

A HISTORY OF THE CONGREGATIONAL
CHRISTIAN CHURCH SAMOA (CCCS) AT
SALEIMOA:
TRACING ORIGINS FROM 1836-1939

A Thesis Presented to the
Faculty of History of the Malua Theological College

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

by

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July 2021

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ABSTRACT

In the year 1839, John Williams departed Samoa with twelve Samoan missionaries with the aim of spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ to the west Pacific. This event in history is particularly important to the people of Saleimoa as this may have been the only official mention of an existing church in their church. This research therefore is only an initial attempt to document the history of the Saleimoa Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (CCCS) from 1836 to 1939. Main sources of information were oral and written historical literature. As a member of the CCCS at Saleimoa, documenting history is important for many generations to come. It is useful that there is a reference point when discussing the history of the Saleimoa CCCS.

DECLARATION

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

Signed: _____

Date: _____

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all the church ministers, missionaries and their wives, who served in the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (CCCS) in Saleimoa in the past. This is also dedicated to all our ancestors and people of Saleimoa who contributed to the establishment of the CCCS in Saleimoa.

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List of Abbreviations

1. CCCS – Congregational Christian Church of Samoa
2. EFKS – Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano i Samoa
3. LMS – London Missionary Society
4. MTC – Malua Theological College

INTRODUCTION

Thesis Statement

In 1839, John Williams, a London Missionary Society (hereinafter LMS) pioneer of the Pacific Christian Mission (Ellis 1889, 143), launched his final mission for the West Pacific, and farewelled the Samoan people in an LMS church in Saleimoa. Ellis claims that “Whether one considers him as an agent of empire, or a messenger of grace, *Missionary enterprises* represents Williams the missionary and Samoa as his mission field: the journals reveal Williams the man, and Samoa itself”. (Williams 1837). Unfortunately, John Williams did not return to Samoa for he was murdered in 1839 in Erromanga, Vanuatu. His death led to the spread of the gospel not only in Vanuatu but around the Pacific region (Williams 1837, Meleisea 1987, 55; Ellis 1889, 157). In 1836, John Williams set up mission stations in various locations in Samoa including Saleimoa.

Was the LMS Saleimoa (hereinafter Congregational Christian Church of Samoa CCCS, Saleimoa) established at the time of John Williams’ farewell sermon or not? If it was, how did the LMS establish this CCCS church? Were there any people of Saleimoa or CCCS adherents involved in John Williams’ last mission venture? How does the old CCCS Saleimoa differ from the current church or do they share similar features in terms of location, structure and identity? Where does the village Saleimoa start and end in terms of its geographical location? Were there other names that the missionaries used to identify any of the sub – villages? This paper will be guided by these questions.

The LMS Church later adopted the name Congregational Christian Church 1962. However, the former name which the church used since its arrival in 1830 reflected the identity of the church as an establishment of the London Missionary Society that

introduced Christianity to Samoa. The latter name also reflected the identity of the current church which is governed and operated by the Samoan CCCS members themselves. In this paper, the latter and current name CCCS or EFKS will be used.

The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the history of Saleimoa, my village and church and in turn add to the local historical perspectives documented about Christianity in Samoa and the Pacific. The history of a place and people is vital, for their past provides insight as to why today it is the way it is. In essence, our history defines who we are today and this paper attempts to share what our ancestors and all past generations gifted us as our history. It is therefore our duty to document this for the generations to come.

Thesis Problem

There is little to no information about the history of the CCCS Saleimoa¹. The problem of not having a Record Book was noted in the Proposal and because of the absence of the *Api ole Galuega* our identity as Saleimoans and as adherents of the CCCS denomination is threatened. Simply put, why then should I identify myself as a member of the CCCS and a resident of Saleimoa if I know nothing about its history? In this regard, the main purpose and motive that has driven this research is the fact that I want

¹ The current church minister, Reverend Seti Seti, claims that since the beginning of his ministerial work in 2016, he noticed the absence of the church record book known as *O le Api o le Galuega* (Seti 2021, Personal interview). The previous church minister before him, Reverend Avea Vagana also mentioned there was no *Api o le Galuega* during their tenure from 2004 to 2014 (Vagana 2021, Personal Interview). This was further confirmed with Reverend Dr Paulo Koria (2021, Personal Interview), who looked after the Saleimoa CCCS church following Reverend Hini Stanley's tenure. According to Koria, the lay preacher who oversaw the church at the time, Nonumalo Sofara at the end of 2002 lost the Record book. When he and his wife Dora looked after the church at the beginning of 2003, Nonumalo informed them that the Record book could not be found. Koria attempted to record the church affairs pending the arrival of the new church minister Reverend Avea and Saumaleula Vagana in 2004. During this period, Reverend Dr Paulo was also the General Secretary of the EFKS Church.

to initiate further research into the history of CCCS Saleimoa and document what has been collected throughout this assignment. I feel it is particularly important for current and future generations of the CCCS Saleimoa to learn about their history.

Some important lessons that this study aims to emphasise include having an appreciation of the importance of our history as Samoans, more specifically a history that is written from our own perspectives. Much of our documented history was written by missionaries and other foreigners. According to Joan Scott, a feminist historian, local experiences enrich Pacific and Samoan historiography by bringing to the fore indigenous actors of history (Scott 1999, 50). This study contributes stories of Samoans and Samoan perspectives of the past to address the void of information regarding the history of the CCCS at Saleimoa. For the CCCS Saleimoa and the younger generations, it is particularly important to understand and learn of this history at this time given the gradual conversion of its members to other religious denominations within the village over the years.

There will be many limitations of this assignment given the time period that I have selected. It was hard to deal with information long deteriorated and dismissed as having no value. Notwithstanding, I have faith that this study will be an attempt that can also trigger further interests to study the history of our church in Saleimoa.

Methodology

Research methodology and methods

This research uses the methods of oral history and textual analysis. Oral history was used to gather primary information from selected research participants. This method is crucial and relevant to the aim of this research as it enables the selected

participants to tell their stories and experiences according to the questions that were posed. It also enabled the researcher to report on what the participants may have heard while growing up. In some cases, the accounts may or may not be complete, 'true' or consistent, but oral history allows participants' voices to be heard in their history.

