

# **HISTORY OF THE CONGREGATION CHRISTIAN CHURCH (CCCS) *PULEIA***

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Bachelor of Theology

by

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## **Abstract**

This thesis is an attempt to provide a record of the history of the CCCS Puleia. Despite the lack of written sources on the beginning of the church, available evidence were able to construct a list of the *Faifeau & Faletua* that worked in Puleia, although years of service for some were not recorded. Incidences of what happened in the past as recorded in the *Api o le Galuega* reveal important parts of the life of the church in its development stages. The completion and dedication of the current church buildings is a milestone achievement for the CCCS Puleia. The challenges faced by the church and remedies employed to resolve them are testaments of the struggles the CCCS Puleia went through in making the church what it is today.

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## **Dedication**

### **OU TE AUALOFA I LENEI GALUEGA I OU AIGA:**

To my parents, Letufuga Iupeli and Paneta and my late grandparents Letufuga Togia Ketu and Fa'aeteete Ketu, and Sāmoa Tāuo Mafua Liuteine and Avei Liuteine.

To my late parents-in-law Ulugia Neueli Iafeta and Pulemagafa Tilly, who raised such a fine woman whom I am proud to call my wife.

To my whole family - uncles, aunties, sisters and my one and only brother, my in-laws and children who tirelessly prayed day and night for this journey to be successful.

## Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Declaration	iv
Dedication	v
Table of Contents	vi
Acknowledgments	vii
List of Illustrations	ix
List of Abbreviations	x
Introduction	1
Methodology	1
Outline of Chapters	2
Chapter 1 The Village of <i>Puleia</i>	4
Introduction	4
1.1 Background of <i>Puleia</i>	4
1.2 Religion.	10
Chapter 2 Origins: The Beginning of CCCS Puleia	13
Introduction.	13
2.1 Sketchy Beginning of CCCS <i>Puleia</i>	13
2.2 Growth of the Church	15
2.3 Church Members	16
2.4 Church Infrastructural Developments	19
Chapter 3 CCCS Puleia Since 1988	21
Introduction	21
3.1 The <i>Calling</i>	21
3.2 Developments	22
3.3 The New Church Building	23
3.4 Challenges & Remedies	25
Appendix	28
Glossary	30
Bibliography	31

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This research paper is important as evidence of our struggles and our success in the challenging life of Malua.

May God Bless You All.



## **List of Illustrations**

Fig.1: Map of Savaii	5
Fig.2: Mu Pagoa Waterfall	6
Fig.3: New Church Building	23
Fig.4: New Church Building with surrounding parking area and fence	24

## **List of Abbreviations**

AM	A'oa'o Malua
CCCS	Congregation Christian Church Samoa
EfKS	Ekalesia Fa'apotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa
FS	Faifeau Samoa
FT	Faifeau Toeaina
MTC	Malua Theological College

## **Introduction**

Since the world evolves and keeps changing around us, documenting what happens, whether in the past or in the present, will benefit those who will read it in the future.<sup>1</sup> Hence putting together what we write and why we write it provides an adequate reason for anyone to write a history paper. This is also why I have chosen to write a History paper on my church, the Congregational Christian Church Samoa (CCCS) in Puleia, so that it preserves the stories of what happened in the past. These stories remind us to appreciate with thankfulness the loving grace of our Father in heaven, for His guidance and care upon our ancestors. It also serves as a challenge for us and for future generations to replicate the good things that happened, while at the same time, learn from the mistakes.

This thesis will explore and document the history of my church, the CCCS in Puleia. I acknowledge with humility that I am not the first person from my village to enter Malua Theological College, but since the history of my church has never been formally recorded, I take this exercise with a humble heart as my contribution to the legacy of my church. A lot has changed during this period, not only for my church but also for my village. Putting them down on record will enable our future generations to enjoy, appreciate and learn from what happened

## **Methodology**

This research paper relies mainly on qualitative fieldwork, sources of information such as personal interview. These interview will include people within the church, also include the current faifeau (pastor) . Other important source, include primary sources

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<sup>1</sup> O'Connor, Ryan, 2018, *Why is History Important?* Manchester: Southern New Hampshire University, 1.

such as the *Api o le Galuega*<sup>2</sup> (CCCS Puleia) or Book of the Work (CCCS Puleia), 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 Puleia 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

For the structure of this thesis, I will attempt to focus a discussion on the village of Puleia, in which the CCCS church is established, and then narrow it down to the establishment of the CCCS church, and then conclude with some lessons learned. Chapter one will look into the village of *Puleia* in terms of its name, location, people, village organization and religion. It will look at its location within the wider district of *Palauli* as well as the exceptional natural features that make *Puleia* unique within Samoa and the Pacific.

Chapter two aims to look at the history of the CCCS Church in *Puleia* from the year 1988-2020. The original establishment of the Church goes a way back, but due to available materials and sources, this study will limit its scope on the proposed timeframe. This chapter will also discuss some of the difficulties and challenges that occurred during this time and how they were resolved.

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<sup>2</sup> *Api o le Galuega*- Every CCCS parish is expected to have one and it must be the responsibility for the faifeau's who worked in the parish during his term to detail ever event happen with in the parish in his term. In regards any change's the elegies who look after the parish will do the same thing. A book in which the parish records will be kept and stored in it.

Chapter three will focus on the lessons learned from what happened in the CCCS in *Puleia* during this time. It will look at the strengths and weaknesses that contributed to what transpired. Lastly, it will discuss some suggestions on how to learn from past mistakes while harnessing the positive attributes in order to move forward in our people's faith journey.

# Chapter 1

## The Village of *Puleia*

### Introduction

In this chapter I will attempt to discuss the historical information of the village of *Puleia*. I will explore its background in terms of its location, as well as the origin of its name. I will also discuss the people, how the village is organized, and factors that pertain to religion.

### 1.1 Background of *Puleia*

#### 1.1.1 Location and Name

The village of *Puleia* is located in the Southern coast of Savaii, the largest island of the Samoan group of islands. It is a part of the larger district of *Palauli* which includes *Sili*, *Gataivai*, *Gautavai*, *Papa Puleia* and *Tafua*. This traditional district has been further divided into Electoral districts, and *Puleia* belongs to the Electoral district of *Palauli-le-Falefa*, which consist of *Gautavai*, *Sili*, *Papa Puleia* and *Puleia*.

The name *Puleia* has its own traditional and cultural significance. It is made up of two words, *pule* meaning authority, and *i'a* meaning fish. It literally means 'authority over a fish' or *pule i le i'a*. The name finds its origins in a myth about a fish called *Igaga*.

