

**HENRY VENN'S THREE-SELF MODEL FOR  
CHURCH INDEPENDENCE, PULE, AND  
SOAPULE: A HISTORY OF THE  
CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
SAMOA (CCCS) IN SAOLUAFATA (1982-  
2021)**

A Thesis Presented to the  
Faculty of the Malua Theological College

In Partial Fulfilment of the  
Requirements for the Degree  
Bachelor of Divinity

by

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## DEDICATION

*Dedicated to my beloved mother, the late Naomi Lovena Kolise, who has been called home by God. May you rest in peace.*

*This work is also dedicated to the late Reverend Elder Limua'a Samuelu Olo and wife, Daru Limua'a Samuelu*

Last but not the least, to all the people of Saoluafata in Saoluafata and around the world. The church has always been our unity and strength from generation to generation.

## Abstract

The Protestant Model for church independence, devised by well-known figures in Protestant circles namely Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson, used by the London Missionary Society to decide whether the Samoan Church (which is now called the Congregation Christian Church Samoa) can attain self-govern, self-support, and self-propagate to grant independence. This thesis anticipates using Samoan concepts of authority called *pule* and *soapule* instead of the three selves, to write a historical account of the Congregational Christian Church Samoa in Saoluafata from 1982 to 2021. In this attempt, three types of authority are used such as dignified authority (*pule mamalu*), supporting authority (*pule lagolago*), and continual authority (*pule faaauau*). These authorities are analogous to and distinctive than the three-self. It is contended that these authorities in the Samoan context are strengths or forces responsible for 39 years of successful Christianity in Saoluafata making the village strong to date, under the leadership of Reverend Limuaa Samuelu, his wife Daru, and their children. Evidently, *pule* and *soapule*, are strengths more characteristic than self-govern, self-support, and self-propagate.

## Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this thesis, which is 13658 words in length (excluding the bibliography and front matter), has been written by me, that it is the result of work carried out by me, and that it has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, in any previously written work for an academic award at this or any other academic institution.

I also declare that this thesis has not used any material, heard or read, without academically appropriate acknowledgment of the source.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Dedication

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In addition, I would like to acknowledge the encouragement and support of my mentor and minister; the late Rev Elder Limua'a Samuelu of the CCCS at Saoluafata, wife and family, thank you for all the guidance and encouragement given me through my life journey. It is truly inspirational to witness your good work and tireless efforts to be a true servant of God.

To my families in Saoluafata, Talimatau and overseas, thank you for the support and encouragement given to me during this part of the journey especially my wife Kate and my two blessings Aliivaa and Asotolu. I could never have done and be where I am now without you all. Thank God for family and all of you, may he continue to bless you all.

## List of Illustrations

**Figure 1:** Henry Venn's three-self model for church independence pg 14

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## **List of Abbreviations**

CCCS	Congregational Christian Church Samoa
LMS	London Missionary Society
MTC	Malua Theological College
EFKS TV	Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa Television

# Introduction

## *Thesis Statement*

The Congregational Christian Church Samoa in Saoluafata (henceforth CCCS in Saoluafata) from 1982 to 2021, under the leadership of Rev. Elder. Limua'a Samuelu, his wife Daru, and children, is one of the most successful churches of the CCCS for 39 years driven by cultural strengths of authority (*pule*) and pairing authority (*soapule*) that are analogous to Henry Venn's three-self principle (henceforth Venn's Triad) of self-govern, self-support, and self-propagate used by the London Missionary Society (henceforth LMS) to grant Independence for the Samoan Church in 1962. *Pule* and *Soapule* are strengths found in missional and ministerial works, where church ministers and their wives, the people of Saoluafata, and their children, give allegiance to it. Additionally, they signify the durability of Venn's Triad in the parish setting like the CCCS in Saoluafata since 1962. The mother church, CCCS, became independent in 1962 from the London Missionary Society (henceforth LMS) when she attained Venn's triad. Instead of Venn's selves, I anticipate dignified authority (*pule mamalu*), supporting authority (*pule lagolago*), and continual authority (*pule faaauau*) as strengths accountable for the success of this transition to independence of the church.

## *Problem*

Previous historical attempts at mapping the original developments of the CCCS in Saoluafata did great in ascertaining and relaying evidence about it.<sup>1</sup> But that attempt focused particularly on the origins and development of the church. Yet, it paid little attention to the strengths that drove the church and village into succession. Reverend

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<sup>1</sup> Petelo Matelani Pauga, "A History of Congregational Christian Church of Saoluafata" (BD Thesis, Malua Theological College, 2014).

Petelo Pauga (henceforth Rev. Pauga) claims in his historical account of the same church that “Strengths are positive attributes that drive Saoluafata CCCS to continue.”<sup>2</sup> He maintains a few elements such as a proud history, majority numbers, and respect and unity as strengths. It is this opening that interested me to utilize *pule* and *soapule* as major strengths driving success.

Hence, I attempt to explore Venn's Triad and modify it to *pule* and *soapule*, contending that these are strengths or forces akin to self-govern, self-support, and self-propagate. In the parish setting since 1962, these strengths are rarely visited. It is not to say that writers of such histories, such as Rev. Pauga for instance, did not recognize it. It is important to acknowledge the successful pastoral ministry as being a product of the mother church, the CCCS. Notably however are the constructs/concepts of *pule* and *soapule* and how the people of Samoa have embraced or embedded them in their world.

### ***Aim***

This historical attempt aims to explore, three key ideas from 1982 to 2021. First church developments, projects, and/or achievements under the leadership of Rev Limuaa Samuelu, his wife, children, and family. Second, to recognize the existence of the triad in the CCCS in Saoluafata. Finally, to emphasize the strengths, powers, or forces they have abided for extensive period of time. One of the principle aims of this thesis is to seek a re-reading of histories using cultural perspectives. As a member of the church who was born and raised in Saoluafata, *pule*, and *soapule* are mostly operated in governing, supporting, and propagating the church and village.

To achieve such aims, the paper is guided by several questions: What is Venn's three-self principle/triad for Church Independence? In what sense does it relate to *pule* and *soapule*? How do church developments, achievements, challenges, confrontations,

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<sup>2</sup> Pauga, “A History”, 46.

and/or oppositions from 1982 to 2021 contribute to the relationship between Venn's triad and *Pule* and *Soapule*? Having identified that relationship, do these cultural strengths hold Christianity for 39 years of Christian mission (from 1982 to 2021) under the leadership of Rev. Samuelu, his wife Daru, children, and families? If Venn's triad is principally about self, can *pule* and *soapule* provide a new self or *pule*? What will be gained in the future from achieving this re-writing of history using cultural models? Will the completion of this thesis contribute new insight about using cultural models to understand the history of the church?

### ***Methodology***

In answering these questions, Primary and Secondary Sources are used. Primary sources focus on the CCCS Record Book (henceforth *Api o le Galuega*) and Personal Interviews. The *Api o le Galuega* records information about the progress of the work in CCCS in Saoluafata people. It also records, birthdays, dates and times of death, developments and projects undertaken by the Church, lists of ministers, and list of families serving the church known in Samoa as *Matafale*. In addition, the *Api* outlines issues faced by the church, the roles of the church minister, wife, and children, and so forth. The church minister responsible for looking after the parish is entrusted with keeping this book safe. Rev. Pauga, a son of Saoluafata in the CCCS denomination, is currently in charge of the church after Rev. Samuelu and his family retired in 2021. Upon request, he granted authorization to use this source.

As *Api o le Galuega* could be worrisome to some people, Wilhelm Dilthey seems to provide a motion. That is, Dilthey's "Historicism" in his hermeneutics as the foundation of the human sciences claims that "religious texts are the expression of the religious and ideological part of a society's superstructure."<sup>3</sup> As such, treating the *Api o*

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<sup>3</sup> Alexander S. Jensen, *Theological Hermeneutics*, (London: SCM Press, 2007), 110.

*le Galuega* as a religious text would not be problematic for it expresses the religious and ideological superstructure of the CCCS and Saoluafata village. One of the ideologies is *pule* and *soapule*.

Additionally, this paper relies also on Personal Interviews. There were 20 members of the community and the church interviewed - 10 men and women - ranging from 30 years of age and over. Rev. Samuelu and his wife Daru were the main figures of this primary process because of their knowledgeable experiences in the mission field which are evidence of a successful ministry. I have also considered Television programs, especially EFKS<sup>4</sup> TV for they host interview programs for church ministers who retire from the Church including Rev. Samuelu.

Moreover, if it is possible, my experience as someone who was born and raised in Saoluafata, under the guidance of Rev. Samuelu and his wife, can be taken as another source worthy of attention. Though for being perilous of bias, I cannot refrain from who I am in the realm of spiritual guidance and upbringing by Rev. Samuelu, his wife, and children. Besides, the CCCS's Christian Education (*Aoga Faifeau*) in Saoluafata led by Rev. Samuelu, was and still is a theoretical and practical venture of my Samoan Christian background.<sup>5</sup> Hence, becoming a source may be acceptable in writing this history, as Martin Heidegger puts it in his “state-of-mind” perspective about “everyday sort of thing”

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<sup>4</sup> Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa or The Congregational Christian Church Samoa.

<sup>5</sup> I have noticed since about my younger age that the attitudes and practices were common in my community. I knew in those days we usually went to Aoga Faifeau, and read and narrated Bible stories with my spiritual parents as well as Sunday school teachers. The difficulties faced by every family in development and financial instability. Sadly, I still remembered, my parents my relatives, and the villagers, carrying coconuts to get some money at the store of a man named Toeta every evening, I also experienced as a young boy in those days, walking around my community and neighborhood village such as Lufilufi and Falepuna to sell fish (*taui'a*), and *fagu'u* (Samoan oil), from my grandparents *lolo*. The reason I recall these thoughts is in connection with the efforts of the people to build the work of the Church as well as families. It is also a comparison of those days and today. According to Rev Elder Samuelu in one of his interviews. He said at the beginning of their ministry in Saoluafata. People were struggling in terms of finance, but they dare to serve the Church according to what they had. "*Ou te manatua I also faatoa amata le ma galuega le mativa ma le le tagolima ae sa taumafai lava nai tagat mo le tautua o le galuega an Atua poo le Lotu*" (E.F.K.S. TV 2 Interview with Rev. Elder Samuelu).

saying that the “state-of-mind discloses how we understand the world [in which we are thrown] ...However, this disclosure of the understanding of the world is by no means reflected or conscious. It is implicit in our state-of-mind and can be made conscious and reflected upon interpretation.”<sup>6</sup> Upon interpretation, my self-consciousness in the world I live in can make sense of the CCCS in Saoluaafata, as a religious and ideological world, through *pule* and *soapule*.

In addition, the Secondary Sources include the Samoan Torch (Sulu Samoa), the CCCS newspaper and books, and other written material by many such as Rev. Dr. Aukilani Tuiai, late Rev. Oka Fauolo, Rev. Dr. Latu Latai, the late Fanaaafi Aiono, Rev. Petelo Pauga, to name a few are also considered valuable sources in this process. It is important to note that these sources – Primary and Secondary – might limit this study. However, my concentration is to unpack and investigate what the sources state especially the *Api o le Galuega*, Interviews, Rev. Pauga’s history, and my contribution. Building on tackling any prevailing condition, J. Maxwell Miller remarkably affirms that

“...history should be equated instead with the common consensus notions about the past held by the general public. These notions might be influenced by what professional historians say as well by other factors, such as prevailing political, social, and religious attitudes. For that matter, are not professional historians themselves deeply influenced by prevailing attitudes?”<sup>7</sup>

It seems that we, as human beings and contexts we live, are influenced by prevailing political, social, and religious attitudes. Such an influence affects how we perceive the past in our days. If there is any prevailing attitude, according to Venn it could be self-

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<sup>6</sup> Jensen, *Theological hermeneutic*, 120.

<sup>7</sup> J. Maxwell Miller, “Reading the Bible historically: The historian’s approach,” in *An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and their Application: To each its meaning*, eds, Steven L. McKenzie and Stephen R. Haynes, (Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press), 1999, 17.

governed, self-support and self-propagate. Yet, in the Samoan culture and tradition, the prevailing attitudes could be *pule* and *soapule*.

