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***O le A'oa'oina o le Gagana, Faitautusi ma le Tusitusi i le A'oga a
le Faifeau: Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa (EFKS)***

Literacy Education, Language, Reading and Writing in the Pastor's
School: Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (CCCS)

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*A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
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Abstract

This study is about an educational experience, which encompasses a range of educational knowledge and skills. It is an experience that is relatively unknown in educational research terms. It is also a comparatively 'secular' educational experience within a 'religious' institution, the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (CCCS). The Pastor's School (A'oga a le Faifeau) system teaches children to read and write, employing both Palagi and Fa'a Samoa frameworks. The study is also a positive response to the critical and sometimes negative historical treatment of the church and the Fa'a Samoa, especially in their role in the Samoan child's critical literacy experiences. In the light of the underachievement of Samoan children (especially in literacy-reading and writing), this thesis makes two arguments. They are: i) The Pastors' Schools are an important educational system that have escaped attention but which have profoundly significant educational content and impacts.

ii) There is a literacy problem in New Zealand that the A'oga a le Faifeau could address for the reported underachieving Samoan children. The content of the A'oga a le Faifeau syllabus for example, includes the teaching of reading, writing, arithmetic, religious and general knowledge, and the Fa'a Samoa. This knowledge forms part of the semantic resources, and literacy skills and expertise, which could prepare children for school because some of those knowledge and skills have spans to school-based literacies. One of the A'oga a le Faifeau's most significant educational impacts is the maintenance and retention of the Samoan language.

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PROLOGUE

This thesis focuses on one site – the Pastor’s School – where two distinct education systems, the **Faa Samoa** (Samoan culture) and **Faa Palagi** (Western education or formal education) merge. The reader may be challenged by the unusual organization of the argument – but it has a conscious rationale. The way the text is organised is a departure from the traditional structure of the academic thesis where the more usual format is a systematic development of an argument through an ordered sequence of an introduction, literature review, a particular methodology, findings and results, analysis to the conclusion. My thesis has nine chapters and includes all the above elements although they are organised in a somewhat different order, similar to the logic and structure of a Samoan oratorical speech. This logic has enabled me to more clearly easily express the organic connections between the **Faa Samoa** and the **Faa Palagi** in the unique educational setting of Samoan Pastors’ Schools.

I indicate that the **Faa Samoa** was incorporated into the relatively new form of education introduced by the London Missionary Society (LMS) missionaries and vice versa, with few confrontational issues or major difficulties to mar the initial fusion of the old with the new.¹

My writing reflects a similar (and I hope similarly unproblematic) merging – of an academic research tradition, and a Samoan approach to communication. Hence the elliptical structural logic in the ordering and writing of the thesis – a logic I would refer to as the **Paepae** rationale. The **paepae** is the foundation of stones² that surrounds a **fale Samoa** (Samoan house). Before entering a **fale**, one walks over this foundation of smooth stones scattered and spread out in such a way that it is relatively easy to walk on. Used as a verb, the word **paepae** means to spread out or to smooth out. Arranging a **paepae maa** (stone foundation) requires care and much time so that

¹ The old refers to the **Faa Samoa**, that is what was there before the new (the **Faa Palagi**) was introduced.

² The **paepae** of many Samoan houses includes a much wider ‘pavement’ of stones spread out before one comes to the actual foundation which is often a raised platform of rock and soil covered with the smooth stones or pebbles.

people walking on it do not hurt their feet. So the **paepae** welcomes the visitor even before he or she enters the **fale**.³

Addressing an audience in a special occasion, a Samoan orator engages in this initial 'smoothing out', which is often also referred to as an act of 'warming to' or acknowledging people or the gods. The orator for example may praise the creator of the earth for making such a beautiful day for the occasion, as well as the dignitaries present at the occasion. He or she would make appropriate connections here and there by referring to a common genealogy or something similar or habitual or citing important historical events (**taeao faitaulia**) that the audience can connect to. Most importantly there is linkage to the main plot, which the good orator only delves into after he or she has paved the way by making the proper introductions, addresses and connections.⁴

The first four chapters essentially do this 'smoothing' out. In those chapters I theorise about the 'old' and the 'new' in various ways to set a perceptual focus for the actual research carried out with the Pastors' Schools discussed in Chapters Six to Eight. Those schools tell the story of the merging of the **Faa Samoa** and the **Faa Palagi**, the lived experiences of the children and the teachers engaged in the Pastors' Schools. Chapter Five explains the eclectic methodology used in the thesis. The last four chapters (6-9) contain the findings, the interpretations and the analysis, samples of children's work and copies of the syllabuses and the conclusion.

