

**A HISTORY OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CCCS CHURCH BUILDING IN IVA  
FROM 1905-1913**

A Research Paper Presented to the  
Faculty of Malua Theological College  
Apia, Samoa

In Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree  
Bachelor of Theology

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18<sup>th</sup> August 2017.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research paper is a history of the construction of the CCCS church building in Iva from 1905 to 1913. There is a saying which goes, “We can never fully understand ourselves, until we understand our past.” It means to know one’s history is the key to knowing one’s identity. This is absolutely important to the members of the CCCS in Iva as well as all people of Iva nowadays. The CCCS church building is the oldest building in Iva with more than a hundred years since it was built. It has been the center of the spiritual lives of the people of Iva for many years now. By looking at the history of the building of this church, it reminds us about the past generations of Iva and our ancestors who built it. In addition it gives us an appreciation of the religious, social, cultural as well as political context of the time. Moreover this history of the construction of this church building serves to inspire us of the faith of those involved.

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my great-grandparents, the late Reverend Elder Enele and Gasolo Kirisome who led the building of the church in Iva. It is also dedicated to my current pastor Reverend Tonu and Malelega Mauafu and it is in memory of those who worshipped in this church and served as pastors in Iva; the late Reverend Ariu and Faalaniga Siō, Reverend Manu and Lanuola Tusani, Reverend Elder Tufi and Kalita Faapusa.

I also dedicate this work to my parents Magele Siaumau and Fiaese Magele Siaumau Kirisome, my wife Aniva, our families and all the people of Iva in Samoa and around the world. Our church has always been our unity and strength from generation to generation.

## **DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP OF RESEARCH PAPER**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby declare that this is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge, contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at Malua Theological College or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made. Any contribution made to the research by colleagues with whom I have worked at Malua Theological College or elsewhere during my candidature is fully acknowledged.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, all glory to our Heavenly Father for the guidance and strength to enable this task to be completed in due course. It is without doubt that God's ever present Holy Spirit has encouraged the fulfillment of this difficult work. Praises be to the Almighty God.

I will like to take this opportunity to say thanks to my supervisor Rev Dr. Latu Latai for helping me complete this complicated task. Your love, guidance and encouragement has empowered me to do this research paper. Without your great support and participation, this task would not have been completed. May God bless you and your family abundantly.

The blessings and prayers from my spiritual parents here in Malua, Principal Rev Maafala and Lalokava Limā are not forgotten. Thank you for your endless love and support during my time here in Malua. You have made this task a fruitful and stress free experience. To my brothers and sisters in our Malua *auaiga*, your support is much appreciated. Thank you so much. May our Everlasting God bless all of you.

Prayer and support from my mentor and minister, Rev Tonu and Malelega Mauafu and family of the CCCS Iva, thank you for all the guidance and words of encouragement given me throughout my life journey. The celebration of the hundredth year anniversary of our CCCS church that you led in 2012 inspired me to write this paper. May our Heavenly Father bless you and your family.

Lastly but not the least, to my parents Fiaese and Magele Siaumau, families, CCCS members and all the people of Iva, thank you so much for your support and love given to me throughout the four years of my journey in Malua Theological College. I could never have done it and be where I am now without you all. May God shower each and every one of you with His blessings.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AOG	Assembly of God
CCCS	Congregational Christian Church Samoa
EFKS	Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa
LDS	Latter Days Saints
LMS	London Missionary Society
SDA	Seventh Day Adventist
SISDAC	Samoa Independent Seventh Day Adventist Church



## Introduction

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2012, the village of Iva celebrated the hundredth year anniversary of its church building. In an article in the *Samoa Observer*, the reporter stated that “Hundreds of villagers gathered...Many Iva villagers from Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America returned for the celebration.”<sup>1</sup>

During the special service, the Chairman of the Congregational Christian Church Samoa (CCCS), Reverend Elder Lale Ieremia told the people of Iva “...to let the celebration be a remembrance of God’s love.”<sup>2</sup> In Ieremia’s speech, he also told the people of Iva, “...not to destroy the church for it was a gift built by your ancestors to you and the next generation.”<sup>3</sup>

Ieremia’s speech encouraged not only the CCCS members but the whole village to remember that this church building was a gift from their ancestors and that it should be a reminder of God’s love. Ieremia also urged Iva to look after the church as a reminder of their ancestors who built it for them.

One of the things that inspired me to carry out this research was this celebration of the hundredth year anniversary of our church building. It was an important event in our village which reminded me as Ieremia stated on that day, of the important work of our forefathers and foremothers.

Theologically, the church has been the foundation of the spiritual life for many generations of Iva. We the people of Iva should therefore be steadfast and work together to maintain our church building as it is a symbol of the love of God which guided our ancestors and the village up until now. It means that we must not destroy this church where lies the foundation of our faith which was handed over from our forefathers and foremothers to us and the future Iva generations. If we destroy the church, it means we take away our blessings and we forget the love of our parents.

The celebration of the hundredth year anniversary of the CCCS Iva church building saw the preservation of this building rather than pulling it down. This was in contrast to the CCCS Jubilee Church in Malua which the CCCS mother church decided to pull down and now replaced

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<sup>1</sup> *Samoa Observer*, 24 April 2012, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Samoa Observer*, 24 April 2012, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> *Samoa Observer*, 24 April 2012, p. 4.

with a new building which was recently opened and blessed during the Church's General Assembly of 2017.

