was educated at Papauta then she married Apineru while he was in Mālua. They stayed there until they were appointed to PNG at Kalaigolo in 1900. They were there for 12 years. In 1913 Vaepa became ill and returned to Samoa. Vaepa delivered an address of her experiences in PNG at the women’s assembly in Mālua in 1913. Later they worked at Lelepa Matautu Savaii for 6 years. Vaepa died at her village Malie on 29 March 1919.
1901	Ioane and Wife	Worked in PNG in 1901. They were reported to be working on Murray Island under the supervision of missionary Pusia. ³
1901	Tuuaiinafua and	Trained at Mālua, 1897–99. Worked in PNG in 1901.

³ There was another Ioane Ve’a who left PNG for Samoa 9 December 1912 (Oka).

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	Wife	
1901	Petaia Toese and Sene	Appointed to PNG in 1901. Returned with wife for furlough in 1915. Returned in 1918. Returned to Samoa in 1925 and retired at Fasitootai. Petaia died on 8 January 1933.
1902	Esekielu and Wife	From Aana. Accepted for mission in PNG in 1902 and left 24 October. He stayed with missionary Schlencker and Uele to learn the language. In 1903 they returned to Samoa with their daughter as Esekielu was ill.
1902	Lemuelu and Wife	Trained at Mālūa, 1898–1902. Ordained in 1902. Worked in PNG in 1902.
1902	Peika and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1902. Peika wrote in a letter in the <i>Sulu</i> for Samoans not to fear PNG but offer to come. He wrote that the image of PNG as a ‘savage’ land is not true.
1902	Pouniu and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1902
1902	Tanielu and Wife	From Faasaleleaga. Accepted for mission in PNG in 1902.
1902	Uelese and Mele	Trained at Mālūa, 1898–1901. From Aana. Appointed to Angas Island in 1902. Transferred to Torres Strait in 1907. Uelese died and was buried in Daru. Mele returned as a widow from PNG in 1919.
1902	M. Konelio and Talau’u	Graduated from Mālūa in 1894. Married Talau’u 11 June 1901 at Ofu Manua. Left for PNG October 1902 and worked at Vatorata. At Gabagaba in 1907–1911. They worked at the villages of Saroakei, Vapurava and Lalokonomu. He was at the building of the road to Boku. Returned to Samoa in 1913 and retired at Manua. Later called to Atuu until 1924 then Vatia. He retired in 1931 and Konelio died in 1936. Talau’u returned to her village at Ofu where she died 25 September 1958.
1902	A. Mose and Tilesa	Trained at Mālūa, 1899–1902. From Apia. On mission ship to PNG in 1902. He offered his service in PNG on hearing of the death of his brother there. He was spared to develop the work which his brother had begun and lived to see the people contributing generously to the funds and work of the LMS. Worked at Kalaigolo from 1902. Still there in 1911 working under missionary Lolani. Returned to Samoa in 1912. Returned to PNG and died in Port Moresby in 1920. His wife returned a widow in 1921 after about 19 years of service.
1902	Tuata and Fasi	Worked in PNG from 1902. Fasi died in 1912. Unable to return in 1917.
1902	Toese and Wife	Trained at Mālūa, 1899–1902. Appointed to PNG in 1902. Left for Samoa on furlough in 1910. Returned to PNG in 1911. Left for Samoa in 1918.
1902	Faatasi Kereti and Nivaga	Trained at Mālūa, 1898–1901. From Fasitootai. Appointed to Suau, Fife Bay (Isuleilei) in 1902. Faatasi died in PNG on 31 May 1904. Nivaga arrived back in Samoa on 17 May 1905.
1902	Alesana and Vaiese/Vaoita	Alesana was educated at Leulumoega Fou School from 1890. He was one of the first students there when it was established in 1890. Later trained at Mālūa, 1898–1902. Appointed and ordained for PNG in 1902. Worked at Vatorata. Vaiese died in Port Moresby on 12 January 1903 aged 29 years. Alesana remarried in 1903 to Vaoita, daughter of Iosefa (Pastor of Laulii village). Returned to Fife Bay in 1904. Returned to Samoa for furlough in 1910. Appointed to teach at Leulumoega Fou. Went back to PNG in 1912 and worked

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at Moru district. Returned to Samoa 1 May 1923. Gave an account of his mission at the *Fonotele* at Mālūa in 1923. Worked at Vaitogi Tutuila from 1923–31. Refused to go back to PNG in 1928. Gave a word of encouragement for new missionaries to PNG in 1928. Taught again at Leulumoega Fou School from 1931–36. Appointed to teach at Mālūa from 1937–55 where he retired. Called again to Malaeloa Tutuila in 1957 and then retired to his family at Lalomalava where he died in 1958.

1902	Faaaliga and Gase	Trained at Mālūa, 1897–1901. Entered Mālūa June 1897. From Faasaleleaga. Married Gase of Saleaumua in 1898. Appointed to Kopuana, Delena in 1902. Wrote an account of the celebration of new church by Ieru at Morapi, Kabadi. Died on 25 December 1907. Buried at Kopuana.
1903	Opetaiā and Wife	Trained at Mālūa from 1905. They first worked at Asu and Matuu. Appointed to PNG and left 16 October 1903. Posted to Daru. Also appointed to Sumai, Fly River in 1909. There in 1911. Returned to Samoa in 1913 and worked at Manua and Aloau. Opetaiā died on 11 November 1942.
1903	Ioane Isaia and Faleupolu	Ordained at Mālūa 11 October 1903 and left for PNG 5 days later. Also accepted for PNG in 1918.
1904	Fareni and Evo	Trained at Mālūa, 1899–1903. From Faasaleleaga. Worked in Delena from 1904 until 1913 under missionary Henry M. Dauncey. According to Oka they worked in PNG for 20 years. Went back to Samoa and worked for 5 years at Vailoa. Evo died on 6 September 1933 in Samoa.
1904	Fuaau Malaki and Oneone	Trained at Mālūa, 1900–1903. From Tutuila. Ordained in 1904. Appointed to Iokea in 1904 and reported to have been working until 1913. They returned to Samoa in 1914 with 4 children.
1904	Ie'u Masina and Fiapito	Trained at Mālūa, 1899–1902. From Lefaga. Ordained 11 October 1903. Worked at Darnley Island in 1904. Also worked at Saibai, Sawana in the Torres Strait. They returned to Samoa in 1914 with 6 children.
1904	Iosefa Toa and Sesa	Trained at Mālūa, 1899–1902. From Aana/Moataa/Laulii. Married 20 June 1901 at Laulii. Ordained 11 October 1903. Appointed to Daru, Fly River in 1904 and was there in 1911. Worked in Daru for 5 years then shifted to Sumai and worked there for 2 years. Later shifted to Katekai for another 2 years. In 1913 they returned to Samoa. Gave accounts of their work at the <i>Fonotele</i> in 1914.
1904	Poutu and Wife	Trained at Mālūa, 1900–1903. Worked in PNG in 1904.
1904	Samasama and Wife	Worked in PNG from 1904
1904	Tovia and Teleai	Trained at Mālūa, 1899–1903. From Faasaleleaga/Faleasiu. Ordained 11 October 1903. Appointed to Daru, Fly River, 1904–1911. Eldest son Ipiasia died in 1911 at Daru Island. Teleai delivered an account of her experience in PNG at the women's assembly at Mālūa in 1913.
1904	Anipale and Siata	Trained at Mālūa, 1899–1902. Appointed pastor of Samamea Apia in 1903. Married 30 September 1904. Appointed to PNG in 1904. Anipale died in 1905 of malaria. Siata returned as widow to Samoa with their daughter Mele in 1905.
1904	Isaia T. and Vau	Trained at Mālūa, 1899–1902. From Faasaleleaga. Ordained 11 October 1903. Appointed to Delena in 1904. Left for Samoa in