Textual analysis was used to collect, read and analyse Secondary Sources as these types of information also play a vital part in authenticating and in validating historical facts (Bradley et.al 1995, 39-42). Secondary sources that were used include the Sulu Samoa (the Samoan Torch) and relevant books and articles such as Augustine Kramer's book on Samoa, George Turner's Nineteen Years in Polynesia, Journals of John Williams and Charles Barff, Martyrs of Polynesia, Lagaga by Meleisea and others to name a few.

Study participants

Five residents of Saleimoa were interviewed. The interviewees were selected from different age groups within the church and village. An additional two interviews were conducted particularly as the need arose to validate some key points in this study from church ministers who were also residents of Saleimoa but are currently serving in different parishes. The interviewees who are residents of Saleimoa were asked about stories they were told about the church and its development². The questions also sought further information about the establishment of the CCCS church in Saleimoa³.

The eldest interviewee is Sauila Faete Viki. He is ninety-three years old and is a member of the Mormon Church having converted from the CCCS church in the 1960s in his late thirties (Viki 2020, Personal Interview). The second interviewee is Fa'alogū

² See List of Questions in Appendix 1

³ See Appendix for the Copy of Questionnaire.

Lafoga Nonutunu, a chief aged seventy-two. He is a former member of the CCCS Saleimoa but currently serves in the Assembly of God (Lafoga 2020, Personal Interview). The third interviewee is Luatua Semi Epati, an orator and lay preacher of the CCCS Saleimoa. He is fifty-seven years old (Epati 2021, Personal Interview). Fourth is Leaupepe Fatu Pula a sixty-year-old chief and judge of the Samoa's District Court. He serves in the Worship Center Church of Apia. He was also a former CCCS member and descendant of the family whose land was used to build the first CCCS Saleimoa church (Pula 2021, Personal Interview). The fifth interviewee is a forty-seven-year-old female Latafale Malomali'i Filipino who is also the daughter of the former church minister who served in Saleimoa from 1973 to 2003.

Additional interviewees included Reverend Avea Vagana, Reverend Seti Seti and Reverend Dr Paulo Koria. These additional interviewees were selected to validate some of the events that were recorded. They were asked the same set of questions as the rest of the participants.

Limitations

This thesis does not fully capture the history of the CCCS Saleimoa during the years 1836 – 1939 because of the limited sources of information. In particular, the period being studied has long passed and so as the opportunity to interview those who lived at that time. Nevertheless, an important point is made by Chladenius who said:

“A history which is told or written to someone assumes that that person will use his knowledge of the prevailing conditions in order to form a reasonable resolution [...] If in reading a story of this kind I focus my attention on just that which is able to bring about the pleasure and if I consequently experience the pleasure which is intended, then I have understood the book completely”. (1985, 55)

Drawing on the knowledge of those who have heard stories about the development of the CCCS Saleimoa, this paper contends that the CCCS Saleimoa church was established by John Williams during his missionary work in Samoa. The author further argues that village chiefs and residents played a significant role in the development of this church-although they are not mentioned in the existing literature.

Structure of the Thesis

This paper is divided into three chapters. The first chapter explains the historical background of Saleimoa and the arrival of Christianity in Samoa. Chapter two discusses the establishment of the CCCS Saleimoa. Chapter Three describes new establishments after the church was set up. The final chapter is the Conclusion.

CHAPTER 1

SALEIMOAO: CULTURAL BACKGROUND AND EARLY CHRISTIANITY

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part discusses the cultural background of Saleimoa. The second part briefly discusses the arrival of Christianity in 1830, the departure of John Williams in 1832, and his return in 1836 to prepare his mission to Vanuatu. Williams chose Saleimoa to be the last location of his mission in Samoa so he was fundamental in the establishment of the CCCS Saleimoa.

1.1 Cultural Background

Saleimoa is a traditional village (*nuu mavae*) and is also known as a sub district of Tuamasaga as it includes seven sub – villages. The traditional Samoan district allocation stated that Saleimoa was also referred to as Sagaga ole Ailaoa (Meleisea 1987, 30). Saleimoa starts from Levi and extends to Alamutu, Lotoso’a, Salepoua’e, Nono’a, Utuali’i and ends in Tufulele which is the boundary between the districts of Tuamasaga and Aana. These are called sub – villages (*fuaiala/pitonuu*). There is a village fono or governance within each sub – village; however, there is an overarching traditional governing structure for the whole village of Saleimoa.

The CCCS’s center of Christian Education called the Malua Theological College lies between the sub – villages of Nono’a and Utuali’i (Luatua 2021, Personal Interview). Luatua and Fa’alogoū claim that Malua marks the boundary between Nonoa, Fatitu and Utuali’i. Fa’alogoū considers the chief Tilialo as the traditional owner¹. In

¹ There are claims that the lands upon which Malua is built belong to Matiu of Utalii both of whom are high chiefs in Saleimoa. There are no clear sources to qualify such a claim, but this paper wishes to acknowledge if anyone could provide for future writings.

1839, thirty (30) acres of land for the Malua Theological Seminary was discussed in Saleimoa, (Nokise 1983, 48; The Samoan Reporter 1845, 2). Nokise notes

“The committee paid the matai to whom the land belonged in cloth, hatchets and other goods to the value of f12.6.7. Once the land was cleared, and temporary dwellings erected, instruction commenced on 25 September 1844 (1983, 48)”.

The selection of the location for the Mission Seminary called Malua is not clear, because Turner notes that the site was a bush (Turner 1986, 34).

