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**The Schism between the Ekalesia Faapotopotoga a Iesu i Samoa
(Lotu Pouesi) and the Samoa Church (London Missionary Society)**

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By

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2012.

Declaration

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

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Date: _____

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ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to address the issue of division (schism) within the Samoa Church (LMS), in particular the breakaway of the Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Iesu i Samoa (EFIS) or **The Congregational Church of Jesus in Samoa (CCJS)** or the Lotu Pouesi from the LMS. The paper examines some of the critical issues involved in the split with the hope to address these issues for the successor of the LMS the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (CCCS).

The division between the EFIS and the Samoa Church (LMS) has relatively gone unnoticed these days. Not many people today in the CCCS are aware of the circumstances that led to the schism which split the LMS in the early 1940s. This paper explores the various reasons why the church split and focuses primarily on the case of the EFIS in Apia as the centre of the Thesis.

Through the use of interviews and literature the paper shall critically evaluate the effects that the split had on the both socially and more importantly theologically.

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May God's blessings be upon you all!

INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores the reasons for the schism between the Samoa Church (LMS) and the Congregational Church of Jesus in Samoa (CCJS) from 1941 to 1952. There have been very few studies by Samoans published on the history of the *Lotu Pouesi*. Those that do exist are relatively slight, selective, and mostly celebratory in nature. Oka Fauolo's *O Vavega O le Alofa Lavea'i: O le Tala Faasolopito o le Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa* is anecdotal and focuses almost exclusively on the missionary accomplishments of the Church. Elia Taase's recent history of the Congregational Christian Church of American Samoa (CCCAS), *Ina ia tatou iloa: O le Talafaasolopito o le Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano i Amerika Samoa mai le amataga o le LMS e oo i le 2005*, includes a page on a similar breakaway movement in American Samoa known as Lotu Levi.¹

Many in the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (CCCS) are unaware of the reasons for the division which subsequently divided the village of Apia. There are many conflicting versions of the schism. Through literature review and interviews it is the aim of this thesis to shed light on the reasons for the schism to help future generations if such an event occurs in the future. This thesis consists of three chapters.

Chapter one provides a brief background of the Samoan culture and its contribution to the schism. It explores the significance of the independent village which is characteristic of Samoan society. Chapter two attempts to identify the reasons for the separation of the EFIS from the Samoa Church (LMS). This chapter will be based on the analysis of interviews conducted and information from written sources. Chapter Three consists of the conclusion which will sum up the findings of the whole thesis. It provides a general overview of some of the factors which led to the division between the Samoa Church (LMS) and the CCJS.

¹Elia Taase, *Ina ia tatou iloa: O le Talafaasolopito o le Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano i Amerika Samoa mai le amataga o le LMS e oo i le 2005*, Apia, Samoa: Malua Printing Press, 2006. Taase had previously written the history of the CCCS from 1830 to 1961 for his PhD thesis at Fuller in 1995.

Chapter One

Christianity in Samoa

This chapter attempts to highlight the cultural and political background that gave rise to the schisms in the church. From the beginning of John Williams's evangelisation of Samoa, he realised that targeting the chief was one way to quickly evangelise the Pacific Island islands. Although this system worked in the majority of cases the subsequent London Missionary Society (LMS) missionaries realised the 'significance of the village' in the spread of the Gospel. By 1836 with the arrival of the first missionaries from England, the LMS mission discovered that the village was important to Samoan identity.

There are nine islands in the Samoan archipelago divided into the independent Western islands of Samoa (formerly Western Samoa before 1997)² and American Samoa, an 'unincorporated' American territory.³ Its isolation and its reputation in 1787 as an island group of 'fierce and treacherous savages'⁴ contributed to the late entrance of Christianity to its shores.

The earliest recorded European visitors to Samoa were Roggwein in 1722 and Bougainville in 1768 but both did not land in Samoa or have contact with the people, nor did the Samoans leave their canoes to go aboard their ships.⁵ Bougainville was so impressed with the sailing skills of the Samoans that he named the island the "Navigator Islands". The contacts between Europeans and Samoans were so limited that the accounts of the voyages by the Europeans gave scarcely any vital information concerning the people or their customs. However, by the time Laperouse's visit in 1787 to Tutuila, some Samoans were prepared to confront the Europeans at close hand.⁶ In the confrontation with the Samoans, Laperouse lost 12 men and vented his anger in his journals describing the Samoans as "fierce and treacherous savages who, nonetheless, inhabited

²Manfred Ernst, ed., *Globalization and the Re-Shaping of Christianity in the Pacific Islands*, Suva: The Pacific Theological College, 2006, 539.

³Manfred Ernst, ed., *Globalization and the Re-Shaping of Christianity in the Pacific Islands*, 584; David Stanley, *Tonga-Samoa*. Emeryville, California: Moon Publications, 1999, 164. According to David Stanley this means the US Constitution and certain other US laws don't apply in American Samoa. American Samoa was keen to keep its system of chiefly control and land ownership to prevent open immigration to the islands.

⁴Richard Gilson, *Samoa 1830 to 1900 the Politics of a Multi-Cultural Community*, London: Oxford University Press, 1970, 66.

⁵Richard Gilson, *Samoa 1830 to 1900 the Politics of a Multi-Cultural Community*, 65-66.

⁶Richard Gilson, *Samoa 1830 to 1900 the Politics of a Multi-Cultural Community*, 66.

one of the finest countries of the universe".⁷ As a result of Laperouse's report in Europe many vessels were fully prepared for a hostile reception and avoided the 'Navigator Islands'.

John Williams in his journey westward from the Cook Islands must have been aware of Laperouse's reports about Samoa. He bypassed Samoa which was the closet island group to the Cook Islands and decided to go to Tongatapu in the Tongan islands. There were several reasons for this. He had heard that the Methodists had firmly established themselves in Tonga. Williams may have been curious at the success of the Methodist mission especially in comparison with the failure of the LMS to establish themselves in the Tongan islands.⁸ Williams required someone in Tonga that knew the culture and language of Samoa in order to assist him with the evangelisation of Samoa.⁹ He had used Tahitian 'teachers' who were familiar with the language and culture of the Cook Islands which greatly assisted with the evangelisation of the Cook Islands. In this regard Williams was fortunate to have met a Samoan orator chief Fauea who was related to the dominant paramount chief in Samoa.¹⁰

The London Missionary Society (LMS) first arrived at the island of Savaii in Western Samoa near the village of Sapapalii at the end of August 1830.¹¹ A few weeks earlier the paramount chief Tamafaigā, a noted opponent of Christianity, was assassinated.¹² Tamafaigā was accused of 'raping' the village virgin of a rival village in the A'ana district. This triggered war between A'ana district and the districts of Savaii and their allies led by Malietoa Vai'inupo, a kinsman of Tamafaigā. Malietoa emerged victorious to avenge the assassination of Tamafaigā in 1830.¹³

⁷Richard Gilson, *Samoa 1830 to 1900 the Politics of a Multi-Cultural Community*, 66.

⁸ Elia Taase, "The Congregational Christian Church in Samoa: The Origin and Development of an Indigenous Church, 1830-1961", (PhD, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1995), 12.

⁹ Elia Taase, "The Congregational Christian Church in Samoa: The Origin and Development of an Indigenous Church, 1830-1961", 12.

¹⁰ Elia Taase, "The Congregational Christian Church in Samoa: The Origin and Development of an Indigenous Church, 1830-1961", 12.

¹¹ Elia Taase, "The Congregational Christian Church in Samoa: The Origin and Development of an Indigenous Church, 1830-1961", 13; Richard Gilson, *Samoa 1830 to 1900 the Politics of a Multi-Cultural Community*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1970, 69.

¹² Richard Gilson, *Samoa 1830 to 1900 the Politics of a Multi-Cultural Community*, 70; For Gilson Tamafaigā was also a religious leader and he may have seen Christianity as threatening his leadership; Malama Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, Suva, Fiji: University of the South Pacific, 1987, 23-24.

¹³ Malama Meleisea, ed., *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa*, Suva: University of the South Pacific, 1987, 56.

When the London Missionary Society (LMS) arrived in Samoa in 1830, the people had already heard about the new God, Jesus Christ by way of beachcombers, escaped convicts from the New South Wales Penal Station, as well as natives that became sailors and returned with their version of the Gospel.¹⁴ Idols and the "high gods" of Polynesia were not widely worshipped among Samoans. Tahitians on passing ships brought news of the *Lotu Tahiti* before John Williams arrival in 1830. Earlier a Samoan SioVili, had returned home as a prophet of a Tahitian-influenced syncretic religion, a tainted version of the Gospel. The local chiefs were very interested to hear about the supernatural forces that gave the white men their powers in navigation and war. The white man was later named the *Papalagi* (sky breakers or heaven busters) because they were held to be descendents from the heavens.¹⁵ This revealed the reverence or high regard that the Samoans had for them. AmaamaleleTofaeono wrote on how fascinated the Samoans were with the arrival of the *papalagi*:

"The perception of the power of the God of the white men associated with the overt happenings and wonder of the strange new realities. The sailing islands as well as the strange new beings with material goods were included in the new categorization of God's power of fertility and blessings." Patu comment that "the Samoans saw the arrival of the Europeans and their God as a positive occurrence."¹⁶

With the arrival of the LMS in Samoa in August 1830 at Sapapalii, Savaii under the leadership of John Williams and Charles Barff, accompanied by Fauea the Samoans came into direct contact with these *papalagi's* whom they admired. According to Moyleeds, Fauea prolonged his first speech to the Samoan people in order to convince them to validate his association with these men with supernatural powers. Also Fauea wanted to sway the Samoans into believing that their arrival together with other vessels which were to follow (with an abundance of materials) would prove to the Samoans that Jehovah, who was the God of the missionaries and indeed the most powerful God.¹⁷

¹⁴ John Garrett, *To Live among the Stars. Christian Origins in Oceania*. Suva, Fiji: Oikoumene, 1985, 121.