³ These smooth stones are not found in every village so people acquire them from relatives or friends in the villages that have them through reciprocal giving. Today the 'user pays' rule applies.

⁴ An orator that speaks later would often say, *Ua uma ona paepae ulufanua lo tatou aso*, meaning that the first orator had already made the introductions, addresses and connections and so on so he or she (the later speaker) would go straight to the main plot of his or her own speech.

Chapter One

A General Introduction

About my Topic: Its Significance

‘O le A’oa’oina o le Gagana, Faitautusi ma le Tusitusi i le A’oga a le Faifeau: Ekalesia Fa’apotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa (EFKS), ‘Literacy Education, language, reading and writing, in the Pastor’s School of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (CCCS).’ The main thrust of this study is an investigation into the ‘secular role’ of the CCCS church, which its Pastor’s School carries out. This role has a background that is steeped in the history of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa, formerly known (before 1961) as the London Missionary Society (LMS) church. The study documents the past as well as the contemporary work of the Pastor’s School in Samoa and New Zealand. The Samoan translation of the Pastor’s School is **A’oga a le Faifeau**, which literally means school (**a’oga**) of the (**a le**) pastor (**faifeau**).

The Pastor’s School is an educational institution which is not widely known outside the CCCS or outside Samoa, but it moved at a steady and continuous pace the education of many Samoans, despite difficulties and setbacks that have continually confronted it since its inception.

An Enigmatic Topic

The topic I have chosen is an enigma to a lot of people who have asked about and wondered what it is, what it means and why I am writing about this particular topic. I have also gone to great pains especially in proffering oral explanations about my topic for the very reason that many people do not know what an **A’oga a le Faifeau** is. It is the relative lack of attention in the literature (let alone the church documents) of the **A’oga a le Faifeau** that prompted me to write on this topic. Except for some **A’oga a le Faifeau** syllabuses published in *O le Sulu Samoa* (*The Samoan Torch*), the official journal of the

CCCS,¹ it is a relatively unknown phenomenon. The **A'oga a le Faifeau** had forged and made major inroads (and still does) in the educational development of many Samoans. Because of its name, the 'Pastor's School', most people would probably associate it with an exclusively religious or biblical instruction. The **A'oga a le Faifeau**, though, has provided a relatively holistic (social, intellectual and spiritual) type of education to many Samoans for years.

How the Pastor's School Started: In Brief

Education systems do not exist in a vacuum. Ideally, the aims and objectives of every education system should be determined by and should reflect the social and economic conditions of the type of society in which it exists. This was not the case with the **Aoga a le Faifeau** system, the aims of which were determined in Britain and reflected the culture and needs of the 'literate' (able to read and write) British society. It is an introduced education system that was welcomed with open arms by a 'pre-literate' Samoan society eager for novel ways and practices. While the histories of missionary encounters with many other 'pre-literate' societies are marred by stories of violence and non-acceptance, this was definitely not the case in Samoa.

Every education system has a history, which tells of its origins thus I am briefly introducing the history of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** here to put in perspective how it all began. Chapter Four gives a more detailed historical background.

"The history of Samoa is the history of the London Missionary Society"

This statement, according to Goodall² (a member of the LMS secretariat in India and the South Pacific in the 1940s), was made by a New Zealand government official in 1915 and which he (Goodall) himself claimed as having a sound basis because little was known in Europe of Samoa prior to the first visit of the LMS missionary John Williams in 1830. Rogeven, a Dutch explorer, 'discovered' the **Manu'a** Islands, the Eastern most part of the Samoa Islands in 1722. The French navigator, De Bougainville, 'discovered' the

¹ The *Sulu Samoa* (Samoan Torch) was first published in 1839 in London by the LMS Press.