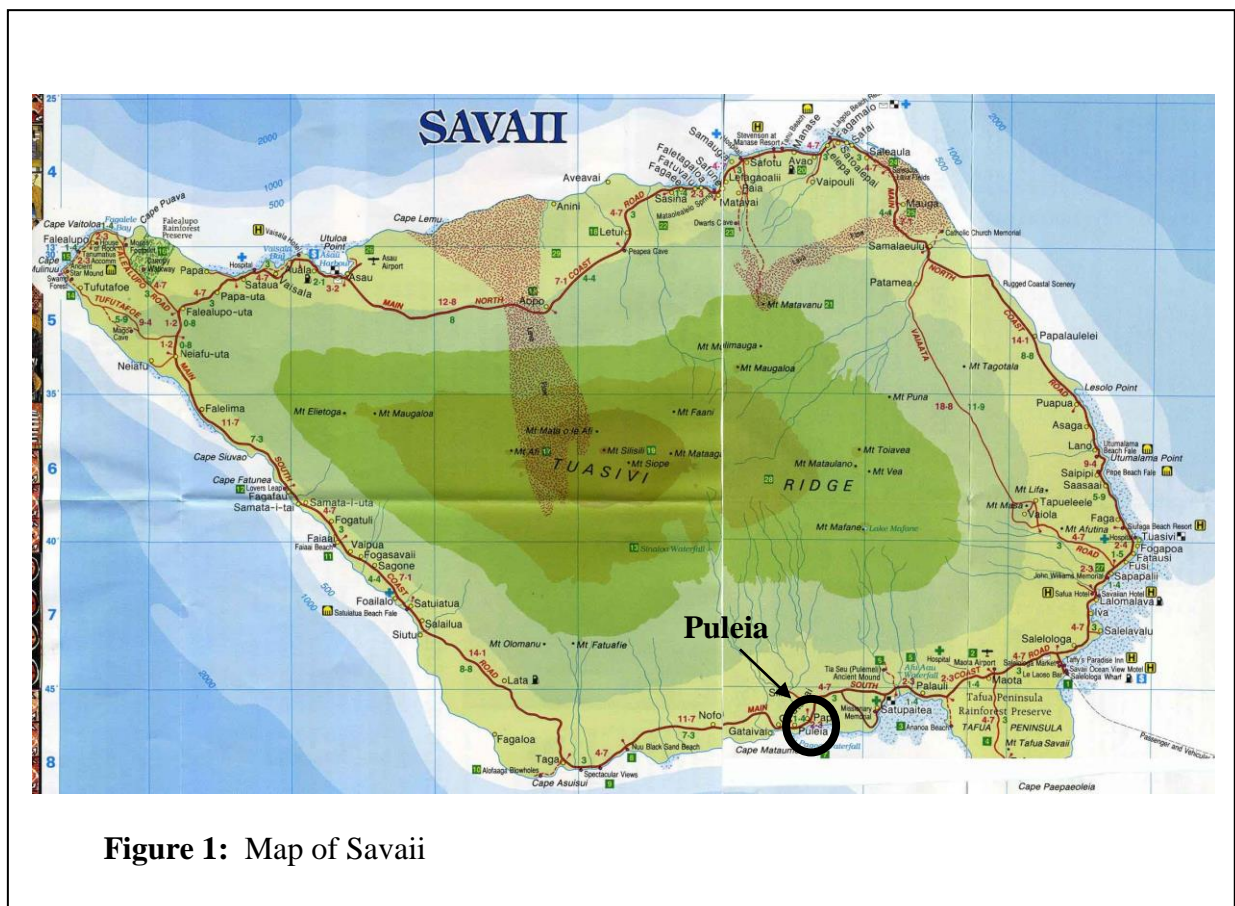
<sup>3</sup>. This fish was originally found only in *Puleia*, but can nowadays be found in other villages of Samoa. According to the myth, *Sinalefiti*, the daughter of the Fijian King or *Tuifiti* travelled to Samoa with two guides, *Tagoa'i* and *Ili* to visit her mother who was pregnant at the time. She brought with her a fish as a gift for her family in

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<sup>3</sup> Rabbit Fish – Scientific name *Siganidae*

Samoa. This fish is called the *Igaga*. It is small in size, but is harvested in thousands. When her mother gave birth to a boy, *Sinalefiti* offered the fish as a gift for her brother, and gave the village the authority to harvest the fish.

This is how the village of *Puleia* got its name, for they were given the authority over the fish or *pule i le i'a*, which is now known as Puleia. Moreover, the myth about the *Igaga* also gives reference to the origin of the phrase *Igaga-tō*<sup>4</sup>, where *tō* means ‘to give’ or ‘be given’. It signifies the *Igaga* that was given as a gift to *Sinalefiti*’s brother and his village.



**Figure 1:** Map of Savaii

<sup>4</sup> *Igaga-tō* is a Samoan phrase that is given to the gifting of something to someone. It is usually referred to occasions where a *matai* title is given to someone who is not related by blood, but because of service (*tautua*), the title is given as a gift. The gift therefore is given to the person and can be passed on to that person’s off-springs; not to any other person. Such is also the nature of the gift of the *Igaga* given to the village of *Puleia*, that only in *Puleia* can people harvest this gift. Other villages may lay claim to the *Igaga-tō* phrase, but this is *Puleia*’s claim, as the *Igaga* is originally from *Puleia*.

Puleia is also known for one of its natural features: the Mū Pagoa waterfall.

According to the Samoa Tourism Authority website:

*Mu Pagoa* Waterfall may not be particularly high but its allure lies in the fact that you're looking at *Savai*'s [second] largest river dropping quite abruptly off a cliff and into the Pacific Ocean. It is wider, and more spectacular, after rainfall. *Mu Pagoa* Waterfall is located at the village of *Puleia* and surrounded by a rugged landscape of solidified lava, which has shaped this coastline, and which clearly formed the waterfall as it is today.<sup>5</sup>

The waterfall has been one of the main attractions for tourists who visit the big Island of Savaii.



**Figure 2:** Mū Pagoa Waterfall- a landmark in Puleia, second largest waterfall with an abrupt drop in the pacific

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<sup>5</sup> Samoa Tourism Authority, *Self-Drive Brochure: Visit Beautiful Samoa: Savaii*, <https://consumer.southpacificislands.travel/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/STA044d-Updated-STA010b-SELF-DRIVE-BROCHURE-WEB.pdf> Accessed 23 June 2020.