¹⁵ Richard Gilson, *Samoa 1830 to 1900 the Politics of a Multi-Cultural Community*, 70.

¹⁶ AmaamaleleTofaeono, *Eco-Theology: Aiga, the Household of Life. A Perspective from Living Myths and Traditions of Samoa*, Neuendettelsau: World Mission Script, FreimundDruckerei, 2000, 67; Tunupopo Patu, "Faamalama Theology", (BD Thesis, Malua, 2001), 21.

¹⁷ Richard Moyleeds, *The Samoan Journals of John Williams 1830-1832*, Canberra: Australia National University, 1984, 265.

John Williams' arrival in Samoa was indeed significant in that it heralded the dawning of a new era in the history of Samoa as a nation.¹⁸ Williams and Barff brought six Tahitian teachers and two Cook Islanders from Aitutaki with the hopes that by placing them in Samoa that they would venture out and evangelize the whole Island before his return in 1832. However, Malietoa sent the teachers out into villages belonging to his clan only. They became agents of liturgical and religious change, but local customs affected them.¹⁹ Upon Williams return in 1832 there were complaints by the teachers for even though they taught the women to sing hymns, the women turned around and took those tunes to the dancing houses and used them for their 'night dance' with explicitly sexual connotations, and later officially outlawed by the LMS.²⁰

Not only was Williams saddened by the fact that the missionary activities in Samoa had progressed slowly over the two years since their arrival, but he also noticed that there was denominational competition for Samoa by the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (WMMS). On his return Williams noted that a leading chief, Tuinaula, had visited Tonga and introduced Wesleyan worship into Satupaitea in Savaii.²¹ According to John Garrett, on his first visit to Tonga Williams made an agreement known as the "Comity Treaty" between the LMS and the WMMS for the LMS to be the sole missionary society in Samoa while the WMMS had rights over Tonga and Fiji.²² However, reactions from London were too late and the WMMS had already sent Peter Turner to Samoa in 1835 to reinforce the *lotu Tonga*.

In 1836 when the LMS missionary Aaron Barff visited areas where the London Missionary Society was established he found that *Malietoa* could not remove the various sects, in areas he was supposedly under control. These sects had protection from the villages in which they were based. Such a situation illustrates the independence of the villages.²³ Gilson noted that such a prevalence of independent villages curbed tyranny.²⁴ A village would find it was to its advantage to maintain alliances within the sub-district to protect its independence and interests.

¹⁸Tunupopo Patu, "Faamalama Theology", 22.

¹⁹John Garret, *To Live Among the Stars. Christian Origins in Oceania*, 122.

²⁰John Garret, *To Live Among the Stars. Christian Origins in Oceania*, 122.

²¹John Garret, *To Live Among the Stars. Christian Origins in Oceania*, 122.

²²John Garret, *To Live Among the Stars. Christian Origins in Oceania*, 123.

²³Richard Gilson, *Samoa 1830 to 1900 the Politics of a Multi-Cultural Community*, 83.

²⁴Richard Gilson, *Samoa 1830 to 1900 the Politics of a Multi-Cultural Community*, 80.

Rivalry between the LMS and WMMS in Samoa was intense. According to the Wesleyan missionaries, the maintenance of Methodist presence in Samoa was an obligation to the Samoans who asked for it. The LMS missionaries on Samoa resented this and termed it "Wesleyan aggression"; to them it was sheep stealing.²⁵ When Turner landed on the island of Manono in 1835, the chief on Manono had previously made a deal with Malietoa to remain LMS. The presence of Methodist missionaries at a time when missionaries were scarce, led to a disregard of the previous agreement with Malietoa and Manono followed the Methodist denomination.²⁶ This event has been recorded as a 'new morning' or *taeao* which is a historically significant moment in the history of Methodist Christianity in Samoa.

To the Methodist Samoans in the village of Satupaitea and the island of Manono, they viewed the continued relationship with the Tongan Methodist as a reinforcement of contact with their 'kinsmen' and southern neighbour (Tonga), against the 'alien' Tahitian form of Christianity. Hence the chiefs of Manono and Satupaitea had asked, "What do we know of Tahiti?"²⁷ When the WMMS finally succumbed to the terms of the Comity Agreement, in 1839, the WMMS missionaries Peter Turner and Matthew Wilson were removed from Samoa. Despite this setback Methodism remained within Samoa with the assistance of the Tongan Wesleyan, PenisimanuLatuselu, the first ordained Tongan missionary sent to Samoa by the 'devout' king of Tonga, King Taufa'ahau. When the Wesleyans officially returned to Samoa in 1857 there was already a strong Methodist Church in Samoa maintained through the activities of Tongan Methodism.

The ease with which Manono was able to accept Methodist missionaries highlights a distinctive feature of Samoan society. Many villages are relatively independent entities, with their own laws. Kerry Howe described the Samoan society as 'nucleated' which refers to the localised power of the Samoan society in the village environment.²⁸ Meleisea agrees with Howe and calls the independence of the village 'a unitary system of dispersed power'²⁹ In other words the

²⁵ John Garret, *To Live Among the Stars. Christian Origins in Oceania*, 122-123.

²⁶ Richard Gilson, *Samoa 1830 to 1900 the Politics of a Multi-Cultural Community*, 83-84.

²⁷ John Garret, *To Live Among the Stars. Christian Origins in Oceania*, 123.

²⁸ Kerry R Howe, *Where the Waves Fall. A new South Sea Islands history from first settlement to colonial rule*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991 230.

²⁹ Malama Meleisea, *Change and Adaptations in Western Samoa* Christchurch: MacMillan Brown Center for Pacific Studies, 1988, 1-2.

village was a 'relatively' autonomous institution of Samoan society and illustrates that true power in Samoa was localised at the village level and at the sub-district level where village alliances were forged to protect each other in times of war.³⁰

The sub-districts would often join to form distinct districts and this influenced the organisation of the LMS Church. Turner identified three districts in Upolu and three in Savaii as well as the island of Manono.³¹ Each of the districts were dominated by a paramount chief.³² Likewise the LMS church followed similar lines of demarcation and there were seven 'districts' (*matagaluega*). In Savaii there were two districts, *Itu-o-tane* and the *Fa'asaleleaga* districts. In Upolu there were four districts; *Apia*, *Aana*, *Malua* and *Falealili*. American Samoa formed the seventh district which encompasses the two island groups of *Tutuila* and *Manu'a*. Each *matagaluega* was also represented by an elder which is similar to the paramount chiefs in secular Samoa.

During the absence of the WMMS, the LMS church began immediately to put down roots and become 'Samoan' in orientation. Since all Samoans identified with the villages, the LMS cleverly began to introduce the church as part of the village structure and organisation. The LMS introduced a new and instrumental position into the village hierarchy, the *faiifeau* (pastor) surrounded by his council of influential lay preachers and deacons.³³ The lay preachers were often chiefs (*matai*) who as representatives of extended families within the village guaranteed support from the families for the *faiifeau*. The *faiifeau* replaced the older holy-men and prophets of the village as the new mediators between the known and unknown realms. Since the *faiifeau* was supported by the chiefs of the village, in essence the *faiifeau* became a 'spiritual chief' of the village, but also 'superior' to the local village chiefs.

³⁰George Turner, *Nineteen Years in Polynesia: Missionary Life, Travels and Researches in the Islands of the Pacific*, London: John Snow, Paternoster Row 1861, 193; George Turner, *Samoa a Hundred Years Ago and Long Before*, 180; Malama Meleisea, ed., *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa*, 29.

³¹George Turner, *Samoa a Hundred Years Ago and Long Before*, 232-266.

³²Michael Field, *Mau: Samoa's Struggle for Freedom*, Revised Edition, Auckland, New Zealand: Polynesian Press, 1991, 21-22.

³³Kerry R Howe, *Where the Waves Fall. A New South Seas Islands History from First Settlements to Colonial Rule*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1984, 242.

Slowly the LMS church began to incorporate other aspects of Samoan culture within the structure of the Church such as the General Assembly (*Fono Tele*) and the Elders Committee (*Au Toeaina*). In 1875, the first General Assembly (*Fono Tele*) was held which the missionaries and the Samoan pastors assembled to discuss issues together pertaining to the church.³⁴ In 1893 it was strengthened by the addition of lay representatives of the churches, such as lay preachers and deacons. The General Assembly coordinated the efforts of the missionaries, lay representatives and pastors to spread the gospel not only within Samoa but also as missionaries to the Pacific. In 1906 the 'Elders Committee' was set up consisting of forty-five members. Some were ordained pastors and some were lay deacons and others were senior Samoan pastors. The Committee was set up to advise the missionaries in the running of the LMS church.³⁵ Both the General Assembly and the Elders Committee mirrored what was found in the villages. The General Assembly is similar to the village meetings of the various chiefs within the village to coordinate village activities so as to maintain peace and promote efficiency in the use of local resources.