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		1910 on furlough. Vau delivered an address of her experience in PNG at the women's assembly at Mālua in 1913.
1904	Faasala and Wife	Arrived in PNG in 1904. Left in 1911.
1905	Feuu and Wife	Worked in PNG in 1905
1905	Neru and Solia	From Aana. Appointed to Iokea in 1905. Both were reported sick at Moru in 1914. Returned to Samoa in 1917 as Solia was ill.
1906	Neemaia and Solonaima	Worked at Millport Harbour in 1906. Wife Solonaima died 20 October 1907 due to blackwater fever. Neemaia returned to Samoa in December 1907.
1906	Samuelu Sitala. and Tautala	Trained at Mālua, 1901–1904. From Falealili/Afega. Married at Afega 8 January 1901. Ordained 16 October 1905. Appointed to Darnley Island in 1906. New church was commemorated at Magik village, 13 October 1909. They also build a cricket pitch and taught people how to play Samoan cricket. They had a son name Samuelu who also became a missionary in PNG. They returned to Samoa in 1914. They both died in the 1918 Flu Epidemic in Samoa.
1906	Fuatai and Wife	Worked in PNG in 1906
1906	Manulele and Wife	Worked in PNG in 1906
1906	Naiti and Wife	Trained at Mālua, 1902–1905. Worked at Delena in 1906.
1906	Fasi and wife	Arrived in Daru in 1906. Still there in 1911.
1906	Siania and Fatufua	Trained at Mālua, 1902–1905. From Faasaleleaga/Lotofaga. Married 12 December 1902. Ordained 15 October 1905. Worked at Iokea (Moru) in 1906. Returned for furlough October 1913. Fatufua reported dead in PNG. Siania and 2 children returned to Samoa. He went back in 1915. Returned for furlough in 1925 but was informed that he could not return to PNG unless he remarried. He was also told to refrain from trading. He was later engaged to a nurse from Tutuila. PDC however refused to take him back. The SDC protested against this decision.
1906	Saulo and Wife	Saulo died in PNG on 14 February 1906 after serving 6 years
1906	Solo and Wife	Trained at Mālua, 1902–1905. From Apolima. Ordained October 1905. Appointed to Darnley Island in 1906.
1906	Toso and Wife	Trained at Mālua, 1902–1905. From Tutuila. Ordained 16 October 1905. Appointed to Iokea in 1906. There in 1911.
1906	Ualesi and Sili	Educated at Mālua, 1901–1904. From Falealili. Ordained 16 October 1905. Appointed to Daru from 1906 and were there in 1911. Ualesi died 6 July 1912 due to malaria and was buried in Daru.
1906	Solomona and Laupua	Trained at Mālua, 1901–1904. From Faasaleleaga. Ordained 16 October 1905. Appointed to Hige bai in 1906. Returned to Samoa in 1910. He was reported as unsuitable and quarrelsome. ⁴
1906	Ieremia and Tautuu/Fesuaiga	From Toamua. Married in 1902 at Toamua and entered Mālua. Graduated in 1906. Worked at Iokea in 1906. Wife Tautuu died August 1908 at Toaripi. Remarried Fesuaega/Fesuaiga, Iopu's widow in 1910. Continued working at Moru until 1918 when they returned to Samoa. Returned from PNG 25 February 1918. They worked at Lona. Ieremia died 2 November 1933. Ieremia and

⁴ Another Solomona worked in PNG from 1899. Left for Samoa in 1910 (DW).

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Tautuu's daughter Laulii, who was born in PNG, later returned with her husband Faagu as missionaries in Daru in 1931.

1906	Feliki and Felila	Trained at Mālūa, 1901–1905. From Apia. Ordained 16 October 1905. Worked at Kwato in 1906. Felila died 20 March 1906 from malaria. Feliki returned to Samoa in 1906 and married Tuia on 6 September 1906 at Apia. They returned to Daru in 1906 and were still there in 1909. Returned to Samoa with 1 child. In 1918 he was reported as having offered for further service in PNG.
1906	T. Apineru and Tasesa	Trained at Mālūa, 1901–1904. From Falealili/Lano. Married 28 May 1903. Ordained 16 October 1905. Appointed to Vatorata in 1906 and Daru in 1907. Apineru died February 1912 from malaria and Tasesa returned to Samoa in 1912.
1906	Ioka and Pua	Trained at Mālūa, 1902–1905. From Olosega/Tuanai. Appointed to Daru in 1906. He was dismissed in 1911 for threatening his wife with a firearm. They returned to Samoa. Ioka died at Olosega, 11 August 1912.
1907	Poloie and Pekina	From Itu o Tane. First worked at Nanumea and Niutao Tuvalu then went to PNG.
1907	Fau and wife	Worked in PNG from 1907. They were at Veiru and started an LMS plantation.
1907	Mane and Faamelea	Worked in Delena, 1907–1911 under missionary Henry M. Dauncey. They previously worked at Beru, Kiribati in 1901. He was head of a school there. When visited in 1907, the school where he worked was dispersed as there was a student walkout. So they asked to be appointed to PNG and were accepted. Worked at Delena (Tureture, Moru). Faamelea died of fever 1 December 1913. Mane and their children arrived in 1914.
1907	Mika P. and Wife	Trained at Mālūa, 1902–1906. Appointed to PNG in 1907.
1907	Nusipepa and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1907
1907	Iopu and Fesuaiga	Trained at Mālūa, 1893–96. Appointed to Nukunau in Kiribati in 1897. Then reappointed to Iokea, Moru PNG in 1907. Iopu died in PNG 5 June 1909 from blackwater fever. Wife Fesuaiga remarried another Samoan missionary Ieremia in 1910.
1907	Aviata and Losivale	Trained at Mālūa, 1903–1906. From Faasaleleaga. Appointed to PNG in 1907 to Duabo, Samarai (Isuleilei) Worked in Fife Bay in 1913. Left for Samoa on furlough in 1917. They wanted to go back.
1907	Fetui and Sene/Seepa	Trained at Mālūa, 1902–1906. Fagalii/Amanave. Appointed to Daru in 1907. Sene died after giving birth on 19 July 1907. The child lived but Sene was buried on Thursday Island. The Somerset register of deaths records Sene's death as follows: "Sene, a teacher and daughter of Saenafae, a student, born c. 1882 at Mousamoua Apia, Samoa arrived in Queensland c.2/7/1907 of retained placenta peritonitis at Thursday Island; married to Fatoui [Fetui] in c. 1906 at Mousamoua, Samoa." (Anna) Fetui returned to Samoa in 1908 and was about to return to PNG. Reported to be married again to Seepa and worked with Benjamin T. Butcher at Ipisia at the Fly River. Left for Samoa on furlough in 1918. Returned with 4 children to Samoa 21 May 1918. Seepa was born at Poloa Tutuila in 1882. She attended the first girls' school at Amanave Tutuila. The school was shifted to Atauloma and Seepa shifted there too in 1900. She was trained for 5 years and graduated in 1905. She then became a teacher there in 1906. 1910 she married Fetui at Amanave and left for PNG the same year.