### 1.1.2 People

According to the recent national census in 2016, 256 people were recorded living in *Puleia* at the time of the census, while 246 people elsewhere (including overseas) were recorded as having *Puleia* as their original village.<sup>6</sup>

This report also shows the dominant age group in the village is the young adults, from the age of twenty to the mid-thirties which make up sixty percent of the village population. This suggests that the majority of *Puleia*'s population are young, and are able to work in order to support the needs of everyday life of the people in the village. The majority of families rely on the land and sea in order for every day consumption and income. Families have their own plantation of taro, coconuts, cocoa in which they are able to sell in order to earn some money to cope with the needs of everyday life. Also some families raise cattle, pigs and chicken for the purpose of feeding the family, family obligations or *faalavelave* and to sell some to earn money.

With a high number of people living overseas, *Puleia* receive a fair amount of remittances from these family members. Some of the youth are also required from time to time to travel overseas on the Government's seasonal workers scheme in New Zealand and Australia. These opportunities offer great financial assistance for the people in the village. Intermarriages within the village and also within the wider district of *Palauli* has strengthened family ties within the district and the village.

### 1.1.3 Village Organization

*Puleia* is like any other traditional Samoan village where the *Faamatai*<sup>7</sup> or chief system is respected to be the ultimate governing system in the village. When compared

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<sup>6</sup> Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2016, *Population and Demography Census*, Government of Samoa Printing.

<sup>7</sup> Faamatai (chiefly system) is the traditional Samoan system for governing villages. In *Puleia* every aiga (family) have a matai. Also see: Fana'afi Le Tagaloa Aiono, *Western Samoa: The Sacred Covenant: Land Rights of Pacific Women* (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies of the University of

to other villages in Samoa, *Puleia* is not a big village. However, their order of hierarchy is unique in its own right. When it comes to decision making, the village is divided into two main councils or *Fono*: *Fono a Matai* or the Council of Chiefs, and the *Fono a Tamaita'i* or Council of Women.

### 1.1.3a Fono a Matai (Council of Chiefs):

The myth of how the village got its name, also lays the foundation for how their chiefly system is organized. *Sinalefiti* and her guides, *Tagoa'i* and *Ili* caught a shark along the way. *Sinalefiti* ordered her two guides to take the shark ashore and carry it to where her mother was. The two guides went ashore and carried the shark, while *Sinalefiti* paddled on in her canoe. However, while carrying the shark, the two men ate the liver of the shark. When they arrived at their destination, *Sinalefiti's* mother saw that the liver of the shark was not there. So she was very upset and shouted, *Sa tatau ona faasua le au o le malie*, meaning the *au* or the liver of the *malie* or shark should have been cooked in boiling water or *faasua*. Afterwards when *Sinalefiti's* mother gave birth to a baby boy, she called him *Faasua'iau*, as a reminder of how she was upset for not being able to boil the liver of the shark. The name *Faasua'iau* is now the paramount chief title of *Puleia*. When it was time for *Sinalefiti* to go back to her home, she left behind her two guides, *Tagoa'i* and *Ili* to look after the *Igaga* for her little brother, *Faasua'iau*.<sup>8</sup> This is how the village of *Puleia* got its traditional and cultural honorifics:

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the South Pacific, 1986), 103. ff; Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa* (Suva: University of the South Pacific, 1987), 117.

<sup>8</sup> Fuimaono Na'oia Fereti Tupua, 2002, *O le Suaga a le Vaatele: The Findings of the Big Canoe*, Malua Printing Press: Tamaligi, 39

Afio Fa'asua'iau ma le Aloalii (Fepula'i),  
 Susu mai oulua Suafa o Ili ma Tagoa'i,  
 Afio Tagaileono ma le Aiga Sa Tagaileono,  
 Maliu mai lau Tofa Laumau ma Upu ia te oe Sātala.<sup>9</sup>

This can be interpreted as:

*Sinalefiti's* brother *Faasua'iau* is the paramount chief who is accorded the highest honour. He bore a son or *Aloalii* and he named him *Fepulea'i* and should be recognized together with him.

Tribute is paid to the two guides, *Tagoa'i* and *Ili*, whom *Sinalefiti* left behind to take care of the fish for her brother.

Esteem is paid to *Tagaileono* the elder, along with other high chiefs who are all recognized as the family of *Tagaileono* or *Aiga Sa Tagaileono*.

Respect is paid to *Laumau* who is the leading orator, and all the other orators of the village, referred to as *Mamalu ia Sātala* or the respected orators of *Sātala*.

From the above honorifics, it can be seen that the *fono a Matai* consist of three families or *Aiga*: the Paramount Chiefs or *Aiga Alii* (Faasua'iau & Fepuleai), the High Chiefs or *Aiga Suafa* (Tagoa'i, Ili & Tagaileono), and the Orators or *Aiga Failauga* (Laumau & mamalu ia Sātala).

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<sup>9</sup> Matagaluga o Tina ma Tamaita'i, Atina'e o Nu'u ma Afioaga ma Agafesootai, 2004, "Puleia" in *Tusi Faalupega o Samoa Aoa*, Government of Samoa Printing: Matautu, 287.

### 1.1.3b Fono a Tamaita'i (Council of Women)

The council of women is made up of not only the daughters of the chiefs, but also include the wives of the high chiefs and orators, or *Faletua ma Tausi*. It is important to distinguish the difference between this group and the group of daughters, for the *Faletua ma Tausi* are from outside of the village, so therefore should not hold the same esteem as the daughters of the chiefs. However, as time evolved, the two groups have merged together and formed the one group: the *Fono a Tama'ita'i*. Their hierarchy follows that of the *Fono a Matai*, where the wife of *Faasua'ileau* is accorded the highest respect, and flows on to the wives of other high chiefs and orators. Despite of the fact that the *Fono a Matai* is the highest decision making body in the village, the *Fono a Tamaita'i* serves an equally important purpose. That is to advise the *Fono a Matai* on matters pertaining to the welfare of the village, especially with regards to hygiene and other important matters.

## 1.2 Religion.

Religion is “a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, persuasive, and long-lasting moods and motivation in [humans].<sup>10</sup>” I can relate to this definition because before the arrival of Christianity in Samoa, the Samoan people were already engaged in a form of religion to worship their polytheistic gods. This is also true in my village of *Puleia*. The gift of the *Igaga* fish came together with its taboos or *tapu* and sacred rituals which must be observed during the harvest.