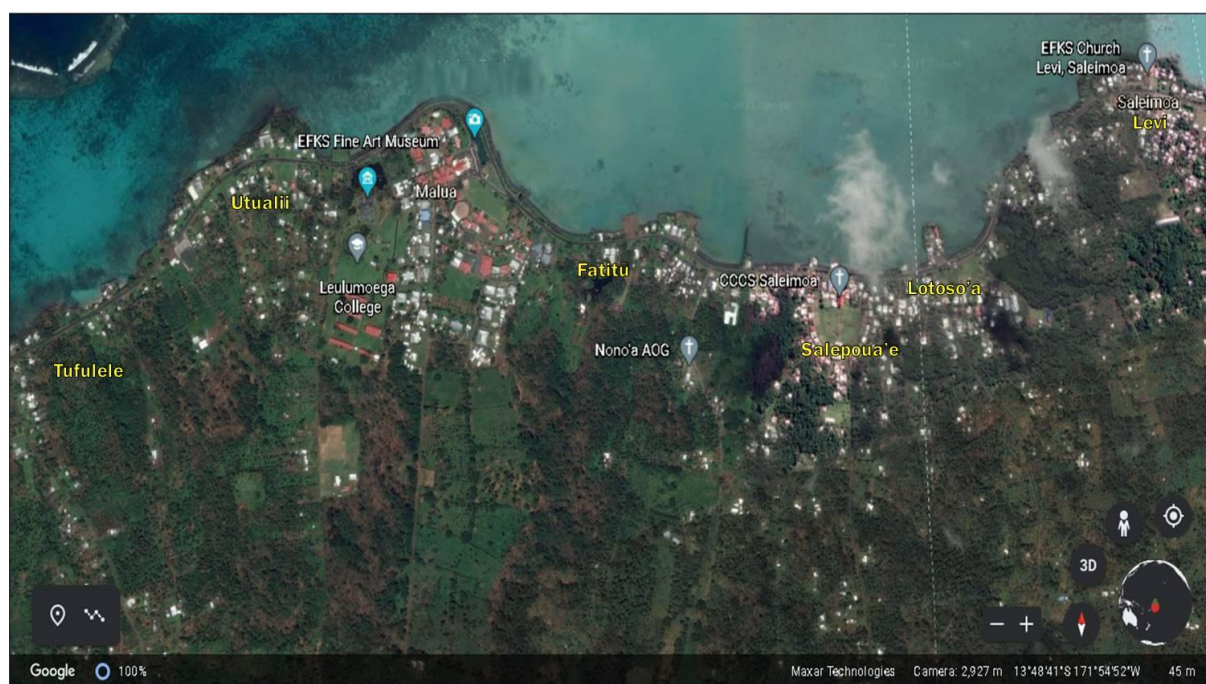


Figure 1 was taken from Google Earth.

1.1a Saleimoa and its Traditional Honorifics and Salutations (*fa'alupega*)

Each of the seven sub – villages of Saleimoa has its own traditional honorific salutation (*fa'alupega*) but combined, they form the traditional salutation of Saleimoa as one. The honorific salutation of Saleimoa encompassing all sub – villages reads as below.

Afifio Aiga e Tolu
 Afifio Alo o Sina, ma Alo o Malietoa
 Afifio le nofo a Maopū
 Alalata'i lau fetalaiga Luātua, ma lou Ga'utāala ma le Faletolu
 (Pula Valovalo and Luatua Semi, Personal Interviews 2021).

The phrase *Aiga e Tolu* refers to the three paramount chiefs of Saleimoa namely, Pula in Salepoua'e, Luatuanu'u in Tufulele and Tilialo in Nono'a. *Alo o Sina* refers to the sons of Tuia'ana Sina - Patea and Futialo and their covenant Nonumalo. Meleisea (1987) remarks that the greeting of sons of Malietoa is connected to Malietoa Vainu'upo who accepted John Williams and Christianity in 1830. *Nofo a maopu* refers to the titles of Nonumalo and Matiu the covenant relation of the three paramount chiefs of Saleimoa. *Nofo a maopū* in Salepoua'e only, refers to the title Fa'alogo'ū and Taitu'ave of the Sa Pulā family.

Malietoa, who was the paramount chief in early Samoan Christianity, resided at Malie, in the Tuamasaga district. He appealed to John Williams *and the early missionaries to select Saleimoa as the location of the mission center and the theological seminary in Upolu* (Meleisea 1987, 30-35). Lotoso'a is considered central for village meetings (*fono*), by Saleimoa residents, and is therefore described, by most, as the *tupua o le fuaiala* of Saleimoa, Sapa'u and Lei'ata'atimu or the *to'aiga o Tumua i Malie ma Vaitoelau*. Tumua is also known as Upolu while Malie and Vaitoelau are villages in Tuamasaga commonly known as Malie and Afega nowadays. The chiefly orator Luatua presides all Saleimoa and the House of the three orators, Moenoa, Umu and Tuato (Kramer 1902, 439).

The honorific salutation, suggests there is a huge connection between Saleimoa and Malietoa Vainu'upo, who accepted John Williams and Christianity in 1830. After Tuna and Fata defeated Talaifei'i and the Tongans, it became evident that a woman from Solosolo, married to Gaga Savea, had fallen pregnant to Talaifei'i hence the name *Savea-tu-vaelua*. Talaifei'i, upon arriving in Tonga, requested for his Samoan wife and son to join him. Polu Savea offered to take them. As they neared Tongan shores, the

woman gave birth and Polu, who was steering the canoe, had the baby named after him, Polu – le – uli- gaga. When the boy came of age, he returned to Samoa and stayed in the district of Tuamasaga as a son of Malietoa, hence the reference to Malietoa as the son of Tuamasaga (Luatua Semi 2021, Personal Interview)². In this same understanding, the sons of Malietoa in the honorific salutation are defined below (Luatua Semi 2021, Personal Interview):

Le itutolu o Sagaga (the three sides of Sagaga):

- Sagaga le Ailaoa (Saleimoa), the residence of Luatua le Vaiula
- Sagaga le Muli (Vaimauga), the residence of Manogiamanu and Tamapua
- Sagaga le Palalaua (Siumu), the residence of Saveatama and Li’o Fofoga ole alataua, Faleata and Gafa

1.1b Origin of Saleimoa

The name Saleimoa originated from the story of the village’s god of war, named *Lefanoga* which was an owl (Kramer 1994, 58&26). The most important house in the middle of the village (*fale tele*) had a post with two edges upon which the owl stayed. The villagers would feed the owl a rat every day diminishing the number of rats in the village. So the villagers banned the killing of rats and reserved these only for the owl (Lafoga 2020, Personal Interview). The name Sāle’imoa is the combination of the words “*Sa*” which means ban or taboo; “*le*” which means ‘the’; and “*imoa*” which is the Samoan word for rat. Thus, Saleimoa refers to this instance when there was a ban (or taboo) on rats.

The place where the owl lived is called Salepoua’e, which is a sub – village of Saleimoa. “*Sa – le – pou- a’e*” literally means no one is allowed to touch or climb the main post (*pou*) upon which the owl lived as it is sacred (Luatua 2021, Personal Interview). The EFKS Saleimoa is currently located at Salepoua’e. This is not the original site according to Lafoga. This respondent claims the first church was located

² Luatua Semi’s interview 2021, “Malietoa o le tama a le Tuamasaga”

right next to the current one, insisting that these are the only locations in Saleimoa and within Salepoua'e that the CCCS church was located (2021, Personal Interview). (See Figure 3). The original site is believed to be where John Williams held his last sermon in Salepoua'e in 1839.