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		1917 they returned to Samoa and worked at Pavaiai Tutuila for 6 years. In 1923 they retired to their family village at Fagalii.
1907	Asera and Wife	Educated at Tuasivi and Leulumoega. Trained at Mālua and graduated 25 October 1907 and appointed to PNG. Worked at Kwato. Sent home in 1909, illness—consumption. He worked at Lalomalava until he died 29 December 1922.
1907	Tuata and Leitu	Married 24 December 1902. In 1907 they departed to work in Kiribati but due to an epidemic on the ship, they were left on a deserted island before it was safe for them to enter the island they were posted to. Then they changed their minds and requested to go to PNG. Posted to PNG in 1907. Worked in Duabo, Milne Bay in 1909. They returned to Samoa 12 May 1916.
1908	Fuafiva and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1908
1908	Saifoloi and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1908
1908	Sione T. and Tina	From Matautu. Appointed to PNG in 1908. Worked at Delena. Returned with wife and 3 children for furlough October 1919. Went back to PNG in 1920 and continued to work at Delena until 1928 when they went to Samoa for furlough. They then worked at Saleaula and retired to Leauvaa where Sione died on 13 December 1952.
1908	Tufulele and Wife	Trained at Mālua, 1904–1907. Appointed to PNG Torres St. in 1908.
1908	Iosia and Wife	Appointed to PNG Moru in 1908. Returned in 1930. Report by T. Iosia in 1928 in PNG. In Moru district in 1929.
1909	Isaia I. and Wife	Trained at Mālua, 1905–1908. Appointed to PNG Darnley Island in 1909.
1909	Keti and Wife	Trained at Mālua, 1905–1908. Appointed to PNG in 1909.
1909	Soloi and Wife	Worked in PNG in 1909
1909	Niu Sapolu and Simoe	From Apia. Apia/Satoalepai. Married at Satoalepai in 1906. They also graduated from Mālua in 1906. Appointed to New Guinea in 1908. Worked in Daru in 1909, first at the Fly River then the Torres Straits. Left for Samoa on furlough in 1917. Returned with 1 child from PNG 21 May 1918. They were appointed teachers at Māluafofou, then worked at Toamua. Niu died at Toamua 23 September 1954.
1909	Urima and Siaotea	From Fasitootai/Fagalii. Trained at Mālua, 1899–1903. Married 26 December 1902. Worked at Apia. Then ordained 23 October 1908 for the work in PNG. Left in 1909. Worked at Iokea, Moru District in 1909. At Kaipi in 1914. He was reported crippled and returned to Samoa with 3 children on May 21 1918. In 1922 he could walk again. Offered to return to PNG in 1927. Urima died at Fasitootai on 23 March 1961.
1909	Iese and Siatigi	Trained at Mālua, 1905–1908. Appointed to Delena (Kabadi) in 1909. They later shifted to Torres Straits. Siatigi died August 1910 while giving birth to twins. The twins also died. Iese returned to Samoa 1910. He remarried and returned with his new wife in 1911. In 1917 they returned to Samoa because Iese was ill.
1909	Tito and Pologa	Ordained for PNG in 23 October 1909. Appointed to Iokea in 1911. Returned to Samoa with wife and child in January 1920. Worked at Saleaula and Matavai. Pologa died 21 May 1948. Tito died, 21 June 1950.

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1910	Logologo and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1910
1910	Samu and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1910
1910	Filimoni Faitele and Wife	Arrived in PNG in 1910. Left for Samoa in 1915
1910	Simona and Faauma	Trained at Mālūa, 1907–1910. Appointed to Vatorata in 1910. Returned to Samoa in 21 May 1918 with 4 children.
1911	Aso and Vaega	Trained at Mālūa, 1898–1901. Worked at Vaisala and Manase in 1905 (possibly he was married another woman). Married to Vaega at Satoalepai 1 April 1908. Posted to Kwato district in 1911. Replaced Vaiea at Lelehoa, Milne Bay in 1913. Vaega died at Lelehoa on 3 July 1913. Aso returned in 1916 and called to Papa Sataua. He died, 6 December 1935.
1911	Fasi and Moevao	Trained at Mālūa, 1907–1910. From Sapunaoa. Married at Sapunaoa 26 December 1902. Appointed to Fly River in 1911. Returned to Samoa on furlough 12 May 1916. Went back in 1917 and returned with wife to Samoa in 1920.
1911	Iosua and Sanitoa	Appointed to Delena in 1911. Returned to Samoa with 3 children on 1 May 1923. Returned to PNG after furlough for further service in 1923. Iosua died in PNG after 15 years of faithful and devoted service in 1926. His wife Sanitoa returned as a widow with her child on 1 June 1926.
1911	Naitupua and Siavauli	Trained at Mālūa, 1908–1911. From Manono/Saleimoa. Appointed to Delena in 1911 under missionary Tonise. Worked at Gabagaba in 1911. Naitupua died from black fever 2 February 1916. Siavauli returned to Samoa 12 May 1916.
1911	Toele and Wife	Trained at Mālūa, 1907–1910. Worked in PNG in 1911.
1911	Ifaraima Lotu and Wife	Arrived in PNG in 1911. Left in 1913.
1911	Tima and Fale	Trained at Mālūa, 1908–1911. Appointed to Gabagaba in 1911. Resigned due to Fale's health in 1917. Tima's leg was amputated by accident during furlough in Samoa. They still returned to PNG and Tima died from blackwater fever, 14 September 1923. Fale returned to Samoa as a widow with 2 children, 10 September 1924.
1911	Lefulefu and Leutu	Worked at Gabagaba, Vatorata. Lefulefu died 1 April 1913 from fever and was buried at Gabagaba.
1912	Auauna and Vaaiga	Graduated from Mālūa in 1908. From Solosolo. Worked at Fagalii then appointed to Moru PNG in 1912. Went back to Samoa in 1923. They worked at Sauano, Saletele Fagaloa and Solosolo until they returned to PNG again in 1930. They worked in Moru until 1938. Then they were asked to assist Sister Fairhall with the newly established Leprosy hospital at Gemo Island. They accepted and worked there until they returned in 1941. Auauna died 1 April 1960.
1912	Tipasa and Fale	Left for PNG in 1912. Tipasa attended the funeral of Apineru in 1916.
1912	Penitala and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1912
1912	Soli and Wife	Trained at Mālūa, 1908–1911. Appointed to PNG in 1912.
1912	Kurene Meki Vaaulu and	From Toamua. Kurene married Sagaia in 1900. Trained at Mālūa, 1908–1911. They entered Mālūa where Sagaia died in 1910. She

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	Sosoo/Sivanila	was 33 years old and had 1 child. He then married Sosoo in 1911 and left for PNG. Appointed to Borgu in 1912 under the German Lutheran Rhein Mission. Sosoo died there on 5 April 1915 and was buried at Borgu. She died from TB and malaria. Kurene returned to Samoa in 1916 and married Sivanila on 4 February 1917. Kurene returned with child to Samoa February 1922. So they may have gone back. They worked at Letogo. Sivanila died and then he married Savali in 1940.
1912	Ierome Ilaoa and Siautu/Lili	Trained at Mālūa, 1908–1911. Appointed to Borgu in 1912 under the German Lutheran Rhein Mission. In 1912, he wrote a letter from German New Guinea where he was working on the island of Ruō. Siautu died 31 March 1922. He returned to Samoa for furlough and left for German New Guinea in 1930, married Lili and went back. They served there until 1933 when they returned to Samoa. Oka suggested that they went back and they returned in 1940. Returned with wife and orphan from PNG February 1922. Siautu died a few weeks after arrival at Apia hospital (same as above) SDC May 1922.
1912	Feso and Malo	Appointed to Daru in 1912. Malo died 26 March 1917 from blackwater fever at Ipiā (Kineai Island/Fly river). Feso returned to Samoa with 1 child on 21 May 1918.
1913	Koria Lilo and Perelini	Appointed to Daru in 1913. They were also posted to Mabudaware, St Paul and Omuas in the Torres Straits. They were praised for their good service. They returned to Samoa with children for furlough in 1921 and returned to PNG on 3 May 1924 on the ship the <i>Tofua</i> . They continued working in Daru until 1933. They returned to Samoa and were posted to Tokelau Swain's Island from 1937–45. He built a beautiful new church there and he was known for his carpentry skills. His son Tema who was born at St Paul in the Torres Straits would later become a missionary to PNG and also worked in Daru from 1951.
1913	Samuelu I. and Tafu'e	They previously worked at Lefaga, Aana. They were ordained for the work in PNG on 16 October 1905. He was well known for his carpentry skills as he helped built the church at Magik where Samuelu Sitala worked. They were working in PNG at Toripi under missionary Sione's district. In 1911 Samuelu died from blackwater fever. Tafu'e continued working on her own. Sione wrote an impressive account of her work in 1913. Tafu'e continued working on her own until she died on 30 September 1929. She fell from her copra house and injured her hand. She was buried at Toaripi where she had worked on her own for 16 years.
1913	Kaisara and Wife	Trained at Mālūa, 1909–1912. Appointed to Delena in 1913.
1913	Siliva F. Autagavaia and Lemau	Appointed to German New Guinea in 1913 under the German Lutheran Rhein Mission. Lemau died during their mission there. In PNG in 1917.
1913	Pao and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1913
1913	Tuaumu and Seepa	Left for PNG in 1913 and posted to Kalaigolo. Returned to Samoa in 1920. Gave an account of his work at the <i>Fonotele</i> in Mālūa in 1921. Posted to Sapapalii for 5 years until he died on 30 September 1926.
1913	Taeao Salua F. and Lea	From Satoalepai Ituotane. Offered to go to PNG but was asked to await response from PDC concerning his children. Appointed to German New Guinea and worked under the Lutheran Rhein mission. Returned to Samoa with wife and children February 1922.