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<sup>10</sup> Geertz, Clifford, 1966, “Religion as a Cultural System” in M. Banton (ed) *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*, A.S.A. Monographs No. 3, London: Tavistock,

### 1.2.1 Harvesting the Igaga Religion

The lead fishermen or *Tautai* to harvest the *Igaga* are *Tagoa'i* and *Ili*, together with their relatives, who are called *aiga tautai* or the fishermen family. The *Igaga* is believed to be brought in by a large fish called the *Pa'itele*,<sup>11</sup> and it is said that only *Tagoa'i* and *Ili* will notice this huge fish when it comes from the deep ocean and rests opposite the *Mū Pagoa* falls. The *Tautai* will then give the signal to the *aiga tautai* to take their positions in the lagoon to await the arrival of the *Igaga*. The *Pa'itele* will open its mouth and pour out the *Igaga*, which will be chased by other big fish ashore. The *aiga tautai* will take on the task of catching the big fish that are chasing the *Igaga*, while letting the *Igaga* to continue to the *Mū Pagoa* falls.

Once the *aiga tautai* is assured that there are no more big fish around, they will give the signal for everyone to start harvesting the *Igaga*. Fishnets called *fonoti* which are similar to those used to harvest *palolo*, only that the net is woven from sinnet, are used. The aim is to try and catch as much as possible while the *Igaga* are going up to the falls. The *Igaga* will travel all the way to the waterfall, and will go inland up stream. The harvesting of the *Igaga* takes a whole day, and once the harvesting is done, the lead fishermen, *Tagoa'i* and *Ili* will distribute the catch not only to everyone who is present at the time, but will also include all the Old men and women of the village who no longer have the strength to attend such ritual.

The village do not have to worry if they miss any *Igaga* on its way up river, because the *Igaga* will return once it cannot go any further upstream. However, when it returns, it is bigger and is now called *anamani*. It is the same fish, only this time it is bigger. This is also another time of harvest.

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<sup>11</sup> This is related to the myth about the *Pa'itele* that went ashore in *Safata*, and as it went in it dug up the land or *suatia le fanua o le nuu*. That is the origin of one of the villages in the *Safata* district, *Nuusuatia*.

Before the harvesting of the *igaga*, several rituals must be strictly observed. Food for the fishermen called *Tu* must be cooked according to the *tapu* of the ritual. The fire should only be lit once. If any stone falls from the oven, it should not be put up again. The number of the *aiga tautai* in attendance is also important, because the number of *mailo* or coconut-leaf plates to be prepared should be the exact number of the *aiga tautai* present. No one should go to sea unless the *aiga tautai* gives the signal to do so. On the same token, no one of the *aiga tautai* should go to sea unless Tagoa'i and Ili give the signal. If any of these *tapu* is not observed, the *Igaga* will not come ashore to the waterfall. Since the *Igaga* gives life to the people, the people also accord it the sacredness that a religion deserves.

### 1.2.2 Modern Religions

It is difficult to pinpoint the exact time that Christianity arrived in Puleia. However, one can evaluate the information within other historical accounts to decipher an approximate time for this. According to Malama Meleisea, after John Williams brought Christianity in 1830, he returned to England and came back to Samoa in 1832 and was happy to see that the eight Tahitian and Cook Island teachers that he left behind are now working in villages across the island... where "Umia went to Palauli."<sup>12</sup> Umia, was one of the eight Tahitian teachers that Williams left with Malietoa. This is significant because Palauli is a neighboring village, and if there was a teacher around that area, it is more likely that people from *Puleia* would have attended his teachings as well.

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<sup>12</sup> Meleisea, M, et al, 1987, "Christianity" in *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa*, University of the South Pacific: Suva, 58.

## Chapter 2

### Origins: The Beginning of CCCS Puleia

#### Introduction.

The aim of this Chapter is to construct a history of the CCCS *Puleia* from its inception to the present. The formal introduction of christianity into the village is a challenge due to available sources. Glimpses from recollections of some of our old people in Puleia will help in putting together a history of not only the origins of the CCCS, but also the developments since 1988 and the challenges the church faced.

#### 2.1 Sketchy Beginning of CCCS *Puleia*

It is possible that the people of *Puleia* were informed of Christian teachings in the early 1830's, as discussed in the previous chapter.<sup>13</sup> The earliest written information that this paper could access was the *Api o le Galuega* or Ministry Log-book, which have entries from 14<sup>th</sup> July 1957 but containing information about the church in 1954. In analyzing the early entries in this log-book to find the author, evidence points to Rev. Uilinese Isara and his wife Tagivale. According to Fualole Isaia, Isara and Tagivale were the third pastors in Puleia.<sup>14</sup> In her recollection:

The name of the first Church Minister [was] Onosemo from the village of Tafua. [Then] Siulifi and his wife Lauama was the second Church Minister and the third was Isara and his wife Tagivale. Then Viliamu and [his wife] Pii.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa*, University of the South Pacific, Suva, 1987, p. 58.

<sup>14</sup> *Personal Interview* with Fualole Isaia, Gautavai, 15 December, 2019.

<sup>15</sup> *Personal Interview* with Fualole Isaia, Gautavai, 15 December, 2019.

However, another interviewee, Maumalii Faitoto'a, a deacon added that there was a faifeau named Elia and his wife Sina from Safotu, who were the first to work in Puleia.<sup>16</sup> This claim is supported by Rev. Mose Tanielu<sup>17</sup> from the verbal stories that he had heard, that there was a faifeau named Elia, whose grave is in Puleia. During the dedication of their new church building in 2017, a faifeau named Soloi came and donated a gift to their congregation as a tribute to his great-great-grand-father Elia who worked in Puleia in the past.<sup>18</sup>

In addition, the initial entry in the *Api o le Galuega* by Rev. Isara records the “Names of the Congregation in Puleia in 1954” or *O Igoa o le Ekalesia i Puleia - 1954*. This shows that Rev. Isara and his wife Tagivale started in Puleia in 1954, and an entry by Rev. Viliamu Leota later on reveals that Isara and Tagivale left Puleia on 5<sup>th</sup> February 1962.<sup>19</sup> Leota also in his entry on the 10<sup>th</sup> May 1963, he recorded the deacons and the years they were made deacons. Interestingly, the first deacon of the church, Laumau Matuu and his wife Fau, were made deacons in 1923, with a note that Laumau Matuu was born in 1888.<sup>20</sup> This information is vital in the attempt to find the origin of the church. Moreover, an entry in the *Api o le Galuega* lists the names of the Faifeaus that worked in Puleia by Rev. Viliamu Leota:

Siaosi & Faoa'ai – Iva  
Fatu Savaii & Suluia – Sili  
Onesemo & Faletua – Tafua  
Suifili & Lauama – Saipipi  
Isara & Tagivale – Moataa

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<sup>16</sup> *Personal Interviews* with Maumalii Faitoto'a, Puleia, 25 June, 2020.

<sup>17</sup> Rev. Mose Tanielu and Aliitasi are the current pastor in Puleia. Their work started in 1988.