For me this was an unfortunate decision. The old Jubilee Church was a symbol of the love of God to our people at that time and for the CCCS's future generations. It reminded us about how faithful our people were. It also shows the connection of the CCCS and the LMS missionaries who brought the light of God since 1830. The old Jubilee also reminded us of how the past generation appreciated and respected Christianity. The destruction of the old Jubilee means we had destroyed our heritage from our forefathers and foremothers. It means that we have forgotten their love and the good works of their hands.

Writing a history of the CCCS Church building in Iva is therefore an important task. The church building is one of the oldest in Samoa and it reminds the people of Iva of the faith of our ancestors who built it.

Iva is one of the villages in the district of Faasaleleaga situated in the northeastern coast of Savaii. It consists of four sub-villages; Vaifou, Avea, Vaoiva and Vaiafai. The first three sub-villages have one *faalupega* or salutation which is,

*Afifio le paia o le Aiga Salevalasi*  
*Afifio Tofilau ma Matua*  
*Alalata'i lau fetalaiga Leauanae*  
*Faapea Sasulu ma le nofo-ituaiga.*

Vaiafai has a separate salutation which is,

*Susū mai Tapaau ma Alo o le Tagaloa*  
*Maliu mai Taulauniu ma le Falesafune*

But the Faalupega of the whole village of Iva including Vaiafai is,

*Afifio le paia o le Aiga Salevalasi*  
*Afifio le Aiga sa Tofilau ma Matua*  
*Susū Tapaau ma Alo o le Tagaloa*  
*Alalata'i lau fetalaiga Leauanae*  
*Ma le falelua ia Sasulu ma Taulauniu*

The salutation of Iva shows the important chiefly titles and chiefly families of Iva. Firstly are the families of high chiefs which includes the Aiga Salevalasi, Tofilau ma Matua. Secondly are the chief orators Leauanae, Sasulu ma Taulauniu. As we will see, these chiefly families played important roles and influence in the history of the CCCS church in Iva and particularly in the construction of the church building.

## **Methodology**

This research paper relies mainly on three main sources of information and data collection. Firstly are the written sources. These include primary sources such as the *Api o le Galuega* (CCCS Iva) or *Book of the Work* (CCCS Iva), the LMS missionary magazine *Sulu Samoa*, the Council for World Mission Archives in Microfiche Collection held at Malua Theological College Library. Other materials collected from the archives of the CCCS, Ministry of Statistic and Bureau and the Lands and Titles Court.

Secondly, this research uses oral sources through personal communication and semi-formal interviews. Listening to the stories of elders in Iva about the history of the church and its church building was one of the reasons that inspired me to write this history.

## **Outline of Chapters**

This research paper has three main chapters. Chapter 1 looks at the previous church building and the decision to build a new one. Chapter 2 looks at the decision to build the new church at a new location, and the important cultural political and religious meanings associated with it. Chapter 3 looks at the construction of the church and those involved until it was completed, blessed and celebrated in 1913. A conclusion will sum up the social, political, cultural and theological issues related to the construction of the church.

## Chapter 1: *O le Lupe a Noa*: The Old church and the Arrival of the Gospel in Iva

*O le falesa muamua, sa faaigoa O le Lupe a Noa...E faapea le tala o le lupe na lele mai ma le Talalelei, ua sau tu i Vaoiva. Tai pei o le lupe foi lele a Noa, na alu e vaai le lolo. O tala nei mo mea o tala faa-agamua. Lea la na sau loa le lupe tu i i tonu lava i le mea lea sa faatu ai le falesa muamua. Sa lele mai ai le lupe ma le Talalelei.<sup>4</sup>*

*The first church building was named The Dove of Noah. The story goes that the dove flew here with the Good News and landed at Vaoiva. It is like the dove of Noah that went out to observe the flood. This is an oral tradition. The dove came and landed in this place where the first church was built. The dove flew here with the Gospel.*

According to an interview with Mulitalo Onosemo, one of the oldest members of our church, the current CCCS church building in Iva was built to replace the old church which was called *O le Lupe a Noa* or *Noah's Dove*. This church was named to commemorate the arrival of the Gospel in Iva. As Onosemo stated, the story goes that a dove came with the Good News, like Noah's dove and landed at Vaoiva, a sub-village of Iva where the first church building was built.

There are no written records of the arrival of the Gospel in Iva. But this oral tradition demonstrates the significance of this event in the lives of the people of Iva, which was memorialized in the name of its first church building. As shown in the story told by Onosemo, the people of Iva likened the landing of the dove, to the dove of hope from the story of Noah in the Book of Genesis. This signals the arrival of the Gospel in the village of Iva.<sup>5</sup> The building of the first church in this location was therefore a reminder of the arrival of the Gospel.

Despite the lack of written as well as oral accounts of the arrival of the Gospel in Iva, it is likely that Iva was one of the earliest villages in Samoa to be evangelized. Word of the new religion would have reached Iva as early as 1830, the year when John Williams arrived in Samoa.<sup>6</sup> This is because Iva is situated only a few kilometers from Sapapalii where Williams arrived. Since the LMS arrived in Sapapalii and Williams and his Tahitian teachers made this village their base, it is likely that many nearby villagers from the Faasaleleaga district including Iva went to Sapapalii to hear and learn from the missionaries about the new religion. Oka Fauolo also noted that the

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<sup>4</sup> *Personal Interview* with Mulitalo Onosemo, Iva, 9 December, 2016.

<sup>5</sup> *Personal Interview* with Mulitalo Onosemo, Iva, 9 December, 2016.