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They went back and then returned to Samoa in 1933.⁵

1913	Faiupu F. Apulu and Epenesa	From Faleasiu. Appointed to German New Guinea under the Lutheran Rhein mission. Posted to Nobonob. He returned from PNG with wife and children February 1922.
1913	Euta Leota and Sulu	From Fogapoa. Left for PNG in 1913. Posted to Delena. Returned to Samoa with wife and 4 children. Worked at Saasaai. Euta died 4 December 1957 when he fell from his house.
1913	Asafo F. Toa and Faaea	Appointed to German New Guinea under the Lutheran Rhein Mission in 1913. Worked on Karakar island. Returned to Samoa for furlough with 6 children. Arrived in Samoa on 5 March 1927. Asafo died while on furlough in Samoa on June 2 1927. Faaea died, 7 August 1970.
1914	Pita U. and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1914
1914	Uati and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1914
1915	Sione M. and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1915
1915	Fiasau and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1915
1915	Lagi and Wife	Appointed to Borgu, German New Guinea in 1915 under the German Lutheran Rhein Mission.
1915	Siaosi and Wife	Trained at Mālūa, 1911–14. Appointed to PNG in 1915.
1916	Faiai and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1916
1916	Fiavaai and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1916
1916	Keilani and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1916
1916	Sapolu and Wife	Trained at Mālūa, 1912–15. Appointed to PNG in 1916.
1916	Foisaga Mulipola and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1916. Returned to Samoa in 1930.
1917	Kaino and Salima	Salima reported dead in PNG in 1917
1917	Alefaio and Mareta	Worked at Keleteni, Kwato. Died at Kwato in 1917.
1917	Toese Petaio and Sene	Appointed to PNG in 1917
1917	Eliapo and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1917
1917	Ma'anaima and Wife	Offered service in 1917
1917	Kuki Toso and Laina	From Tutuila/Moataa. Married 29 May 1902 at Moataa. Ordained 16 October 1905 and left for PNG. Returned for furlough in 1914 and returned and appointed to Delena. Laina died there in 1916. Kuki returned to Samoa in 1917. He worked at Olosega and Tau Manua until he died, 3 November 1937.
1917	Kume Toso and Wife	Worked in PNG and returned in 1917
1917	Petelo and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1917
1918	Solo and Faaleo	Trained at Mālūa, 1914–18. Appointed to PNG in 1918. Worked at the Fly River around the late 1910s. Also at Ipihia and Daru. Wrote an account of their voyage to PNG from Sydney in 1918. On

⁵ According to Oka the name of his wife is Savaliga.

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		Parama Island at the mouth of the Fly River in 1923. On furlough to Samoa with wife and children on 6 May 1927. Returned to PNG in February 1928 and appointed to Orokoru district. Faaleo died from a disease outbreak at Moru in 1931. Solo returned with their 3 children in 1932. In 1933 Solo married Pisila and left to work in Tuvalu at Motufoua. Solo died, 20 July 1961.
1918	Sione V. and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1918
1918	Faasisila and Wife	Trained at Mālūa, 1914–18. From Ituotane. Appointed to PNG in 1918. Reported dead in PNG in 1923. Wife returned to Samoa on 1 May 1923.
1918	Paapaa and Wife	Trained at Mālūa, 1914–1918. Appointed to PNG in 1918
1918	Puna and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1918
1918	Fatu and Taulafo	Accepted for PNG in 1918
1918	Eperu and Tafu	Accepted for PNG in 1918
1918	Toloa Enosa and Mutaaga/Naito	From Tufutafoe. Appointed to PNG in 1918. Posted to Veiru. Their daughter Sinefu died of fever in PNG. Returned to Samoa and worked at Lotofaga where Mutaaga died. He then married Naito on 29 March 1935 (former wife of Posegai who worked for PCC as Sec in Suva, Fiji). In 1935 they were asked whether they were willing to accept a call to PNG for work at Aird Hill where help was urgently needed. Returned to Samoa with children in 1946. Worked at Lotofaga from 1947–76 .
1919	Tofiga and Wife	Accepted for PNG 1919. Went back to Samoa and offered to return to PNG in 1927.
1919	Taime and Wife	From Ituotane. Offered and accepted for PNG in 1919.
1920	Tautu and Wife	From Tutuila. Accepted to go to PNG in 1920.
1920	Neri and Asenati	Returned to Samoa on furlough from PNG 1920. Neri delivered an account of his work in PNG at <i>Fonotele</i> in Mālūa in 1921.
1920	Enosa and Lea	From Ituotane. Offered for PNG in 1919 and appointed to PNG in 1920. Sailed for PNG via Pago, 7 July 1920. Enosa died at Orokoru district in 1922. Lea returned to Samoa on 1 May 1923.
1920	Fineaso and Sulu	Offered for PNG. Accepted for PNG June 1919. Sailed for PNG on 13 October 1920. At Delena district in 1929. Returned for furlough in 1929.
1920	Peni and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1920. Wrote that he intended to become a Seventh Day Adventist in 1922. Returned with wife from PNG February 1922. Departed again with wife to PNG 22 January 1923. Offered again for PNG in 1927.
1920	Pose and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1920
1920	Iosa and Wife	Appointed to PNG Borgu in 1920. Transferred to Kerema, Orokoru in 1928. Iosa was charged with indecent behaviour and was sent home in 1929 for inadequate repentance.
1920	Isaia and Eline	From Lepa, Falealili. Ordained and appointed to PNG in 1920. Eline participated at a women's service at Delena and Moru district in 1927. She also gave an account of her mission at the women's assembly <i>Fono</i> May 25 1929 at Mālūa.
1920	Sootaga and Aveau	Appointed to PNG in 1920. Sailed for PNG via Pago 7 July 1920. Worked in PNG for 4 years until Sootaga was reported dead. Aveau returned to Samoa as a widow with her child in 1925.