Howe mentions that many Samoans were attached to their villages and if the missionaries wanted to influence Samoans they had to go to their villages. But the missionaries did not have the numbers, to go to every village so a need for Samoan training institution was required.³⁶ This led to establishment of Malua Theological College, in 1844. Malua became the second theological college in the South Pacific after Takamoa in the Cook Islands. Malua was also a continuation of William's insistence that education was a key component of the LMS mission. The abundance of Samoan trained pastors familiar with the culture, contributed rapidly to the dominance of the LMS within Samoa. However those villages that received Methodist help from Tonga remained firmly as Methodists.

Conclusion

When the LMS arrived in Samoa it had hoped to establish a monopoly and dominance in Samoa. However the LMS had failed to take into account the independence of villages. The relative independence of villages meant that there would always be division within Samoa. As early as

³⁴Norman Goodall, *A History of the London Missionary Society, 1895-1945*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954, 367.

³⁵Norman Goodall, *A History of the London Missionary Society, 1895-1945*, 367.

³⁶Kerry R Howe, *Where the Waves Fall. A new South Sea Islands history from first settlement to colonial rule*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991, 241.

1832, the LMS recognised that Malietoa's 'power' in Samoa was limited. In times of peace, the Samoans reverted to the power of the local village or village groups.³⁷ The independence of the village was later mirrored in the existence of the Methodist denomination amongst villages that did not receive LMS missionaries.³⁸ It can be seen then that the independence of villages contributed to the sense of independence of the Samoan Church from the LMS.

³⁷Richard Gilson, *Samoa 1830 to 1900 the Politics of a Multi-Cultural Community*, 90-91. According to Gilson, '...it appeared that 'every village [had] its king or chief not subject to any other' except in war, the policy of courting high chiefs for purposes of political advantage stood condemned.'

³⁸Richard Gilson, *Samoa 1830 to 1900 the Politics of a Multi-Cultural Community*, 94.

Chapter Two

The Lotu Pouesi Church

The origins of the *Lotu Pouesi* is an example of the decisions of the Samoan Church (LMS)³⁹ that upset members of the Apia congregation resulting in a breakaway movement from the LMS control. Similar circumstances occurred at the same time in American Samoa with the Fagatogo and Pago Pago congregations. In each case the pastor was reprimanded by the Church or in the case of Pago Pago by the high chief of the village. In all instances various sections of the village were angered by the decisions against their pastors. Eventually these three congregations joined together to form the Congregational Church of Jesus in Samoa (CCJS). This chapter attempts to look into the origins and causes for the formation of the Lotu Pouesi.

According to Oka Fauolo, the *Lotu Pouesi* was set up by Reverend Namulauulu Pouesi in August, 1941 under controversial circumstances⁴⁰. Members of the Apia congregation were disappointed at the removal of Pouesi's position, as the Church secretary for the District (*Matagaluega*) of Apia. It was previously agreed by the District of Apia that the position of secretary would be rotated after every 3 years. Apparently, a ballot by the Samoan Church (LMS) was carried out in which a Reverend Mavaega was appointed as the new secretary before Pouesi's term was finished.⁴¹ According to Reverend NamaiaKofe, whose father was a deacon of the *Lotu Pouesi* at the time, several prominent members of the church of Apia were distraught at the decisions of the Church.⁴² They suspected that the Church authorities conspired against Pouesi leading to the loss of his status as the secretary and the opportunity to be an elder of the district of Apia.

The position of secretary of the district was a prestigious one in the Samoan Church at the time. In addition the secretary of a district automatically becomes the elder in the event that the elder

³⁹Samoan Church (LMS) will be referred to as Church throughout this chapter.

⁴⁰Oka Fauolo, *O Vavega O le Alofa Lavea'i: O le Tala Faasolopito o le Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa*, Apia: Malua Printing Press, 2005, 736-737. In 1995 Rev. Elder Oka Fauolo was assigned by the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa to write a history of the Church.

⁴¹Oka Fauolo, *O Vavega O le Alofa Lavea'i: O le Tala Faasolopito o le Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa*, 736.

⁴²Interview with Rev. Namaia Kofe, 20 August 2012.

position is vacated due to death or retirement.⁴³ Most districts and sub-districts, practice the Samoan custom of *vatapuia* or the seniority criteria as the basis for selection of an elder or secretary to maintain harmonious relationships. Having an elder within the congregation was an authoritative position with great responsibility and power.⁴⁴ Furthermore the position of elder guaranteed more support from within the district especially when the missionaries began delegating more authority to the elders since 1938.⁴⁵ Indeed the elder of the district of Apia passed away which made Pouesi the likely candidate to succeed to the office of elder had he remained the secretary of the district. Pouesi was in London at this time as a representative of the Church in a meeting that was held at the London Missionary Society office.⁴⁶ Upon his return, the leaders had already voted for Mavaega as the new secretary. Pouesi's absence during the ballot only confirmed the suspicion of the Apia congregation that the Church authorities conspired against Pouesi. It is the way that the ballot was conducted (in Pouesi's absence) that upset the Apia congregation and Pouesi. For Pouesi and his supporters it was best to form an independent church from the Samoan Church (LMS).

It was fortunate that the current pastor of Apia congregation Rev. UtuferiNaseri was able to recall a casual conversation with an 'elderly lady' that witnessed the events at the time. Her recollection of events confirms the anger of Pouesi after the ballot for the secretary. According to this elderly lady's recollection:

What happened was there was a ballot for the secretary of the District...there was an expectation that the secretary will be Pouesi...however when the ballot was completed he was not chosen as secretary...Pouesi was upset according to this old lady... he was made to look like a fool...the pastors in the district had flattered him before the ballot...he was so upset he wanted to leave the (LMS) Church.⁴⁷

⁴³Interview with Rev. Namaia Kofe, 20 August 2012. Rev. Namaia Kofe is from the village of Apia and his father Kofe was one of the deacon of the EFIS at the time the Lotu Pouesi was initiated. Rev. Namaia is the church pastor of Vaotupua (Savaii) since 1998 with wife Pelemoni.

⁴⁴Interview with Rev. Namaia Kofe, 20 August 2012.

⁴⁵Elia Taase, *Ina ia tatou iloa: O le Tala Faasolopito o le Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano i Amerika Samoa mai amataga i le LMS e oo i le 2005*, Malua Printing Press, Tamaligi, Apia, Samoa, 2006, 117.

⁴⁶Interview with Rev. Namaia Kofe, 20 August 2012.

⁴⁷Interview with Utufua Naseri, 30 March 2012.

Author's translation of the following:

O le mea na tupu, sa fai le palota o le tofi failautusi a le Matagaluega o Apia. Faapea le loomatua sa fai folafolaga a toeaia ma nisi o faifeau o le a toe lafo le tofi ia Pouesi,... aepeitai ina ua fai le palota, e le i faamanuaina Pouesi..ma ua lagona ai lona maasiasi ona o tala a toeaia sa fai. O le manatu o Pouesi, e peiseai ua faa-valea o ia e faifeau o le matagaluega ... ma iu ai loa ina tevaeae mai le Ekalesia LMS.

Naseri's 'account of events' highlights several interesting points. Pouesi had lost the ballot which confirms Fauolo's version of events. Even though it is not clear whether the ballot was to renew the secretary or elect a new secretary it is possible to deduce that, Pouesi was widely expected to retain or become the secretary of the district. Even the pastors within the district expected Pouesi to be the secretary. When Pouesi did not get the position, the reaction was such that 'Pouesi wanted to leave the (LMS) Church.'⁴⁸ This recollection strongly suggests that the Church leaders must have influenced a sure 'bet' on the ballot. Pouesi's accusation towards the pastors within his districts of 'sweet-talking' his prospects of being (or retaining) the secretary of the district, conveys a sense of intrigue and collusion before the ballot. It was not only Pouesi but certain families within the Apia congregation who recognised a 'conspiracy' against Pouesi.

2.1 What are the possible reasons for Pouesi leaving the Church?

One major reason for Pouesi's possible demotion from the secretary position can be attributed to the Apia district stance concerning the *taulaga*. According to IerikoFruean a lay preacher of the *Lotu Pouesi* the Church did not like the issue that the Apia district brought to the General Assembly. The Apia district urged the Church to ease the demand for funds from its members (the *taulaga*) to build up the Church and let people donate what they can afford (using the Samoan spirit of giving '*loto fuatiaifo*,' or what you can give from your heart).⁴⁹ According to Fruean, the Church did not like the suggestion of the Apia district since the *taulaga* was the major way the Church was able to finance Church projects. It seemed to the Church that the Apia district did not want to support the Church's fund-raising activities. Since Pouesi was the secretary of the Apia district the Church suspected that this contentious motion may have been Pouesi's work.