### ***Pule and Soapule as a Perspective***

*Pule* is authority and *Soapule* is pairing authorities.<sup>8</sup> Collecting historical information from 1982 to 2021 is useful in operating these Samoan concepts concerning self-govern, self-support, and self-propagate. As the three self-principles were restricted to LMS circles in granting independence for indigenous churches, *pule* and *soapule* prove that those outside models<sup>9</sup> may not fully capture the driving forces of success and durability of Venn's triad in the CCCS in Saoluafata. To an extent, the attempt to provide a re-write of the history of the CCCS in Saoluafata from *pule* and *soapule* is one way to acknowledge the gigantic efforts of those who established and developed the church and village from the beginning. These concepts continue to strengthen my Samoan traditions and culture as well as enable the fluidity and influence of Western models.

Some Westerners may feel pessimistic about using traditional and cultural concepts as models for history writings. However, being fundamental to such negativity may, on the one hand, may not help reveal the importance of my traditions and culture. And on the other hand, not right or safe to stand against the conscience<sup>10</sup> of my inheritance. My intention is not to discriminate between Venn's triad and the *pule* and *soapule* perspective but to have a mere dialogue, presupposing that one helps the other in accomplishing this goal of identifying the driving forces of success as well as re-reading and re-writing histories.

Kerry R Howe remarks on certain things about pessimism mentioned above saying:

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<sup>8</sup> See Part 1.4 in Chapter 1 for a detailed demonstration.

<sup>9</sup> Outside models refer to models outside Samoa. I call them Western Models.

<sup>10</sup> These are Martin Luther's words to the pope at the Diet of Worms during the Reformation in 1517.

“As colonies became decolonized, so as historians began to decolonize history...Where the written histories of these places had been a history of white men as agents of empire, now the indigenous peoples themselves were deemed fit subjects for academic research.”<sup>11</sup>

It seems that there is an opportunity to re-write histories from cultural perspectives as peoples of their contexts understand their way of living. Having that mindset, Howe puts forth his "island-oriented perspective."<sup>12</sup> That perspective can affect a historian in two ways. Firstly, it is the "expansion" of European history, and secondly is that

"Europeans in the Pacific were influenced by local conditions and especially by indigenous societies. Pacific islands' history had to be seen in terms of cultural interaction, which meant studying both sides. The Islanders were brought into the picture. Their communities were now credited with having histories of their own that were worthy of serious academic study."<sup>13</sup>

Notably, we as Samoans were in the picture of making Christianity a success and our communities must write histories of their own because they understand their own religious and ideological superstructures. Such an interesting island-oriented perspective provides a foundation for viewing Venn's three-self principle for church independence from *pule* and *soapule* perspective, using the CCCS in Saoluafata as a historical community. It can be presupposed that Venn's model in the Pacific was influenced by local conditions or prevailing attitudes like *pule* and *soapule*. The employment of these two is historically evident in Saoluafata Christianity.

### ***Thesis Outline***

To write history of a church from a cultural perspective, this thesis is outlined in 4 major chapters and ends with a Conclusion. Chapter 1 establishes a background focusing mainly on the CCCS towards the emergence of Venn's triad and its relation to *pule* and

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<sup>11</sup> Kerry R Howe, *Where the waves fall: A new South Sea Islands history from first settlement to colonial rule*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984), xii.

<sup>12</sup> Howe, *Where the waves fall*, xiii.

<sup>13</sup> Howe, *Where the waves fall*, xiii.



*soapule*. This chapter sets a platform for the rest of the paper using *pule* and *soapule* instead of Venn's three-self principle. Chapter 2 discusses a relationship between Rev. Samuelu and the Saoluafata village authority focusing on dignified authority (*pule mamalu*) as self-govern. Chapter 3 discusses the relationship between church ministers' wives including Daru and the Saoluafata Women's Council focusing on supporting authority (*pule lagolago*) as self-supporting. Chapter 4 aims to explore a relationship between spiritual children and village children using continual authority (*pule faaauau*) as self-propagate. Each chapter arrives at a new self or *pule*. It is through this that strengths are plausibly grasped.

# Chapter 1

## A Historical Background

### Introduction

In 1982, Rev. Samuelu, his wife Daru, children, and family made a covenant with the CCCS in Saoluafata. Their covenant spanned 39 years. Historically, the CCCS denomination is founded on certain principles namely the 1830 covenant and Venn's triad. On the one hand, the 1830 covenant is based on the agreement or promise made between Samoa and the LMS at Sapapalii, Savaii in 1830, when Malietoa Vaiinupo graciously landed and accepted Christianity. On the other hand, the LMS used Venn's triad to grant church independence to the Samoan Church in 1962. These are significant because the CCCS in Saoluafata adhere to these principles making them a successful parish. Hence, this Chapter is divided into four parts. The first part sets the background. The second part deals with history before 1982, focusing on church ministers, wives, and people. The third and fourth parts demonstrate a modification of Venn's triad to the *pule* and *soapule* Model.

### 1.1 The CCCS

As mentioned, the CCCS denomination in Samoa is employed on two major principles – the 1830 covenant and her Independence in 1962. One may speculate that Venn's three-self model only intensified the LMS to grant independence upon their discretions. Yet, it can be observed from a Samoan viewpoint, that it is *pule* and *soapule* that do the work. Think likely, the success of Christianity in the parish setting (like the CCCS in Saoluafata) begins in 1830 but became fully recognized in 1962 when the

Samoa Church accomplished Venn's triad. It is because *pule* and *soapule* existed and operated in Samoa before, during, and after 1830.

### ***The 1830 Covenant***

The 1830 covenant at Sapapalii Savaii is the ground which covenants in the CCCS denomination are based upon. In 1830, Malietoa Vaiinupo covenanted with John Williams and other LMS missionaries, with 8 Tahitian teachers.<sup>1</sup> As a covenantal model, Malietoa Vaiinupo offered two fine mats of high value in the Samoan culture and tradition while John Williams emphasized their mission to bring Samoa under the gospel toward prosperity.<sup>2</sup> Added to it were civilized instruments to help cultivate and prepare the lands for the gospel and the Samoan people. This covenant serves as the guiding principle of any CCCS covenantal ceremony when a parish or village calls a church minister to look after them. It did not occur in mission stations but was undertaken when villages began to call Samoan teachers to be their church ministers around 1860.

In 1836, the LMS missionaries began to establish mission stations and Samoan teachers began to emerge. In 1839, the LMS under John Williams leadership chose the first Samoan missionaries to Christianize Vanuatu and other Pacific islands. Accordingly, Samoans did not want to abandon their villages because of mission stations. They felt that leaving their lands and families was something disrespectful to their heritage. Returning to villages making it easy to adapt and adopt Christianity in the village setting.<sup>3</sup> To that, the missionaries were uncertain and in retrospect, were reluctant to label the Samoans

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<sup>1</sup> John Williams, *A narrative of missionary enterprises in the South Sea Islands; with remarks upon the natural history of the island, origins, languages, traditions, and usages of inhabitant*. (London: J. Snow 1838), 343-6.

<sup>2</sup> Williams, *A narrative*, 343-6.

<sup>3</sup> R. P. Gilson, *Samoa 1830-1900: The politics of a multi-cultural community*. (Melbourne: Oxford University Press 1970), 98.

"ministers" when they became leaders of parishes.<sup>4</sup> However, in 1860, at the early stages of the Malua Theological College in the preparation of a native agency, Samoans began to make covenants with villages and began to call them *faafeagaiga* (church minister).<sup>5</sup>

As mentioned above, the 1830 covenant consists of *pule* and *soapule* which became evident as Venn's triad in the CCCS in Saoluafata. Under the leadership of Rev. Samuelu, his wife Daru, and children from 1882 to 2021, the *pules* are either concealed or embodied by the church, village, church minister, wives, women, and children. Although the CCCS became independent from the LMS in 1962, it upholds this principle to date. The purpose herewith is not to use Venn's concepts but rather to highlight the *pules* found in the Church and particularly the CCCS in Saoluafata. It is not to say that before 1882, there were no *pule* and *soapule*. One may find that this history would undermine previous ministries by other church ministers, wives, and families. However, Rev. Samuelu, his wife Daru, and the children's faithful representatives contributed to enormous success during their service in Saoluafata. From 1830 to 1962, the Samoan Church was under the LMS banner, but it changed its name to CCCS after its Independence in 1962.

### ***The CCCS Independence from the LMS in 1962***

The CCCS's Independence from LMS in 1962 took place after attaining several factors. Tuiai professes cultural, ecclesiastical, and political factors as factors contributing to the Independent Church.<sup>6</sup> Cultural factors recognize the village setting and the village-based church. It begins from its culture (*aganuu*) where the high chiefs and chiefs (*alii/matai*), untitled chiefs (*taulelea*), honorific salutations (*faalupega*), and its village

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<sup>4</sup> Gilson, *Samoa*, 98.

<sup>5</sup> Gilson, *Samoa*, 98.

<sup>6</sup> Auklani Tuiai, "The Congregational Christian Church of Samoa, 1962–2002: A Study of the Issues and Policies that have Shaped the Independent Church", Ph.D. Thesis, (Sydney: Charles Sturt University, 2012), 8-41.

council (*fono*) serve fundamentally to achieve the self-sufficiency of the Samoan people. The village-based church portrays a community-based church instead of an individualistic one.<sup>7</sup> A community-based church implies that differences among members of the community cannot be resolved individually; rather, it is communal where the village council comes into play. This is particularly important because it determines the self-sufficiency and self-governing abilities of the Samoans.

Moreover, the ecclesiastical factors are mainly referred to as Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson's influence. Accordingly, Venn aimed at establishing an "indigenous church" using his principles of self-sustaining, self-governing, and self-propagating and insisted on a complete absence of the LMS missionaries in the field, allowing the local Christians to work their affairs.<sup>8</sup> In Venn and Rufus' order, a church should be firstly self-sustained to self-govern, then eventually extend itself (self-propagate).<sup>9</sup> Worthy to note is the fact that Samoa was evidence of self-supporting after 1830.<sup>10</sup> More importantly, the ability of the Samoans to self-govern has been noted in the contribution of the LMS to divide the Samoan political government during the New Zealand administration in 1920. That was the Mau Movement led by the LMS.<sup>11</sup>

Compellingly, the Mau Movement sets a tone for political factors contributing to independence. The colonial rule of the Germans and the New Zealanders from 1900 to 1920, changed the history of Samoa and the church. Yet, at the turn of events, it proves that the village authorities and churches in the village-based community managed to survive in turbulent times. It is plausible that in this political turmoil, the LMS saw a

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<sup>7</sup> Tuai, "The Congregational Christian Church", 15.

<sup>8</sup> Tuai, "The Congregational Christian Church", 20.

<sup>9</sup> Tuai, "The Congregational Christian Church", 19.

<sup>10</sup> Tuai, "The Congregational Christian Church", 21.

<sup>11</sup> Tuai, "The Congregational Christian Church", 22. Tuai refers to Norman Goodall, *A History of the London Missionary Society 1895–1945*, 371.

convincing force in the Samoan culture and tradition that enabled the successful acceptance of Christianity. These factors prove that the success of Samoa and Christianity in Samoa is attributed to the Samoans in the village setting. As Tuai's historical undertaking covers the whole of Samoa, I attempt to view and illustrate these factors in the CCCS in Saolufata.

## **1.2 The CCCS in Saolufata before 1982**

The establishment of the CCCS Saolufata, from 1843 by the LMS to 1982 under the CCCS denomination, is well developed and documented.<sup>12</sup> It includes the LMS missionaries in 1843 until the installation of Samoan church ministers to the field later in 1926. Although it is a fascinating historical development, it does not consider the strengths concealed in their contributions. To do so, we must first explore the CCCS in Saolufata before 1982 to highlight the validity and strengths of their history.