<sup>6</sup> John Williams, *A Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands*, John Snow, London, 1840, pp. 85

LMS Tahitian Teachers visited some of the villages of the Faasaleleaga and took the Gospel there.<sup>7</sup>

Another evidence of the early arrival of the Gospel in Iva was the selection of two men from Iva as the first Samoan missionaries to the Western Pacific. On the 6<sup>th</sup> November 1839, Williams departed with twelve Samoan missionaries. These Samoan men were selected from among thirty four applicants.<sup>8</sup> Two of the twelve missionaries were from Iva and they were Mose and Filipino.<sup>9</sup> This shows that Christianity had already been established in Iva and that a church had already existed. It is likely therefore that Iva was evangelized in the 1830s, sometime between 1830 and 1839.



Figures 1. Location of O le Lupe a Noa.<sup>10</sup> Figure 2. Another angle of the location O le Lupe a Noa<sup>11</sup>.

Accordingly the first church building in Iva was at Vaoiva where members of the village worshipped until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the new church was built.<sup>12</sup> This part of the village is where the two sections of land called Poutavai and Tuanofoga meet. According to Onesemo, this was where the old church was built.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Oka Fauolo, *O Vavega o le Alofa Lavea'i: O le Tala Faasolopito o le Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa*, Malua Printing Press, Apia, 2005, pp. 36

<sup>8</sup> Oka Fauolo, *O Vavega o le Alofa Lavea'i: O le Tala Faasolopito o le Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano i Samoa*, Malua Printing Press, Apia, 2005, pp. 69

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 69 According to Malama Meleisea, John William four of the twelve were from Iva, Salamea, Filipino, Mose and Ioane. See Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa*, University of the South Pacific, Suva, 1987, pp.59.

<sup>10</sup> Figure 3 shows the white arrows pointed to the place where O le Lupe a Noa was built. This area belongs to Poutavai and Tuanofoga and no one knows the boundary for these lands. The right white arrow shows Poutavai site and while the left white arrow to Tuanofoga site. This photo was taken from the public road at the front.

<sup>11</sup> Figure 4 illustrates my position standing from Poutavai land and takes this photo of the location of O le Lupe a Noa. We see the road there, that's the connection of these two lands.

<sup>12</sup> Personal Interview with Magele Siaumau Kirisome, Iva, 9 December, 2016.

<sup>13</sup> Personal Interview with Mulitalo Onosemo, Iva, 9 December, 2016.

The land Poutavai belongs to the extended family of Sā Sevē. Seve is one of the *tulafale* or orators in Iva. Tuanofoga, on the other hand belongs to Sā Avea, one of the branches of the Tofilau family.<sup>14</sup> It is likely therefore that these families were the first Christian converts in Iva given that they offered their lands to build the first church.<sup>15</sup>

Mulitalo Onosemo stated that *O le Lupe a Noa* was built in the design of a Samoan *fale-afolau* and could accommodate more than a hundred people.<sup>16</sup> However, as the population of the village and congregation grew, there was a need to build a bigger church. The reason for building the new church was therefore because the old church was too small compare to the growth in numbers of the members of the church.<sup>17</sup>

Today, there is no reference to the name *O le Lupe a Noa* being given to the current church building. Yet to this day, many have not forgotten the old church building and the meaning of its name. The old church was the foundation for the spiritual lives of the village which gave direction to building the new church. In essence, the humbleness of the first church, made it possible for the new church to be built. The growth of the village from its humble beginnings, showed the perseverance and patience and the gratitude of the people with the building of the new church.

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<sup>14</sup> These lands are still registered under these respected families. Hence the lands were returned when the new church was shifted and built on a new location.

<sup>15</sup> *Personal Interview* (phone call) with Magele Siaumau Kirisome, 8 July, 2017.

<sup>16</sup> *Personal Interview* with Mulitalo Onosemo, Iva, 9 December, 2016.

<sup>17</sup> *Personal Interview* with Mulitalo Onosemo, Iva, 9 December, 2016.

## Chapter 2: The New Church Building and the Shift to the New Location

As we have learned, the reason for the building of the new church was due to the growth in number of the Church in Iva. The previous church which was a Samoan *fale-afolau* could no longer cater for the increased members of the congregation.

The pastor at the time when the new church was built was Enele Kirisome from Falelatai and Manono.<sup>18</sup> Prior to Enele Kirisome were Malaki who lost his life in the sea in 1901<sup>19</sup> and Monise from Malie who left for to work as a missionary in Tuvalu in 1905.<sup>20</sup> Enele Kirisome however was married to Gasolo who was from Iva, the grand-daughter of Leauanae Nuuuli of Faleloa. After serving as missionary in Beru in the Kiribati Islands,<sup>21</sup> they returned home and went to Savaii to stay at Gasolo's family at Faleloa Iva.



Figure 3. Reverend Elder Enele Kirisome from Falelatai and Manono who spent almost 40 years in Iva and he's the one who built the church that was celebrated in 1913.<sup>22</sup>

However the current pastor Monise at that time left Iva to go as a missionary to Tuvalu and so the people of Iva then urged Enele Kirisome to become their pastor.<sup>23</sup> Enele Kirisome did not accept their request because his wife Gasolo was from Iva. This is based on the traditional policy of the LMS that a pastor and his wife cannot work at his or her own village. The village however

<sup>18</sup> *Personal Communication* with Magele Siaumau Kirisome, Tuesday, 11 Oct, 2016.

<sup>19</sup> *O le Sulu Samoa*, Mati, 1901, 27-28.

<sup>20</sup> Latu Latai, *Covenant Keepers: A History of Samoan (LMS) Missionary Wives in the Western Pacific from 1839 to 1979*, Submitted Thesis, 2016, pp. 307

<sup>21</sup> *Personal Communication* with Magele Siaumau Kirisome, 8 July, 2017.