<sup>18</sup> *Personal Interview* with Mose Tanielu, Puleia, 25 June, 2020.

<sup>19</sup> Rev. Leota, Viliamu, 1962, “*Api o le Galuega*”, 10.

<sup>20</sup> Rev. Leota, Viliamu, 1963, “*Api o le Galuega*”, 20.



Isara and Tagivale probably started here in 1954, but they left the work on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1962. They were replaced by Viliamu and Piilua – Gautavai, on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1962.<sup>21</sup>

All this information is crucial in putting together the following list of *Faifeau* & *Faletua* who worked in Puleia from the past to the present:

<b><u>Faifeau &amp; Faletua</u></b> <sup>22</sup>	<b><u>Years</u></b>
Elia Vaisamoalelua <sup>23</sup> & Sina	-
Siaosi & Faoaai	-
Fatu Savaii & Suluia	-
Onosemo & Faletua	-
Siulifi & Lauama	-
Uilinese Isara & Tagivale	1954 – 1962
Viliamu Leota & Piilua	1962 – 1987
Mose Tanielu & Aliitasi	1988 – current

## 2.2 Growth of the Church

The CCCS is the first church to be established in Puleia. This is according to chief orator and a deacon, Laumau Tavita .<sup>24</sup> Puleia did not have a church building for them to worship God in the past. According to church member Maumalii Faitoto’a, the early church services were held in a *fale afolau*, a traditional Samoan house.<sup>25</sup> This reveals a vital information about the work of *faifeau*’s in the past, that they did not

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<sup>21</sup> Rev. Leota, Viliamu, 1963, Api o le Galuega, 315.

<sup>22</sup> Only Rev. Leota recalls the names of Siaosi & Faoaai, and Fatu Savaii & Suluia.

<sup>23</sup> Maumalii Faitoto’a was the only one who mentioned this last name for Elia Vaisamoalelua, also mention that Elia was brought by the Maumalii family to become there faifeau at the time, but he didn’t mention the date that his family brought Elia from Safotu Savaii.

<sup>24</sup> *Personal Interview* with Laumau Tavita, Puleia, 15 December ,2019.

<sup>25</sup> *Personal Interview* with Maumalii Faitoto’a, Puleia, 25 June, 2020.

prioritize church buildings for the work, but the conversion of people to Christianity and ensuring they observe and practice christian ethics and way of living.

In support of this, most of the entries in the early part of the *Api o le Galuega* lists names of people ‘seeking the Lord’ or *Au Sailiili*, and those who have been ‘accepted’ or *Faaofia*.<sup>26</sup> Not only the *Au Sailiili* and *Faaofia*, but the *faiifeau* also records when such person is “put aside from the church” or *pa’u le ekalesia*. The main reasons written for putting aside members from the congregation are: engaging in tatooing or *Ta tatau*, alcohol or *Inuga Ava*, adultery or *Mulilua*, non-formal relationships or *faapouliuli/faitaaga*, and causing harm or *Faaoolima*. These reasons were major issues, as we will discuss later, for the *Faiifeau* and their *Faletua* in the past.<sup>27</sup>

### 2.3 Church Members

In the beginning of the *Api o le Galuega*, Rev. Isara recorded the names of all the people that were in Puleia in 1954.<sup>28</sup> There were 8 chiefs or *Matai*, 8 untitled men or *Taulele’a*, 8 Wives of Chiefs & Orators or *Faletua & Tausi*, 11 unmarried ladies or *Tamaitai*, 6 wives of untitled men or *Ava a Taulele’a*, and 22 children or *[Au] A’oga*.<sup>29</sup> All in all, the total number that were in the CCCS Puleia in 1954 was 63 people. Isara’s last entry in 1959 records a total of 99 people: 12 *Matai*, 12 *Faletua & Tausi*, 11 *Taulele’a*, 14 *Tamaitai*, 11 *Ava Taulele’a*, and 39 *Au A’oga*.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> *Au Sailiili* are church members who seek christian guidance in order to live an acceptable christian life. Once accepted, such person is allowed to partake in the Holy Communion.

<sup>27</sup> It is to be noted that the same issues are evident today, although, according to Rev. Tanielu, at a lesser extent.

<sup>28</sup> This year is assumedly the beginning of Isara & Tagivale’s time in Puleia.

<sup>29</sup> Rev. Isara, *Api o le Galuega*, p 1-3, 1954

<sup>30</sup> Rev. Isara, 1959, *Api o le Galuega*, 1-3.

In 1968, Rev. Viliamu Leota did another recording or *Tusigaigoa*. He recorded 10 *Matai* and their wives, 25 *Taulele'a*, 16 *Tamaitai* and 30 *Tama ma Teine*, a total of 93 people, including himself and his wife.<sup>31</sup> Of this total, Leota recorded that there were 12 Deacons or *Tiakono*, and 2 Lay Preachers or *A'oa'o Fesoasoani*.

Rev. Leota also records some of the incidences of *pa'u le ekalesia*. In one case, Rev. Leota explains in detail as follows:

'Sione'<sup>32</sup>, on 10<sup>th</sup> February 1981, this is the third time this deacon has been put aside [*pa'u le ekalesia*] from the church,<sup>33</sup> because he was married [unlawful relationship] with another girl. This person has been an enemy of the church. When we started to build our new church, he only joined when there were three more weeks to the completion of the work. This person in 1977, he took 22 bags of cement. When it was time to build the *fale o le faifeau* on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1981, he was asked to bring the bags of cement – but he brought nothing. We then started this two storey building and was completed on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1981 and dedicated, but this person had left Puleia for Apia. Anyone who reads about this deacon need to think carefully about this person's behavior. He has been banished numerous times from the village on miss-use of finances: finances for the school building and finances for the bridge in 1972.<sup>34</sup>

Despite the sad nature of this incident regarding the behavior of one of the *Tiakono*, this entry has revealed an important information regarding the development of the church. That is, Puleia built a *fale o le faifeau* in 1981 and a church building before that. From Rev. Leota's account, it seems like the cement that was taken in 1977 by this *Tiakono* was for a major project of the church; could be their church building that Rev. Leota was referring to.

Rev. Leota further clarifies this in a section of the *Api o le Galuega* on the 'lives of Faifeau's who worked in this village' or *Tala Malamalama i Soifuaga o Faifeau e au*

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<sup>31</sup> Leota, 1968, *Api o le Galuega*, 22-23.

<sup>32</sup> 'Sione' is a substitute name for this deacon, as his real identity shall remain confidential.

<sup>33</sup> Earlier entries reveal that 'Sione' was made a *Tiakono* on 28<sup>th</sup> November 1970, then *pa'u le ekalesia* on 12 January 1971. He was reinstated, but again *pa'u le ekalesia* on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1972; and again on 10<sup>th</sup> February 1981.