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1920	Eru and Meafua	Appointed to PNG in 1920. Eru is Tuvaluan and Meafua Samoan. Meafua died at Delena 17 February 1923. The village wept as they remembered her kind and humble ways.
1920	Suuoina and Wife	Sailed with wife for PNG 13 October 1920
1920	Isuia/Isaia and Wife	New appointment. Sailed for PNG 13 October 1920.
1921	Enari and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1921
1921	Sao and Wife	Trained at Mālūa, 1917–20. Appointed to PNG in 1921.
1921	Matini and Wife	Returned with wife and children for furlough from PNG in 1921. They were reported as doing good service.
1922	Iosia and Folototo	From Tutuila. Prepared to leave for PNG Jan 1922. Left for PNG with wife and 2 children January 1922 and worked at Movivave.
1922	Falemaa and Taulafo	From Vaotupua Ituotane. Graduated from Mālūa in 1919. Appointed to PNG in 1920 and left January 1922. Taulafo participated in women's service of Delena and Moru District 1927. They were at Melaripi in 1929. Returned to Samoa for furlough around 1930 and returned back in 1931. Appointed to Moru again, until they returned to Samoa in 1939. Falemaa was reported sick at the hospital in Sydney in 1940 on their return to Samoa. They were back in Samoa and worked at his village Vaitupua from 1943 until he died 5 August 1944.
1922	Otinelu and Wife	From Faasaleleaga. Prepared to leave for PNG January 1922.
1922	Moli and Wife	Asked to prepare for PNG January 1922
1922	Faatau and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1922
1922	Puni and Wife	Trained at Mālūa, 1918–21. Appointed to PNG in 1922.
1922	Sipa and Wife	Trained at Mālūa, 1919–22. Appointed to PNG in 1922.
1922	Sumeo and Wife	Trained at Mālūa, 1919–22. Appointed to PNG in 1922.
1923	Taumua and Wife	Returned with wife and four children to Samoa, 1 May 1923.
1923	Taeleipu and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1923
1923	Filimoni Faitele and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1923. Left for Samoa in 1945.
1923	Noa Aione and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1923. Left for Samoa in 1945.
1924	Peneueta and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1924
1924	Petaia M. and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1924
1924	Iosa and Kone	Departed on the <i>Tofua</i> for PNG, 3 May 1924. Worked at Boku, Orokoru. Iosa died at Fasitoouta, 12 June 1929.
1924	Nemaia and Initia	Departed on the <i>Tofua</i> for PNG 3 May 1924. At Delena and Moru district in 1927–32. At Lawes College in 1935. Nemaia was reported dead and Initia continued working at Lawes College in 1938. She wrote that she worked there for another year and a half after her husband died. She returned to Tutuila in 1939 and looked after students at the Nursing School.
1924	Neemia and Lisepa	Departed on the <i>Tofua</i> for PNG 3 May 1924. They worked at Delena (Kivoli) until they returned for furlough in Samoa in 1934. Lisepa participated at the women's service during the South Seas Conference at Delena and Moru district in 1927. They returned to

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		Samoa with 4 children and then called to Tuanai in 1935. Shifted to Fusi Safotulafai in 1939. Lisepa died in 1950 and Neemia married Filirosa. Filirosa died in 1977 and Neemia died 30 June 1982.
1924	Tanoi and Fetaulai	Departed for PNG on the <i>Tofua</i> , 3 May 1924
1925	Seilala and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1925
1925	Ioane Laupepa and Lailoa/Semeatu	Married in 1924 while Lailoa was at Papauta. Appointed to PNG and ordained 1 January 1924. They were appointed to Moru district. Lailoa died from fever on 13 September 1928 at Moru. Lailoa was a promising student at Papauta. She married Laupepa 12 September 1924. Laupepa had already offered for PNG while he was a final year student at Mālūa. Laupepa continued working and then returned to Samoa with his 4-year-old son Peteli in 1928. In 1930 he married Semeatu. They returned to PNG in 1931 and were appointed to Moru again, but Laupepa died during the South Seas Conference in which an epidemic broke out killing him and others. Semeatu was about to return in 1932 but was detained in PNG because of complications to her pregnancy. Her baby boy lived and was named Ioane. Semeatu returned to Samoa and married a Samoan Elder Pastor Farenī. Semeatu died at Faatoia, 20 November 1982.
1925	Gapelu and Ferolini	Offered for PNG in 1924. Ordained 1 January 1925 and appointed to PNG in 1925. Worked at Moru district and was there in 1932. Ferolini attended the women's gathering at Moru during the South Seas Conference in 1932. Returned to Samoa and worked at Amaua for 18 years. Ferolini died 5 October 1945. Gapelu died, 21 February 1960.
1926	Misifoa and Aiulu	Trained at Mālūa, 1921–24. From Tutuila. Offered for PNG in 1925. Accepted and ordained 17 January 1926. Departed to PNG 13 February 1926 and appointed to Urika. Left for Samoa on furlough in 1934. Recalled to work to Urika 1935. Still there in 1940. He was chairperson of the South Seas Teachers Conference in 1940. Returned to Samoa in 1946 with their 2 children.
1926	Totenese and laneta	Offered for PNG in 1925. Accepted and ordained 17 January 1926. Departed with 2 children 13 February 1926. At Kaipi Moru district in 1928, 1931. Returned in 1931 and worked at Masausi. Totenese died at Aunuu, 27 June 1959.
1926	Maulogo and Feagiai	Departed for PNG 13 February 1926. Appointed to Aird Hill, Delta Division and was still there in 1929.
1926	Minute and Sa or Va	Departed with child to PNG, 13 February 1926. Appointed to Hisiu, Delena. Minute died at Hisiu from malaria, 12 June 1932. They had 3 children.
1926	Ripine and Sauimalae/Siniva	Ripine is Tokelauan while Sauimalae is Samoan from Mulifanua. Departed for PNG 13 February 1926. Sauimalae died in PNG. They had boy, Lino Faavae, who was born there but died when he aged 1 year. Ripine returned and arrived in Samoa 6 May 1927. He offered to go back with new wife Siniva and departed January 1928. They were posted to Moru but Ripine died from a disease outbreak at Moru in 1931. Siniva returned with 3 children in 1932.
1927	Reuelu and Fita	Departed for PNG, 19 January 1927. Posted to Isuleilei in 1929. Both died in PNG in 1931. Fita died 10 October 1931 from fever. A week later Reuelu died from fever also. Fita was buried at Isuleilei while Reuelu was buried at Rokea Island near the hospital where he sought help. This was the beginning of the epidemic that killed

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many others in PNG and those who were at the South Seas Conference at Moru.

1927	Elia and Ninei/Nuanua	Posted to PNG in 1927 or earlier. At Delena district in 1929. Returned to Samoa and Ninei gave an address of her work in PNG at women's assembly <i>Fono</i> , 25 May 1929 at Mālūa. To be sent back to Aviara, PNG in accordance with PDC request. At Delena in 1935–38 with his children, while Ninei had apparently died. Elia married Nuanua and they were in PNG in 1940. Later Elia died and Nuanua went back to Samoa in 1946.
1928	Simona and Wife	Worked at Delena in 1928 and Boku in 1929. Went back to Samoa and left again for PNG in 1930. They were at Saroa in 1935. Returned to Samoa in 1938.
1928	Lauti and Wife	At Toaripi in 1928, 1929
1928	Iakopo and Wife	Appointed to PNG and posted to Delena in 1928
1928	Isaia and Wife	Trained at Mālūa, 1925–28. Appointed to Moru in 1928. There in 1929.
1928	Tuumalo and Volike	Left for PNG 23 January 1928. Posted to Delena. Volike attended women's gathering at Moru during the South Seas Conference in 1932. At Waima in Delena in 1935. Returned to Samoa in 1935. Worked at Aunuū for 2 years. Tuumalo died, 27 October 1958 at Tau.
1928	Solo and Wife	Left for PNG, 23 January 1928
1929	Pologa and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1929. Returned to Samoa in 1934.
1930	F. Afaaso and Faleloa	Married and left for PNG in 1930 and there in 1932, 1935. And in Delena in 1935. There in 1938 at Delena at the village of Hisiu. Returned to Samoa in 1939 and went back to Delena in 1940. Afaaso died 15 March 1941 from blood fever.
1930	Sale Hosea and Arieta	Left for PNG in 1930. Posted to Orokorō. There 1935, 1938. Returned to Samoa 1939. Back to Orokorō and still in Orokorō in 1946. From Fakaofo Tokelau and about to return in 1949 with one child.
1930	Pouniu Iosia and Eseta	From Apia. Left for PNG in 1930 – there in Isuleilei, Fife Bay in 1931, 1934, 1935, 1938 (their 2-year-old child died in 1938). Returned in 1939. Worked at Salani Falealili for 4 years. Appointed to Mālūa, 25 January 1944 as a teacher. Worked at Siufaga Falelatai in 1953 until Iosia died in 6 July 1956.
1930	Tauoa and Siva	From Vaitogi. Trained at Mālūa, 1924–29. Appointed to PNG in 1930 and worked at Moru Delena until 1938 when they were about to go back to Samoa. Worked at Ofu from 1938–49. At Laulii in 1950 until Siva died in 1953
1930	Ioapo and Alavale	From Moataa/Safotu. Worked at Sivili Orokorō. Only worked for 4 years then returned as Ioapo had eye disease. Worked at Safotu from 1934–37; Fatuvalu Safune from 1937–40 then retired to Moataa until he died 15 March 1949. He slipped while working in his garden.
1930	Setu and Luaao	Luaao was born in 1903 and trained at Papauta from 1920–24. In 1925 she became a nurse until she married Setu who was at Mālūa. They graduated in 1930 and left for PNG where they worked until they returned in 1938. There in 1935, 1936 and 1938. At Delena in 1938. About to go back to Samoa in 1938. They later worked at Fogatuli Salega in 1940 and Saasaai from 1951 until she