Like other villages of Samoa, polytheism existed at Saleimoa. Saumaeafe³, is the sacred girl (*teina sa*) and daughter of Sami from Saleimoa and a woman from Samalaeulu, Savaii. Saleimoa has traditional songs that record stories of this girl⁴. Interestingly, the connection with the village of Samalaeulu in Savaii is the overflow from the Maliolio river that passes through Lotoso'a, Saleimoa occasionally during heavy floods (Luatua Semi 2021, Personal Interview).

These gods were gradually abandoned when Malietoa in Sapapali'i accepted Christianity which later spread to Saleimoa and other parts of Upolu. Evidence of how cannibalism ended in Samoa can be found in Saleimoa. Fatitu for instance, is a small area of Saleimoa where the human offerings for Malietoafaiga land, coming from Savaii to Malie (Kramer 1994, 410). There are several versions of this story, but the common understanding is that Poluleuligaga, a stepson of Malietoafaiga, who resided in Tuamasaga at the time, offered his life to replace the human offering from Savaii (Pula 2009, 4). He ordered his men to plait him in a palm frond and carry him to Malie for his father's meal. Fatitu⁵ was the name given to the place where the palm frond was taken. Malietoa, upon receiving his meal realized that the offering was his son. Malietoa's cannibalism ceased. The young men saved by Poluleuligaga were so thankful they took

³ Rev Dr Vaitusi Nofoaiga claims another version from the Tuanai village of the origin of Saumaeafe. This paper acknowledges that this story of Saumaeafe consists of other versions.

⁴ "A popular song that is always used by Saleimoa when performing dances – A o ai foi le mua nei, e le taumate pe ni pese mai fea, a ia malamalama o le ia nofo ile moana, o le ia faifaiaga e tauasa le tai papau ole Tuamasaga, O le ia o le ia lava o le gataifale, le taele, le taele lava o le taifanae, tautai ai lava Saumaeafe"

⁵ Fatitu is the translation of how Poluleuligaga was plaited in the palm frond in an upstanding position. The part of Saleimoa where this took place was named by Poluleuligaga, Fatitu.

a dip in the freshwater pool by the sea to the east of Malua not far from *Fatitu*. The pool was named Tofuola, meaning *to immerse in joy for their lives have been spared*; *tofu* means immerse and *ola* means life. The Malua Theological College is located next to these parts of Saleimoa named after the story of Poluleuligaga (Refer to satellite map Figure 1). This story is approximated to have occurred in the 14th century prior to the arrival of Christianity in the early 19th century (Pula 2009, 5). The early periods of the Samoan Christianity may give a clear picture of the establishment of the first church in Saleimoa with the contention that John Williams was its founder.

1.2 The arrival of Christianity in Samoa

John Williams, the LMS pioneer of the gospel to the Pacific, arrived in Sapapali'i, Samoa, in 1830 (Sulu Samoa 1839, 4). The LMS arrival is a significant feature of Samoa's history. John Williams and his companions targeted the village of Sapapali'i because it was the home of the paramount chief Malietoa Vainu'upo, the most powerful chief in Samoa at the time. At the time of Williams' arrival, Samoa was in a civil war between the supporters of Malietoa Vainu'upo in Savai'i and chiefs of A'ana in Upolu. Malietoa was avenging Tamafaiga's death. His brother Taimalelagi brought the eight (8) teachers onshore but left the LMS missionaries on board. Eventually, Malietoa left the war to return to Sapapali'i to accept the Christian mission in 1830. Malietoa landed and cordially accepted the missionaries and the eight teachers whom he had brought from Tahiti and Rarotonga. Malietoa welcomed them in a *faletele*. This event was the fulfilment of Nafanua's prophecy to Malietoa Fitiseanu, as Malietoa Fitiseanu was searching for a head/title for his kingdom (Meleisea 1987, 50-60).

As a matter of contention, the aforementioned prevailing conditions of the acceptance of Christianity give the impression that the Malietoa name is connected to

the “sons of Malietoa” in the Saleimoa honorific salutation. John Williams and the eight teachers, and the *faletele* contribute more to what is contended.

1.2a 1832 to 1836

The acceptance of Christianity by Malietoa Vainu’upo in 1830 led to other ventures which contributed to the establishment of the CCCS Saleimoa. When the missionaries landed at Sapapali’i, Malietoa Vainu’upo undertook a covenant with John Williams. The event occurred at a *malae* (field) where a *faletele* (big house) was traditionally located. Malietoa offered his *faletele* to begin the church in Sapapali’i while Williams insisted him to ban polygamy, war, and rude dances. Later, in the same year, John Williams returned to London to bring more missionaries. Upon returning to Samoa in 1832, he went first to Rarotonga. It was not, until 1836 that he and his wife returned to Samoa choosing Fasito’otai as his place of residence (Ebenezer 1843, 554)⁶. It was in this same year that mission stations began to be established with eight teachers being dispersed. Saleimoa became another mission station and John Williams put a Tahitian teacher named Tereauone there to begin the church (Fauolo 2005, 38; Ellis 1889, 138).

Summary

The cultural and historical background of Saleimoa offer valuable knowledge for tracing the origins of the CCCS Saleimoa. The covenant between Malietoa and John Williams occurred at a *malae* in a *faletele* which suggests that Christianity began in the *faletele*. From 1830 to 1832, the church at Saleimoa was not yet established however, one of the teachers who began Christianity at Saleimoa is one factor that this tracing event considers important. The contending and prevailing condition that is gathered

⁶ Ebenezer claims “During his residence at Fasito’otai, Mr Williams formed there a Christian Church.” Ellis mentions Fasito’otai as “station”. This suggests that John Williams event at Saleimoa could be a church station.

herewith is the fact that the only missionaries that had the authority to establish the mission stations and assigned the teachers accordingly were John Williams and Malietoa. Later in 1839, John Williams used Saleimoa as blessing ground for the first Samoan missionaries that travelled with him and the last place to farewell Samoa for his fatal mission in Vanuatu. It is these triumphant conditions of a Christian History, one should not disregard and ignore but consider valuable in forming reasonable resolutions of what is contended in this paper, that John Williams founded the CCCS church in Saleimoa.