<sup>22</sup> Figure 7 from Rev Tonu Mauafu, Iva, 21 April, 2012.

<sup>23</sup> *Personal Interview* with Magele Siaumau Kirisome, Iva, 9 December, 2016.

still wanted Enele Kirisome to become their pastor and he finally accepted.<sup>24</sup> According to oral accounts, when Enele Kirisome became the pastor, the Leauanae family provided food for Gasolo while Kirisome and his children's food were provided by the village. This was because Gasolo was from Iva and a member of the Leauanae family. This shows how the Leauanae family were aware of how the appointment of Kirisome and Gasolo was breaking with traditional protocols and LMS policies.<sup>25</sup>

Enele Kirisome thus became the pastor of Iva during the time when the people were discussing the building of a new Church.<sup>26</sup> According to oral accounts, when discussion of the new church was made, the congregation decided that the new church be built in a new location. From Poutavai and Tuanofoga, the new church was to be built at Faleloa.<sup>27</sup>

According to oral accounts, the chiefs Leauanae Timani and Leauanae Amani requested that the new church be built on their land at Faleloa. It is important to note that the new pastor at the time was Enele Kirisome who was married to Gasolo a member of Leauanae family of Faleloa. Gasolo was the grand-daughter of Nuuuli, the previous holder of the Leauanae title. She was also the cousin of Leauanae Amani. Hence the decision to build the new church at Faleloa was probably influenced by this strong family connection.

However, the request to shift the church to Faleloa could have also been based on cultural and political reasons. The chiefly title Leauanae is the most influential title in Iva. Both Amani and Timani were the title holders of this title and they both played the same significant roles in the decision making in the village. Leauanae Amani and Leauanae Timani wanted to shift the church to their land opposite to the *laoa* or meeting house and *malaefono* or meeting place at Faleloa.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> *Personal Interview* with Magele Siaumau Kirisome, Iva, 9 December, 2016.

<sup>25</sup> *Personal Communication* with Magele Siaumau Kirisome, 8 July, 2017.

<sup>26</sup> On the other hand according to Magele Siaumau Kirisome, it was also Enele Kirisome himself who wanted to build a new church to replace the old one.

<sup>27</sup> *Personal Interview* with Magele Siaumau Kirisome, Iva, 9 December, 2016, *Personal Interview* with Mulitalo Onosemo, Iva, 9 December, 2016.

<sup>28</sup> *Personal Interviews* with Magele Siaumau Kirisome and Mulitalo Onosemo, Iva, 9 December, 2016. Even though originally agreed upon by these two chief orators, but it was a decision made by the family at large, the *Leauanae* family at *Faleloa*. There is contention at the moment over the ownership of the land in which the Church now stands, however it has been cleared from when the decision to relocate the Church to *Faleloa*, that the rightful ownership, has always been the *Leauanae* family. Yet, the land is now under the ownership of the Church and the congregation, but it is only for the Church that is built on the *Faleloa* land. The Reverends house is actually built elsewhere within the village.



Faleloa is the most important meeting place in Iva. Traditionally, the *malaefono* is used when the whole village meets including the sub-village of Vaiafai. As shown in the salutation of Iva, although Vaiafai is autonomous, it is also part of Iva.<sup>29</sup> Iva and Vaiafai often hold their own meetings, known as *Aso o le Puluenuu*, but when something important happens in the village like hosting visitors, then a meeting called *Fono Sootuli* is held at Faleloa. *Sootuli* literally means knees touching. During this *fono* the knees of the chiefs literally touched once seated. Hence it shows the significance of this meeting and portrays an image of working together as one in unity in their decision making.

There is another important meeting held at Faleloa called *Fono Tauati*. This meeting is much more powerful than the *Fono Sootuli* because it discusses serious matters like murder or conflicts with other villages. This *fono* begins with four separate meetings known as *nofo-a-fono*. These are meetings within the four main families of Iva referred to in its *faalupega*; Aiga Salevalasi, Tofilau ma Matua, Tapaau & Alo o le Tagaloa & Taulauniu and Leauanae and Faleupolu- Sasulu & Nofo-a-ituaiaga. After each of these meetings, each *nofo-a-fono* then selects one representative to speak on their behalf at the *malaefono* at Faleloa. Even though there are other *nofo-a-fono* during the time of the *Fono Tauati*, the final decision was still made in Faleloa. When discussing a serious issue, the final decision was usually made by Leauanae together with his group of orators.

The meeting house at Faleloa is also called Tua-o-Fuifatu meaning ‘behind or back of Fuifatu’. Fuifatu is the name of the meeting place for the district at Safotulafai. Tua-o-Fuifatu means behind Fuifatu meaning Faleloa is the house upon which Fuifatu depends on. In other words, Fuifatu relies on the *tofa* and *faautautaga* or advice from Leauanae of Faleloa to govern and protect the whole district.

To me, this is an implication of the importance of Faleloa. It means that this is an important place where the whole village come together to make important decisions concerning the welfare of

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<sup>29</sup> Iva and Vaiafai are one village but according oral tradition, Vaiafai was once taken by the *Tagaloa* family, and that's why their *Faalupega* was related to the *Tagaloa*. However *Lafai* (descendants of Iva) the brother of *Tagaloa Funefeai*, declared war against *Tagaloa Funefeai* and he defeated him, so he recaptured Vaiafai again as part of Iva. But Vaiafai still use their *Faalupega* of the *Tagaloa* family, a decision made by *Lafai* as a remembrance of his brother *Tagaloa Funefeai*. Nowadays Vaiafai still use their *Faalupega* but they are one of Iva's sub-village.

the village. It is also an important place where decisions are made that influence the affairs of the district of Safotulafai.