Fruean's claim that Pouesi rebelled against Church authority is supported by other accounts. Fauolo noted that when the *Lotu Pouesi* Church was established people eagerly supported Pouesi's stance against the Church authorities.⁵⁰ According to MaiavaSolomona, a nephew of Pouesi's wife Siuila "...there was no Samoan voice in the control of European pastors...it was a time of colonialism...Pouesi did not want to sit down and be controlled by European

⁴⁸Interview with UtufuaNaseri, 30 March 2012.

⁴⁹Interveiw with IerikoFruean, 9 March 2012.

⁵⁰Oka Fauolo, *O Vavega O le Alofa Lavea'i: Ole Tala Faasolopito o le Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa*, 736.

minsters....⁵¹ Similarly Reverend Victor Pouesi, the grandson of Pouesi recalled that his grandfather's formation of the *Lotu Pouesi* was not against the Church but the leaders and their unfair decisions.⁵² LionaTeleaga a pastor of the EFIS from Siufaga in Savaii also supports the view that the *Lotu Pouesi* was formed because of unfair and biased decisions by the Church authorities.⁵³

2.2 Political/Ecclesiastical Events that Challenged Church Authority

The revolt of the Apia congregation against the Church authority should be seen in light of the political events that contributed to the 'colonial' attitude of the LMS. The image of the LMS was harmed with the revelation that one of the most prominent advisors to the New Zealand administrators in the 1920s was a printer employed by the LMS, Harry Griffin.⁵⁴ Griffin was a missionary for the LMS from 1905 until 1921 when he accepted a government appointment as Resident Commissioner of Savaii. He helped formulate the Samoan Offenders Ordinance in the following year, as the Government Secretary for Native Affairs.⁵⁵ It was a post which he held until his death in 1927 at the age of fifty.⁵⁶

The *Samoan Offenders Ordinance* gave power to the Administration to remove the titles of chiefs (*matai*) and banished them from their hereditary villages. The ordinance essentially gave dictatorial powers to the Administrator and those close to him.⁵⁷ For example a senior *faipule* [mayor] by the name of *Toelupe* was able to remove the *matai* title from the *matai* Muagatu of *Malie* using the *Samoan Offenders Ordinance*.⁵⁸ Muagatu refused to comply with inspections of knives, forks and spoons required by the administration.

⁵¹Interview with Maiava Solomona, 27 August 2012. Maiava is the nephew of Siuila, Namulauulu Pouesi's wife. Furthermore, Solomona stated that there was a saying in those days that 'if anyone has anything against the LMS church, then that person better start up a new church like Pouesi.'

⁵²Interview with Rev. Victor Pouesi, 19 May 2012.

⁵³Interview with Rev. LionaTeleaga, 6 October 2012.

⁵⁴Norman Goodall, *A History of the London Missionary Society 1895-1945*, 363.

⁵⁵Elia Taase, "The Congregational Christian Church in Samoa: The Origin and Development of an Indigenous Church, 1830-1961", 273; Norman Goodall, *A History of the London Missionary Society 1895-1945*, 363.

⁵⁶Norman Goodall, *A History of the London Missionary Society 1895-1945*, 363.

⁵⁷Elia Taase, "The Congregational Christian Church in Samoa: The Origin and Development of an Indigenous Church, 1830-1961", 273.

⁵⁸Michael Field, *Mau: Samoa's Struggle for Freedom*, 57-59.

The close association with the New Zealand Administrators and the former LMS missionary Griffen created a negative image for the LMS. During Griffen's term of office, Colonel Robert Tate granted special privileges to Europeans. For example only children with European last names were accepted in government schools in Apia.⁵⁹ Brigadier General George Spafford Richardson who succeeded Tate in 1923 further provoked the ire of the Samoans when he used the *Samoa Offenders Ordinance* law to remove the title of one of the four paramount chiefs in Samoa, Tupua Tamasese Meole III, of the Atua district.⁶⁰ This action showed how little the Richardson administration and Griffen respected Samoan culture.

The manner in which Tamasese's title was removed created further friction between the LMS and the Samoan populace. Griffen complained to Tamasese to remove a hedge that was planted by the High Chief. Tamasese refused Griffen's request and the High Chief was subsequently exiled to Savaii island and his title removed.⁶¹ The removal of a paramount chief's title was sacrilege to not only the extended family but the district of Tamasese, and even the Samoan nation. Ironically Griffen was chosen as an advisor to the New Zealand administration because of his LMS affiliation, knowledge and experience of Samoan custom. Yet he failed to see the implications of his actions.⁶² Between 1921 and 1926, fifty three Samoan chiefly titles were removed and the chiefs subsequently banished from their villages.⁶³ Griffen's association with the New Zealand administration and his ties with the LMS created a negative image of the LMS in Samoa.

By the time of the 1930s the simmering discontent of the Samoan pastors to the religious authorities in the 1920s began to surface as outright rebellion against Church authority. For example in the early 1930s the LMS missionaries' encountered strong opposition, as Samoan

⁵⁹Elia Taase, "The Congregational Christian Church in Samoa: The Origin and Development of an Indigenous Church, 1830-1961", 272.

⁶⁰Derek Freeman, *Margaret Mead and Samoa the Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1983, 272.

⁶¹Elia Taase, "The Congregational Christian Church in Samoa: The Origin and Development of an Indigenous Church, 1830-1961", 274; Derek Freeman, *Margaret Mead and Samoa the Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth*, 272; Michael Field, *Mau: Samoa's Struggle for Freedom*, 64.

⁶²Elia Taase, "The Congregational Christian Church in Samoa: The Origin and Development of an Indigenous Church, 1830-1961", 273.

⁶³Malama Meleisea, ed., *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa*, 133.

pastors began to challenge their decisions.⁶⁴ For example in 1932 Rev. Stanley Phillips clashed with Ariu the son of Rev. Elder Sio of the Fa'asaleleaga District.⁶⁵ Both were employed at Leulumoega Fou; Phillips as principal and Ariu as Samoan teacher.⁶⁶ Phillips found that the Samoan students obeyed Ariu rather than him and consequently threatened to resign unless Ariu was dismissed from the staff of Leulumoega Fou.⁶⁷ The LMS in London favoured sacking Ariu by the end of 1932.⁶⁸ Likewise the missionaries within Samoa supported Phillips. However the missionaries were powerless in the General Assembly and the Elders Committee as Ariu had powerful family connections.⁶⁹ Ariu's father, the Rev. Elder Sio of the Fa'asaleleaga District threatened to boycott the General Assembly unless Ariu was reinstated to Leulumoega Fou.⁷⁰

There is no doubt that the Samoan Church leaders had frustrated the termination of Ariu in Leulumoega Fou. Eventually Phillips left Samoa in 1936 exasperated that the Samoan Church leaders blocked the sacking of Ariu and thereby restricting his authority as principal of Leulumoega Fou. The Elders also began to demand the termination of Rev. Frank S Hoad who dismissed the threat of the Fa'asaleleaga District when he suggested to his colleagues to 'have a cigar and if it comes to a showdown we must all stand together.'⁷¹ Hoad's remarks seem to suggest to the Samoan pastors in Fa'asaleleaga that the district was just bluffing and could not challenge the authority of the missionaries.

Such dissension by Samoan clergy was not restricted to the missionaries alone. In 1932 Samoan pastors of the Falealili District refused to recognise the leadership of Rev. Elder Enosa, who had called himself the 'Missionary Elder.'⁷² In order to demonstrate his power Enosa tried to dismiss two Samoan pastors Sione and Esera from their parishes. According to Hoad the pastors conspired to get rid of Enosa by turning out a rumour about Enosa and Esera's wife. Such was

⁶⁴Featuna'i Liuaana, *Samoa Tula'i. Ecclesiastical and Political Face of Samoa's Independence, 1900-1962*. Apia: Malua Printing Press, 2004, 258.

⁶⁵Featuna'i Liuaana, *Samoa Tula'i. Ecclesiastical and Political Face of Samoa's Independence, 1900-1962*, 259.

⁶⁶Featuna'i Liuaana, *Samoa Tula'i. Ecclesiastical and Political Face of Samoa's Independence, 1900-1962*, 259.

⁶⁷Featuna'i Liuaana, *Samoa Tula'i. Ecclesiastical and Political Face of Samoa's Independence, 1900-1962*, 260.

⁶⁸Featuna'i Liuaana, *Samoa Tula'i. Ecclesiastical and Political Face of Samoa's Independence, 1900-1962*, 259.

⁶⁹Featuna'i Liuaana, *Samoa Tula'i. Ecclesiastical and Political Face of Samoa's Independence, 1900-1962*, 261.

⁷⁰Featuna'i Liuaana, *Samoa Tula'i. Ecclesiastical and Political Face of Samoa's Independence, 1900-1962*, 261.

⁷¹Featuna'i Liuaana, *Samoa Tula'i. Ecclesiastical and Political Face of Samoa's Independence, 1900-1962*, 258.