CHAPTER 2

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CCCS Saleimoa: 1836 ONWARDS

This chapter discusses the establishment of the first LMS church in Saleimoa. The main focus is on John Williams and his companions and the development of mission stations in Samoa. It also focuses on John Williams' last days in Saleimoa. John Williams and his companions, namely the eight teachers from Tahiti, are particularly important as one of them was placed in Saleimoa in 1836. These historical placements around Samoa in 1836 contributed to the early development of the CCCS Saleimoa. The church at Saleimoa was considered the center of LMS activities in Upolu and played a role in the establishment of Malua Theological College in 1844. (This is discussed in Chapter 3).

2.1 John Williams, Charles Barff, and 8 teachers

2.1a John Williams

As mentioned earlier, John Williams was (and still is) the LMS pioneer to the Pacific particularly Samoa. He brought Christianity to Samoa and initiated the mission at Sapapali'i. He then founded the mission station at Fasito'otai upon returning from London in 1832 to 1836 and placed Tereauone in Saleimoa. He departed Samoa at Saleimoa in 1839 and died in Vanuatu. John Garret claims that "Williams achieved the standing of a nonconformist social lion". (1985, 86). With this in mind, this was the peak of his achievements and Saleimoa stands a worthy contributor to his elevation as he chose Saleimoa to set his final footprints in Samoa. As an important figure in this undertaking, this paper acknowledges John Williams as the pioneer of the CCCS

Saleimoa. However, without his companions, he would have not accomplished his mission.

2.1b Tahitian Missionary Teachers

John Williams, Charles Barff, 6 Tahitians, and 2 Rarotongans were important figures of Samoan Christianity, and fundamental in the establishment of the CCCS Saleimoa (Garret 1985, 122; Robons 2009, 21-39). When Williams returned from London in 1836, he distributed the teachers to different parts of Samoa. Umia was allocated to Palauli, Teava to Manono, Moia to Falelatai, Boti to Mulifanua, Taataori or Tereauone from Raiatea to Saleimoa, Anea to Apia, Tuatone to Pago Pago and Ratu to Leone” (Meleisea 1987, 58; Garret 1985, 122). By 1840, the mission had spread to the main islands of Samoa, including Savai’i, Upolu, and the islands of Tutuila in the east. The network of mission stations soon covered Samoa, but the LMS Missionaries headed the stations assisted by Rarotonga and Tahitian teachers (Richard 1889, 373; Nokise 1983, 211). Williams chose Saleimoa as a station for the Sagaga district. The connection of Malietoa to Saleimoa, as indicated in the honorific salutations, could be one reason why Williams chose Saleimoa. Malietoa’s existence and family connections contributed to mission allocations by John Williams in 1836. Hence, this qualifies him and Tereauone as pioneers of the CCCS Saleimoa. Family connections are ideal for the establishment of missionary work in Saleimoa.

2.2 Mission Stations

As noted in Chapter One, in 1830, Christianity began in a *faletele* situated on a *malae* or what is known as a village meeting ground. Davidson claims the *faletele* as the first missionary house. “The first phase of chapel building, which included purely native style and lime plastered chapels began in 1835.” (1969, 68). She adds that in 1835 to

1836, there were 3 chapels built on Upolu, 2 at Fusi, and one at Amoa (1969, 47 f30). Further, “lime plastered house in 1835” and “stone chapels...[were] built in Solosolo” in 1841.

Faletele were initially used to establish mission stations in 1836 (Garret 1985, 15; Turner 1986, 15). The stations were proper houses built by the villages and districts for the church, The Saleimoa church in its early establishment began in 1836 in a *faletele*, led by John Williams with the assistance of Tereauone. Fauolo asserts that Tereauone (Taataori) was a good builder (2002, 38). Williams (1837) states

“On arriving at the houses of the teachers we were surprised to find them so comfortable. Their houses are plastered with lime made from coral, and the floors boarded - the Internal Part of the house divided into rooms by neat, plastered partitions comprehending bedrooms sitting rooms and looked remarkably neat”.

Literary accounts suggested the CCCS Saleimoa began in a *faletele*. This later changed to a proper enclosed plastered house followed by the erection of a stone chapel by the Saleimoa people and the LMS. Turner qualifies that by claiming that “the chapels are built freely by the united labour of the people themselves, and that entitles them to free attendance”. (1986, 15; Lovett 1998, 373). This further suggests that the stone chapel replaced the *faletele* not long after the mission stations were built in 1836. Kramer describes the location of the church at Saleimoa as follows:

“It takes seven minutes to go through Lotoso’a to Salepoua’e (church), and a further five minutes to the rocky but lowland of Fatitu, where the human offerings for Malietoafaiga, coming from Savaii to Malie, used to be landed” (1902, 410).

Based on Kramer’s account, the first CCCS Saleimoa church was located at the same *malae* where the modern church is today¹. This paper asserts that John Williams established the CCCS Saleimoa in 1836 putting Tereauone as the first teacher to begin the building of the church. The church was later improved to a lime plastered chapel. It

¹ See picture of the modern church in Chapter 3.

is not clear why Williams chose Saleimoa before embarking to his final destination where he died in Vanuatu in 1839. Furthermore, several meetings were held at Saleimoa including the 7th missionary meeting in October 1839. It is also where John Williams last preached before he departed on this fateful mission journey in 1839 (Meleisea 1987, 30).

2.3 John Williams' last days in Saleimoa

John Williams' last days in Samoa were spent at Saleimoa and it was here that the first Samoan missionaries emerged. In August 1839, Williams and his associates held a meeting at Fasito'otai, and then Williams departed for Vanuatu from Saleimoa (Faletoese, 18). At Saleimoa, "wives, children, missionaries, Malietoa, and many Samoans" gathered. The 7th LMS Assembly was a departure ceremony for John Williams (Henry [date not found], 18). The assembly was large comprising of "brethren, the teachers, and the natives, altogether about 150 united." (Ebenezer 1843, 556). John Williams "preached the last time, strangely enough from Acts XX, 36-38 [and]...both the preacher and congregation were deeply depressed." (Ellis 1889, 143; Ebenezer 1843, 557; Sulu Samoa 1839, 23). Ellis noted that a prayer meeting was held at Saleimoa. The ministers included Seupule and Mose of Saleimoa, Mose from Fuaiupolu, Lolagi, Salamea from Sagana and Filipi, Ioane and Mose from Iva" (Ellis 1889, 143). Moreover, "After only nine years from the establishment of the LMS mission in Samoa, John Williams had begun to use Samoan converts as missionaries on his fatal trip to Vanuatu in 1839." (Latukefu 1996, 19). The *Sulu Samoa* 1839 and 1843 further claim that a:

“Farewell sermon for John Williams was held at Saleimoa. The sermon was delivered by Misi Ale, Misi Ite, John Williams and Mose from Saleimoa...”² “The missionary from Great Britain known as Misi Ropeti was the church minister for Aana and Saleimoa”³.