It is also important to note the significance of the title Leauanae. The title is also referred to as the *ao* or head of all the *tulafale* or orators of Iva, the one who leads all the orators and the one who makes decisions depending on the *tofa* or wisdom from the Aiga Salevalasi and Tofilau ma Matua, the high chiefs of the village. On the district level, Leauanae is also the one who represents the village to the *Fono a le Itumalo* or District Council at Safotulafai. So in that sense, the holders of the Leauanae title at the time saw the importance of their cultural and political roles and therefore believed that the rightful place for the church would be at Faleloa. They too believed that they should safeguard the Church and the Gospel, thus the relocation of the Church to the new location on their land.

The cultural and political significance of Faleloa is therefore one of the likely reasons for the request from the two Leauanae to shift the new church there. The aerial map of Iva taken in 1954 shows how the new church was shifted from its old location at Vaoiva to Faleloa opposite the *malaefono* and *laoa* at Faleloa. (See figure 4 below)

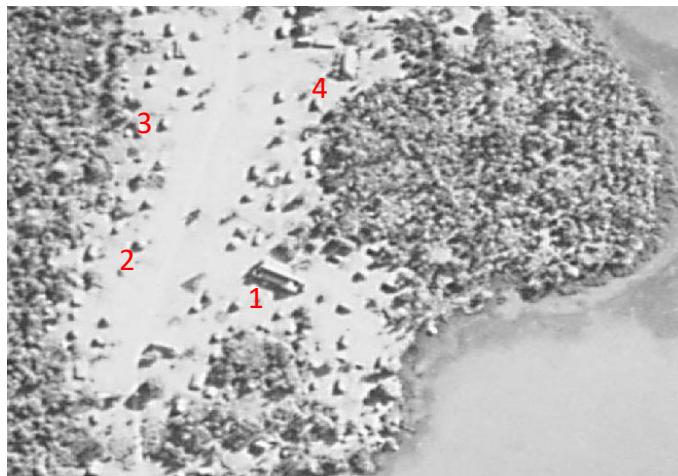


Figure 4. Aerial map of the central part of Iva. Taken via satellite in 1954. The numbers indicate, 1. New Church Building, 2. *Laoa* and *malaefono* at Faleloa, 3. *O le Lupe a Noa* at Vaoiva, 4. Pastor's residence.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> This image was provided by *Petania Tuala*, Senior Officer of the Land Division at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.

This aerial image of Iva also shows the centrality of the Church in the life of the village. It is the biggest building in the village. It is also only one of the few buildings that was of European design at a time when the majority of people lived in traditional Samoan *fale* or houses. The only other building that is near in size is the Pastor's residence. These buildings highlight the significance of the Church to the people of Iva and how they have incorporated it into their lives. This shows the strong connection of the church to the village and the important relationship between the Gospel and the *Faa-Samoa* or Samoan Culture. These two goes together, like the Samoan proverbial saying "*E malu le Talalelei i le Aganuu ae mamalu le Aganuu ona o le Talalelei*" meaning The Gospel is safe with Culture while Culture is esteemed by the Gospel. The church which was to be built facing the meeting house at Faleloa could also mean that by building the church opposite the meeting place means that the Spirit of God will be present in their decision making.

Today the CCCS church in Iva and where it is located continue to serve not only as a reminder to the Leauanae family for what they stand for to safeguard the village, but also a sign of pride for the future generations of the Leauanae family as shown in a recent aerial view of Faleloa.

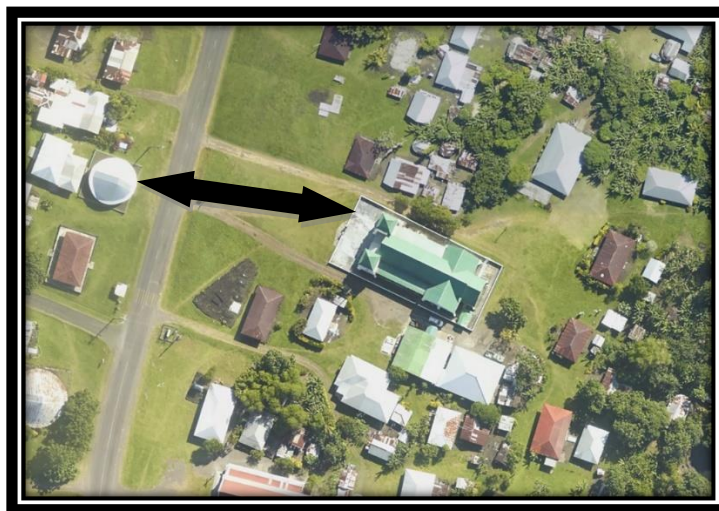


Figure 5. This aerial satellite image of Iva taken in 2015 shows the position of the church to the *laoa* and *malaefono* at Faleloa indicated by the arrow.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> This image was provided by Petania Tuala of the Land Division, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Apia, 9 June, 2017.