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		died in 1953.
1930	Tuliau and Pulega	Left for PNG in 1930. Pulega died in 1931 due to an epidemic outbreak at Moru. Tuliau returned in 1932 after only 2 years in PNG.
1931	Fereti Saaga and Fetogi	From Saanapu. Left for PNG in 1931. Worked at Lawes College, Kwato. Fetogi gave birth to their son Tafafunai April 1933. Fereti died the same year from malaria on 2 August in PNG and Fetogi returned to Samoa in 1933 as her baby was ill.
1931	Talatonu Niuatoa and Siniva	From Laulii/Tutuila. Ordained 3 November 1931 at Mālūa and appointed to PNG. Posted to Hula district. Warned in 1937 to be extremely careful in their relationship with other sects like the Seventh Day Adventists. Still in PNG in 1940. Returned to Samoa 1941. Talatonu died, 6 February 1945.
1931	Faagu Samuelu and Laulii	Married and appointed to Daru district in 1931, 1933, 1935, 1937, returned. They were still in Daru in the 1940s. Laulii was born in PNG to missionary parents, Ieremia and Tautuu.
1931	Samuelu and Silaulii	Samuelu was born in the Torres Straits in 1905 while his parents Samuelu and Tautala were missionaries there. He was trained at Mālūa, 1925–30. They married in 1931 and left for PNG. Returned in 1940 and rested at Afega for 4 years. Worked at Mutiatele where his parents had also worked from 1945 until Samuelu died, 13 April 1965.
1932	Fereti Fau and Rarotoga	Real name was Frederick Meredith. First worked at Falefa when finished at Mālūa. Left for PNG in 1932. Posted to Aird Hill, Delta division. There in 1935 and 1938. Returned to Samoa in 1940. Worked at Vailuutai and Faleatiu. Rarotoga died 26 April 1956. Fereti then married Metotagivale in 1957 and continued working at Vailuutai and Faleatiu.
1933	Aasa and Faatele	There in 1932. Faatele attended women's gathering at Moru in 1932. Faatele died and Aasa returned in 1933.
1934	Saroa Mataio and Nuutai/Ianeta	Saroa is Tuvaluan but his second wife Ianeta is Samoan. Saroa married Nuutai and was ordained for PNG, 26 August 1934. Left for PNG in 1934 and posted to Orokoru. Sirivi Kerema. Nuutai died from malaria 21 July 1935. Returned to Samoa and married Ianeta in 1935 at Tulaele. Left again in 1935 and continued working at Orokoru. Left with 2 children in 1946. They worked at Papauta School from 1947–62. Worked at Sogi in 1964 until retired in 1980. Ianeta died, 2 June 1983.
1934	Papu and Wife	Appointed to PNG in 1934. Returned to Samoa in 1938.
1934	Saifoloi Leleua and Mafa	Left for PNG in 1934. Posted to Urika in 1935. In 1948 they were looking after the head station. They were at Orokoru when visited in 1949. Saifoloi died in PNG, 21 December 1950. Mafa returned to Samoa in 1952 and taught at Papauta in the 1950s. Saifoloi was born 18 August 1906 and died at 44 years old. He entered Mālūafou in 1924 and then shifted to Leulumoea Fou where he graduated in 1929. In 1930 he entered Mālūa. He married Mafa Papalii at Mālūa on 18 August 1934 and later was ordained and left for PNG in 1934. They returned to Samoa for furlough in 1942 and then called to Faatoia in 1942. In 1944 he was appointed teacher at Avele by missionary Uaita. Then he was called to Lalomanu and worked there for close on 2 years until he was called back to PNG in 1946. He died there at Kapuna Hospital where he was buried in 1950. His son, Urika, later became a missionary in PNG.

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1935	P. Tauila and Wife	Worked in Moru, 1935–46. Attended and wrote a report of the South Seas Conference in PNG in 1941.
1935	Aketi Ieremia and Aoina	Appointed to PNG in 1935 and posted to Daru, Mabudawane. In 1946 their 6-year-old child died in Daru. They were about to return to Samoa in 1946.
1935	Fakaogo. Sumeo and Nia	Appointed to Orokoru PNG in 1935. Their appointment was in answer to an urgent call from PNG for a new couple to be sent immediately to Orokoru, Auma, Urika. They returned to Samoa in 1946 with 2 children.
1935	Sepania and Matafanua	Appointed to PNG in place of Veniale in 1935. At Saroa Gabagaba. Returned 1946.
1936	Sepania and Soana	Appointed to PNG and posted to Saroa. Both died in PNG in 1948 and were survived by 2 children and new born baby. Soana died after giving birth. The two children were taken to Samoa on the <i>John Williams VI</i> in 1948.
1937	Pita Uo and Moetoto	From Tutuila/Apia. Appointed to PNG in 1937 and posted to Moru, Koaru. Moetoto and their daughter died there. Then Pita and the 2 children returned to Samoa in 1946. Pita was known for his musical talent in teaching choirs in Moru. He worked with missionary Dr. H.A. Brown in composing music and hymns. Pita used to run choir singing competitions in Moru. Returned and work as a teacher at Fagalele. He married again to Vaovai Seumanutafa of Apia. Then taught at Nuuausala in 1954; Leulumoega Fou in 1955–59. Worked at Matautuuta Apia in 1961. He died of a stroke, 21 March 1983.
1938	V. Ekeroma and Aialaisa	Appointed to the work in PNG at Lawes College Fife Bay 1937. Their appointment was delayed to await satisfactory completion of his course at Mālūa in May 1938 plus a medical examination. After, he was released immediately and left Samoa, February 1938. Leader of returning party, well educated.
1938	Elise and Sepola	Left for PNG in February 1938. Posted to Moru. Elise reported dead in 1941. A memorial was service was held for him at the South Seas Teachers Conference at Orokoru in 1941.
1940	Faoliu and Emeline	From Nuuuili Tutuila. Appointed to PNG. To sail as soon as possible in 1940. Arrived and left at Kukipi next to Toaripi. They were left on the beach with nowhere to stay the night. At Koaru when they returned to Samoa in 1946. Returned to Koaru until 1948 when they were about to return for furlough.
1940	Samuelu Peni and Malili	Samuelu's parents were Peni and Sivaiee who had worked as missionaries in Tuvlau. Graduated from Mālūa in 1939. Appointed to work in PNG in 1940. To sail as soon as possible in 1940. Worked at Suau Island Fife Bay in 1946. Worked there until they returned to Samoa in 1947. Wanted to go back but Malili was ill. In 1951 they were called to Funafuti Tuvalu. Returned to Samoa when Malili was ill. She died 21 January 1953. Samuelu married Eseta and continued working in Tuvalu. Returned in 1966 and worked at Faatoia. Called to papa Puleia in 1971 until Samuelu died in 1978.
1941	Tuuaiinafua Levi and Sieni	Ordained 23 February 1941 and appointed to PNG. Worked in Orokoru from 1941–49. About to return with 5 children in 1948.
1941	Pose and Wife	Appointed for work in PNG in 1941
1946	Alesana Isara and	From Moataa, Apia. Trained at Mālūa, 1940–44. Ordained and