<sup>34</sup> Leota, Viliamu, 1981, *Api o le Galuega*, 22-23. Translated by Ketty Iupeli, 28 June 2020.

*mai i le Galuega i lenei Nu'u*, that the church building that the people were using at the time of his arrival was built and dedicated in 1955 – this would be during Rev. Isara's tenure in Puleia.<sup>35</sup> He also mentioned that all the members agreed at a meeting in 1973 that a new church building should be built, and the putting together of financial resources or *sailiga tupe* for this were done in 1973 and 1974.<sup>36</sup> One of the plans to find financial resources for the new church building was a visit to New Zealand or *malaga su'e tupe i Niu Sila*, which eventuated on 5<sup>th</sup> February 1974.<sup>37</sup> There is no explicit evidence in the *Api o le Galuega* on when this new church building was built.

Another incident involving church members is also recorded by Rev. Leota in 1980. In recording those who died in 1980, he wrote of two *Matais*, 'Simi' and 'Siaki',<sup>38</sup> who were buried together on the same day.

'Simi' is 70 years old but not yet *Faaofia*. This person was an enemy of God's work. When he died, he was a Methodist, but he was with us. But 'Siaki' is a *Tiakono*. These two *Matais*' funeral services were done together in church. I, Viliamu Leota (FS) was leading the service, while Tia'i (FS) and Lamauta (Methodist) preached the sermon. After the service, we took them and conducted their final services one after the other. This is a new thing in this village and it ought to be recorded: that two *matais* were buried together in one day. It is a question for all *faiifeaus* who come to this village? 'Simi' is someone who does not like to go to church. He is dead, but had only attended church service twice. Every other day, he does not go to church, but only sleeps and stays home. He encourages people to rebel against the church and its doings. This is how dangerous this person is. He discourages people not to go to church and not to do anything for the church. This person is recorded, so that any brother who comes to this village shall know him. Signed - Viliamu Leota.<sup>39</sup>

This entry highlighted the issues and challenges faced by the *faiifeaus* when dealing with the church members and people of the village. It also shows that there was

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<sup>35</sup> Leota, Viliamu, 1972, *Api o le Galuega*, 317.

<sup>36</sup> Leota, Viliamu, 1974, 318.

<sup>37</sup> Leota, Viliamu, 1974, 318.

<sup>38</sup> 'Simi' and 'Siaki' are substitute name for these *Matais*, as their real identity shall remain confidential.

<sup>39</sup> Leota, Viliamu, 1980, *Api o le Galuega*, 103-104.

a Methodist church in Puleia in the past. The burying together of two matais in one day in one church service is also noted with interest, as Rev. Leota states, “is a new thing [...] and it ought to be recorded.”<sup>40</sup>

Rev. Leota passed away in 1987, and *A’oa’o Fesoasoani* Togailano Isaia recorded the details:

Viliamu Leota, Rev. Elder. He died suddenly [*gasegase oso faafuase’i*] at Salelavalu on 7<sup>th</sup> January 1987. He was taken away from the Tuasivi morgue on Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> January 1987, and was laid to rest on Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> January 1987 at his family at Vaiala, Gautavai. Those who attended his final service: Leader - Rev. Elder Faamatala Aseta (FT), prayers – Rev. Elder Elisara Tia (FT), Sermon – Rev. Elder Alefaio and Rev. Lamauta (Methodist). Eulogies 1.Luafata Viliamu Leota (FT), 2.Fareti Viliamu Leota (FS), 3.Tauo Tuisafia mo le nuu, 4.Lualua Tanielu (FS) he was the secretary of the Pulega.<sup>41</sup>

Apart from Rev. Elia Vaisamoalelua, the first faifeau for Puleia, Rev. Elder Viliamu Leota was the second *faifeau* to have been called by his Master while doing His will at the CCCS Puleia.

## 2.4 Church Infrastructural Developments

From what is recorded in the *Api ole Galuega* and from interviews that were made, the main infrastructural developments that were done by CCCS Puleia were the church building, the pastor’s house or *Fale o le Faifeau* which sometimes is referred to as the *Fale o le Galuega* or house for the congregation. The village started their worshiping services in *Fale Afolau* as alluded to in the previous chapters.<sup>42</sup> The first

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<sup>40</sup> Leota, Viliamu, *Api o le Galuega*, 104.

<sup>41</sup> Isaia, Togailano, 1987, *Api o le Galuega*, 105.

<sup>42</sup> *Personal Interview* with Maumalii Faitotoa, Puleia 25 June, 2020.

church building that is on record was built in 1955 during Rev. Isara's tenure in Puleia. The second church building was built during 1977 by Rev. Leota's time. The third and current building was built in 2017.

The first mention of a *Fale o le Faifeau* in the *Api o le Galuega* was the two storey building that was dedicated on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1981.

## Chapter 3

### CCCS Puleia Since 1988

#### Introduction

The significance of the year 1988 in this thesis is because this is the year that the current *Faifeau*, Rev. Mose Tanielu and Aliitasi, started their work in Puleia. After the passing of Rev. Elder Viliamu Leota, a *A'oa'o Fesoasoani* named Tuisafia Tauo Teueli looked after the work or *tausi le galuega*. However, he passed away on 10<sup>th</sup> October the same year, and another *A'oa'o Fesoasoani*, Togalano Isaia, took over. Then on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1988, the CCCS Puleia went into covenant or *Osi Feagaiga* with Rev. Mose Tanielu and Aliitasi<sup>43</sup>

#### 3.1 The Calling

Before the covenant service or *Osiga Feagaiga*, Rev. Tanielu explains the time when members of CCCS Puleia approached him and his wife while they were in their final year at Malua Theological College:

When Puleia came to us, I was sitting my final year exam in Malua at the time. Aliitasi, my wife, came and told me about it, and they were directed to the principal, Rev. Oka Fauolo. But Oka told them, that the final decision rests with me. We were staying at the old Salega house at the time, with Samoan posts before the new building was built. Those that we met included Ili Puaniu, Mafua Liuteine, Tulafili Tema and others. I accepted the call, but told them that I need to complete my graduation before we can move in. We went into covenant in January 1988, and up to now, we have been here 32 years.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Tanielu, Mose, 1988, *Api o le Galuega*, p.330.

<sup>44</sup> *Personal Interview* with Mose Tanielu (current Pastor), Puleia, 25 June, 2020.