During establishment, the LMS chose Saolufata as the ideal place for a mission station. The church began in 1843<sup>13</sup> when the Saolufata station became the center of evangelization for the east of Upolu. Convincingly, Samoan ministers began evangelization in 1926 until the CCCS in Saolufata called Rev. Samuelu, his wife Daru, and children to be their church ministers in 1982. This list of local church ministers is compellingly recorded and well preserved by Rev. Pauga.<sup>14</sup> However, Rev. Pauga was inconsiderate of the strengths or forces cloaked within. He mentioned the missionaries, discussed the village setting, identified the early Samoan church ministers, and their

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<sup>12</sup> Pauga, "A history", 16.

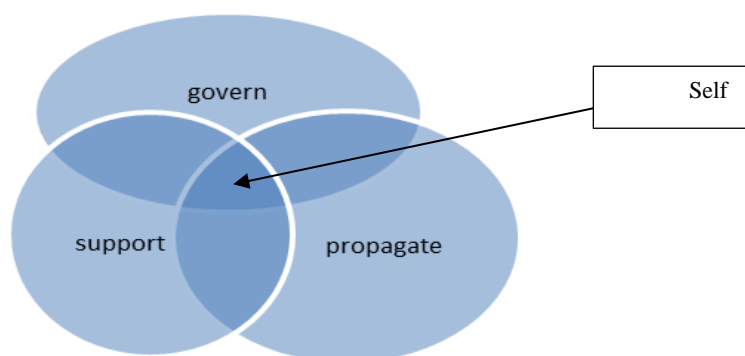
<sup>13</sup> Pauga, "A history", 21-25. The LMS Missionaries began evangelization in 1843 towards 1868 in Saolufata and beyond the east side of Upolu. They were Rev. Thomas Slayter and his wife, missionary John Sunderland, Thomas Health and John Stair, Rev. George Drummond, missionary Archibald W. Murray, and Rev. William Watson.

<sup>14</sup> Pauga, "A history", 35-36. Samoan missionaries became church ministers in 1926. They were Rev. Iiga Kuresa (1926), Rev. Maresala (1928), Rev. Elisara Ioapo and wife Funafuti (1936-1980), Rev. Limuaa Samuelu and his wife Daru (1982-Present).

works, but he paid little attention to the interactions of these entities and what held them together for 39 years. One may wonder what strengths or forces drove the LMS missionaries, the village, and the Samoan ministers to consolidate Christianity in Saoluafata.

Given Howe's island-oriented perspective, Rev. Pauga made few convictions worthy of contemplating *pule* and *soapule* as strengths. They are "Samoa Ordained Ministers," "they rule separately," "supportive of the mission," and "loud in his commands",<sup>15</sup> to name a few. They may have been entrenched in *Pule* and *soapule* as driving forces analogous to Venn's three-self model. For example, an ordained minister suggests that, through ordination, he has an authority to govern. The same applies to "rule separately" in a sense that there are existing ruling parties that rule separately. These are things that Venn's three-self model may ignore.

### 1.3 Henry Venn's three-self model for church independence



**Figure 1:** A reproduction of Venn's three-self principle. The center marked by the arrow is self. Self is represented by a church like the CCCS. It means the CCCS can self-govern, self-support, and self-propagate. The overlaps indicate that the element are bonded. Such a bonding implies that one element relies on the other, but one must not have supreme authority over the other. Overlapping reflects a solid church.

<sup>15</sup> Pauga, "A history", 13, 31, 35, 37.

Venn and Anderson are widely known in Protestant circles for their three-self principles of self-govern, self-sustain, and self-propagate to declare the independence of the church in the national or indigenous sphere.<sup>16</sup> The LMS in Samoa in 1961 implemented this triad to see whether the Samoan church managed its affairs. Upon attainment, the LMS granted Independence to the Samoan Church and changed her name to the CCCS (EFKS) in May, 1962.<sup>17</sup> This triad is an integrated approach to church independence that discloses the abilities of the CCCS to self-govern, self-sustain, and self-propagate.

Considering the CCCS in Saoluafata as a micro church<sup>18</sup> of the CCCS denomination, the triad is important for the Saoluafata's generations to know about the forces that drive the contributions made by their families in the establishment of their church and dare to understand their enormous contribution to the independence of the CCCS from the LMS in 1962. Significantly, the triad seems completed without further additional self. However, this study contains 39 years of historical account and sees the flexibilities of cultural models in producing new selves or pules.

#### **1.4 Modifying the Venn's triad to *Soapule* Model**

Venn's triad is used as a guide to facilitate the *soapule* model. *Soa* is pairing and *pule* is an authority.<sup>19</sup> As the triad focuses on self-govern, self-sustain, and self-propagate, this thesis modifies them to dignified authority (*pule mamalu*), supporting authority (*pule lagolago*), and continual authority (*pule faaauau*). For *soapule*, there are two ways to use it. Firstly, it pairs or fuses two authorities. If dignified authority, for instance, has two

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<sup>16</sup> Peter Dorn, "The Three-Self Principle as a Model for the Indigenous Church" (1982). *Master of Divinity Thesis*. 17. <http://scholar.csl.edu/mdiv/17>, 9-21.

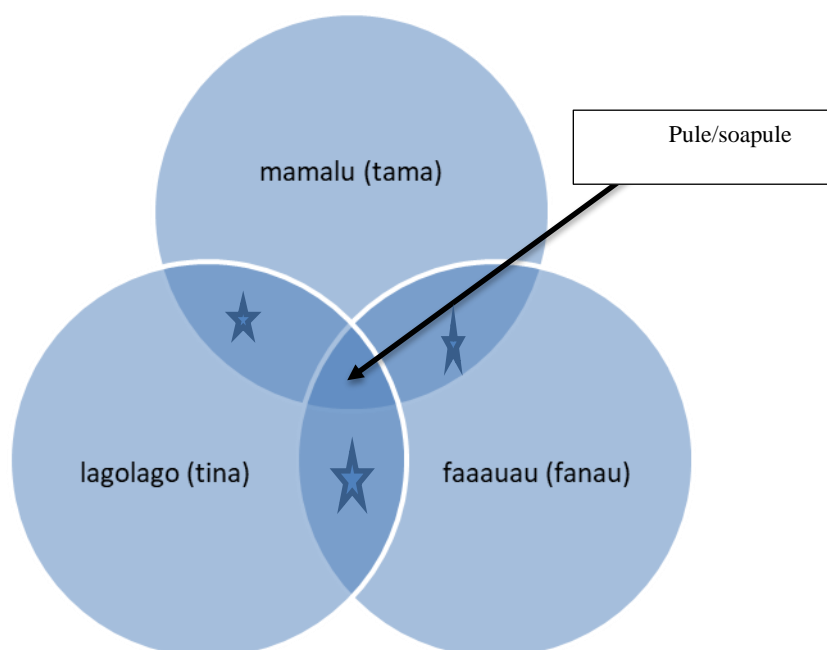
<sup>17</sup> Tuiai, "The Congregational Christian Church of Samoa", 43.

<sup>18</sup> A micro church is simply taken as a parish or a congregation of the mother Church CCCS.

<sup>19</sup> Pratt, *Pratt's*, 257.



authoritative bodies, then *soapule* is employed by fusing them. Secondly, the fusion characteristic of *soapule* tells us that *soapule* is an integrated approach suitable to define the 39 years of successful ministry. The intention is neither to abrogate nor to obliterate Venn's model; rather, to apply them as cultural concepts exhausted in the CCCS in Saoluafata. This offers an opportunity for a dialogue between the triad and cultural models. It is also a way to acknowledge the influence of everyone who contributed to the development of the church and a way to recognize the Samoan culture and traditions in history-making. This values the importance of cultural models suitable for re-reading and re-writing histories. Venn's three-self principle can be modified to a *Soapule* Model as follows:



**Figure 2:** A Samoan Family (*Aiga*) Model. The self-governing, self-sustaining, and self-propagating are changed to *pule mamalu*, *pule lagolago*, and *pule faaauau*. The *Pule* in the middle can be found in each element. To merge two or three elements, they have to undergo this *pule* in the process of *soapule*. The overlaps indicated by stars can also be *soapule* and implies that this Samoan cultural model is an integrated approach to validate a solid church and village.

Considering figure 2 above, it is basically a derivative of a Samoan family (*aiga*) model where the father (*tama*) is the head of the family, the mother (*tina*) supports him,

and the children (*fanau*) are their heirs. It is a single family. In the extended family, it would be more than 3 families and more heads come into contact when matters are discussed. This basic orientation of the Samoan family exposes bonding and relating where each entity binds to one another. Binding never assumes controlling and dominance. Control and dominance cannot prevail because of *soapule*. This is the origin of *soapule* in the Samoan context. In fact, the CCCS in Saoluafata has dignified governments operating as governing bodies. Having identified the governing bodies, *soapule* employs to merge them. Upon merging, it produces a new self/pule. In this way, the *soapule* model verifies that there is a *pule* in the CCCS in Saoluafata that realizes the concept of self-govern. The *pule lagolago* and *pule faaauau* function in the same direction. Moreover, the overlaps marked by stars render the *soapule* model as an integrated approach (similar to the three-self principle) suitable for re-reading and re-writing histories. That reflects a solid church and village which attributes a successful church mission from 1982 to 2021, under the leadership of Rev. Samuelu, his wife Daru, and children.

### Summary

The CCCS in Saoluafata from 1982 to 2021 situates in a context of various undertakings such as the arrival of Christianity brought by the LMS in 1830 at Sapapalii Savaii, the independence of the Samoan Church from the LMS in 1962, and the Samoan tradition and culture of governance. The 1830 covenant marks the beginning of self-govern, self-support, and self-propagate. The LMS analysed these selves and granted church independence in 1962. Appropriately, the analysis was based on Venn's triad and left untouched by some history writers such as Rev. Pauga. However, from 1982 to 2021, it seems likely that instead of Venn's selves, it was *pule* and *soapule* that generated success. As life progresses, so do models change. Venn's three-self model has been

changed to *the pule* and *soapule* model which have similar characteristics. *Pule* and *soapule* have been operational in the CCCS in Saoluafata before and after 1982.

## Chapter 2

### ***Pule mamalu* (dignified authority) as self-govern: The governing bodies**

#### **Introduction**

The CCCS in Saoluafata is governed by two governing bodies. This chapter sets a stage for the identification of these bodies. These governing bodies are fused and a new self or *pule* is identified. Hence this chapter is divided into four parts which essentially include the 1830 covenant between Malietoa Vaiinupo and John Williams at Sapapalii Savaii, which serves as a prominent guide to the covenant between the CCCS in Saoluafata and Rev. Samuelu, wife Daru, and children to lead the church from 1982. This chapter ends with a Summary.

#### **2.1 Self-governing and *Pule mamalu* (dignified authority)**

##### ***Self-governing***

Self-governing is a nationalistic effort and feeling from people who gain spiritual, social, political, economic, and cultural responsibilities and growth to lead and govern their affairs.<sup>1</sup> Dorn begins in a local "basic unit of an organization" then layers are added to the point where missionaries are no longer needed.<sup>2</sup> Tuiai turns into the Samoans' abilities to destabilize the LMS church in village and subdistrict contentions.<sup>3</sup> The sense

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<sup>1</sup> Dorn, "The Three-Self Principle", 23 -25.

<sup>2</sup> Dorn, "The Three-Self Principle," 23 -25.

<sup>3</sup> Auklani Tuiai, "The Congregational Christian Church of Samoa, 1962–2002: A Study of the Issues and Policies that have Shaped the Independent Church", Ph.D. Thesis, (Sydney: Charles Sturt University, 2012), 22.

of nationalism<sup>4</sup> emerges from the village, subdistrict, or district level. It is significant because the 39 years of successful Christianity in Saoluafata verifies people as having leadership abilities and capacities to govern and control their church and village. Under the leadership and pastoral guidance of Rev. Samuelu, his wife Daru, and his family it is noteworthy that the CCCS in Saoluafata has two key governing bodies, and their amalgamation determines their inseparability. Being inseparable is the crux of shared authority.