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	Tumanu	appointed to Gabagaba, Saroa in 1946. They were also at Katatai. Returned to Samoa in 1953 and appointed teachers at Mālufou School until 1962 when they were called to Avata Falealupo; then worked at Ulutogia Aleipata from 1987–89. Alesana died, 3 September 2002 at Moataa.
1946	Tesimale/Iesimale Lameko and Tauese	From Fasitoota, Mālufu. Ordained and chosen for PNG in 1946. Worked at Aird Hill, Era, Karaulti, Kipaio Kelewo, Delta, Kikori from 1946–53.
1946	Ieremia and Aiagaga	From Vaisala. Married then ordained and chosen to go to PNG. Posted to Aird Hill in 1946. Worked there from 1946–52. Arrived back in Samoa 30 September 1953. Worked at Fasitoota; Tanoaleia in 1968 until Tesimale died 10 November 1975.
1946	Anesone Masinalupe and Lepetia	From Safaatoa/Faleasiu. Graduated from Mālufu in 1935. Accepted for PNG in 1941 but postponed because of World War II. Ordained for PNG Orokoru in 1946. Still there in 1948, 1949. Returned to Samoa in 1953 and worked at Mulinu in 1962. Lepetia died 15 June 1974. Anesone died 12 June 1982 at his home at Alafua. Tom Koraea, who later became Gulf District Councillor, was their student.
1946	Filipo and Falesoa Onesemo	From Ulutogia Falealili. Ordained for PNG and posted to Mailu in 1946. Suggested to be a good choice for Lawes College. Falesoa died in PNG in 1947 at Mailu. Filipino returned with his son Fiti and remarried Emi from Tokelau. She was raised in Samoa.
1946	Isaia Taito and Aliimau	From Sapapalii Faasaleleaga. Ordained for PNG in 1946. Posted to Fife Bay. They were at Lawes College in 1948 and took a break in Port Moresby. And then they were shifted in 1949 to Karaisu, at the Tahuni Bay where Tofili used to work, and to supervise the Papuan teachers at that side of the district. Returned to Samoa in 1952. Isaia died 1 March 1973. Isaia went to pastoral school in Tutuila and later taught there in 1930. He entered Tuasivi, 1931–34; Leulumoega Fou in 1935; Mālufu in 1939. In 1938 he married Tauasu Aiono Mealeaga at Fasitoota. In 1942 he looked after the congregation at Sapapalii where his wife Tauasu died. In 1943 he married Aliimau and from 1944–46 taught at government school. In 1946 he was ordained as a pastor in Apia. In 1946 they were appointed to PNG and posted as teachers at Lawes College Fife Bay. They were then posted to Dahuni for 2 years. In 1952 they returned to Samoa and taught at Mālufou until 1959. In 1960 they were called to Matafele Fou until Isaia retired of illness in 1970.
1946	Lafitaga F. and Tapuni	From Fasitoota, Mālufu. Trained at Mālufu, 1941–45. Married and left for PNG in 1946. Worked in Daru. Returned to Samoa in 1952. Worked at Nua and Seetaga Tutuila from 1953–58; Masefau from 1959–70. Lafitaga died, 21 January 1970.
1946	Mane and Tuaoi	From Leone Tutuila. Ordained for PNG in 1946. Still there in 1948. They returned with 1 child in 1949.
1946	Maresi and Aimiti	From Nofoalii Aana. Ordained for PNG and worked in Moru in 1946. Taught at the School at Moru district. There in 1949. Later shifted to Movivave. Returned in 1953. Worked at Faleula from 1954–61; Matautu Falealili from 1966–74. Maresi died, 30 August 1981, at Porirua, New Zealand.
1946	Peni Tofili and Mere	From Manua. Trained at Mālufu, 1941–45. Ordained for PNG in 1946. Worked there and returned in 1953. Then taught at Fagalele then worked at Aoa Faleula, 1956–63. Called to Tafuna to chaplain

Latu Latai

Leper patients until he died, 2 April 1976 at Fagaalu hospital.

1946	Posesione and Laloifi	From Salani, Falealili. Ordained for PNG and worked in Urika in 1946. Still there in 1948 where they established a new school for the district. They were at Orokoru when visited in 1949. Returned to Samoa 30 September 1953.
1946	Tanila and Wife	Returned to Samoa in 1946
1946	Peniamina and Mele	Chosen for work in PNG. They were at Mailu in 1949. They were joined by Niuean missionaries Alesana and Eseta.
1946	Aitaoto and Salilo	Graduated from Mālūa in 1941. Worked at Vailima in 1945 and left for PNG in 1946. Chosen for work in Daru, Mabudawane in 1946. Returned to Samoa in 1952 and taught at Leulumoega School. Became treasurer of the Church. Worked at Tau Manua in 1960. Appointed as Chaplain at Avele School in 1963. Worked at Lufilufi in 1970. Aitaoto died on 23 November 1973 at Fagaalu.
1946	Mane and Tuaoi	From Leone Tutuila. Ordained and chosen for work in Moru in 1946. Worked in Daru. Visited in 1949 and they were at Moru. They were to return to Samoa as Mane was weak. To return to Samoa in 1952. They had 1 child.
1946	Fiaola Tekavei and Faamulio Mālūa	From Tuvalu/Samoa. Faamulio Mālūa is Samoan. Ordained in 1946 and chosen to go to PNG. Worked as teachers in Saroa in 1947. There for 2 years then shifted to Dagona. They were there in 1949. Returned to Samoa in 1953 with an orphaned child whose parents had both died. Posted to work for a Tuvaluan congregation at Kioa Island, Fiji.
1946	Sao Sevaaetasi and Falesoa	Chosen for work in PNG in 1946. Worked at Saroa and Gabagaba districts. There in 1949. Returned by aeroplane in 1955.
1946	Fiavaai and Elisapeta Tanuvasa	From Moataa/Apia. Chosen for work in PNG in 1946. Worked at Orokoru. Returned and then went back in 1964. Finally returned to Samoa in 1970. They taught Albert Kiki who became Deputy Prime Minister and Minister in government.
1947	A. Maresi and Aimiti	Worked in Moru, 1947–54
1948	Soloi Wilson and Tofi	Ordained for PNG in 1946 and accepted for PNG in 1948. They were appointed to Lawes College to replace Isaia and Aliimau who took a break in Port Moresby. They were still there in 1949. Returned to Samoa in 1955 with children.
1949	Alesana and Viivale	Chosen for work in PNG in 1946. Worked at Iruna from 1949–52.
1949	Fuafiva Leiataua and Ruta	Appointed to PNG in 1949. Worked at Moru, 1949–55. Returned by aeroplane.
1951	Fuatai Tauutu and Lusa	From Apia/Moataa. Left for PNG in 1951. Worked at Gabagaba. Returned to Samoa in 1958 with 2 children. Appointed principal of Nuuausala School. Then called to Vaiala in 1959. Became chairperson of the CCCS General Assembly from 1991–94.
1951	Mika Levasa and Afa	From Fagaloa. Appointed to PNG in 1951. Returned to Samoa in 1958 with 2 children. Worked at Uritea, Urika from 1960–66.
1951	Paapaa and Lila Sapolu	Left for PNG in 1951. Returned to Samoa in 1958 with one child.
1951	Puni and Lagisi Leota	From Toamua/Fagaloa. Left for PNG in 1951. Worked at Gabagaba and Moru until 1958 when they returned to Samoa with one child. Worked as assistant treasurer. Called to Apolima village in 1959.