### Chapter 3: The Construction of the New Church

*O le galuega o le falesa sa galulue ai le nuu atoa. O taulelea ma matai sa o i paopao ua la'u mai le amu mai tai le sami. Ona aumai lea ua la'u i totonu o ogaumu nei e tafu ai. Ona maua ai lea o le mea ga pei se pefu, pei se pauka. Ia o mea la ga sa palu e fau ai le tino o le falesa. Sa galulue uma tagata i na taimi...*<sup>32</sup>

*The building of the church was a collective effort done by the whole village. The young men and chiefs of the village went out to sea and collected coral from the reef. Then the coral were burnt inside the ovens. It produced a dust like powder. This was mixed with water to make the walls of the church.*

As we have learned from the previous chapter, the building of the current church saw it shifted from its old location on the two sections of land named Poutavai and Tuanofoga to its current location of Faleloa.<sup>33</sup> As mentioned this was because of the growing population of the village as well as the influence of the chief orators Leauanae Timani and Leauanae Amani and the then chiefs of the village. As well as this there was also the influence of Enele Kirisome and particular his wife Gasolo who was a daughter of the Leauanae family. According to oral accounts, the construction of the new church was also under the direction of chief orators Leauanae Timani and Leauanae Amani.<sup>34</sup>

The building of the church was a huge task for the village. The account above by Magele Siaumau Kirisome shows how the whole village became involved in its construction. At the time, there were two Christian denominations in Iva, the Catholic Church<sup>35</sup> and the LMS Church. Yet, people from both congregations helped in the building of the LMS church. This shows the unity within the village at the time; not only the unity of the two churches but also the village council and the people. There was one voice and everyone worked to build the church, no matter whether you were Catholic or LMS.

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<sup>32</sup> *Personal Interviews* with Magele Siaumau Kirisome, Iva, 9 December, 2016.

<sup>33</sup> *Personal Interview* with Mulitalo Onosemo, Iva, 9 December, 2016.

<sup>34</sup> *Personal Interview* with Magele Siaumau Kirisome, Iva, 9 December, 2016.

<sup>35</sup> In 1845 both Iva and Salelavalu were evangelized by the Roman Catholic Church. See Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa*, University of the South Pacific, Suva, 1987, p. 63.

According to Tofilau Papalii Saausi Matautia, “The church was built at a time when people did not have much, but the people were united. It was a time when there were less people, but chiefly authority was strong.”<sup>36</sup>

Mulitalo Onosemu and Magele Siaumau Kirisome both testify to the account that the church building was built under the direction of the chief *tufuga* or builder Mataafa Iose from Palauli.<sup>37</sup> However the work stopped due to the unexpected death of the chief builder who was sick due to his hard work building the church and the lack of medical treatment at the time.<sup>38</sup> The congregation then had to find someone to continue the work. It was here that the congregation turned to the LMS administration for help.<sup>39</sup> The LMS then lent a builder who was working for the German colonial government at the time. He was Peter Paul<sup>40</sup> or Polo<sup>41</sup> as he was known to the local people. Paul was a builder and a contractor and he had his company in Apia at the time.<sup>42</sup> This company was assisted by a group of builders from someone by the name of Sio.<sup>43</sup> Sio and Jose or Iose were the Samoan builder-carpenters trained in Leulumoega by the missionaries. At the time they were building an LMS Faamasani or Preparatory School at Tuasivi Savaii. They also built some of the churches in 1913.<sup>44</sup> It was this group of builders that continued the building of the church until it was completed.

Funding for the church involved every family in the village. Magele Siaumau Kirisome said that each family of Iva sold copra and cocoa to fund the construction of the church.<sup>45</sup> This money was used to pay for the materials provided to build the church. Even though there was funding for the completion of the church, anything above and beyond that was relied on the strength of the village of Iva. The construction of the church depended on the labour provided by the people of Iva. For example, the chiefs and untitled men of the village would go out to sea and bring back

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<sup>36</sup> *Personal Interview* with Tofilau Papalii Saausi Faaifoaso Matautia, Iva, 11 December, 2016.

<sup>37</sup> *Personal Interview* with Magele Siaumau Kirisome, Iva, 9 December, 2016.

<sup>38</sup> *Personal Interview* with Magele Siaumau Kirisome, Iva, 9 December, 2016.

<sup>39</sup> *Personal Interview* with Magele Siaumau Kirisome, Iva, 9 December, 2016.

<sup>40</sup> *O le Sulu Samoa*, Ianuari, 1912, 1.

<sup>41</sup> *Personal Interviews* with Mulitalo Onosemo and Magele Siaumau Kirisome, Iva, 9 December, 2016.

<sup>42</sup> *O le Sulu Samoa*, Ianuari, 1912, 1.

<sup>43</sup> *O le Sulu Samoa*, Oketopa, 1913, 159.

<sup>44</sup> J Wilberforce. Sibree, *Council for World Mission Archives: 1914 Report from the Faasaleleaga District of Savaii and the Aana District and Leulumoega Boys School Upolu*, Malua Printing Press, London Missionary Society, Samoa, 9<sup>th</sup> January, 1915.

<sup>45</sup> *Personal Communication* with Magele Siaumau Kirisome, 8 July, 2017.

coral from the reef. They would dig large holes and burn the coral in them which produce lime which was then mixed with water to produce cement which was used on the outside structure of the Church.<sup>46</sup>



Figures 6 & 7. The places where huge ovens were built to burn corals<sup>47</sup>

The village also looked after the builders of the church, housing them, feeding them, and tending to their everyday needs. Building materials like timber and glass windows were provided by the LMS Church.<sup>48</sup>

As we have seen the new church building was the biggest building in the village at the time. It was of European design using mostly foreign materials in the form of timber, cement, and glass windows. The construction must have been quite a sight, as it was one of the biggest construction project that the village had ever done.

After seven years of work, the new church was finally completed in 1912. The design of the Church reflects Protestant ideas and values. The church is in the shape of a cross. (See Figure 5) The front has one steeple on the right hand side where the big bell hangs. The original design probably meant to have two steeples but in the end they decided to have only one. It could be because of cost related reasons. As shown in figure 8 below, the bottom half of a steeple on the left hand side was already completed.