***Pule Mamalu (dignified authority)***

Authority is *pule* in Samoan.<sup>5</sup> As a norm, the Samoan culture and traditions attribute *pule* to high chiefs and chiefs. They rule or permit authorization of things such as lands and titles which make them law makers (*faipule*).<sup>6</sup> Other Samoan sayings seem related: *o le ala I le pule o le tautua*, and *e gase toa ae ola pule*.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, *mamalu* is “overshadowing...influential...to overshadow...to protect.”<sup>8</sup> These are associated with high-ranking, dominant, or powerful. In prominent terms they can limit to words such as dignified and distinguished. In Saoluafata, there are two dignified authorities – the church through a church minister and the village through the men's council. These bodies share their authority.

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<sup>4</sup> This thesis will not discuss nationalism as it is principally comprehensive. I only mention it to describe an attribute village governance may project.

<sup>5</sup> Pratt, *Pratt's*, 257.

<sup>6</sup> *Fai* is to make and *pule* is authority. *Faipule* is to make authority or to authorize. High chiefs and chiefs, and orators are *Faipule*.

<sup>7</sup> *O le ala I le pule o le tautua* is authority through service. *E gase toa ae ola pule* is warrior dies while authority lives.

<sup>8</sup> Pratt, *Pratt's grammar*, 204.

## 2.2 The governing bodies

### *Pastoral authority (Pule faafaifeau/faaEkalesia/aofaalupega)*

The CCCS Constitution 2011 holds and outlines the authority of a church minister and his wife to carry out their duties in their calling for the work of God. Their authority is from the Lord, the Head of the Church.<sup>9</sup> It fulfils the Will of God. It is a legal badge of any church minister to become an ordained figure on church premises. However, the Constitution carefully states that only the church minister and his wife can have this authority in a form of a “servant”. If they are not servants, they are not authorized by the Church to perform the work of God. It is through servanthood of God that God’s authority in Jesus Christ is held by a church minister. This authority enables Rev. Samuelu to perform the baptism, Holy Communion, marriage, funerals, the bestowment of chiefly titles, the opening of new residences and other developments, perform governmental devotions, and others.

On January 31, 1982, the CCCS in Saoluafata made a covenant with Rev. Samuelu, his wife Daru, and his children. This pathway enabled them, especially the church minister, to exercise their authority from the Lord only on things on their authority. At this covenant, the CCCS Saoluafata agreed to protect, feed, guard, and love the servant of God.<sup>10</sup> In response, Samuelu, and his wife Daru worked according to their calling and in the process blessed Saoluafata. This fusion between the church minister and the CCCS in Saoluafata has blessed the church, especially the youth and church.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The Constitution of the Congregational Christian Church Samoa, 2011, 7.

<sup>10</sup> This is a CCCS norm derived from the 1830 covenant between Malietoa Vaiinupo and John Williams at Sapapalii, Savaii.

<sup>11</sup> Faamau Neru, Interviewed by the author, 2022, May 14.

In 1984, the CCCS ordained Rev. Samuelu and his wife Daru in Malua during the General Assembly. He began to perform the sacraments – baptism and Holy Communion – and other activities mentioned above until they retired in 2021. In fact, he baptized approximately 403 babies and children and consecrated approximately 133 marriages, 105 deacons, and 5 laypersons.<sup>12</sup> Alongside his ministerial duties, he carried out 178 Samoan traditional bestowments of chiefs including high chiefs of Saoluafata. Additionally, was the consecration of the high chief Tagaloa Kerslake Tuala and Sagapolutele. In 1985, Rev. Samuelu consecrated the church building after renovations.<sup>13</sup> He built another residence in 1989 and a new hall in 1994 when the old one was damaged by cyclones Ofa and Val in 1990 and 1991.

Moreover, offerings tend to be a product of spirituality and assurance in the lives of the people. Offering efforts gradually developed after 1984.<sup>14</sup> The CCCS collects money in November annually for the development of the Church. From 1982 to 1985, offerings remained unchanged but the gradual development of the church in later dates has reformed the ways people probed the importance of offerings for the church.<sup>15</sup> Upon observation, Rev. Samuelu changed tactics. He divided the church into sections and sought whether people changed the ways they donate before.<sup>16</sup> In so doing, such a change was successful.

In one view, baptism, consecrations, and bestowments are important aspects of a church minister's authority because they explain the validity and power of God's authority in His servant. That said, without this Godly authority, the lives of the

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<sup>12</sup> Api o le Galuega, CCCS in Saoluafata, 1982–2021.

<sup>13</sup> Api o le Galuega, CCCS in Saoluafata, 1985.

<sup>14</sup> Afesulu Papu, Interviewed by the author, 2022, May 12.

<sup>15</sup> Rev. Elder. Limuaa Samuelu, Interviewed by the author, 2021, September 26.

<sup>16</sup> Api o le Galuega, CCCS in Saoluafata, 2004.

Saoluafata peoples assume fallibility. For instance, a chief cannot be a chief unless consecrated by a church minister. Along with the children, they cannot be entirely spiritual unless consecrated and baptized by an ordained church minister. This is the importance of a church minister in a parish, but that importance cannot entirely stand on its own because every Samoan undergoes a village authority of his or her village.

***Saoluafata Village Authority (Pule a alii ma faipule)***

Exploring a person's identity is emphasized by certain questions: Who are you? Who am I? Your genealogy? and Where are you from?<sup>17</sup> These postulate authority in the village setting. The village is well known in Samoa for its honorific salutations (*faalupega*):

*Susu le e lua; Tagaloa ma le Sagapolutele,  
Taofia ma le Usoalii  
Ma lau fetalaiga Saoluafata; tainane  
Tululautu ma Teuialilo, ma le lua nuu paia*

The Saoluafata village is unique because it has two distinct councils namely the men's council (*Nu'u o Alii*) and the women's council (*Nu'u o Tamaitai*).<sup>18</sup> The men's council is made up of orators (*tulafale*), high chiefs (*alii/aoe'e*), and untitled men (*taulealea*). The high chiefs and chiefs are law makers (*faipule*). The women's council is made up of the wives of chiefs (*faletua/tausi*), wives of untitled men (*aualuma*), and virgins of the family called *taupou*.<sup>19</sup> The women's council has a prominent level of perception contributing to the governance and/or authority. It is sacred and they make their own rules, particularly

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<sup>17</sup> Aiono Fanaafi Le Tagaloa, *O le tagata ma lona Faasinomaga*, (Apia: Malua Printing Press, 1997), 3.

<sup>18</sup> Pereseti Fili Matalavea, Interviewed by the author, 2021, December 16.

<sup>19</sup> See Chapter 3 for detailed explanations.



for the betterment of the young girls of the village. They taught the importance of understanding the cultures and how to become future female leaders.<sup>20</sup>

As leaders, they govern the village by establishing laws on the political, social, cultural, and religious setting of the village. The chiefs as heads penalize the people who breach village laws, and they are responsible for looking after the premises of the church. In that way, they deal with Rev. Samuelu and Daru when there are problems in the church itself, and complicated issues between the church and the village.

### **2.3 Soapule (pairing the governing bodies)**

On January 31, 1982, after the covenant-making, the CCCS in Saoluafata began to call their church minister *faafeagaiga*.<sup>21</sup> The covenant embodies the Eucharistic cup of the covenant and a Samoan traditional ava ceremony. The village provided the mat of the covenant<sup>22</sup> to mark the merging of two authorities – pastoral and village authorities. This covenant implies the aptitudes of the CCCS in Saoluafata and Rev. Samuelu to self-govern, hence dignified authorities. They are dignified because the ordination of a church minister is grandeur and spiritual in the CCCS while village authority is sacred because tradition and culture are sacred. Similarly, the covenant principles laid by Malietoa Vaiinupo and John Williams in 1830 are dignified and grand. When these meet a spiritual culture, spiritual governance is acquired. That was the importance of Rev. Samuelu, his wife Daru, and his children in 39 years of pastoral ministry. They strengthened the village governance by "Christianizing" and "retaining"<sup>23</sup> the bond between the men's and

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<sup>20</sup> Luafata Simanu-Kultz, Interviewed by the author, 2021, December 25.

<sup>21</sup> Api o le Galuega, CCCS in Saoluafata, 1982. *Faafeagaiga* is made up of 2 words – *faa* and *feagaiga*. See Section 2.4 for an explanation.

<sup>22</sup> This is known in Samoa as *ie o le feagaiga*.

<sup>23</sup> Luatimu uses the Samoan word “faakerisiano” and “faatumau.” I transliterated it to Christianizing and retaining.

women's council. Accordingly, they zealously worked through counseling and assisting the village's governing bodies and helped them in controlling and navigating issues affecting their relationships.<sup>24</sup>

Moreover, on other occasions, Rev. Samuelu and Daru focused on the betterment of teenagers and children by teaching them the gospel, theology, and the right attitudes toward being a good boy and girl.<sup>25</sup> The women's council is crucial in the life worlds of the village and the church. Both councils help the church when the church needed them.<sup>26</sup> Having them together influence church affairs.<sup>27</sup> They are both important for unity and the strength of the village and the church. In some areas, tensions and conflict may appear but it never annihilates the unity they possess as the Holy Spirit works through them to become one people for Christianity and the village.<sup>28</sup>

Moreover, the Godly authority held by the church minister and wife amplifies the village authority to another level where chiefs, untitled men, and women, became deacons, lay persons, Sunday school teachers, Youth Committee, and Choir presidents in the church. Under the leadership of Rev. Samuelu and Daru, the Saoluafata people fully committed to maintaining the church mission, education, Christianity, and the village.<sup>29</sup> Seemingly, the two governing authorities maintain that the covenant (*feagaiga*) is imperative in holding the church and village together.

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<sup>24</sup> Seumaalo Faafetai, Interviewed by the author, 2022, May 23., Rev. Elder. Limuaa Samuelu, Interviewed by the author, 2021, December 26.

<sup>25</sup> My personal experience as someone who was raised under the leadership of Rev. Limuaa and his wife.

<sup>26</sup> Rev. Elder. Limuaa Samuelu, Interview, 2021, December 26

<sup>27</sup> Samuelu, Interview, 2021.

<sup>28</sup> Samuelu. Interview, 2021.

<sup>29</sup> Rev. Peni Liva, Interviewed by the author, 2022, May 15.

The pairing of the two authorities at times also resonated with problems and challenges. However sound attention and flexibility were key attributes in solving these. Rev. Samuelu and his wife Daru remarked that the fieldwork challenged them in the relationship with the village as a whole, and the relationship with the elders of the community and the congregation.<sup>30</sup> The established relationship holds "no barrier since they arrived as young youth servants [in Saoluafata]."<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, the pastoral work presents conflict and violence where pastoral counselling and the voice of the *alii* and *faipule* are highly recommendable. That said, various issues arose such as the use of land for church purposes and developments that absorbed challenging views from the congregation and the village. The late submission of children and youth members to the church and church programs, and the banning of sports in the village by the village authority, absorbed challenging views from the congregation and the village. As a resolution, Rev. Samuelu and his wife Daru committed to persuasive efforts for the village to allow sports, as young people are talented in it and exposure should be highly inevitable.<sup>32</sup> The fusion of the two authorities produced a new self or *pule*.

#### **2.4 A new self/pule: *Pule faafeagaiga* (covenantal authority)**

Covenantal authority, for this purpose, is authority obtained only under covenant making.<sup>33</sup> In CCCS circles, a church minister is pronounced *faafeagaiga* when he and his wife and families make a covenant with the village authority of the Saoluafata congregation. In that way, the church and village are like covenant (*faafeagaiga*) for they

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<sup>30</sup> Samuelu, Interview, 2021.

<sup>31</sup> Vaiauau Paleaee, Interviewed by the author, 2022, May 12., Failelei Maposua Folau, Interviewed by the author, 2022, January 15. Afesulu Papu, Interviewed by the author, 2022, May 13.

<sup>32</sup> Feagai'fu'e Peepee, Interviewed by the author, 2022, May 22.