² Goodall, N, 1954, *A History of the London Missionary Society 1895-1945*, Oxford University Press, London, p. 352.

islands in 1768. La Perouse, another French explorer, landed on **Tutuila** Island (today, the main island of American Samoa) in 1788.³ Apart from an altercation between La Perouse's crew and some Samoans that resulted in the death of eleven people, those explorers as well as whalers, beachcombers, escaped convicts, boat deserters and traders who had also made contact with some islanders, did not leave any lasting or significant influence on the lives of Samoan people. The first real outside influence that impacted greatly on the Samoans was the LMS missionaries.⁴

The London Missionary Society (LMS)⁵, that pioneered the introduction of Christianity, also introduced formal education to the Samoans.⁶ The first LMS missionaries, John Williams and Charles Barff⁷, arrived in Samoa in August 1830 with eight 'native'⁸ teachers and their families from Tahiti and Rarotonga. Williams and Barff left the native teachers after two months with the paramount chief **Malietoa** who welcomed and accepted the new religion in Samoa. It was the responsibility of those teachers to spread their knowledge and understanding of Christianity amongst the Samoans and thus prepare the ground for white missionaries to follow later on. Williams visited them briefly in 1832 and in 1834 Barff and another missionary, based in Rarotonga, also paid a brief visit. In 1836 the first permanent LMS missionaries (five married and one single) arrived from Britain.⁹

The LMS missionaries initially engaged the help of Samoans willing to undertake teaching duties. These first Samoan teachers had little training and limited knowledge to impart 'but without them missionary work would have been seriously impeded for many years since the missionaries were few in number and the Samoan people lived in many

³ Hutton, J, 1874, *Missionary Life in the Southern Seas*, King, London, p.141.

⁴ Goodall, N, 1954, *A history of the London Missionary Society 1895-1945*, Oxford University Press, London, p.352.

⁵ The LMS church in Samoa became independent from the LMS in London in 1961. The church in Samoa wanted to affiliate with a denomination rather than a society. It became known as the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa. The preposition 'of' is often used instead of 'in' in this title. In my thesis I use the former (of) to distinguish the CCC of Samoa in Samoa from the CCC of Samoa in New Zealand, rather than the CCC in Samoa in Samoa or the CCC in Samoa in New Zealand which can be quite confusing.

⁶ Goodall, (Ibid), p.352.

⁷ Williams and Barth were known in Samoa by their respective Samoan names **Viliamu** (Williams) and **Papu** (Barth).

⁸ The word 'native' is used here to refer to indigenous people.

⁹ Carson, M C, 1983, 'The Samoan Mission Seminary 1844-1884,' MA Thesis, Victoria University, Wellington, p. 1.

villages scattered throughout several islands.¹⁰ Those were the 'humble beginnings' of the Pastor's School. It is called the Pastor's School (**A'oga a le Faifeau**) because the pastor (with the help of his wife) runs and teaches the school. The school is in their sole charge.

After 14 years in Samoa the LMS missionaries set up the Samoan Missionary Seminary (SMS, later renamed the **Malua** Theological College, MTC) in 1844 which trained a 'native' ministry to give the trainees an education designed to make them not only evangelists but also teachers. Eventually every village was given its trained native pastor cum teacher to spread the gospel and to teach Samoans print literacy (reading and writing) in the vernacular. A syllabus for the year was printed and circulated by the missionaries throughout Samoa. The Pastors' Schools pupils were examined at the end of the school year in oral and written Samoan Grammar, arithmetic and scripture. Other subjects like Geography, World History and General Science (after their texts were translated to Samoan) were added to the syllabus later on.¹¹

The CCCS has no written history of its own,¹² except for a short historical narrative in Samoan by **Faletoese**¹³ and a PhD thesis by **Taase**,¹⁴ a former **Malua** Theological College lecturer.¹⁵ This latter work is the most comprehensive as well as a more complete history of the CCCS to date. It has made a significant contribution to my own study especially as it is the only writing that gives an historical account of the institution of the **faifeau** Samoa (Samoan pastor) from whence sprang the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. The work of Samoan linguist and educationist Professor **Aiono Fanaafi**¹⁶ on the Samoan language

¹⁰ Carson, (*Ibid*), p. 1.

¹¹ Rowe, N.A., 1930, *Samoa Under the Sailing Gods*, Unwin Brothers, London, p.88.

¹² Rev **Oka Fauolo**, a former Chairman of the CCCS, is at present writing a history for the church.

¹³ This short history was compiled by Rev Faletoese, K T, 1959, ***O le Tala Fa'asolopito o le Ekalesia Samoa (LMS)*** (A history of the Samoan Church (LMS), **Malua** Printing Press, Western Samoa.

¹⁴ **Taase**, E T, 1995, *The Congregational Christian Church in Samoa: 'The Origin and Development of an Indigenous Church, 1830-1961.'* Unpublished PhD Thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, School of World Mission, USA.