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<sup>46</sup> *Personal communication*, with Magele Siaumau Kirisome, Iva, 31 January, 2017.

<sup>47</sup> *Figures 8 & 9* shows the circles which marked the places of the holes that were used to burn the corals which produce the lime that used to make the outer part of the church.

<sup>48</sup> *Personal Interview* with Magele Siaumau Kirisome, Iva, 9 December, 2016.



Figure 8. The CCCS church building in the 1960s.<sup>49</sup>

The interior design of the Church shows the pulpit in the middle in the front facing the congregation. On each side of the pulpit are places where children sit facing the pulpit. The inside design of the church is like the old Jubilee in Malua showing the influence of the LMS missionaries. Unlike the stained windows of the Jubilee, the windows of this church are clear. This was probably because of cost related reasons.

Theologically, the design of this church indicates the significance of the term congregational. The position and the location of chairs facing the pulpit from the front and two sides is the image of worshippers facing together during worship. (See figures 9 -12) The term congregation implies coming together in unity and sharing together in worship.

In relation to Faleloa, a house where all the chiefs of Iva come together to discuss their *tofā* and *faautautaga* for the benefits of the village. The worshipping together of the village in this church not only to give praises but asking God for his guidance upon the village. The pulpit is in the middle of the church is the implication of the Word of God to be preached out to the people. It means that God is in the middle so that everyone is equal.

At the time when the church was completed, it must have been a beautiful sight. The year of completion is 1912. Evidence of this is the year 1912 etched in the cement in the front of the Church. This was why we celebrated the church's 100<sup>th</sup> year Jubilee in 2012.

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<sup>49</sup> James Siers, *Samoa in colour*, Tokyo, Japan, 1970, p112. Image taken sometime between 1960-70. It shows that at the front of the church, there was only one steeple and the roof was covered in red tiles.





Figures 9 & 10. Inside view of the Church via middle aisle.<sup>50</sup>



Figures 11 & 12. Images showing the chairs on the side of the *pulela'a* which are facing inwards.<sup>51</sup>

However accounts in the *Sulu Samoa* shows that the church was blessed for use by the congregation on the 6<sup>th</sup> September 1913. Enele Kirisome in the *Sulu Samoa* published the following account of this momentous occasion. He wrote,

*The chiefs and the matai of our village were filled with joy and thanksgiving because this big work has been completed. It was only a service to bless the church but it is clear - The Celebration for the Church will be held in future. Our whole village gathered together to bless our church on the 6<sup>th</sup> September 1913. An invitation was extended to the Leaders of the District as well as Elders and ministers. This day was Saturday. Those who spoke- Misi Saipele and Elders Faimalo, Liuvao and Reverend Fereti who said the prayers, deacon Amani also spoke. This service gave thanks to those who were responsible in making this building such as Polo, Mata'afa Iose, Pita and the builders of Sio.*<sup>52</sup>

It is clear from Enele Kirisome's account that the church was blessed for use on the 6<sup>th</sup> September 1913. This differs from the year 1912 etched at the front of the church. So why was there a delay in the blessing of the Church for usage?

<sup>50</sup> Photos taken by Vaega Magele, 1 June, 2017.

<sup>51</sup> Photos taken by Vaega Magele, 1 June, 2017.

<sup>52</sup> *O le Sulu Samoa*, Oketopa, 1913, 159.



Oral accounts by those interviewed provide a valid answer. According to Magele Siaumau Kirisome, when the church was completed, the people went to worship on Sunday, and then came the rain and the water seeped through the roof and covered the floor.<sup>53</sup> The problem was that there were leaks on the roof. The roof was tiled and no one knew how to fix it. Enele Kirisome and the people of Iva asked the LMS Samoa to find someone to fix the tiles on the roof. Then there came a 21 year old young man named Ake from Sydney, Australia.<sup>54</sup> When he arrived, some people of Iva were sent to Malua to pick him up. The people thought that Ake would bring many tools or equipment but he only had a hammer and a cutter. There were scaffoldings which surrounded the church and these were used by Ake to climb to fix the roof.<sup>55</sup> After that, Ake asked for his pay and the people gave him \$1000.<sup>56</sup> When Paul asked him about the roof of the church whether it was okay from the rain, Ake replied, that he was a special worker of tiles. On the following Sunday when the village went to church to worship, there were no more leaks.<sup>57</sup> If we think of the coming of Ake from Sydney Australia to fix the roof of the church, it gives us an idea that the church was finished in 1912 but because of the leaking roof, then the service to bless the church was delayed until 1913.

The completion of the church was a great milestone for the village of Iva. The new church building was finally used for its services and no doubt the people were proud of this achievement. On the day that the church building was blessed Enele wrote that,

*I presented an account of the building of the church, the money used - \$18,217.80c. This is the cost of this beautiful church for services to praise God. It was the Lord who was present and the source of strength that led to the success of the project from the beginning until it was finished.*<sup>58</sup>

After the blessing of the church, the congregation then began preparation for the *faaulufalega* or the celebration of the completion of the church. Kirisome announced in the *Sulu Samoa*,

*I would like to inform those who are related to Iva, those who will attend the Celebration with gifts of love. Hear this – please! Do not express your love with a chair, a clock, a*

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<sup>53</sup> *Personal Interview* with Magele Siaumau Kirisome, Iva, 9 December, 2016.

<sup>54</sup> *Personal Interview* with Mulitalo Onosemo and Magele Siaumau Kirisome, Iva, 9 December, 2016.