⁷²Featuna'i Liuaana, *Samoa Tula'i. Ecclesiastical and Political Face of Samoa's Independence, 1900-1962*, 258.

the seriousness of the accusations that it eventually led to the resignation of Enosa, and eventually Esera.⁷³

When the LMS missionary and historian Norman Goodall visited Samoa in 1939 he described the relationship between the missionaries as 'unpleasant'.⁷⁴ He felt that there was no unity or 'fellowship' between the missionaries leading to 'mistrust, slander, and malicious gossip'.⁷⁵ Goodall's observation of the Elder's Committee was also critical in that he did not feel they were worthy of the leadership role.⁷⁶ Under such circumstances it is easy to see how Pouesi was critical of the leadership and wanted to break free of the LMS Church.

Pouesi's determination to form the *Lotu Pouesi* as a rebellion against Church authority follows the general pattern of discontent with Church authority in the 1930s. He respected the Church but criticised those in leadership positions for their heavy handed decision against him. Furthermore, his grandson Victor Pouesi recalls that his grandfather insisted that the whole village of Apia should once again unite and return to the LMS when he died.⁷⁷ Victor Pouesi's recollection further supports the notion that Pouesi's actions were not against the village, but against the Church leaders. Despite the formation of *Lotu Pouesi* there was still a large contingent within Apia that remained loyal to the LMS such as: *Seumanutafa Loligi, Fonoti, Tuiletufuga Afoa, Tuiletufuga Tualai, Amitua Alipa, Leota, Tualau Mauni and Tuiletufuga Lafo*.⁷⁸ Apparently, there were two distinctive sides of the village. Some members of the village sided with *Seumanutafa Loligi* and the LMS while others sided with *Seumanutafa Pogai* and Pouesi.⁷⁹

2.3 Schism in American Samoa

At the same time that Pouesi was in conflict with the Church authorities in Western Samoa, Rev. Afele Levi of the village of Fagatogo in Tutuila experienced a similar situation to Pouesi.⁸⁰

⁷³Featuna'i Liuaana, *Samoa Tula'i. Ecclesiastical and Political Face of Samoa's Independence, 1900-1962*, 259.

⁷⁴Featuna'i Liuaana, *Samoa Tula'i. Ecclesiastical and Political Face of Samoa's Independence, 1900-1962*, 263.

⁷⁵Featuna'i Liuaana, *Samoa Tula'i. Ecclesiastical and Political Face of Samoa's Independence, 1900-1962*, 263.

⁷⁶Featuna'i Liuaana, *Samoa Tula'i. Ecclesiastical and Political Face of Samoa's Independence, 1900-1962*, 263.

⁷⁷Interview with Rev. Victor Pouesi, 19 May 2012.

⁷⁸Oka Fauolo, *O Vavega O le Alofa Lavea'i: O le Tala Faasolopito o le Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa*, 736.

⁷⁹Oka Fauolo, *O Vavega O le Alofa Lavea'i: O le Tala Faasolopito o le Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa*, 736.

⁸⁰Elia Taase, *Ina ia tatou iloa: O le Talafaasolopito o le Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano i Amerika Samoa mai le amataga o le LMS e oo i le 2005*, Apia, Samoa: Malua Printing Press, 2006, 117; Oka Fauolo, *O Vavega O le Alofa*

Between 1939-1941, the LMS authorities advised Fagatogo village to remove Levi's privilege as pastor and to vacate his congregation for a period of six months.⁸¹ He was accused of obtaining finance that was 'considered contrary to Church rules.'⁸² Fauolo does not elaborate on the financial activities of Levi but according to Kuki Tuiasosopo,

One of the policies of the LMS church stated that pastors should not receive external salary other than the *alofa o le faifeau* or monthly contribution by the village congregation.⁸³

Tuiasosopo further elaborated that Levi had received money from his children's barbershop business.⁸⁴ Levi complied with the decisions of the Church, however his apparent demotion angered some members of the village. Many did not see anything wrong with Levi receiving finance from his children's business. The money Levi received from the barbershop business was only voluntary donations and not something Levi accessed directly.

Levi was a popular pastor of the village. Tuiasosopo describes the attributes of Levi that so endeared him to the village:

He was a superb teacher of the Word of God, and he ministered to all the needs of the parish. He demonstrated his message through personal action. He was a farmer and a builder who guided his parish with conviction and firm but loving care.⁸⁵

The decision by the Church was an embarrassment to Levi and for the village. Levi was not only stripped of the pastor duties such as communion and baptism, but the village had lost their spiritual leader for six months. Without a pastor the name and pride of the village took a serious

Lavea'i: O le Tala Faasolopito o le Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa, 736; Kuki Tuiasosopo, "Pese Ma Viiga I Le Atua. The Sacred Music of the Congregational Church of Jesus in Samoa". (MA, University of Hawaii, 2005), 75.

⁸¹Oka Fauolo, *O Vavega O le Alofa Lavea'i: O le Tala Faasolopito o le Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa*, 736.

⁸²Elia Taase, *Ina ia tatou iloa: O le Talafaasolopito o le Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano i Amerika Samoa mai le amataga o le LMS e oo i le 2005*, 117.

⁸³Kuki Tuiasosopo, "Pese Ma Viiga I Le Atua. The Sacred Music of the Congregational Church of Jesus in Samoa", 76.

⁸⁴Kuki Tuiasosopo, "Pese Ma Viiga I Le Atua. The Sacred Music of the Congregational Church of Jesus in Samoa", 7.

⁸⁵Kuki Tuiasosopo, "Pese Ma Viiga I Le Atua. The Sacred Music of the Congregational Church of Jesus in Samoa", 75.

hammering. Essentially the Church had ostracised the village of Fagatogo which was tantamount to being excluded from the 'holy family of God'.⁸⁶

Traditional leaders of the village appealed to the Church authority to reconsider their decision. The missionaries and the elders remained firm in their decision.⁸⁷ A deacon and prominent chief Tuiasosopo Mariota I, was so unhappy with the decisions that he gathered supporters of Levi and had Holy Communion amongst themselves.⁸⁸ Tuiasosopo in a bid to challenge the Church decision initiated the formation of a separate congregation.⁸⁹ He requested Levi to be their pastor, while Levi was still under suspension by the LMS.⁹⁰ The decision by Tuiasosopo was equivalent to rebellion against Church authority.

Elia Taase paid tribute to Tuiasosopo's stand against Church authority from a financial point of view. Taase noted an article in the "Chicago Daily News" in September 1948 by George Weller. Weller wrote:

The aim of this church (EFIS) set up by Tuiasosopo is to halt the loss of finance from America (Samoa) to British Samoa through the LMS. The Naval (administration) has long tried to block the flow of cash (to Western Samoa) but it is reluctant to do this task.⁹¹

According to Taase the Church in Western Samoa in the late 1940s was benefiting immensely from American Samoa finance. There is a suggestion in the article that it is one way 'traffic' from American Samoa to Western Samoa. The EFIS symbolised the American Samoan concern that American money would eventually finance institutions in Western Samoa and neglect American Samoa. For Taase, the EFIS would anticipate the future concern of the American Samoa when it complained of the lack of investment from the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (CCCS). As a result of the failure of CCCS to invest in American Samoa, the

⁸⁶Kuki Tuiasosopo, "Pese Ma Viiga I Le Atua. The Sacred Music of the Congregational Church of Jesus in Samoa", 77.

⁸⁷Kuki Tuiasosopo, "Pese Ma Viiga I Le Atua. The Sacred Music of the Congregational Church of Jesus in Samoa", 76.

⁸⁸Kuki Tuiasosopo, "Pese Ma Viiga I Le Atua. The Sacred Music of the Congregational Church of Jesus in Samoa", 77.

⁸⁹Elia Taase, *Ina ia tatou iloa: O le Talafaaasolopito o le Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano i Amerika Samoa mai le amataga o le LMS e oo i le 2005*, 117.

⁹⁰Elia Taase, *Ina ia tatou iloa: O le Tala Faasolopito o le Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano i Amerika Samoa mai le amataga i le LMS e oo i le 2005*, 117.

⁹¹Elia Taase, *Ina ia tatou iloa: O le Tala Faasolopito o le Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano i Amerika Samoa mai le amataga i le LMS e oo i le 2005*, 119.

American Samoan district decided in 1980 to become independent from CCCS control and form the Congregational Christian Church of American Samoa (CCCAS).

The village in Pago Pago also suffered a split between the followers of the village high chief, Mauga and the supporters of Reverend Ueligitone. Ueligitone scolded the congregation in particular the high chief Mauga, for using Church funds that were allocated for a chapel.⁹² Mauga took offence and banished Ueligitone from the village. Other chiefs of Pago Pago village such as Mageo supported Ueligitone and eventually broke away from the Samoa Church (LMS).