Years later in 1843, the Sulu Samoa also mentions a church in Saleimoa.

Such claims verify certain things contended in this paper. Firstly, the fact that Williams chose the Saleimoa church gives the impression that John Williams was the founder of the church. Secondly, the congregation mentioned in 1839 appears to be the first church established at Saleimoa at the time throughout the Sagaga district. Thirdly, the inclusion of Mose of Saleimoa partaking in leading this service suggests he could have been the first Saleimoa teacher/minister of the CCCS Saleimoa in its early establishment. Lastly, the occasion of meetings held in Saleimoa connotes the Saleimoa church as one of the LMS centers in Samoa. Considering the above, there is certainty there existed a church in Saleimoa soon after the arrival of John Williams in 1830. Interestingly, between 1834 – 1836 a well-established mission station in Saleimoa was created and further augmented in 1839 onwards when Williams prepared for his last mission to Vanuatu. This paper considers the validity of meetings held in Saleimoa in 1839 giving reference to the establishment of Malua Theological College in the next Chapter.

² Sulu Samoa Nov. 1839 [translated “ Faamavaega I Saleimoa ma Ioane Viliamu. Na lauga Misi Ale, Misi Ite, Ioane Viliamu ma Mose o Saleimoa. Tatalo Faaiu Misi Mataio. Tatalo ma le Tusi Paia – Misi Milo”] p. 24

³ Sulu Samoa No1. Vol 2 1843 May. [translated “ Faifeau na taunuu mai Peretania o Misi Ropeti na aveva ma faifeau o Aana ma Saleimoa”]

Summary

This chapter has revealed key events in the period that contributed greatly to the tracing of origins of the CCCS Saleimoa. These events occurred within the vicinity of Saleimoa. The establishment of the CCCS Saleimoa was not from a vacuum but from John Williams himself in association with Tereauone and the Saleimoa residents namely Mose. The farewell service brings light to the origin of the church, consolidating the fact that the Saleimoa church was founded by John Williams and was the LMS center of missionary activity in Upolu. Furthermore, the church of Saleimoa was the origin of the first ever Samoan missionaries in the history of Christianity in Samoa and the Pacific.

CHAPTER 3

THE OLD AND THE NEW CHURCH: FURTHER ESTABLISHMENTS

This Chapter is divided into five parts. Firstly, it discusses the establishment of the Malua Theological College. Secondly, it discusses the establishment of the District Committee. Thirdly, this chapter provides a brief outlook on the CCCS Saleimoa since 1836. Fourthly, this chapter also highlights a list of church ministers that looked after the church over the years. Lastly, is a snapshot of the physical location of the CCCS Saleimoa church. There is not much written information about Saleimoa and the CCCS church in the years after 1839, but this paper continues to uphold any “prevailing conditions” emphasized by Cladenius mentioned earlier.

3.1 The Establishment of Malua Theological College

The theological seminary at Malua was established in response to the need to train future Samoan pastors and their wives in preaching the Word of God (Turner 1986, 30). The general meeting of the members of the mission appointed Mr Hardie and Mr Turner to commence this educational institution. This meeting comprised of European missionaries and Tahitian teachers in 1836 in Saleimoa (Nokise 1983, 39-211). Turner recalls that the meeting resolved to buy twenty-five acres of the Saleimoa land to build the Samoa Mission seminary (1986, 47). Moreover, due to an increase in the number of students, the Committee bought another twenty-five more acres (Turner 1986, 47). This land is situated between the sub – villages of Nono’a and Utuali’i. Nono’a and Utuali’i

are part of Saleimoa hence the land for the Malua Seminary belongs to Saleimoa¹. Taking this into consideration, it must be noted that the establishment of MTC further supports the notion that tracing the CCCS Saleimoa origins is significant to developing a deeper understanding of the overall development of the EFKS church².



Figure 1. Tutor's residences at the Samoa Mission Seminary now known as Malua Theological College Turner, G (1986p.40)

3.2 Establishment of a District Committee

The significance of Saleimoa is highlighted in many CCCS events after the departure of John Williams. In 1836, a governing body called the District Committee held a series of meetings concerning the spread of Christianity. The Samoa District Committee meeting of 1839, held at Saleimoa discussed the formation of the Samoa mission to the Pacific and the establishment of the Malua Seminary (Nokise 1983, 39-40). Considering the importance of Saleimoa, John Williams chose Mose, a Saleimoan chief (matai), as part of the first twelve missionaries to take the gospel to the Pacific and

¹ "We called together the owners of the land, marked off about twenty-five acres and paid for it in calico and hardware."

² It is respectively noted that the focus of this paper is not on the establishment of Malua Theological seminary nor of the District Committee, notwithstanding, these major developments in the history of the EFKS are worth noting due to their connection to tracing the history and origin of the EFKS Saleimoa.

around the world (Meleisea 1987, 59; Nokise 1983, 40; Latai 2016, 94). It can be suggested that John Williams, Tereauone, and a matai named Mose were the founders of the CCCS Saleimoa. The occasional occurrences of meetings held in Saleimoa led to the establishment of her own church. Tereauone (also known as Taataori) continued their calling in developing the church in Saleimoa. He was a builder undertaking training and teaching young village men in building skills. George Turner, who was one of the pioneers in the establishment of the Malua Seminary, claims

“My fellow tutor and I reside in stone cottages, which were erected by the paid labour of the natives of the adjacent villages” (1986, 35).

3.3 CCCS Saleimoa since 1836

As mentioned earlier, when John Williams returned from London in 1836, he distributed the eight teachers in eight different locations both in Upolu and Savaii, including Tutuila and Pago Pago. One of the teachers was Tereauone whom Williams placed at Saleimoa. Turner called that teacher a “resident teacher” but the district refers to the Matagaluega a Malua of which includes Saleimoa (1986, 61). According to district or mission station’s principle, the villages united with the students in Malua once a month. Interestingly, this practice still exists today.