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Then, in 1966, they worked at a Samoan congregation in Wellington New Zealand.

1951	Taeleipu Aiono and Taeipo	Left for PNG in 1951. Worked at Tureture from 1952–54, Kiwai Fly River in 1954 and Daru. Returned to Samoa in 1958 with 2 children.
1951	Tema Alavaa Koria and Olita	From Saleimoa. Appointed to PNG in 1951. Worked at Mabudawan, Severemabu, Daru. Returned in 1958 with 2 children.
1951	Paapaa Sapolu and Lila	From Toamua/Vaiala. Appointed to PNG in 1951. Worked at Orokoru, then Vailala and Nimurua. Returned to Samoa around 1958 and worked in American Samoa then Honolulu. Paapaa was a teacher at Avele School from 1937–40; Mālūa Fou in 1941; Leulumoea Fou, 1942–45; Mālūa College from 1946–50. They were married July 1949. Paapaa died on 26 October 1986.
1951	Tipeni and Kuini	Appointed to PNG in 1951
1953	Tone Tuia and Seutaatia	From Saleimoa. Ordained 29 July 1953 and appointed to PNG. Worked at Aird Hill in the 1950s.
1953	Livigisitone and Lili	Appointed to PNG and worked at Lawes College, Fife Bay in the 1953. Lili was the daughter of Maina who was at Tureture. Returned and worked at Fasitoo where they died. Livigisitone was born in 1912 and died 10 April 1968. He was educated at Malifa and Avele then worked at a Carpentry company. He was also a teacher in a government primary school. In 1948 he entered Mālūa with his wife Lili. In 1952 they graduated and left for PNG in 1953. In 1960 they returned to Samoa and were called to Fasitootua and worked there until Lili died in March 1963. Livigisitone worked on his own and then married to Nai on 18 February 1965.
1953	Lama Milford and Talosaga	Ordained for PNG 29 July 1953 and left in August. Worked in Orokoru (Moru District), Kunimaipa, Zuesi, Petoe, Kerema, from 1953–59. About to return to Samoa in 1960. Returned in 1961 with children Brown and Suaesi. Both returned and died in Samoa.
1953	Keti Magalo and Moevanu	From Moataa. Ordained 29 July 1953 and appointed to PNG. Worked at Urika from 1953–60.
1953	Siulagi and Rosa	Ordained 29 July 1953 for PNG. Posted at Orokoru, Moru. Returned to Samoa 8 February 1960.
1953	Esera P. Maifala and Sagogo	Ordained 29 July 1953 and left for PNG. Worked at Kikori, Aird Hill, 1953–60. Returned for furlough in Samoa and returned to work at Kikori until 1967.
1955	Feuu Hosea and Solonaima	From Vaigalu. Ordained 22 February 1955 and left for PNG. Worked from 1955–61 at Moru District, Moaviave. Work at Vailoa upon returning then went to US.
1955	Fereti Kisona and Ailima	From Tokelau. Ordained 22 February and left for PNG. Returned to Samoa in 1961.
1956	Moe Tiai and Mere	Ordained for PNG March 1956. Left with their 2 year old daughter Lotofoa. Went to PNG to replace Koria and Olita at Mabuawane from 1956–62.
1956	Mika Faamausili Petaia and Alofa	Ordained 21 March 1956 for PNG. Worked at Orokoru and returned in 1962.
1957	Niu Sapolu and Tafagamanu	Posted to PNG in 1957 and worked Dagana, Port Moresby as principal of school there. Returned in 1961. Worked at Matautu, Lefaga upon returning.

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1957	Peneueta Mauigoa and Faafofoga	Worked in PNG Saroa from 1957–64. Fofoga from Tutuila. Returned and worked at Fagamalo where Faafofoga died 8 March 1986. Peneueta remarried Sieni.
1958	Keilani Tagoai and Mere	From Iva. Trained at Mālūa, 1953–57. Married while in final year at Mālūa. Posted and worked in PNG Gabagaba, Saroa from 1958–64.
1958	Seilala Luamanuvae and Ruti	Worked in PNG Urika from 1958–64. Worked upon returning at Palauli, Savaii where Ruti at Faaala Palauli on 21 September 1972 at the Motootua hospital. Seilala was born 25 June 1935 at Alamagoto. Educated at Malifa, Leififi, Intermediate and Teachers College (1952–54). In 1955 he was a teacher at Afega and Saleimoa. Then at Leauvaa and Fagalii from 1956–57. On 26 October 1957 he was married to Ruti at Solosolo and then entered Mālūa. In 1958 they were called to PNG until 1964. They returned to Samoa and were called to Faala Palauli where Ruti died. Remarried Faufau and then moved to Levi where he died.
1958	Feata Tagaloa and Lupeline	Ordained for PNG 20 February 1958. Worked in PNG Orokoru from 1958–64.
1958	Maluolefale and Sieni	Worked in Daru. Attended the 1972 Centenary of the arrival of the Church in PNG. They were part of a delegation of former Samoan missionaries.
1960	Ailani Faiai and Silomiga	From Toamua/Puipaa. Graduated from Mālūa in 1960 and posted to PNG. Appointed at Moru to replace Lama and Talosaga who were returning to Samoa. Worked in Moru from 1960–66. Returned to Samoa and worked at Gautavai until 1984. Ailani died in 1993.
1960	Itielu	From Manua, Tutuila. Worked in Daru, 1960–66.
1960	Afato Gafa Tuatagaloa and Ida	Worked in PNG Moru, 1960–62; Borebo, 1963–65; Gabagaba, 1967–70; Saroa, 1971–73. They worked at Vaipuna upon returning to Samoa. Attended the celebration of the Uniting Church of PNG and Solomon Islands.
1960	Fekusone Latai and Olivia	From Saleimoa/Moataa. Worked in PNG Aird Hill, Dobima, 1961–62, Karaulti, 1963–67; Aird Hill, 1968–73. Returned to Samoa and worked at Sataoa then Satoalepai. Later became teachers at Papauta and Leulumoega. Fekusone died in 1990 and Olivia in 2009.
1961	Levuana Teo	Sent as a teacher in mission schools in PNG. Returned in 1966.
1961	Tavita Apineru	Sent as a teacher in mission schools in PNG. Returned in 1966.
1961	Tavita Samuelu and Bertha	Arrived in PNG. Not sure whether they were missionaries.
1964	Urika Saifoloi and Oomi	Graduated from Mālūa in 1963. Ordained and posted to PNG. Worked in PNG Saroa from 1964–69/1970. Currently living Melbourne Australia.
1964	Seuga Pula and Tupe	Worked in PNG Delata District, 1964–69
1964	Ioane Tauo and Saviga	Worked in PNG Moru, 1964–69. Also worked at Boku. Died suddenly on 27 August 1966 at Boku.
1964	Faamago Petaia and Omaiomao	Worked in PNG, 1964–70. Attended the celebration of the Uniting Church of PNG and Solomon Islands in 1968.
1969	Sulufaiga Samasoni	Worked in PNG Dagona, 1969–70, Kerewa and Petoe in 1970, Orokoru, Kadeboro and Meii, 1971–74, Kadeboro, Tubusereia from

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	and Sisavaii	1974–75.
1969	Faiva Saaga and Soo	Worked in PNG Aird Hill from 1969–75. Also at the Delta, Veiru. Worked upon returning in US where Soo died. He remarried.
1971	Fiti Isaia Tiatia and Faanimo	Worked in PNG Daru from 1971–75. Faanimo died in Samoa. Isaia remarried. Recently an elder at Lalomanu and died in 2014.

Total: *About 356 Samoan missionaries: 6 remarried and returned to PNG*

Deaths:

1883–1913	42 husbands and 15 wives = 57	(30 years)
1913–1933	10 husbands and 11 wives = 21	(30 years)
1933–1979	13 husbands = 13	(46 years)
Children overall	13	

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