<sup>33</sup> Covenant making in Samoa is *osi feagaiga*. *osi* is to make and *feagaiga* is a covenant. *Faafeagaiga* is made up of two words: *faa* and *feagaiga*. *Faa* is a causative prefix which makes *feagaiga* a verb. It is then becomes *faafeagaiga* meaning 'to be a covenant, like a covenant.'

are submitted to a covenant (*feagaiga*). As mentioned above, the covenant bonds them together in the Eucharistic cup of the covenant and the ava ceremony. A church minister cannot enter a parish unless a congregation calls and makes a covenant with him and his wife. The Eucharistic cup of the covenant holds the authority of the church and only an ordained church minister can perform it. The cup of the Samoan traditional ava ceremony holds the authority of the village. Both embrace the gravity of dignity, making the covenant a dignified authority and thus called covenantal authority.

Covenantal authority helps accomplish certain developments. Firstly, Rev. Samuelu encouraged the development of Sports in his ministry later in 1985. In 2000 and 2001, the village took their youth rugby 7's team to American Samoa led by Rev. Samuelu. The CCCAS in American Samoa hosted the tournament and interestingly, they won. Secondly, raising cattle on farms and plantations helped them to provide for the aged people of Mapuifagalele. Thirdly, a band and youth bus were also developed to help the community to earn money for themselves and the needs of the church and village.<sup>34</sup>

In a certain sense, Rev. Samuelu's contribution was not confined to the spiritual realm of development but also becomes "a watchman for the community."<sup>35</sup> As a watchman, the people are enthusiastic and talented in sports.<sup>36</sup> Such enthusiasm was reflected in winning the cricket tournament for 3 consecutive years where Rev. Samuelu has been a spiritual leader and a supporter.<sup>37</sup> Having a controlled mindset in nurturing the body, mind, and soul, he offered significant contributions to the social and mental but

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<sup>34</sup> Feagaifu'e P, Interviews with the Leader of the Youth: Feagaifu'e Peepee: *O le vaitau lea sa manaomia tele ai e le autalavou ni ana atina'e mo le manuia o tupulaga talavou, o lea sa faia ai maumaga, o le lafumanu (pa povi) o le pasi e la'u pasese mo se tupe ma le autalavou ae sa totogi ai tama ma teine sa faafaigaluega ai.* May 2022.

<sup>35</sup> Samuelu, Interviewed, 2021, December 29., Api o le galuega, CCCS in Saolufata, 1982-2021.

<sup>36</sup> Samuelu, Interviewed, 2021.

<sup>37</sup> Pereseti, Interviewed, 2022, January 15.

most essential spiritual development of the children and youth.<sup>38</sup> Achieving the social, mental, and spiritual developments of the peoples may significantly contribute to the 39 years of successful pastoral ministry and village<sup>39</sup> carried out by Rev. Samuelu and his family.

### Summary

The CCCS in Saoluafata has two governing bodies, the ordained ministry through the church minister Rev. Samuelu and his wife Daru, and the men's council or the village governance. These bodies influence the ways the church has run, and it is them that successful Christianity for 39 years has realized. These governing bodies work on their own grounds. One cannot overpower the other, but they merge to discuss, argue, converse, and consider things pertaining to their own world. Upon discussion through *soapule*, a new *pule* or self is produced known as covenantal authority. Rev. Samuelu and his wife Daru would not have been a church minister for the Saoluafata church unless they went through this covenant. It is through this covenant that the bonding and relating of two authorities are explored. It has been observed that the CCCS in Saoluafata have endured *pule* and *soapule* through covenant since 1843.

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<sup>38</sup> Sootaga Pereseti, Interviewed by the author, 2022, April 16.

<sup>39</sup> Petelo Pauga, Interviewed by the author, 2022, January 8.

## Chapter 3

### ***Pule lagolago* (supporting authority) as self-sustain: The supporting bodies**

#### **Introduction**

While the CCCS in Saoluafata exposes their immense ability to self-govern, this chapter seeks to explore what makes the church self-supporting. In doing so, this chapter has four parts. The first part seeks to understand the concepts of self-sustaining and *pule lagolago*. These are demonstrated further in the second part by identifying two supporting authorities namely church ministers' wives through Daru, and Saoluafata women's council. The two authorities merge in part three under *soapule* and it produces a new self/*pule* in the fourth part. This chapter ends with a Summary.

### **3.1 Self-sustain and *pule lagolago***

#### ***Self-Sustaining***

“Within twenty-five years of John Williams landing in 1830, a self-supporting village ministry was at work.”<sup>1</sup> As mentioned earlier, any prevailing condition of a historical material may be sufficient to determine the plausibility of a fact. That said, according to Tui'ai, sustainability was evident in Samoa before the Missionaries arrived,

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<sup>1</sup> Auklani Tui'ai, "The Congregational Christian Church of Samoa, 1962–2002: A Study of the Issues and Policies that have Shaped the Independent Church", (Ph.D. Thesis, Sydney: Charles Sturt University, 2012), 21. Tui'ai took this from Norman Goodall, *A History of the London Missionary Society 1895–1945*, 353. According to Goodall, '...within a quarter of a century of John William's landing, a self-supporting village ministry was at work and native Samoan missionaries had already laid down their lives in 'foreign' service.' Elia Taase, "The Congregational Christian Church in Samoa: The Origin and Development of an Indigenous Church, 1830–1961", 212.

but the LMS used that element to determine the capability of the Samoan Church to self-sustain.

### ***Pule lagolago* (Supporting Authority)**

As *pule* means authority, *lagolago* means “to help” or “to prop up”<sup>2</sup>. *Lagolago* is rooted in *lago* meaning “to lean” or “to raise on support”.<sup>3</sup> In the CCCS Constitution 2011, the Women Fellowship “become strong supporters of the Church’s mission in areas of worship, promotion of moral life, and providing charitable services for others.”<sup>4</sup> As strong supporters of Christian missions, the wives engage with their husbands (the church minister) simultaneously.<sup>5</sup> These imply that the female gender in the Samoan context is responsible to support their husbands or those who lead. Remarkably, when one leads the other supports.<sup>6</sup> That said, *pule lagolago* can be misleading when it runs in one direction; yet it runs both ways – husband to wife and wife to husband. In this undertaking, there are two supporting bodies in the CCCS Saoluaafata: wife Daru (representing church ministers' wives) and the village's women's council. They have the authority, but it is supporting authority.

## **3.2 The supporting bodies**

***The church minister’s wife (Faletua<sup>7</sup>) as pule lagolago: Daru and other church minister’s wives.***

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<sup>2</sup> George Pratt, *Pratt’s grammar dictionary and Samoan Language*, (Apia: Malua Printing Press, 1911), 172.

<sup>3</sup> Pratt, *Pratt’s grammar*, 172.

<sup>4</sup> The Constitution of the CCCS, (Malua Fonotele, 2011), 11.

<sup>5</sup> Alesana Fosi Palaamo, “Three-dimensional triangular roles of the Samoan Church Minister-*faifeau* (church minister), social worker, and counselor,” *SJT*, 1(1), 2022, 113.

<sup>6</sup> Palaamo, Three-dimensional, 120.

<sup>7</sup> Church ministers’ wives are often called *faletua*. *Fale* is house and *tua* can be meant ‘at the back’ or ‘rely on’. This means *faletua* is a house at the back which people rely upon.

A church minister's wife has a supporting role in the context of the CCCS. Accordingly, a graduate of Malua Theological College cannot be ordained unless married.<sup>8</sup> It implies that a church minister must have a wife before entering a parish under covenant circumstances. The CCCS calls a church minister's wife *faletua*. A *faletua* is "a small house at the back." In Samoan tradition and culture, a high chief or chief's wife is also called *faletua*. It is made up of two words – *fale* (house) and *tua* (back).<sup>9</sup> This may be subordinating; however, *faletua* is mostly taken as someone upon whom a household is relying.<sup>10</sup> It is associated with the term *tuafafine* where *tua* is back and *fafine* is a woman. It is not that a woman is behind but rather, a woman on whom a household, husband or anyone is relying upon. Latu Latai clarifies that church minister, and their wives hold "increasing power within the church and Samoan society."<sup>11</sup> It is appropriate to say that Daru Samuelu has an authority significant of either leading or supporting.

Daru Samuelu, in her position as *faletua* in pastoral ministry functions in ordained premises. As a *faletua*, she earns two pastoral capabilities – authority (*pule*) and support (*lagolago*). She may have equal governing abilities with her husband, but that authority is supporting, backing, encouraging, and assisting, her husband in the ministry. Her supporting authority is also dignified.

She heads the church's Women's Fellowship (*Mafutaga Tina*) and always leads the Sunday School and Church Youth. One claims that she had an enormous contribution to supporting her husband and children in their ministry and she disciplined the children in

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<sup>8</sup> Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa, "O le Iloiloga o Tulafono Tumau," (Apia: Malua Printing Press, 2013), 15. Vaega IV Faifeau Samoa, 2: Ia le faauuina foi se Aoao ua iu mai Malua, vagana ua faaipoipo.

<sup>9</sup> See also Alesana Fosi Palaamo, "Three-Dimensional Triangular Roles of the Samoan Church Minister-Faifeau (Church Minister), Social Worker, and Counsellor", *SJT*, (1 (1), 2022), 119.

<sup>10</sup> Relying upon is *e tua I ai* in Samoa.

<sup>11</sup> Latu Latai, "Covenant Keepers: A History of Samoan (LMS) Missionary Wives in the Western Pacific from 1839 to 1979", PhD Thesis, (ANU, 2016), 74.



an acceptable fashion<sup>12</sup>. Seeking a comment, Daru insists that practical work in the field is the reality of being a *faletua* although much has been learned in Malua Theological College (MTC).<sup>13</sup> Asking why, she claims that MTC only provides a 4-year preparation, but in the parish, there are huge interactions, dealings, exchanges, and collaborations with the people in every facet of the work where valiant anticipation is necessary.<sup>14</sup> Failelei Maposua remarks that on every occasion in the church Daru was always there with Rev. Samuelu at any time of the day and night.<sup>15</sup> Daru further remarks that preaching the word of God is fundamental to her and her husband because preaching attracts and fashions the relationships between them and the congregation but ominously between the people themselves. They aimed to construct solid relationships between the people to have a concrete church and village.<sup>16</sup> Rev. Samuelu believes that the success of their church mission is the assistance, support, and advice of his *faletua* Daru.<sup>17</sup> There were some clashes with members of the church because these members did not support his ideas. However, Daru always side-lined his ideas and encouraged him to leave the matter for the next meeting or until the Holy Spirit appears to him to do so.<sup>18</sup>

Moreover, Daru leads church fellowships. The Women's Fellowship (*Mafutaga a Tina*) which consists of church ministers' wives, chiefs' wives who serve as deacons and lay pupils, widows, and any woman who is called a mother on the statutes of the church, are under the leadership of Daru. Since 1982, the Women Fellowship called her the

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<sup>12</sup> Daru Samuelu, Interviewed by the author, 2021, December 29.

<sup>13</sup> Daru, Interviewed, 2021.

<sup>14</sup> Daru, Interviewed, 2021.

<sup>15</sup> Failelei Folau, Interviewed by the author, 2022, May 25.

<sup>16</sup> Daru, Interviewed, 2022.

<sup>17</sup> Samuelu, Interviewed, 2021.

<sup>18</sup> EFKS TV 2, "Lauaosinasina", 2022.

mother of the ministry.<sup>19</sup> When they became Elders, the women call her the wife of the Elder (*Faletua o le Toeaina*) and mother of the subdistrict and district (*Tina o le Pulega/Matagaluega*). At subdistrict and district levels, the women listen to her only on the statutes of the church.<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore, the Sunday School is another crucial arm of the church's ministry where Daru became a zealous teacher and nurturer for the children. In fact, in 1982 they began their Sunday School with 50 percent of children and when they retired in 2021 ministry the number ascended to more than 100 percent.<sup>21</sup> Practically, Daru's voice was spiritually steady and courageous in that she never shouted to children but daringly reached out to young girls and gave them advice and strong encouragement about their lives as girls.<sup>22</sup> Girls are a need for the future of the Women's Council.