“These villages also furnish a sphere for occasional exercise of the preaching talents of the students, preparatory to their being sent out and appointed to the care of the villages themselves” (Turner 1986, 61).

Furthermore, the whole Mission Seminary district also held an annual missionary meeting in the “Exeter Hall” in Malua which was under the shade of the breadfruit trees on a large field (*malae*) (Turner 1986, 71). A *malae* is a place of large gathering similar to what Malietoa used in the first phase of Christianity in Samoa. The church members

offered an annual donation to the Missionary Society. This gathering continued to be held in Malua Theological College annually.

The first Saleimoa church was in a *faletele* located on a *malae*. The most intriguing fact is that District Committee meetings shifted from Saleimoa to Malua Theological College after the LMS established Malua in 1844 (Sulu Samoa 1844, 73&83; 1845, 2). Thus, in tracing origins, findings seem plausible. Firstly, John Williams founded the church and made Tereauone its first teacher. Secondly, the church began in a *faletele* located on the *malae* which is understood to be at Salepoua'e where the current church still stands. Thirdly, the CCCS Saleimoa was a district/mission station. Fourthly, LMS annual meetings were held at Saleimoa then shifted to Malua after its establishment. Next, it was the CCCS Saleimoa that the first Samoan missionaries emerged. In light of this, this paper sees that the *faletele* and *malae* reflect the village authority concerning the sons of Malietoa (mentioned in the honorific salutation earlier in this thesis). Finally, the LMS bought a portion of Saleimoa land for the MTC, a fact that still exists in history. Since the establishment of the church in 1836, a series of church ministers have been recorded to have served at the CCCS Saleimoa.

3.4 Records of Ordained Church Ministers for the CCCS Saleimoa

As mentioned, Tereauone was the first teacher to introduce Christianity to Saleimoa in 1836. However, notwithstanding the limitation of sources, the author of this paper finds that the first recorded church minister for Saleimoa in 1878, was Reverend Toga (Fauolo 2005, 653). Written hereunder the list of church ministers for Saleimoa since 1878 as recorded by Fauolo and with personal knowledge of the author:

1878 – Reverend Toga from Manono

1899 – Reverend Kuresa was later assigned to a church calling in Suva, Fiji.

1907-1909 Reverend Reuelu from Falealili

1909 – Reverend Tootoo Faraimo

1919 – L Patu and Ulu from Saleimoa³
 1920 – 1940 Reverend Tootoo Faraimo and Faasegi from Iva.
 1940- 1960 Reverend Tootoo Faraimo and Lisi⁴
 1963 – 1973 Reverend Tapu and Siaitolo from Lotofaga and Manu’a
 1973 – 2003 Reverend Hini Stanley and Alofisa from Savalalo and Fausaga
 2004 – 2014 Reverend Avea and Saumaleula Vagana from Manase and Moataa
 2016 to current – Reverend Seti and Vaialisi Seti from Nofaalii, Fogapoa and Faleniu

According to Reverend Paulo Koria, who temporarily looked after the CCCS Saleimoa church in 2003, the missionaries supervised the church since its establishment. Latai also notes the missionary named John Marriot was stationed in Saleimoa in 1901 (Latai, 307). Koria’s family currently resides on land that is commonly referred to in Saleimoa as Tofuola and their family are descendants of Reverend Toga (Koria 2021, Personal Interview). Rev Toga was Leiataua’s son from Manono and was married to a woman from Sapapali’i.

3.5 The Church Building Site

From 1836, the church began in a *faletele* situated on the main *malae*⁵ of the village where the current church stands. It was not until 1878 that the church leased land from Moenoa Malaeoaitu Vuga (Pula 2021, Personal Interview). Pula claims the lease was extended for a year then the church shifted to its new location after 1839. This is only a few feet from the first site. Lafoga in an interview qualifies that shift (2020, Personal Interview). Lafoga and Koria insisted a man named Eliko built the new church when Rev Faraimo was the church minister. Rev Koria verifies Faraimo as the church minister for the Saleimoa church in 1950 (2021, Personal Interview). Fa’ete recalls being one of the young village men who obtained sand for the church in the 1950s.

³ Latai records that this couple returned from their mission in Kiribati and worked at their village in Saleimoa for a year and a half as there was no church minister at the time. 2016. 315

⁴ Lisi was the second wife of Reverend Tootoo Faraimo.

⁵ Refer Figure 5

(Fa’ete 2021, Personal interview). This same story is recalled from the author’s wife’s late grandfather, Pisi Latai⁶. See figure below an image of the new church building.



Figure 2: CCCS Saleimoa 2021. Photo by Navy Lutua

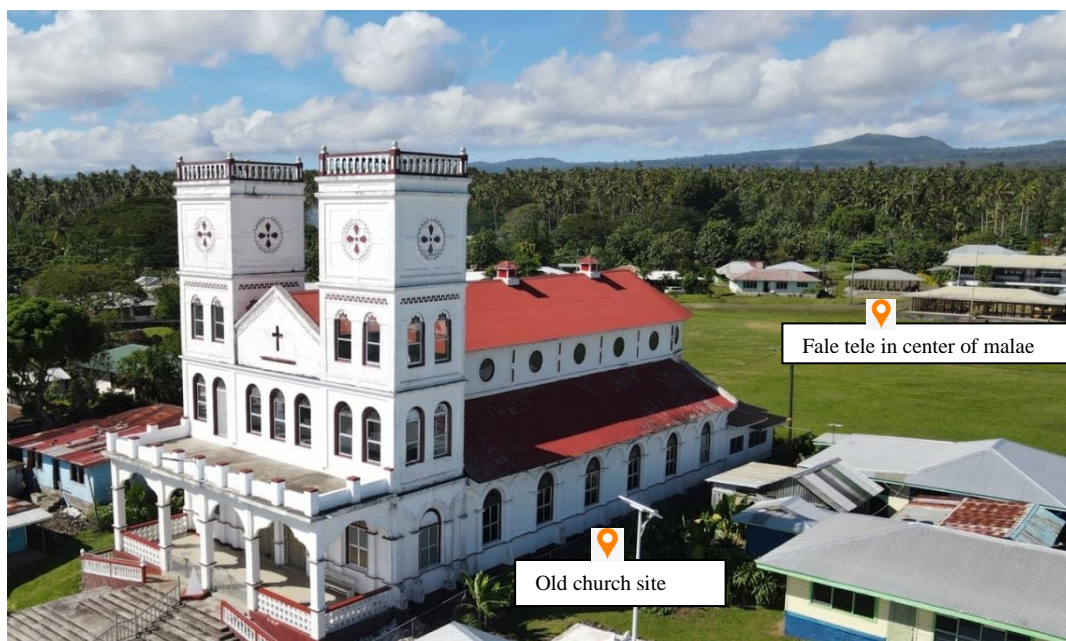


Figure 3: Behind the church is a *malae* (field) and on the right side of the church was the old church building as claimed by Lafoga and Pula. The meeting house or the Fale o le nuu is seen at the back at the center of the malae here in Salepoua’e.