The three congregations under Levi, Pouesi and Ueligitone corresponded and supported each other. According to Fauolo, Ueligitone and Pouesi met in Apia in 1941 and decided to form their own denomination called "*The Congregational Church of Jesus in Samoa*" (CCJS) or *O le Ekalesia o le Faalapotopotoga a Iesu Keriso Samoa* or (EFIS).⁹³ However Tuiasosopo research has pinpointed the actual date to 22-23 June 1942.⁹⁴ Tuiasosopo has mentioned that Levi, Ueligitone and Pouesi were present in Apia. Victor Pouesi commented that the name *Lotu Pouesi* was a derogatory name for the early days of the church in Apia.⁹⁵ *Lotu Pouesi* literally means 'Pouesi's Church' a name associated with rebellion of an individual from Church authority. With the support of Levi and Ueligitone, *Lotu Pouesi* was not alone in its stand against Church and village authority. *Lotu Pouesi* became associated with the more respectable name of *Ekalesia Faapotopotoga a Iesu Samoa* (EFIS) or the *Congregational Church of Jesus in Samoa* (CCJS). The EFIS became the first denomination formed by Samoans for Samoans in Samoa.⁹⁶

2.4 Division between the Samoa Church (LMS) and *Lotu Pouesi* Widens

A year after the EFIS was formed the schism between the LMS and *Lotu Pouesi* widened with a controversial court ruling. Those of the village who remained with the LMS took the *Lotu Pouesi*

⁹²Kuki Tuiasosopo, "Pese Ma Viiga I Le Atua. The Sacred Music of the Congregational Church of Jesus in Samoa", 77.

⁹³Oka Fauolo, *O Vavega O le Alofa Lavea'i: O le Tala Faasolopito o le Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa*, 736.

⁹⁴Kuki Tuiasosopo, "Pese Ma Viiga I Le Atua. The Sacred Music of the Congregational Church of Jesus in Samoa", 80.

⁹⁵Interview Rev. Victor Pouesi, 19 May 2012. Victor Pouesi is the son of the late Rev. Ioselani Pouesi and Epenesa Pouesi.

⁹⁶Kuki Tuiasosopo, "Pese Ma Viiga I Le Atua. The Sacred Music of the Congregational Church of Jesus in Samoa", 80.

to court for using the LMS premises to conduct their worship. The court ruled in favour of the LMS and Pouesi was required to vacate the Apia premises within two months and to conduct their church services elsewhere. According to Fauolo, Pouesi left before the end of two months and resided at his place near the *Loto Samasoni* river where his family members are still residing now.⁹⁷ The ruling of the courts also forced some of the supporters of Pouesi to return to the Samoa Church (LMS) as they were under financial pressure to establish new premises for the new church. For example the chief Tuiletufuga Lafo was initially against the LMS but then he changed his mind and returned to the LMS.⁹⁸ Despite protests by the supporters of Pouesi, the LMS remained firm in the court decision. The court ruling and LMS refusal to listen to the protests of the *Lotu Pouesi*, only justified the move away from the LMS by the supporters of Pouesi. In response to the court ruling the Seumanutafa Pogai family offered part of their land for the pastor's house as well as the church building.⁹⁹

The *Lotu Pouesi* church in Apia adopted the name "*Lotu o le Saolotoga*" ('The Free Church'). The name suggests that *Lotu Pouesi* is free from LMS control and able to achieve self-determination. Fruean provides an alternative meaning in which the congregation are not pressured to give towards the *taulaga* like the LMS Church. Hence at the early stage of the EFIS, the *taulaga* was not an important part of their General Meetings.¹⁰⁰ Fruean estimated that at the present time (2012) the typical annual offerings amount to \$100,000 which is substantially much less compared to the EFKS church donations.¹⁰¹

Further division between the two 'denominations' occurred when the Samoan Church (LMS) banned the use of LMS hymns in EFIS worship. According to Tuiasosopo, an LMS missionary was sent to the first meeting of the EFIS with the following message:

"You left the church, and you are no longer children of God. You are not good enough to use the Bible, and you cannot use our music."¹⁰²

⁹⁷Oka Fauolo, *O Vavega O le Alofa Lavea'i: O le Tala Faasolopito o le Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa*, 737.

⁹⁸Oka Fauolo, *O Vavega O le Alofa Lavea'i: O le Tala Faasolopito o le Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa*, 736.

⁹⁹Interview with Rev. Namaia Kofe, 20 August 2012.

¹⁰⁰Interview with Ieriko Fruean, 9 March 2012.

¹⁰¹Interview with Ieriko Fruean, 9 March 2012.

¹⁰²Kuki Tuiasosopo, "Pese Ma Viiga I Le Atua. The Sacred Music of the Congregational Church of Jesus in Samoa", 87.

It is not known who this missionary was but the banning of the use of LMS music or hymns was a tactic by the Church authorities to weaken the worship life in *Lotu Pouesi*. Such a move was a 'serious blow to the souls of the members of the CCJS.'¹⁰³ The Church decision further entrenched *Lotu Pouesi* in its stand against Church authority. Fortunately it was not a major concern for Namulauulu Pouesi as his family were accomplished musicians.¹⁰⁴ The Pouesi family assisted in the writing of music for the LMS through KareneSolomona and MatautiaPeneSolomona (his wife Siuila's brothers).¹⁰⁵ Such was the prolific song-writing talents of the family. There are around four hundred hymns of the *Lotu Pouesi* which had spread to other EFIS congregations.¹⁰⁶ These hymns were very popular even amongst the LMS congregation as the tunes were original Samoan tunes and not 'borrowed' European tunes as most of the LMS hymns were.¹⁰⁷

Some of the songs tell of the ordeal of the Lotu Pouesi against Church authority, such as *Le FiliSaua Ua Ita Tele Mai*, or 'The Devil rages in anger'. The words of the hymn expresses how a person's hope to be saved by Christ from the devil and to be free from the troubles of the world.¹⁰⁸ According to Tuiasosopo, the choice of words reflects the past events of the EFIS and also serves as a reminder to future generations of those who laid the foundation and the cornerstone of EFIS.

The English translation of the Samoan text¹⁰⁹:

1. The Devil rages in anger
Searching for my soul to condemn
Jesus is my shield
Who guards me from my enemies.

Chorus Jesus, whom I shall be victorious

¹⁰³Kuki Tuiasosopo, "Pese Ma Viiga I Le Atua. The Sacred Music of the Congregational Church of Jesus in Samoa", 87.

¹⁰⁴Interview with Rev. NamaiaKofe, 20 August 2012; Kuki Tuiasosopo, "Pese Ma Viiga I Le Atua. The Sacred Music of the Congregational Church of Jesus in Samoa", 87.

¹⁰⁵Interview with Rev. NamaiaKofe, 20 August 2012.

¹⁰⁶Interview with Rev. NamaiaKofe, 20 August 2012.

¹⁰⁷Interview with Rev. NamaiaKofe, 20 August 2012.

¹⁰⁸Kuki Tuiasosopo, "Pese Ma Viiga I Le Atua. The Sacred Music of the Congregational Church of Jesus in Samoa", 213.

¹⁰⁹Kuki Tuiasosopo, "Pese Ma Viiga I Le Atua. The Sacred Music of the Congregational Church of Jesus in Samoa", 139.

Guide and protect me
 Jesus, come into my life
 I shall not be wick.

Other hymns of the EFIS offer encouragement such as '*Ina fa'aea ia i luga*', or '*Arise*.' The text provides encouragement for its members to move forward and be steadfast.¹¹⁰

English translation of the Samoan text.

1. Arise
 Respect and be gracious
 In the presence of the King
 The sovereign ruler
- Chorus Arise my Samoan countrymen
 The new church has been founded
 The Congregation Church of Jesus in Samoa
 Jesus is the head of our church
 He is the sovereign ruler.

The schism between the LMS and the *Lotu Pouesi* is further accentuated by Seumanutafa Tiavolo Pogai's account of his father's views at this time.¹¹¹ According to Tiavolo, the Apia congregation had noted that the district meeting was held at the church at Alamagoto village instead of the usual venue at the Apia church.¹¹² The changed venue for district meetings puzzled the Apia congregation and especially Pouesi. When the Apia congregation requested the Church leaders for the reason for the change of meeting venue, 'no proper reasons' were given.¹¹³

There seemed to be a deliberate policy by the Church to exclude the Apia congregation from district meetings. The Apia congregation had a preeminent status amongst the congregations in the Apia district because it was one of the earliest churches in Samoa.¹¹⁴ According to Tiavolo, the shift in venue for district meetings from Apia to Alagamoto was planned by the Church

¹¹⁰Kuki Tuiasosopo, "Pese Ma Viiga I Le Atua. The Sacred Music of the Congregational Church of Jesus in Samoa", 213, 151.

¹¹¹Interview with Seumanutafa Tiavolo Pogai, 2 March, 2012. Tiavolo is (was) the current church secretary of the EFIS, whose father Seumanutafa Pogai was one of the high chiefs of Apia who supported Pouesi.

¹¹²Alamagoto village is part of Apia village as well as Tanugamanono and Vailima where the EFIS Theological College is located.

¹¹³Interview with Seumanutafa Tiavolo Pogai, 2 March, 2012.

¹¹⁴Interview with Rev. Namaia Kofe, 20 August 2012.

authorities to remove Pouesi's influence in district affairs.¹¹⁵ Rev. Elder Lale Ieremia suspects that Pouesi was a very stubborn man.¹¹⁶ It became clear to the Church authorities that Pouesi's strong willed personality in the preeminent church of the district could have swayed the opinions of other congregations of the Apia district to support him. As a consequence of the threat Pouesi posed to the LMS in Apia, the Church authorities decided in (1941) that Pouesi ceased to be the pastor of the Apia congregation.