¹⁵ The **Malua** Theological College is a tertiary institution that trains pastors for the CCCS ministry. The LMS set it up in 1844, and was then called the Samoan Mission Seminary (SMS). It was then also not only a theological but also a teacher training institution.

¹⁶ **Aiono Dr Fanaafi Le Tagaloa** (**Aiono** is her chiefly title) was the first Samoan PhD who graduated from the University of London in 1960. She was Professor of Samoan studies at the National University of Samoa. She was also Director of Education and former Principal of the Western Samoa Teachers Training College. She is a scholar and an intellectual with wide experience in education and linguistics.

and LMS documents for her PhD in London, also documents a brief history of the LMS in Samoa. Her references to the 'creation' and development of the Samoan alphabet and written language by the LMS are invaluable because this information is of great relevance and importance to the study. Carson's MA thesis, 'The Samoan Mission Seminary 1844-1884', a study of furnishing teachers in Samoa for educational and religious outreach by London missionary Society members in the nineteenth century,' also contributed very useful information. She summed up in the following quote the 'educational mission' of the LMS:

Education is an indispensable part of missionary activity since the people to whom the word of God is brought need to not only hear the Gospel but must also understand its implications. In Samoa the British missionaries came not just to convert the Samoans to Christianity but also to establish a church that would be a self-supporting self-governing, self-propagating Christian community. The two earliest forms of formal teaching were the 'instruction' and 'catechizing' of interested Samoans. The ready response of the Samoans to the missionaries' evangelization efforts led rapidly to the establishment of schools and classes. These not only provided further opportunities to impart religious knowledge en masse but were places where the Samoans could also be taught some of the useful arts enjoyed by 'more advanced civilizations' such as reading, writing and arithmetic. Though the secular aspects of this education were viewed as subordinate to the spiritual they were inseparable especially since teaching the people to read the Bible in their own language was of paramount importance in promoting spiritual advancement.¹⁷

My study investigates those secular aspects that Carson mentions above, which provided many Samoans with an education, not only in religious matters but also in those 'useful arts enjoyed by supposedly 'more advanced civilizations' such as reading, writing and arithmetic.' Those secular elements were inseparable and indispensable in the missionaries' evangelising work. They could not carry out their work efficiently and effectively if the converts were not reading and writing competently. The Pastor's School carried out this important function. It was a means to disseminate Christian dogma more rapidly amongst the Samoans in order to fulfil their purposes. On the other hand for the Samoans, it was the key to the arts and the knowledge of the **Palagi**. The missionary schools that later became known as the Pastors' Schools, especially when 'trained' pastors were assigned to village parishes after graduating from the Samoan Mission Seminary in the late 1840s, (with schools later set up by other missions like the Catholics and Methodists), were the only formal schools in Samoa until the official takeover by

Her book, *O la Ta Gagana*, (*Our Language*) written in Samoan gives a brief history of how the Samoan alphabet was first planned and written by the LMS missionaries.

¹⁷ Carson, (*Ibid*), p. 1.

New Zealand of Western Samoan primary education from the missionaries in the 1920s. While the **A'oga Palagi** (English Schools), as the New Zealand run-schools were known, took the children for the first half of the day, the pastors carried on their schools in the afternoon. The Pastors' Schools consequently became known as the **A'oga Samoa** (Samoan Schools), Samoan language immersion schools as distinct from the **A'oga Palagi** that also have English instruction. The syllabus of the Pastor's School then also included English instruction in the basics.

The following brief summary of a report by Rev Newell and his wife, LMS missionaries in Samoa during the 1880's, provides insight into the work of the Pastors' Schools and the provision of education - especially prior to the era of formal colonisation that began in 1899 with German rule of the Western Samoa Islands and the United States' takeover of the Eastern Samoa Islands.¹⁸

A handwritten letter¹⁹ by Rev Newell to the LMS authorities includes a report of the schools of the **Matautu** District (also known as the **Ituotane** District) in **Savaii**. It was written in January 1888 for the information of the LMS Conference. According to the report, Rev and Mrs Newell visited every village in the **Matautu** District during the months of June and July in 1887. During these visits they conducted school examinations.