### *The Women's Council (Nuu o tamaitai) as pule lagolago*

As Daru is the main course of support from her part as Rev. Samuleu's wife, the Saoluafata's women council is one of the main auxiliary wings of the Saoluafata village. Daru cannot work independently. She works in association with the Women's Council towards creating a single bonded cohort for the church and village. This Women's Council consists of the chief's wives (*faletua* and *tausi*). A *faletua* is a high chief's wife and a *tausi* is an orator's (*tulafale*) wife. The word *tausi* means "to take care of, to nurse, to observe, to keep."<sup>23</sup> Also, in this circle are the wives of the untitled men called *aualuma*, "a company of single ladies" and *taupou*, "a virgin [of a family]."<sup>24</sup> Since they are one of

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<sup>19</sup> We often call any church minister's wife *tina* (mother). *Tina o le galuega* – mother of the congregation; *Tina o le Pulega* – Mother of the subdistrict; *Tina o le Matagaluega* – Mother of the District.

<sup>20</sup> Solonaima Papu, Interviewed by the author, 2022, May 12.

<sup>21</sup> Api o le galuega, CCCS in Saoluafata, 2021.

<sup>22</sup> Sootaga, Interviewed, 2022, April 15.

<sup>23</sup> Pratt, *Pratt's*, 304.

<sup>24</sup> Pratt, *Pratt's*, 11, 303.

the auxiliary arms of the Saoluafata village and church, they share the same dignity with the village authority in the same dignified space. Hence their association with Daru and their position in the village from the concept of supporting (*lagolago*) are one dignified whole.

Interestingly, Rev. Samuelu found out that the Women's Council offered sturdy support in the work of God.<sup>25</sup> He further judged that there were challenging problems along their 39-year journey, but the women managed to retain the church and the village ensuring consistent stability. On that line of judgment, the men, and women of the village, who are also working for the church, indulged in understanding their relationship with each other including the church minister and his family.<sup>26</sup> It seems that the focus here was (and still is) about bonding and relationship. Also, an elderly man remarks that due to a great sympathy of the people to understand the church minister and his families' intentions and needs, the village began to accept and instil ideas and decisions made for the betterment of the village, especially the children, the advancement of the youth, and the progress of both the village and the congregation in daily activities.<sup>27</sup> The women provide support in the Women's Fellowship, in becoming deacons, Sunday School teachers, and members of the youth and the choir.

### 3.3 Soapule

As mentioned above, the Women's Council makes a coupling effect in associating with the church ministers' wives including Daru as *faletua*. These two dignified supporting bodies create a solid church, church mission, and village. Their governance is dignified because the church ministers' wives are within the boundary of an ordained

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<sup>25</sup> Daru, Interviewed, 2022.

<sup>26</sup> Daru, Interview, 2022.

<sup>27</sup> Lafulafu Mulitalo, Interviewed by the author, 2022, May 19.

ministry, while the Women's Council is traditionally and culturally sacred. Both are instituted and realized in the dignified and covenantal authority. However, this does not assume superiority over their husbands. The husbands and wives share the same dignified governing capabilities, but their roles differentiate them. That is, the church ministers and the village authority are to lead the church and village in governing, but the women are to lead from the concept of support, assistance, help, and the like.<sup>28</sup> It is in this way that women have been recognized in the CCCS in Saoluafata and Saoluafata villages. Hence, it may be appropriate to say that the CCCS in Saoluafata is characterized as one of the churches in the CCCS realm that is blessed and gifted with the power to recognize women, locally, regionally, and globally.

### **3.4 A new self/pule: self-recognize/pule amanaia**

The honorific salutations mentioned in Chapter 2, "recognizes both councils [men's council and women's council] as legitimate and together provide authority within Saoluafata."<sup>29</sup> Recognizing authority means an authority that recognizes, acknowledges, admits, and values women in pastoral ministry and the village. On the one hand, the CCCS ministry, as the mother church, fully congeals the recognition of women in her church mission and activities. Such recognition is based upon the fact that both the church minister and wife are called for the work and have authority over things about the church. On the other hand, the organization of women in their village's social and political setting is one separated whole that is not detached from the whole body of the village governance. Since these supporting bodies fall into the dignified authority making women a

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<sup>28</sup> Palaamo, "Three-dimensional", 120: Palaamo states that "if *faletua* leads, then the role of the *faiifeau* is to support. When the *faiifeau* leads, the role of his *faletua* is to support."

<sup>29</sup> Pauga, "A history of CCCS", 12-13.

distinguished separated whole, the CCCS in Saoluafata is likely to have sustained this characteristic before and after 1982.

In a sense, this prolongation of recognition of women reflects the contribution of women to the spiritual, religious, social, political, and economic developments of both the church and the village. This consolidates the contention that *pule* and *soapule* are the strengths hidden in the 39 years of successful church mission and one of which is the supporting bodies of women. They are the fundamental and necessary wing in Saoluafata, making the church and village concrete entities.

Certainly, few developments and achievements certify the women as being the fundamental and necessary arm in a solid church and village. The developments can identify the spiritual and social life of the CCCS in Saoluafata and the Saoluafata village.<sup>30</sup> In 1998, the CCCS in Saoluafata built a new church hall and renovated the existing church building. The issues were discussed in the church and "both men and women of the village supported the decision based on damages of both the church building and hall by the previous cyclone."<sup>31</sup> Moreover, on the first Sunday of each month, spiritual stories and songs are performed by each subdivision of the community and the church. It was a wonderful opportunity for everyone, especially the women of the village, to lead and showcase their dance and singing talents.<sup>32</sup> These are expressive of the spiritual determination and progress of the Saoluafata people.<sup>33</sup> This was apparent in a thanksgiving ceremony in 1998 to celebrate 80 years of God's love on the church and village, where women offered financial support in every way, and both old and young

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<sup>30</sup> Vaiala Valoaga, Interviewed by the author, 2022, May 18.

<sup>31</sup> Api o le Galuega, CCCS in Saoluafata, 1998.

<sup>32</sup> Api o le Galuega, 1998.

<sup>33</sup> Samuelu, Interviewed, 2021.

have participated.<sup>34</sup> In tears, their mission work in the CCCS in Saoluafata was a challenging, but successful deliberations.<sup>35</sup> Accordingly, they stated that without Saoluafata they would not have been able to perform the ministry.<sup>36</sup>

### Summary

Without women, the pastoral ministry would not have been successful, and the village would not have been powerful. The CCCS in Saoluafata has two supporting bodies – the church ministers’ wives and the Saoluafata’s women’s council. They are dignified to authorize but their authority is to support because they are part of the dignified authority. When two supporting bodies merge, a new *pule* emerges called *pule amanaia* (recognizing authority or self-recognition). Recognition of women is highly recommendable in any society and a fact to remark about why Christianity succeeded in Saoluafata for 39 years. In essence, *pule* through the women is a strength analogous to self-support which is responsible for the success and strong Saoluafata.

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<sup>34</sup> Api o le Galuega, CCCS in Saoluafata, 1998.

<sup>35</sup> Samuelu, Interviewed, 2022.

<sup>36</sup> EFKS TV 2, “Lauaosinasina”, 2022.

## Chapter 4

### ***Pule faaauau* (continual authority) as self-propagation: The propagating bodies**

#### **Introduction**

It is self-evident that the CCCS in Saoluafata has dignified and supporting authorities responsible for the success and strong village. However, the model has not been fulfilled unless the church is self-propagated. Self-propagation is manifested in the lives of the Saoluafata people from 1982 to 2021, a fact to plausibly uncover the ability of Saoluafata to self-propagate. The LMS used self-propagate but as contended, *pule faaauau* is more distinctive in propagation. Hence, this chapter seeks to explore the relation between self-propagation and *pule faaauau* and to identify the propagating bodies responsible for the success of Christianity in Saoluafata.

#### **4.1 Self-propagation and *pule faaauau***

##### ***Self-Propagation***

Self-propagation refers to "every new Christian [who is] an active witness, [who] bears a part in the church and shares the responsibility for the spread of the Gospel. [They are] the seed."<sup>1</sup> Dorn considers this self the "importance of the threesome [self-support, self-govern, and self-propagate]."<sup>2</sup> Tuiai claims it as "evangelism" and a "growing church."<sup>3</sup> These define the ability of an indigenous church to spread. Despite that, few

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Dorn, "The Three-Self Principle as a Model for the Indigenous Church," MD Thesis, 1982, 17, <http://scholar.csl.edu/mdiv/17>.

<sup>2</sup> Dorn, "The Three-self", 1982, 25

<sup>3</sup> Tuiai, "The Congregational Christian Church Samoa", 105-107.

concepts are considered worthy of adapting self-propagating to *pule faaauau* (henceforth continual authority). Concepts such as new Christians, active witness, the spread of the gospel, seed, and the growing church, bear witness to self-propagation referring particularly to the children of the church and village as future authorities. They are active and enthusiastic agents or participants. In Samoa, they are the precious offspring of parents.<sup>4</sup> As precious offspring, they have persistent abilities to endure, regenerate, and maintain authority. Hence, they are the continual authority.

### ***Pule Faaauau* (continual authority)**

Continual is the English word for *faaauau*. *faaauau* is rooted in *au* meaning reached, achieved, arrived at, to name a few. Few instances in Samoan are 'it is hereditary' (*e au I le gafa*), 'I can reach' (*ou te au iai*), and 'the strength of ladies can reach' (*e au le inailau a tina*). Similarly, as children are the precious offspring of parents, they can reach the point where they become parents spiritually and socially. The causative prefix *faa* causes *au* to be a verb, hence the word *faaauau*. On one occasion, they carry the *pule* hence hereditary. On another, they can reach the *pule* from the Samoan perspective of authority through service.<sup>5</sup> They will become good fathers and mothers, high chiefs or chiefs, orators, church ministers, prime ministers, cabinet, and many other authorities. Put simply, the children are the future authority of the Church, village, and the Independent State of Samoa.

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<sup>4</sup> This is translated from a Samoan saying *o au o matua fanau*.

<sup>5</sup> *O le ala I le pule o le tautua* – *tautua* is service, *pule* is authority, and *o le ala I le* is through.



## 4.2 The propagating bodies

### *Spiritual children (Fanau Faaleagaga)*<sup>6</sup>

In 1982, the CCCS in Saoluafata called Rev. Samuelu, his wife Daru, and his family, and commenced working in the parish. They were not ordained and not qualified to perform the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion.<sup>7</sup> Rev. Leauma of the CCCS in Fusi Saoluafata performed the prescribed sacraments for two years according to the CCCS Constitution.<sup>8</sup> It is not until 1984, after the CCCS General Assembly in May where he was ordained, that he began to perform the sacraments. From then until 1988, Rev. Samuelu baptized 117 babies and infants.<sup>9</sup> A woman named Faamalologa, who currently works as a police officer, marks the first six-year term of Rev. Samuelu, Daru, and their children in the parish. From 1988 to 1995, another six years in the field, he baptized 116 other children.<sup>10</sup> From 1984 to 2021, a total of 518 children were baptized and nurtured by the church minister and his wife. Some of them today are helping the families, the whole community, the Church in Saoluafata, and the Mother Church. Others have become church ministers while many are working for the government and have travelled abroad to study and developed their own families.<sup>11</sup> They keep visiting Rev. Samuelu, his wife, and his family to date, not only in Samoa but also abroad.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> This should not be confused with the Saoluafata children (*fanau faalenuu*). The point is developed from the notion of transformation through baptism. Baptized children are Spiritual children as opposed to not baptized children. When the children enter the church through baptism and Holy Communion, theologically, they do not belong to the world but to the Kingdom of God. Outside of these premises, I refer to Saoluafata children.

<sup>7</sup> Api o le Galuega, 1982., Folau, Interviewed, 2022.

<sup>8</sup> Api o le Galuega, 1982. Samuelu, Interviewed, 2021., Daru, Interviewed, 2021.