2.5 Tapeni Ioelu 1944-1952

According to Fauolo, on the 12 September 1944, Tapeni Ioelu was appointed as pastor for the Apia congregation.¹¹⁷ The Apia Church Records confirms that in 1944, Ioelu became the pastor of the Apia congregation replacing Pouesi.¹¹⁸ Apparently, Ioelu recorded in the Apia Church Records of 1944-1957 that the dispute between the LMS and *Lotu Pouesi* seems to be prolonged by the village members.

One of the first things Ioelu attempted as pastor of the Apia congregation was to heal the rift within the village between the LMS and *Lotu Pouesi*. His earlier efforts for reconciliation between the parties focussed on the chief orators and high chiefs of the village. On the 11 June 1946, a peace march by the major Orators of the village of Apia known as the *Faletolu* to the high chief Seumanutafa Pogai, was organised to discuss the division within the village.¹¹⁹ The

¹¹⁵ Interview with Seumanutafa Tiavolo Pogai, 2 March, 2012.

¹¹⁶ Interview with Rev. Elder Lale Ieremia, 2 March 2012.

¹¹⁷ Oka Fauolo, *O Vavega O le Alofa Lavea'i: O le Tala Faasolopito o le Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa*, 737.

¹¹⁸ "Tusi o le Galuega LMS Apia 1944-1957. Apia Church Records." Reverend Tapeni Ioelu and family started working with the Apia Congregational Christian Church of Samoa since 1944 after Reverend Namulauulu Pouesi. He was the treasurer of the LMS church of Samoa at the time when he was called to become the church pastor of Apia LMS.

¹¹⁹ Interview with Rev. Utufua Naseri, 30 March 2012. Like every other settlement in the country, Apia village has its own *matai* chiefly leaders and *fa'alupega* (genealogy & customary greetings) according to Samoan way of life. The *Faletolu* is a traditional name referring to the three major Orators of Apia namely Tuiletufuga, Pupualii and Leta'a. These prominent orators represent the voice of the whole village of Apia whenever there's a village gathering with the high chiefs. Tuiletufuga represents those residing in the central part of Apia. Pupualii represents those who are residing in the village of Matautu Uta and Matautu Tai. Letaa represents those residing in the villages of Tanugamanono, Vailima and Alamagoto. So whatever major issues that arise pertaining to Apia, the *Faletolu* must be present in the meeting, hence their regular involvement in this case. The Seumanutafa is one of the prominent chief title of the village of Apia. There are two sides holding the Seumanutafa chief title, Seumanutafa Pogai whose son, Tiavolo is currently the Secretary of the EFIS (Seumanutafa Tiavolo). Seumanutafa Pogai supported Pouesi and the movement against the LMS, whereas Seumanutafa Loligi's family remained with the LMS.

Faletolu orators requested Pogai to settle the differences with the other chiefs so as to unite the village. Initially the response was favourable when Pogai was quoted as saying:

Seumanutafa Pogai: 'Ua lelei o le a fai i se aso lata mai'.
(‘It will be alright. It will be done soon’).¹²⁰

On the 1st July 1946, the *Faletolu* went on another peace mission for further consultation with Seumanutafa Pogai.¹²¹ Unfortunately, Pogai refused any form of reconciliation unless the Women’s Committee house or the pastor’s house next to the Apia Church could be used for *Lotu Pouesi*’s Sunday service. This angered the *Faletolu* who did not want to bring in the issue of the *Lotu Pouesi* in what they considered to be reconciliation amongst the high chiefs and orators.¹²² Pogai was more concerned about the establishment of the *Lotu Pouesi* rather than trying to unite the village. The situation was to remain unchanged for the next two years.

Utufua noted that Ioelu also discussed reconciliation with Pouesi in an effort for the two churches to promote unity within the village.¹²³ Furthermore Ioelu pointed out that it was Pouesi who agreed with him to reunite the village but apparently Pouesi’s plans were blocked by the Pogai family. Ioelu noted that the problem could have been minimized if it wasn’t for the Pogai family. Utufua commented that perhaps if the decision to reunite was made solely by Pouesi, the *Lotu Pouesi* would have ceased to exist and the village would have one church, reunited once again under the LMS.¹²⁴ Furthermore, Utufua pointed out the significance of the status of a high chief in those days and how they can influence the decision making of the village and families.¹²⁵ In 1948 the laying of the foundation stone of the *Lotu Pouesi* and the jubilee year of the Apia Church, offered some hope in a year of celebrations. On the 26 January 1948, *Lotu Pouesi* laid the foundation for the new church next to the Protestant Church in Apia less than 50 metres from the Apia congregation. Again, on the 9 October 1948, the *Faletolu* proposed a village gathering and on the 16 October 1948, the village reassembled to discuss the issue of reuniting since the establishment of *Lotu Pouesi* in 1941.¹²⁶ Seumanutafa Pogai and Faulalo accepted the proposal by *Faletolu* orators to have a village gathering under one condition, and that is for his rival

¹²⁰“Tusi o le Galuega LMS Apia 1944-1957. Apia Church Records”, 62.

¹²¹“Tusi o le Galuega LMS Apia 1944-1957. Apia Church Records”, 63.

¹²²“Tusi o le Galuega LMS Apia 1944-1957. Apia Church Records”, 63.

¹²³Interview with Rev. Utufua Naseri, 30 March 2012.

¹²⁴Interview with Rev. Utufua Naseri, 30 March 2012.

¹²⁵Interview with Rev. Utufua Naseri, 30 March 2012.

¹²⁶“Tusi o le Galuega LMS Apia 1944-1957. Apia Church Records”, 67.

Seumanutafa Loligi and his family to leave the village. The situation between Pouesi and the LMS church leaders seemed to have cooled down, however the dispute amongst the Seumanutafa clan continued to divide the village.¹²⁷

On July 1952, another reconciliation march took place involving the orators and chiefs of the village.¹²⁸ Fortunately, Seumanutafa Pogai accepted the proposal and so it was agreed that both parties involved in the dispute should reassemble on the 9 November 1952 at Seumanutafa Pogai's house for the discussion of a way forward. Pogai's change of heart to commence talks with his rival may be attributed to the opening of the *Lotu Pouesi* church on 6 December 1951.¹²⁹ The 9 November 1952 was a momentous occasion for the district of Apia. At 12 noon the two parties gathered at the house of Seumanutafa Pogai to discuss reconciliation and settle their differences.¹³⁰ Ioelu contacted Pouesi and his wife Siuila to discuss the plan for the day. Pouesi, Siuila and another founding member of the *Lotu Pouesi* by the name of Nomani, discussed their differences with Ioelu and all agreed to forgive each other for any misunderstanding between them. The day ended with a service to thank God for bringing the two factions together. Ioelu led the service and Pouesi prepared the sermon with the lay preachers (Ieriko and Nomani from the *Lotu Pouesi*) saying the prayers. The day ended with many villagers crying over the division that had plagued the district. Of equal significance are the two chiefs from the Seumanutafa clan who embraced and shook hands in front of the village as a witness to a spirit of reconciliation.¹³¹ In the evening, Pouesi led the service and Ioelu preached in the recently opened *Lotu Pouesi* church. It became a symbolic gesture of reconciliation between the LMS and *Lotu Pouesi*.

Ioelu's sermon seemed to reinforce this spirit of cooperation and unity. Ioelu's sermon was a theological analysis of the history of the village from 1929 to 1952. Ioelu divided up the history of the village into three 12-year periods:

From 1929 to 1941...a 12 year period. During these years the behaviour of the village before God was bad in this period. God punished (the village) in order to teach us. Many chiefs (11 in all) died in this period such as *Tonuu*, *TamaseuTiafu*, *Tamaseu*, *Fouvale*,

¹²⁷"Tusi o le Galuega LMS Apia 1944-1957. Apia Church Records", 67.

¹²⁸"Tusi o le Galuega LMS Apia 1944-1957. Apia Church Records", 82. They included Tuitaualai, Tuilafo, Tuiafoa, Letaa, Lima and Auimatagi.

¹²⁹"Tusi o le Galuega LMS Apia 1944-1957. Apia Church Records", 82.

¹³⁰"Tusi o le Galuega LMS Apia 1944-1957. Apia Church Records", 82.

¹³¹"Tusi o le Galuega LMS Apia 1944-1957. Apia Church Records", 82.

*Auliaomalae, TuiletufugaTiafu, Tuiletufuga Liu, TuiletufugaSio, FueFaaolesa, MatauKarauna, FuimconoSeiuli.*¹³²

Ioelu's speech blamed the difficulties faced by the village firmly on the leadership of the village. He is careful not to ostracise the church and does not blame the church. Ioelu noticed that the suffering continued for another 12 years from 1941 until 1952. However, its impact was less severe than the preceding period from 1929 to 1941. This is evident by the number of events that took place within this time period as compared to 1929 to 1941.