⁶ Lutua, Amiaifolau. Personal recollection of stories passed from late grandfather Latai, Pisimaka 2017 “O le galuega o le falesa, sa matou lauina ai le amu mai gatai ona ave lea e tao. O le tufuga na fauina le tatou falesa sa fauina foi le falesa a Matautu Falelatai ma falesa tuai a Falefa ma Nuuli i Tutuila translated “The construction of the church was mainly done by the village men, we took the limestone and sand for the cement from the sea. The builder for our church was also the builder for the CCCS Matautu Falelatai and Nuuli and a church in Falefa”

Summary

The land upon which now Malua Theological College stands is Saleimoa land. The CCCS Saleimoa and the missionary district, is still called Matagaluega Malua to this day. These aspects of Saleimoa have been highlighted as particularly important to the history of the entire CCCS.

Conclusion

To conclude, it is important to note that this study is the first initial attempt to collate and document information about the establishment of the CCCS Saleimoa. Some key findings relate to the inauguration of the church during 1836 to 1839. In answering the key questions which have guided this research, it can be concluded that the CCCS Saleimoa was the only mission station of the Sagaga district in 1836. A Tahitian missionary named Tereauone was assigned by John Williams here as the first teacher of the church. Mose, as the first missionary *matai*, is another major figure in the establishment of the church. He was one of the “sons of Malietoa” who helped John Williams and Tereauone in 1836 begin the mission station. This paper certainly believes that Mose could be one of the *matai* (chief) belonging to the family who owns the land for which John Williams established the CCCS Saleimoa. Despite the lack of information about the names of many people of Saleimoa who attended the establishment of the mission station in 1836, this paper would like to acknowledge their immense act of faith and service in accepting Christianity since its arrival in 1830 and its establishment in 1836. The author concludes that John Williams, the Tahitian teacher Tereauone or Taataori, Mose, “sons of Malietoa” and people of Saleimoa who established the mission station in 1836, are pioneers of the CCCS Saleimoa.

Additionally, the CCCS Saleimoa is the only mission station of the Sagaga district. A shift from a *faletele* to the new church building reflects the enormous work of the people of Saleimoa. Such a shift is in line with the transformation and progress in the spread and development of Christianity not only in Saleimoa, but in Samoa. The occasional meetings held at Saleimoa in the early years of Christianity in Samoa are testament of the history of the CCCS Saleimoa. The Saleimoa church was central for

LMS activities in Upolu before the establishment of Malua from 1840 to 1844, as the Samoan Mission Seminary.

Moreover, the traditional setting and cultural leadership of the village proved very important in this paper. Samoan tales and legends, songs, and personal recollection of stories from elders and relatives of the author helped shed light on untold aspects of Saleimoa's history. This research has shown the connection between Saleimoa and the development of the center (*laumua*) of the CCCS in Malua. The missionaries that administered Malua at the time were also overseeing the nearby churches including Saleimoa.

Finally, this study has revealed the significant contribution of the Saleimoa people in the development of the CCCS and Christianity in Samoa which is not evident in the existing literature on Christianity and religion in Samoa. Such studies are important to address the scarcity of information which adequately represents local people. Not only are our people inadequately mentioned or may have been purposefully omitted, the lands and the events that have occurred have largely contributed to piecing together the information presented in this research. This paper serves to acknowledge those who have gone before us in laying the foundation for Saleimoa as being pinnacle to both the History of the origins of Christianity in Samoa as well as the establishment of the CCCS commonly known in Samoan as EFKS.

Appendix

1. Copy of Interview Questions

Suafa _____
Tausaga ole Soifua _____
Ekalesia _____

FESILI

1. O e tau manatua faamolemole ni faamatalaga tuutuu taliga, I le amataga o le lotu EFKS I lo tatou nuu o Saleimoa? O tau silafia se tausaga na faavae ai, a'o fea foi se nofoaga na faatu ai le uluai falesa, a'o e tau manatua foi ni faifeau muamua na galulue I lo tatou nuu?
2. Faamolemole o e tau manatua se tala I le sauniga lotu mulimuli a loane Viliamu lea sa faia iinei I Saleimoa I le tausaga e 1839? E tau silafia poo fea o lo tatou nuu sa faatino ai lea sauniga?

E iai uluai misionare mai lo tatou nuu e suafa ia maua o Mose ma Seupule na filifilia I le toasefululua o uluai misionare mo le pasefika, o e tau manatua ni aiga o nei tagata faamolemole?
3. E te silafia se tala I le foai o fanua o Saleimoa o loo faatuina ai le Kolisi Faafaifeau I Malua, a'o se mafuaaga poo se faamoemoe na filifilia ai fanua o Saleimoa e faatuina ai le Kolisi? A'o tau manatua nisi sa faia ma auai I lea foai?
4. O lea sou silafia I le igoa Saleimoa, mafuaaga o le igoa? O ai tonu fuaiala e aofia ai, aisea foi na mafua ai ona faaigoa fuaiala nei I igoa e pei ona iai I le taimi nei?
5. O iai nisi vaega, poo nisi tala o e manatua e uiga I le tau amataga o le lotu EFKS I Saleimoa nei, poo ni faafitauli o tau manatua I le amataina o le lotu I lo tatou nuu?

Glossary

Alii – High chief

Fa'alupega – Honorifics

Falesa – Church building

Faifeau – Church Minister

Laumua - Centre

Lotu – Church

Tulafale – Orator

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