<sup>9</sup> The number of children baptized in the first 6 years of the ministry, 1982-11, 1983-17, 1984-16, 1985-24, 1986-15, 1987-17, 1988-17: Data from Api o le Galuega CCCS Saoluafata.

<sup>10</sup> Api o le Galuega, 1988-1995.

<sup>11</sup> Faamau Neru, Interviewed by the author, 2022, May 14.

<sup>12</sup> Samuelu and Daru, Interviewed, 2021.

In 1983, the church held a census. There were 317 church members, ranging from 12 years old, confirmed and accepted to partake in the Holy Communion sacrament.<sup>13</sup> The census is one point to ascertain a growing church. Furthermore, in 1982, Rev. Samuelu's work began with 30 families<sup>14</sup> and not until 2021, it ascends to 60 families.<sup>15</sup> By the same token, the first monetary offering known as *alofa* for the church minister was \$571.50. To date, it is \$3000 every fortnight. Annually, it is estimated more than \$100,000 in monetary gifts are offered by the Saoluafata people for Rev. Samuelu and his family.<sup>16</sup> These figures show an immense forward movement of the church, and it is an indication of self-propagation.

In the case of Spiritual Leadership, Rev. Samuelu, and his wife Daru, always wanted Saoluafata people, particularly the youth, to become church ministers. Interestingly, they encouraged some but on other occasions, he picked us saying "it is the time for you to go and try the Entrance Exam to Malua Theological College."<sup>17</sup> Some of us accepted it but others chose other non-church avenues. Consequently, a line of church ministers hailed from Saoluafata took the proclamation of the Word and Sacraments directions.

Rev. Isamaeli Liaina served the CCCS parish in Australia. Pereseti Fili Matalavea is the wife of Rev. Elder Fili Matalavea of the CCCS in Faleula. Faanino Isaia, who was also an Elder's wife, served in CCCS Lalomanu. Faaiuga Tefuli, a church minister's wife served in the Tokelauan Church. Rev. Elder Faaulu Malaulau serves in the CCCS in Newton New Zealand. Rev. Elder Nomeneta Simanu serves in Lefaga. Rev. Toeileiu

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<sup>13</sup> Api o le Galuega, 1983.

<sup>14</sup> 'Families' - This is known in CCCS circles as *matafale*.

<sup>15</sup> Puga, Interviewed, 2022.

<sup>16</sup> *Api o le galuega*, 2021., Samuelu, Interviewed, 2021.

<sup>17</sup> Samuelu, Interviewed, 2021.

Seuteni, Rev. Sanerivi Mulitalo, and Rev. Georgy Elisara of CCCS in American Samoa.<sup>18</sup> Some ladies chose to marry Methodists and became wives in the Methodist Church. Rev. Petelo Pauga, who was baptized by Rev. Samuelu, graduated from MTC in 2014 and he looks after the parish nowadays to await a new church minister. Gaolo Elisara and I are yet to graduate this year, 2022, while Faafouina Samuelu, a son of Rev. Samuelu, has just begun his theological training. The increased number of Saoluafata people in the ministry is believed to be the reason behind many successes.<sup>19</sup> Vaia'ua'u, a great-grandmother, is happy to share her views about Daru and her duties in nurturing the young lives. Daru was the right person for our kids, and she was key to the betterment and success of our children.<sup>20</sup> In fact, "Daru hit me with a stick because I was too naughty and continued to be absent from Sunday School. That brought me where I am now."<sup>21</sup> Moreover, Gaolo Elisara was badly influenced by bad drinking behaviour. Elisara insists that Rev. Samuelu's immense work was the reason why he is in Malua aiming to become a future church minister.<sup>22</sup>

### ***Saoluafata children (fanau Faalenuu<sup>23</sup>)***

Living and revealing Christian Spirituality and the village of Saoluafata is the great purpose of children. As mentioned, the children are the precious offspring of parents. In one way or another, the expansion of Christianity depends on the availability of the people, especially children and youths. Siaituvao Tivao and Sootagata Pereseti are instances of Saoluafata children who were under the leadership of Rev. Elder. Samuelu

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<sup>18</sup> Samuelu, Interviewed, 2021.

<sup>19</sup> Solonaima Faautagia, Interviewed by the author, 2022, May 13.

<sup>20</sup> Paleaae, Interviewed by the author, 2022.

<sup>21</sup> Afesulu Papu, Lafulafu Mulitalo, Failelei Maposua, Interviewed by the author, 2022.

<sup>22</sup> Gaolo Elisara, Interviewed by the author, 2022, June 15.

<sup>23</sup> *Fanau* is children and *Faalenuu* is the village.

and Daru but are currently working for the government. In ceaseless efforts, they continue to improve the lives of Saoluafata children that Rev. Elder Samuelu and his wife Daru did as they were in the parish.<sup>24</sup> Many Saoluafata children attended evening schools to learn to read and write, simple mathematical addition, subtraction, division, and multiplication. Junior youth and senior youth fellowships are consistently held every Sunday evening.<sup>25</sup>

Children are the visible heirs of parents and relatives and without them, Sunday School may not be active, youth may not exist, and the church may not have a choir. Children are especially important in a Christian society. They are the reflection of a baptized and well-educated community. Many engaged in concerts, youth ministry, and many governmental programs. Television Broadcasts in Samoa such as TV1 Samoa and TV3 are some avenues where Saoluafata figures are accelerated.<sup>26</sup> Gloria S Niue claims their monetary support for the work of their parents in the ministry.<sup>27</sup> In great assertion, the youth and the choir continue to become a norm in everyday living. In 1982, there were few in numbers, but it is now growing. Although many children have travelled overseas and some have lived in other parts of Samoa, the church and village still stand because the church and village authorities work together. In one view, the Saoluafata children reflect a spiritual village and attained spirituality enforced by Christianity. In that sense, self-propagation through *pule faaauau* is achieved. An elder of the village remarks that Saoluafata's inheritance in Christianity and Samoa depends on children if they are spiritually guided and nurtured both in the church and village.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Siaitu Tivao, Interviewed by the author, 2022, April 16.

<sup>25</sup> Pereseti Fili, Failelei Maposua, Saisopo Savelio, Meripa Seumaalo, Interviewed, 2022.

<sup>26</sup> EFKS TV 2, "Lauaosinasina", 2022.

<sup>27</sup> Gloria S Niue, Interviewed by the author, 2022, May 23.

<sup>28</sup> Api o le Galuega, 2021., Neru, Interviewed, 2022.

Guidance and upbringing must reflect in the spiritual life of the Saoluafata children. Their active attendance in many church activities that are observable and obvious nowadays. They like reading the Bible and participating in religious, spiritual, or evangelical activities.<sup>29</sup> In 2020, the Saoluafata youth won the Youth Alive spiritual dance competition. Their effort in such activities continues to master through their creations. Moreover, Faamau Neru was 36 years of age when Rev. Limuaa Samuelu, Daru, and his family arrived. He becomes a deacon and a last resort in decision-making in the church.<sup>30</sup> These are reflections of a successful child.

### ***4.3 Soapule***

Undoubtedly, the successes of Saoluafata children are the product of sharing spiritual and parental guidance. Rev. Samuelu and his wife Daru represent spiritual guidance who guided and nurtured the Saoluafata children in the ways of God through Jesus Christ. The biological or non-biological parents of the children represent Saoluafata people who teach and learn Samoan ways of living like respect and honour.<sup>31</sup> When the two meet, some children will become church ministers and others will become secular leaders. These are attained when spiritual and biological parents work and share a good relationship. Sharing is not to overpower one but to understand each other. This direction ensures successful Christianity and a strong village through our children. Theologically speaking, the Saoluafata children cannot be in the loop of the forgiveness of sin unless they are baptized and perform sacramental rituals. That is important for the Saoluafata parents, to bring their children to the church to assure them that they are saved. The

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<sup>29</sup> Failelei, Vaia'ua'u, and Vaiala, Interviewed, 2022.

<sup>30</sup> Folau, Interviewed, 2022., Paleaae, Interviewed, 2022.

<sup>31</sup> This is an everyday Samoan living based on the norm of the Samoan family is the first place of education in Samoa.

convergence of spiritual children (*fanau faaleagaga*) and Saoluafata children (*fanau a Saoluafata*) produce a new self or *pule*.

#### 4.4 A new self/pule: *E gase toa ae ola pule*

In the *soapule*, a new *pule* of "warrior dies but the grace of God lives"<sup>32</sup> is produced. From a perspective, it intends the continuation of good relationships and the establishment of expectations to reach the good. The warrior can refer to parents – spiritual and biological (or non-biological). The grace of God lives can explain the continuous love of God upon the heirs, the precious offspring, the children. For instance, Rev. Samuelu and his wife Daru have retired from the parish in 2021, but Rev. Pauga, is becoming an ordained church minister in the field. Limuaa Fue, Gaolo Elisara, and Faafouina Samuelu are yet to become church ministers to continue the work of God. In the secular world, many parents have retired from governmental institutions, but their children continue their work and become parents of their own. During a retirement service to farewell Rev. Samuelu's family in 2021, Tagaloa Sale Tagaloa, a high chief of the village, stated that Rev Elder Samuelu, his wife Daru, and his family are a gift from God for the church and village. They generated the successes of many Saoluafata people nowadays.<sup>33</sup> As a new form of *pule*, the CCCS in Saoluafata clearly emphasizes the ability to move forward and become more engineered and organized.

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<sup>32</sup> This is a translation of a Samoan saying *E gase toa ae ola pule*. *Gase* is dying, *toa* is warrior, *ola* is life/lives, and *pule* is authority. There is also a Samoan myth concerning this saying claiming from oral tradition that a man of Ulualofoaiga planned with his troop to kill Salamasina while she was on her visit to the East of Upolu, where Fagaloa is located. However, Leuteleite of Falefa saved the queen, and the people of Salamasina's area organized to kill Ulufoaiga. Instead, Salamasina saved him. So Ulualofoaiga said, the warrior is shattered but the ruler of love lives, the love the Queen Salamasina saved him from death.

<sup>33</sup> Tagaloa S Tagaloa, the high chief of the village, his speech during the farewell ceremony on Friday, 28 August 2021. *Lauga a le aliitaua o le nuu i le lotu, o le tatalaina o le feagaiga*.

## Summary

*Pule faaauau* motivates self-propagate in the sense that a church or village is unable to continue unless there are children. It began with Saoluafata children who can be called children of the world or worldly figures. But when the village made a covenant with Rev. Samuelu and his wife Daru, the children became spiritual, hence the children of God who belong to Saoluafata and the kingdom of God. The merging of these types under *soapule* gives light to the future of the Saoluafata community – church and village. It ensures continuity of *pule* religiously, socially, politically, and culturally. Thus, *pule faaauau* is more distinctive to determine the ability to strive for betterment than self-propagate.

## Conclusion

In closing, the CCCS in Saoluafata under the leadership of Rev. Elder. Limuaa Samuelu, his wife Daru, and children have been operated successfully in the contours of *pule* and *soapule* of men, women, and children. From the LMS perspective, the independence of the Samoan Church was from the accomplishment of Venn's self-govern, self-support, and self-propagate. However, from a Samoan perspective, using the CCCS in Saoluafata as a historical community, it was *pule* and *soapule*. The *pule* of men is represented by the church minister and the village. The *pule* of the women is represented by the church ministers' wives and the Saoluafata women's council. The *pule* of the children is represented by the spiritual and the village children. These *pules* are derived from the Samoan model of family (*aiga*) where the chief (*matai*) is the head of the family, his wife supports him, and their children are their precious offspring. Each consecutive *pule* merges and new *pules* are produced. Consequently, *pule* and *soapule* is an integrated approach suitable for determining factors driving successes. Also, they are appropriate in writing histories from an island-oriented standpoint.