In 1941 there were misunderstandings until 1952. In the 12 years... there has been lessons from God that has created disruption in the village. Even though it has disrupted the village we have behaved better (compared to the 12 years from 1929 to 1941). God has placed these challenges before us for our benefit. Only three chiefs passed away in this period, Amitua, Tuao and Faaletonu. Not only has the behaviour improved but the village has done good things. There was the 50 year Jubilee celebration since the opening of the Apia congregation...there was also the new church of the *Lotu Pouesi*. The pastor's house has been renovated. There are church services on Wednesday and Thursday in the early mornings and many people attend church services regularly on Sundays. These are new mannerisms in the second 12 years.¹³³

Ioelu further elaborated his beliefs that despite the "*flu*" and the "*ua fufula*" (goitre) that struck the village in April, 1947 fewer chiefs died compared to the period from 1929 to 1941. Furthermore members of the village who sided with Seumanutafa Loligi were able to commemorate the silver Jubilee of the Apia Church since its establishment in 1848. On the other hand, those who sided with Seumanutafa Pogai were able to build their new church, not far from the Apia Church. Also, the people were able to renovate each pastor's house and were committed to attend church service on Sundays and morning prayers on Wednesdays and Thursday mornings.¹³⁴ These morning prayers are still practiced by the EFIS up to the present. These major changes highlighted by Ioelu signified an improvement in the moral and spiritual conduct of the village.

Seumanutafa Pogai and Seumanutafa Loligi finally settled their differences. Ioelu called this event one of the happiest days in the history of the village of Apia and Seumanutafa Pogai asked the people of the village to become witnesses of the event. Despite the reunification within the

¹³²"Tusi o le Galuega LMS Apia 1944-1957. Apia Church Records", 83.

¹³³"Tusi o le Galuega LMS Apia 1944-1957. Apia Church Records", 83.

¹³⁴"Tusi o le Galuega LMS Apia 1944-1957. Apia Church Records", 83.

village, the two churches never really became one but 'coexisted' as separate congregations within the village.

Ioelu urged and advised the village to remain steadfast in God's love and to be good citizens for the sake of the village. He also advised future ministers of the church to keep the faith in God and remember the lessons of the past so as to promote unity within the village. Ioelu strongly believes that all these chaos stems from the fact that God is trying to teach the village a lesson of "repentance."¹³⁵

Conclusion

The interviews and literature paint a picture of unfair decisions by those in authority leading to the creation of *Lotu Pouesi* church. It was fortunate for Pouesi that there was a widespread criticism of LMS leaders which enabled Pouesi to form his own church. His cause was helped by the fact that Samoan clergy were also challenging the decisions of those in authority. Pouesi's was fortunate with the formation of the EFIS in 1942 involving the congregations of Fagatogo and Pago Pago from American Samoa. As luck would have it these two congregations were also against those in authority. The creation of the EFIS consolidated the stance of Pouesi against the LMS authorities in Apia. Had the LMS Church leadership and the Pago Pago village leadership not been so heavy handed *Lotu Pouesi* would have been all alone in its stance against the Church.

Tapeni Ioelu's efforts to unite the village in 1952 since the split in 1942 is significant. Not only were the two Seumanutafa clans united after ten years of division, but ironically the village recognised the existence of *Lotu Pouesi*. The LMS Apia Congregation and *Lotu Pouesi* stood within 50 metres from each other and despite their differences, the village was united under Christ.

¹³⁵ "Tusi o le Galuega LMS Apia 1944-1957. Apia Church Records", 83.

Chapter Three Conclusion

The premise of the thesis is to find out the reason or reasons for the schism of *Lotu Pouesi* from the Samoan Church (LMS). The nature of the interviews which are essentially recollections of primary witnesses, leads one to 'read between the lines'. In most cases the eyewitness agree that a ballot was done for the secretary of the district of Apia and that Pouesi did not retain or attain the position of secretary of the district. All agree that Pouesi reacted drastically to the failure to become or retain the position of secretary. Kofe, Fauolo and especially Solomona suggest that the Church conspired to get rid of Pouesi. Both Kofe and Fauolo agree the authorities wanted to get rid of Pouesi. Solomona is more to the point that Pouesi wanted to challenge the colonial authority of the European missionaries. All these accounts point to an issue with Pouesi as a threat to the Church authority. In contrast Utufua's account simply point to Pouesi as being betrayed by fellow pastors who flattered him with assurances that he was guaranteed the position of secretary. Nevertheless all interviews suggest that the Church authorities at the time conspired to 'bring down' Pouesi.

Furthermore the nature of Pouesi's demise, when he was overseas at the time of the ballot points to a conspiracy against him. The authorities made the situation worse by firstly ordering a court order to remove Pouesi from the Apia premises. Secondly and more sinisterly the Church banned *Lotu Pouesi* from using the LMS hymns when the Pouesi family had contributed to the formation of the hymns of the LMS. To ban the Pouesi from using hymns was to aim at the heart of the worship of the Church. These very harsh decisions by the Church further entrenched Pouesi in his stand against the Church.

A major reason for the success of Pouesi setting up his church was the growing discontent with the involvement of the LMS with the New Zealand Administrators of Samoa. From the 1920s to the 1940s there was not only a lot criticism of the Church authority but it was unpopular amongst the Samoan clergy. It can be traced to the knowledge that a former LMS worker Henry Griffen was blamed for the dreaded Samoa Offenders Ordinance. The Samoa Offenders Ordinance gave the Administrator and those under his administration the power to remove the *matai* titles and

banish the chiefs to other islands. The collaboration between the LMS and the New Zealand Administration created a negative image of the LMS not only to the Samoan populace but also amongst the Samoan clergy. By the end of the 1920s the harshness of the New Zealand administration created an environment of rebellion which eventually influenced the church.

There were other reasons for the successful establishment of *Lotu Pouesi*. Firstly there were other cases of rebellion against church authority that came before him. In Falealili district the Samoan pastors 'successfully' removed the elder of the district, Rev. Elder Enosa, by spreading spiteful rumours. Likewise the LMS missionary Rev. Stanley Phillips was 'forced' to resign when the Samoan clergy blocked his attempts to remove a teacher at Leulumoega Fou High School. Unlike these two examples of rebellion Pouesi went one step further and cut ties with the Church authorities by forming a new denomination. Secondly and related to the first reason there was disunity amongst the Church leadership which prevented a more concerted effort to halt the establishment of a new 'denomination'. Norman Goodall described the relationship between the missionaries as 'unpleasant' and full of 'mistrust, slander and malicious gossip'. It is not surprising that the Samoan clergy were inclined to challenge an authoritative structure that was disorganised and showing no signs of unity. Thirdly Pouesi was not alone in the way the Church treated (or mistreated) him. Fortunately he was able to get support from village matais in particular Seumanutafa Pogai. Later the permanency of *Lotu Pouesi* was guaranteed when Pouesi joined forces with Afele Levi of the Fagatogo village and Ueligitone of the Pago Pago village in American Samoa, in the establishment of the EFIS.

The question that naturally arises is why Pouesi was singled out by the Church authorities. Pouesi was the pastor of one of the most prominent churches in Samoa, the Apia congregation. The Apia congregation had a great influence on the Church. The Apia district was the richest district at the time which encompassed the capital city as well as the major businesses operations in Samoa. Hence when the Apia district was not happy with the way the *taulaga* achieved priority in the Church it infuriated the authorities. The *taulaga* was such a controversial issue since it was the primary source of finance for the Church. If the Apia district challenged the importance of the *taulaga* to the Church, it suggests that the district no longer wanted to contribute as much as it potentially can. Since Pouesi was pastor of Apia congregation at the

time, as well as the secretary, the Church authorities suspected Pouesi as instigating the motion about the *taulaga*. Pouesi was in a position of influence and his influence was deemed to be disruptive against the authorities at the time. Stone EFIS, Apia.

From a cultural perspective a possible motive for establishing *Lotu Pouesi* was to become independent from the Samoan Church (LMS). If one views Samoan culture as one of various 'independent' villages it is possible to assume that *Lotu Pouesi* was simply exercising their right to self-determination. *Lotu Pouesi* in essence behaved like an 'independent' village, expressing its own view on the way the church should be run. Just like other 'independent' villages, *Lotu Pouesi* managed to form alliances with Pago Pago and Fagatogo to strengthen and maintain its 'independence'

It must be remembered that Pouesi always said that if he should die that the congregation should return to the LMS. His words confirm that his reason for forming the *Lotu Pouesi* was against the leadership. Certainly Goodall's observation of the disunity among the missionaries supports Pouesi's observation of the leadership at the time. However by 1952 reconciliation was finally achieved between the two factions of the village of Apia. Why did they reconcile? Quite simply the *Lotu Pouesi* had by then built their church approximately 50 metres from the Apia (LMS) Church.

The new denomination had made a powerful statement with the construction of their church. The new church was the dream of high chief Seumanutafa Pogai. When the first reconciliation march by the orators chiefs to Pogai's residence occurred in 1946, Pogai did not agree to the terms unless he was guaranteed of a place of worship. Subsequent reconciliation marches failed because Pogai seemed intent to establish a place of worship for the EFIS to justify the separation from the LMS. It was only when the EFIS church was finally completed in 1951 that the two sides finally reconciled. The *Lotu Pouesi* church dedicated to Jesus, justified to *Lotu Pouesi* that the schism was part of God's plan. As one of their hymns aptly put it:

Arise my Samoan countrymen
The new church has been founded
The Congregation Church of Jesus in Samoa
Jesus is the head of our church

He is the sovereign ruler. (Words from 'Ina fa'aeaialuga')

Appendix
Foundation Stone EFIS, Apia.



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