### 3.2 Developments

Rev. Tanielu records that some of the work that was done when he and his wife started was the renovation of *Fale o le Faifeau* and *Fale o le Aulotu* which started on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2003 and completed on 22<sup>nd</sup> November the same year.<sup>45</sup> The total cost for these two works amounted to \$150,000 and was built by Paepae Aiono and his builders.<sup>46</sup> Then in 2007, they worked to renovate the back part or Faasee of the fale o le faifeau and erected another house at the back to be used by the church when they have visitors. Rev. Tanielu records that:

This work was completed on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2007. The following items were donated by the following people:

Fepulea'i Teofilo & family	- cement & bricks
Fiu Neli & family	- brick for posts
Letufuga Iupeli & family	- brick for posts
Talifala Feterika & family	- nails
Mose Tanielu & family	- 10 corrugated iron roofing
All other families	- 1 corrugated iron roofing each
Mekala & children	- tiles for the sink. <sup>47</sup>

The list of the people and their donations above reveals the level of servitude or *tautua* that the people have for the church.

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<sup>45</sup> Tanielu Mose, 2003, *Api o le Galuega*, p.330.

<sup>46</sup> Tanielu, Mose, 2003, *Api o le Galuega*, p.330-331.

<sup>47</sup> Tanielu, Mose, 2007, *Api o le Galuega*, p.331.



### 3.3 The New Church Building



**Fig. 3:** The New Church Building (1).

The building that was built during Rev. Leota's time has been replaced by the current church building that the people are using today. Rev. Tanielu's entry in the *Api o le Galuega* explains:

A new church building was discussed, and all agreed that a new building should be built. A census was done in New Zealand, and NZ\$162,000 was raised, and was banked in an account in New Zealand while fundraising through BINGO continued. It was also agreed that the new church building will be built on the same location as the old one. Plans for the occasion - \$3,000 & 20 fine mats per family, each of the 3 'families' of the village shall bring 10 x 20 *aga* fine mats each. The master builder arrived on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2017 and met the village. He brought \$2,000 and 30 chicken cartons for the village. Work started the very next day, on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2017.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Tanielu, Mose, 2017, *Api o le Galuega*, 331-332.



**Fig. 4:** The new Church Building with surrounding parking area and fence.

The work was coordinated by a select committee, and one of the committee members, Letufuga Iupeli, 63 years of age who is also a Lay Preacher, recalls that the builders were paid \$2,000 per fortnight.<sup>49</sup> He also mentioned that the church building, the cement in front for parking area and the fence around it costs more than a million Tala in total. As with most major village projects as such, there were parts that were donated. The following list of some of the items donated was based on the recollection of Letufuga Iupeli:<sup>50</sup>

Rev. Mose Tanielu & family	Pulela'a
Mafutaga a Tina	All the glass materials ( <i>tioata</i> )
Aufaipese	Air Condition
Fepuleai Teofilo & family	Tiles
Letufuga Iupeli & Family	Laoai & nofoa

Rev. Tanielu provides the exact figures in his entry in the *Api o le Galuega*:

<sup>49</sup> *Personal Interview* with Letufuga Iupeli, Puleia, 25 June, 2020.

<sup>50</sup> *Personal Interview* with Letufuga Iupeli. Puleia, 25 June, 2020.

“The new church building was dedicated on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2017. The total cost of the whole work is \$1,059,000.00. We did have an account to settle [*aitalafu*] with Bluebird Lumber and Hardware, and we paid it all on 29<sup>th</sup> December 2017”.<sup>51</sup> After settling everything, they still had an extra \$34,000 left, and this was used to renovate the upper house of the fale o le faifeau.<sup>52</sup>

The new church building was a milestone achievement. In this day and age, some people might question why we build new church buildings that cost millions. Chief orator, Laumau Tavita sums it up well, “The church cost millions – because church members wanted blessings”.<sup>53</sup>

### 3.4 Challenges & Remedies

The CCCS Puleia like any other church, is not free from challenges. As we have seen the testimony of Rev. Leota and some of the church members that he faced during his time<sup>54</sup>, some of these challenges are still prevalent today. Rev. Tanielu recalls some of the challenges that he and his wife faced in the beginning of their work:

When we arrived in 1988, there were a lot of problems as in any other work... The first challenge was people not coming to church on Sundays, but drank Kava as if they were teasing. Others used Sundays as their laundry day, while the children saw it as a day to bath in the river... Another challenge was that people believed that Sundays end at 6.00pm in the evening, then they go harvest the Igaga after 6.00pm. We tried to put an end to this by convincing the people that Sundays end at 12.00am midnight. But what had happened was that people from other villages have questioned why the *Igaga* was not harvested on Sundays, and people told them, the *faifeau* prohibits it.<sup>55</sup>

The problem of doing laundry on Sundays and people not going to church are not new, as it is also recorded by Rev. Leota in the *Api o le Galuega* during his time.

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<sup>51</sup> Rev. Tanielu, Mose, 2017, *Api o le Galuega*, 332.

<sup>52</sup> Rev. Tanielu Mose, 2017, *Api o le Galuega*, 332.

<sup>53</sup> *Personal Interview* with Tavita, Laumau, Puleia, 15 December, 2020.

<sup>54</sup> Rev. Leota, *Api o le Galuega*.

<sup>55</sup> *Personal Interview* with Rev. Tanielu, Puleia, 25 June, 2020.

Kava drinking on Sundays could also be related to drinking alcohol, one of the reasons for having people put aside from the congregation or *pa'u le ekalesia*.

From the perspective of the church people, some people see the many activities to develop the church as a problem. One of the interviewees, Maumalii Faitoto'a is so passionate about having too many activities in the church that has caused a lot of diversions for people's finances, instead of going straight to the *Faifeau*.<sup>56</sup> I find this very interesting and ironic to some extent, because the *Faifeau* encourages people to give in whatever activity to develop the church as this is still considered an offering to God. However, Maumalii's view is typical of our Samoan way of how we see the *Faifeau* as a representative of God, and that "all the wealth should flow directly to the *Faifeau* and his *Faletua* for that is how the congregation and our children get blessings."<sup>57</sup>

The harvesting of the *Igaga* was not just seen as a problem because it is harvested on Sundays, but it also has theological concerns to go with it. According to Rev. Tanielu, "there is an impact [of this] on the spirituality of the people, because some of these practices carry pagan beliefs."<sup>58</sup> The pagan beliefs that Rev. Tanielu is concerned about could be the *Tapuaiga* that people do when it is time to harvest the *Igaga*, as explained in Chapter 1.

Despite these challenges, Rev. Tanielu sees a great change and how they have witnessed the transformational power of the Holy Spirit within their congregation. With regards to the *Igaga* harvest, he believes that it is important for the people to know their stories and myths about the origin of their village, as long as they believe that all

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<sup>56</sup> *Personal Interview* with Maumalii Faitoto'a, Puleia, 25 June, 2020.