<sup>55</sup> *Personal Interview* with Magele Siaumau Kirisome, Iva, 9 December, 2016.

<sup>56</sup> *Personal Interview* with Magele Siaumau Kirisome, Iva, 9 December, 2016.

<sup>57</sup> *Personal Interview* with Magele Siaumau Kirisome, Iva, 9 December, 2016.

<sup>58</sup> *O le Sulu Samoa*, Oketopa, 1913, 159.

*pillow etc.; but with money. So that we are able to use your gifts appropriately. The date of this Celebration will be announced in future.*<sup>59</sup>

Enele Kirisome did not confirm the date for this celebration but oral accounts depicted that this was a significant occasion for the people of Iva. There is a traditional saying regarding this celebration which is, “*Ua toe pau a mea a Iva ia Iva.*” This means that there was so much food that there was so much left over. This is because there were plenty of food; pigs, *paelo povi* or containers of salt beef, *apamasi* or boxes of tin biscuits, etc. prepared for this special occasion. According to Mata’utia,

*There was so much food that the people of Iva and people from other villages could not consume them. As a result, the food laid there wasted. But then the rain came and washed it away to the sea.*<sup>60</sup>

The Celebration of the CCCS church building in Iva shows how much the people of Iva were proud of their achievement. This is reflected in the amount of preparations that went into this special occasion.



Figure 13. The church after being renovated in 2001.<sup>61</sup>

Today the church building continues to bring pride to the village of Iva. According to my father, there have been many renovations to the church because of the cyclones in 1966, 1990 and 1991. In 2001 however another major renovation was carried out by Tufi Faapusa. This renovation saw

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<sup>59</sup> *O le Sulu Samoa*, Oketopa, 1913, 159.

<sup>60</sup> *Personal Interview* with Tofilau Papalii Saausi Faaifoaso Matautia, Iva, 11 December, 2016.

<sup>61</sup> Image taken by Vaega Magele, Iva, 7<sup>th</sup> May, 2017. A surrounding wall was built in 1988 by Taualoaia Olo, one of the village carpenters to protect the church.

the completion of the second steeple.<sup>62</sup> This in a sense is the final completion of the church in the way that it was designed to be.

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<sup>62</sup> The renovation of the church was made by Fiaola and his men as well as the members (carpenters) of the CCCS Iva.

## Conclusion

This research into the construction of the CCCS church building in Iva has given us an important insight to the church and village of Iva in past. Firstly is the importance of the first church *O le Lupe a Noa* which marked the arrival of the Gospel in Iva. This church was built like a traditional Samoan house, *fale-afolau* on the lands of Tuanofoga and Poutavai whose owners, the Aiga Sa Seve and Tofilau, were probably the earliest converts to Christianity in Iva.

Secondly was the political and cultural influences that led to the building of the new church particularly the decision to shift it to Faleloa the land belonging to the Leauanae family. We see here the influence of the chief Leauanae not only in the village council but also the church. Leauanae is also the most important person when the district of Safotulafai gathered together to discuss decision making for the betterment of the district.

Thirdly, the CCCS church building and the importance of Faleloa indicates the mutual relationship between the Gospel and the Samoan culture and between God and the people of Iva. This is supported by the saying, *E malu le Talalelei i le aganuu, ae mamalu le aganuu ona o le Talalelei.*

Thirdly, this research has highlighted the importance of oral traditions. Although there is a lack of written records about the construction of the church in Iva, through oral accounts we can still reconstruct a history of this important building. Another important thing is, after writing this paper; we found some of the evidence about the arrival of the Gospel in Iva and we understand how our ancestors accepted this Gospel. There is no recorded history of *O le Lupe a Noa*. But the only reason why we have some stories about this building are from oral stories. These are the stories that we have heard from our ancestors which were passed from one generation to another. We shall maintain the importance of oral traditions because we used it to find history of the past that are not recorded.

Finally, this research has shown how the CCCS church building in Iva played an important role to the people of Iva in the past and nowadays. Before other various Christian denominations arrived in the village, the LMS firstly evangelised our people. By looking at the church building, it shows us how faithful and hard-working our forefathers and foremothers of the past were. There were so many generations of the village who worshipped in this church and it is an

implication of God's love and care through our ancestors. Today Iva has changed a lot since the church was built. We can see this if we look at the recent aerial image of Iva taken in 2015. (See figure 14 below) Compared to the aerial map of Iva taken in 1954, much has changed in terms of the construction of European design houses. This shows the growth and radical transformation of the village in the last 50 years. Moreover it clearly shows the arrival and increase of new Christian denominations. Nowadays, we have the CCCS, the Roman Catholic Church, Assembly of God, Pentecostal Church, two Seventh Day Adventist Churches; (SISDAC which was established in 2011 & SDA), and the Worship Centre Church established since 2005. There is also Latter Day Saints church which is located in the neighboring village of Lalomalava which quite a number of Iva people attend. However despite the many Christian denominations in our village today, the CCCS Church is the oldest. Its church building is also located in the center of the village, which means to me, the CCCS is the heart of the people and was the foundation of other denominations in Iva. The CCCS church building thus continues to remind us of that important heritage.



Figure 14. Aerial map of Iva showing 1.location of the previous church at Tuanofoga & Poutavai, 2. Current CCCS Iva church building, 3.Pastor's house (green roof), Guests house (Falelapotopoto) and CCCS hall, 4.Roman Catholic Church, 5.Assembly of God Church, 6.Pentecost Church, 7. Worship Center.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>63</sup> The aerial map was taken from via satellite in 2015. Provided by *PetaniaTuala* of the Land Division at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.

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