Additionally, *pule* and *soapule* imply the fluidity of models or concepts – Western and cultural. It can be concluded that the success of Christianity in Saoluafata before and after 1982 was because of the integration of authorities between Rev. Limuaa Samuelu and Saoluafata's men's council, between Daru and Saoluafata's women's council, and between spiritual and village children. Such an integration demonstrated that one *pule* cannot overrule the other, nor the women's or the children's *pule* overpower the men's *pule*. Overrule, domination, and power to control never prevail. This historical account proves that any intent to overrule (from both entities – Rev. Samuelu and the village authority) is overcome by *soapule*. Theologically, *soapule* verifies the notion of God's sovereignty over all authorities. In that line, the necessity to have both the church and



village authority in a Christian community postulates an equality of authorities. The church authority is embodied by a church minister and his authority is gained when he becomes a servant through the Eucharistic cup of the covenant and the Samoan traditional *ava* covenant. So did the women from their supporting role and the children as future bodies. These authorities are from God to govern the church and village and overpowering is neither demonstrable nor obliged. In an attempt to answer the questions that guided this historical account, it has been put simply as follows:

**What is Venn's three-self principle/triad for Church Independence? What is *pule* and *soapule*? In what sense do they relate?**

It has been found out that Henry Venn's three-self triad was a model used in Protestant circles to determine whether a church can manage its affairs or not. It is a successful model in LMS settings. But when it comes to Samoan people who live in the context where the model is applied, then it is perhaps a different story altogether. As models, they shared similar characteristics. However, *pule* and *soapule* were more distinctive than Venn's three-self triad. Apparently, Venn's triad looked complete without further selves. In a view, it ceased to a point that it could not breed. But *pule* and *soapule* suggests that they evolve into forming new self or *pule*. Using the CCCS in Saoluafata as a historical context, it is appropriate to conclude that the success of Christianity under a great leadership can be perplexing and fundamental when we read from self-govern, self-support, and self-propagate. However, it is preponderant and definite when we use the perspectives of authority (*pule*) and pairing authority (*soapule*).

The authority that allows a church minister to carry out his calling through baptisms, consecrating the village people to becoming chiefs, Church offices, and other responsibilities associating with the church minister, is from God who owns the church and village. This reinforces the idea that the mother church lays the foundation for all its

servants and upon these foundations, Rev. Samuelu and Daru have successfully served it. Prominently, when Rev. Samuelu and Daru started their work in Saoluafata in 1982, they were not ordained. However, the agreement was implemented through the process of covenant making (*osigafeagaiga*), which brought the opinion of the congregation in Saoluafata and the community as a whole. This was vital because the *ava* ceremony is a cultural connection that was necessary to tie them. The chiefs, women, and children participated. Their authority combined with the church's authority to form a connecting relationship and promised networks. A strong church and village was thus noted. As *pule* was essential to their work the church and village managed to develop and build their community under their leadership abilities.

Finally, the models expressed and signified that generations will pass but others will continue to marvel in the community in both the church and village, or Church and State. It is fair to discern that when two authorities agreed or paired - church authority and village authority – success is nevertheless suspicious, and Christian mission is thus achieved. Such an accomplishment is worthy to rewrite a new historical narrative from people who know their own religious and social superstructures and understand their own political, social, religious, economic, and cultural attitudes. In this way, we can assert that Rev. Samuelu and his wife Daru, and the village used the *pule* correctly. Also, we can attest that Howe's island-oriented perspective has to be respected in rereading or rewriting history or narratives. Nevertheless, in the wake of postcolonial narratives, this thesis owes gratitude to Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson because of the availability of this Protestant model to build our own perspectives. It was them, through the LMS that offered opportunities to master own our affairs. It has been noted that the three-self triad allowed us to see more in our own contexts and proves that we carried out anything into success before, during, and after 1982, if we indulged into *soapule*.

**How do church developments, achievements, challenges, confrontations, and/or oppositions from 1982 to 2021 contribute to the relationship between Venn's triad and *Pule* and *Soapule*?**

The importance of development and projects with the various services in the congregation is a sign that reinforces the growth and the development of life and thoughts that strengthens the spirituality of the members of the church and village. Under the leadership of Rev. Samuelu and Daru, many developments and projects were implemented not only for the physical life but also for the spiritual life of the people. Developments did not focus to a particular group of people but for everyone in both the church and the village. Although few frictions between members of the church and between the church minister and the men's council, the church, hall, playground and many more came into completion. This was because they paired their authorities in acceptable manner. Such pairing were also seen in the association of mothers includes the pastor's wife, youth, and Sunday school. These scenes brought a successful narrative of the church and village.

Unfortunately, it is not only the construction of projects that determine the quality of an endeavor. Problems and confrontations arose but strategic and essential voices and ideas during these projects warranted all sides strived for success. This is the importance of *soapule*. It shows the unity and coordination of voices from governing, supporting, and propagating bodies. The voices were synchronized to form a cohort. The quality of any planned development and project was measured by the ideas that are shared within the circles of the community, councils, and the parish. One intention of this thesis has been to describe the actions and services required of a church community, to ensure that their lives of worship and faithful service to God are strengthened.

**Having identified that relationship, does it prove the strengths that held the 39 years of successful church mission from 1982 to 2021, under the leadership of Reverend Limuaa Samuelu, wife Daru, children, and families?**

Seeing and being part of the success of the mission in Saoluafata in action from the leadership of the church minister and his wife through to the interaction with the congregation has been a life-changing and life-growing experience. It makes me think of the great value of the cooperation of the two parties, the community that represents the congregation and a part of the church minister and his family in his role as a shepherd for the spiritual and physical life of people. During the 39 years of service as a messenger of the gospel, I experienced the following characteristics of Rev. Samuelu and Daru who liked to associate with people and indulged zealously in all parts of their calling. They played their talent and obeyed their calling by participating in farming and many developments in health. He organized tourist trips to foreign countries such as New Zealand and America, for fundraising ventures to contribute to the development of the work of Jesus Christ in the community. These were possible because of the cooperation and agreement of all the people in various organizations of the congregation and the community. The fact is that if the parents were not willing to take their children to the youth and Sunday school, then Rev. Samuelu and Daru observed and played their part by attempting what needed to be done accordingly. The work and progress produced in Saoluafata had brought spiritual, communal, and cultural successes to many lives and the lives of Elder Samuelu and his wife. His leadership took 39 years, and he ended up in becoming a pensioner of the Church. Such a lifetime achievement was caused by pairing his authority with the village authority. A just governance has finally exalted.

**What will be hoped for in the future from achieving this re-reading/re-writing of history using cultural models and apart from the completion of this thesis?**

I anticipate that this thesis will create hope and instil new thoughts and ideas for some to strengthen the importance of *soapule* in villages and churches so that the success of the ministry and good relations in the villages shall remain. One of the ideas this thesis suggests is to encourage others to continue researching the history of our village of Saoluafata, and re-write/re-read it from perspectives that are dominant in cultural settings. We have noted that Venn's triad ceases to concepts of self-govern, self-sustain, and self-propagate. In a view, *pule* and *soapule* tend to breed into new *pule*. Equally important is highlighting the importance of the contribution that women bring as well as illustrating the significant role they play within the church community while upholding their rights and status as women. It is a picture that is sadly downplayed by others in some areas where women and children are not highly recognized. It has been observed that the CCCS in Saoluafata is a portrayal of self-recognition where the men's council recognized the church minister's advice; where the women's council recognized Daru's voice; and where Saoluafata children recognized God to make them children not of the world but of God. Therefore, I strongly urge this thought to some who want to continue to write a history of our community from an island-oriented perspective focusing on prevailing political, social, and religious attitudes of our time.

## Appendix 1



Figure A



Figure B



Figure C



Figure D



Figure E

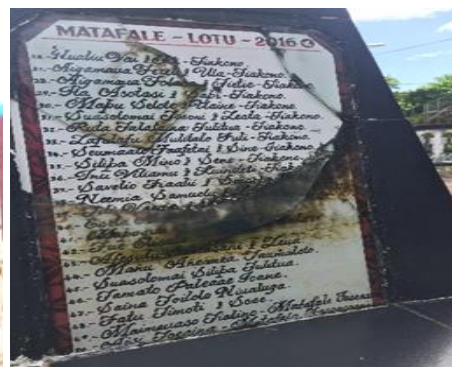


Figure F

## Appendix 2

**MALUA THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE**

**Research Participant Consent Form**

**Title of Research: A history of the Congregational Christian Church Saoluafata, 1982 - 2021: viewing The "Protestant model for Independence" in the microcosm.**

**Name of Researcher: Limua'a Fu'e.**

➤ I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study and what my contribution will be.

YES ✓	NO
-------	----

➤ I have given the opportunity to ask the questions (face to face, via telephone an e-mail)

YES ✓	NO
-------	----

➤ I agree to take part in the interview

YES ✓	NO	N/A
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➤ I agree to interview being tape recorded

YES ✓	NO	N/A
-------	----	-----

I agree to digital images being taken during the research exercise

YES ✓	NO	N/A
-------	----	-----

➤ I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the research at any time **without giving any reason**

YES ✓	NO
-------	----

➤ I agree to take part in the above study

YES ✓	NO
-------	----

Name of participant LIMUA'A P. SAMUEL

Signature Samuel

Date 19/05/2022



## Appendix 3

**MALUA THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE**  
**Research Participant Consent Form**

**Title of Research:** A history of the Congregational Christian Church Saolufata, 1982 - 2021: viewing The "Protestant model for Independence" in the microcosm.

**Name of Researcher:** Limua'a Fu'e.

➤ I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study and what my contribution will be. 

YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO
---	----

➤ I have given the opportunity to ask the questions (face to face, via telephone an e-mail) 

YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO
---	----

➤ I agree to take part in the interview 

YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO	N/A
---	----	-----

➤ I agree to interview being tape recorded 

YES	NO	N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
-----	----	---

I agree to digital images being taken during the research exercise 

YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO	N/A
---	----	-----

➤ I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the research at any time without giving any reason 

YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO
---	----

➤ I agree to take part in the above study 

YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO
---	----

**Name of participant** Danu Korie Samuels

**Signature** *Danu Korie Samuels*

**Date** 19/5/22

## Glossary

<i>Pule</i>	authority
<i>Soapule</i>	pairing authority
<i>Pule mamalu</i>	dignified authority
<i>Pule lagolago</i>	supporting authority
<i>Pule faaauau</i>	continual authority
<i>Matafale</i>	list of families serving the church
<i>Aoga faifeau</i>	Christian Education
<i>Faafeagaiga</i>	like a covenant
<i>Faifeau</i>	church minister
<i>Aganuu</i>	culture
<i>Alii</i>	high chief
<i>Matai</i>	chief
<i>Taulelea</i>	untitled men
<i>Faalupega</i>	honorific salutation
<i>Fono</i>	village council
<i>Faipule</i>	the high chiefs and chiefs impose ruling
<i>O le ala i le pule o le tautua</i>	authority is through service
<i>E gase toa ae ola pule</i>	Pratt's definition: warrior dies but the grace of God lives
<i>Mamalu</i>	dignified/distinguished
<i>Pule faafaifeau</i>	pastoral authority
<i>Faaekalesia</i>	pastoral authority
<i>Ao faalupega</i>	head of honorific salutation/title given to someone like faafeagaiga
<i>Pule a alii ma faipule</i>	authority of chiefs and orators

<i>Nuu o alii</i>	men's council
<i>Nuu o tamaitai</i>	women's council
<i>Faletua</i>	wives of chiefs and church ministers
<i>Tausi</i>	wives of orators
<i>Aualuma</i>	wives of untitled men
<i>Taupou</i>	virgin of a family
<i>Ie o le feagaiga</i>	mat of the covenant
<i>Feagaiga</i>	covenant
<i>Fale</i>	house
<i>Tua</i>	at the back/rely on it
<i>Amanaia</i>	recognize
<i>E au le inailau a tina</i>	the strength of ladies can reach
<i>Ou te au iai</i>	I can reach
<i>E au i le gafa</i>	it is hereditary
<i>Fanau</i>	children/kids/youth
<i>Faaleagaga</i>	spiritual/heavenly
<i>Faalenuu</i>	village/worldly
<i>Alofa</i>	monetary offering for the church minister

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