<sup>57</sup> "Ua le tafe sa'o le suasusu ma le meli i le faifeau ma lona faletua o loo manuia ai le Ekalesia ma manuia ai fanau" *Personal Interview* with Maumalii Faitoto'a.

<sup>58</sup> *Personal Interview* with Rev. Tanielu, Puleia 25 June, 2020.

blessings are from God.<sup>59</sup> He also states that in times of need, there is only one weapon that Christians can resort to – prayer.

Ever since we started, we held fasting services every Wednesday. This is to encourage the people to pray for the people and the development of the church. We have seen the fruition of this practice, as we now have students attending not only Malua Theological College, but Piula Theological College as well. Others have been blessed with high Government positions, and private businesses as well. One of our members Fepulea'i Teofilo and his business carried out the tiling work for the EFKS's new church building in Malua.<sup>60</sup>

The benefits that the church people and the church are enjoying have come with combining prayers with their hard work. The *tautua* that people do within the church, as evident with the new church building that was recently completed, is testament to their servitude towards God and his representatives on earth. Perhaps the most glaring evident of this mark of *tautua*, is mentioned by Rev. Tanielu:

The life-evidence of this is the fact that we have never made fire to prepare food [*e le'i mumu lava se ma afi e fai ai se ma meaai*], nor have my wife had ever gone to make any food [*pe alu fo'i lo'u toalua e fai se ma meaai*]. Ever since we started working in Puleia, we have been fed morning, afternoon and evening.

This is a huge testimony on the spirituality of the people and the way they serve God through His servants or representatives. The remedy of praying and fasting as resorted to by Rev. Tanielu and the church have surely bore fruits.

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<sup>59</sup> *Personal Interview* with Rev. Tanielu, Puleia, 25 June, 2020.

<sup>60</sup> *Personal Interview* with Rev. Tanielu, Puleia, 25 June, 2020.

## Appendix

### *Case 1: Sione*

Sione- Aso 10 Fepurari 1981. Ua paū faatolu lenei o lona tofi Tiakono – o lona faatolu lenei o lona Tiakono – Ua (pau le ekalesia) ua faiava ma le teine Lotu Bahai. O lenei tagata Ua fai ma fili o le Galuega . Na amata ona fai le falesa fou, ae uma le Falesa o lea fai le faaulufalega, ona faatoa ofi mai i le nuu, ae toe tolu vaiaso fai le faaulufalega. O lenei Tiakono o Sione i le tausaga 1977, na la aveina ai tagasima e 22. Ua oo ina o le a fai le fale o le faifeau i lea aso 30 Ianuari 1981. Ua tapa tagasima ae leai se tagasima, o lenei ua amata ona fai le fale fogafalelua lenei. Na faauma ai le umusaga ae lei toe sau lava i Puleia, ae ua alu i Apia ua nofonofo ai.

O se uso e faitau ai i lenei tiakono ia e mafaufau lelei iai, i uiga o lenei tagata. O le tea soo ma le nuu, i mea tau tupe lava. Tupe o le faleaoga, tupe o le faiga o le auala laupapa i le 1972.

### ***Case 2: Simi & Siaki***

‘Simi’ Aso 30 Iulai i le itula e 12am 1980. ‘Siaki’ Aso 30 Iulai i le itula e 7pm 1980.

E lei ekalesia Simi a ua oo i le 70 ona tausaga. Ma o lenei tagata, sa fai ma fili o le Galuega a le Atua. E oti nei ua toe lotu Metotisi, ae sa lotu foi ia tatou. A’o Siaki o le tiakono, na ave uma ia matai faatasi ma fai faatasi o la lotu i le falesa. O a’u Viliamu Leota (FS) sa taitai. Lauga Tia’i (FS) ma Lamatua Metotisi. Ina ua uma le sauniga, ona fai auaua’i lea o toe sauniga i luga o la tuugamau ae faai’u ai o la toe sauniga. O se upu tusia o lea mea fou ua iloa i lenei nuu. O le tatanu faatasi o ni matai i le aso e tasi. Faafesili pea iai le afaigaluega, e aumai i lenei nuu. O le tagata o ‘Simi’ e le se tagata e lotu. E oti nei na o le lua ana lotu i le falesa. Ae o aso uma e le lotu ae moe ma nofonofo i lona fale. Ma o ia e faatupu mea leaga, e tetee ai i mea tau le ekalesia. O le uiga matautia lea, o le taumafai lenei tagata ia aua nei fiafia tagata e lolotu. Ma aua nei faatigaina tagata e fai ni mea i le lotu. E tusia lenei tagata, ia silafaia e se isi uso e aumai i le galuega i lenei nuu. Tusia Viliamu Leota.

### ***Togailano Isaia***

Viiamu Leota Faifeau Toeaina. Na malii i se gasegase oso faafuasei i Salelavalu aso 7 Ianuari 1987. Na aumaia lona tino malii mai le maota gasegase i Tuasivi i le aso Tofi 15 Ianurari 1987, ma falelauasi i le aso Faraile 16 Ianurari 1987 i lona aiga i Vaiala Gautavai. Sa auai le au toeaina i lona toe sauniga i le malumalu i Puleia. Taitai – Faamatala Aseta (FT), tatalo Elisara Tia (FT) lauga Alefaio (FT) ma Lamauta Tiatia (FM) Faifeau Metotisi. Molimau 1. Luafata Viliamu Leota (FS) 2. Fareti Viliamu Leota (FS) 3. Tauo Tuisafia mo le nuu, 4. Laulua Tanielu (FS) o le failautusi o le Pulega.

## Glossary

<i>A'oa'o Fesoasoani</i>	Lay preacher
<i>Api o le Galuega</i>	Congregation's book of records
<i>Aulotu</i>	Parish/congregation
<i>Aiga Tautai</i>	Family of fisherman
<i>Faatuina aloaia</i>	Official Establishment
<i>Faifeau</i>	Pastor
<i>Faifeau Toeaina</i>	Elder pastor
<i>Falesa</i>	Church building
<i>Faletua</i>	Minister's wife
<i>Feagaiga</i>	Covenant
<i>Itu Faa-le-Agaga</i>	Spiritual side
<i>Lotu</i>	Church service/ Religion
<i>Matagaluega</i>	District
<i>Osig Feagaiga</i>	Officially accepted by the congregation/ Covenant service
<i>Tiakono</i>	Deacon
<i>Tusiga igoa</i>	Form of fundraising
<i>Umusaga</i>	Official opening of a building/development



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