The progress report of the schools was an assessment and evaluation of the thirty Pastors' Schools in the **Matautu** district. Newell in his letter complimented the schools for the promising examination results and good progress made since 1886. Fourteen schools had achieved 1st Division (see below) in 1887 compared to six schools the previous year. He was also mindful of the fact that the pastors (teachers) were working under the pressure of social and political disabilities and hindrances. It was at this time when British, German and USA war ships were constantly visiting the Samoa Islands. Locally there was civil rivalry among the paramount chiefs as those great world powers were

¹⁸ *While the LMS work was carried out in the two Samoas, the study pays particular attention to Western Samoa (renamed Samoa in 1995), with which I am more familiar and of which I am a citizen. Plus, the Eastern Samoa branch of the CCCS broke away in 1970 and became independent and has been known since then as the Congregational Christian Church of American Samoa (CCCAS).*

¹⁹ Newell, Rev J E, 1888, January 26, Report of the Matautu District, (Copy of original in Chapter Eight).

competing to find favours with the respective rival chiefs. Educational resources were poor and the **Matautu** District in **Savaii** was the furthest away from **Apia** Harbour, the first port of call in Samoa where ships unloaded their supplies before distribution, meaning that the **Matautu** district always got its materials last. The difficulties however did not deter the pastors and missionaries from their educational pursuits in faithfully teaching and continually assessing and evaluating their schools respectively. Concerning the results of those examinations Newell reported:

It is impossible to speak with entire satisfaction of the schools, but it is encouraging to be able to find positive evidence of advance in school efficiency. As compared with last year (1886) there is progress and that is all it is possible to say. The standard which I have laid down as easily attainable with diligent attention to the schools even in view of present disabilities and hindrances (social and political) is the one I have for several years called the 1st Division. In that rank I place as the result of Examinations and Observations – 14 Schools. Last year I could only put 6 schools into this Class. The tabulated results are as follows:

No. of schools ranked as 1 st Division	-----	14
No	----- 2 nd -----	10
No	----- 3 rd -----	2
No	----- inefficient Not classed-----	4
	Total -----	<u>30</u>

It is right to remark that as the standard of Examination has been raised these results represent a really better education than the children have obtained in past years.

The report signifies that the Pastors' Schools were well and truly in operation then and were making good progress before the onset of formal colonisation 11 years later in 1899, when the islands were thrown into upheaval when they were split between Germany and the United States. While this political 'wrangling' was going on, the pastors carried on with their schools. When the Germans took over Western Samoa in 1899 they left (well alone) the education of Samoans to the missionaries and Samoan pastors, and built only a few schools in Apia for their own children. The Germans even allowed the missionaries to carry on with their English instruction. Some German instruction was given on request from some church schools in Apia. By then the Methodists and Catholics were carrying on their own respective schools following the LMS tradition.

What This Study is About

My study is based on in-depth and participant research with contemporary Pastors' Schools in Samoa. I am also a product of this education system, and an educator in one of these schools in New Zealand, and bring my own experiences into the study. I play a dual role primarily and more importantly as an outsider looking in, and secondarily as an insider 'fitting' in.

The study raises issues about the literacy experiences of Samoan children in the Pastor's School. It is an in-depth and detailed investigation into the practices of the Pastor's School system, which has somehow been 'overlooked' and paid very rare attention.

The primary purpose of the study is to argue, and show, that the Pastor's School played and still plays a significant role in the education, socialisation and enculturation of those Samoan children in the CCCS in Samoa and New Zealand. The study demonstrates how the Pastor's School literacy sets up resonances with Samoan children, Samoan family, Samoan community and conventional school literacy. The thesis maps and describes the Pastors' Schools and their current place in Samoan society especially with regard to Samoan language skills and the maintenance and retention of the language. Two main arguments are followed through in the thesis about the work and 'worth' of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. These are introduced below in the present chapter but the rest of the thesis is testing and supporting these arguments through an analysis of research data.

Argument One: The Pastor's School has Profoundly Significant Educational Content and Impacts.

The Pastors' Schools are an important educational system that has escaped research attention but which has profoundly significant educational content and impacts. The content of the syllabus of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** includes the teaching of reading, writing, arithmetic, religious and general knowledge and the **Fa'a Samoa**. The Pastors' Schools are a powerful socialisation force for the **Fa'a Samoa**.

One of the most significant educational impacts of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** is maintaining and retaining the Samoan language. The missionaries, although they had their own religious agenda, carried out their work predominantly and officially in the Samoan language. One of the first major tasks the LMS missionaries carried out was learning the Samoan language. They were 'instructed' to learn the indigenous languages first and to use them in their 'evangelising' and 'civilising' work²⁰. **Aiono** found this instruction below, given by the LMS Board of Directors to the missionaries, as most significant and impressive:

Ia vave ona outou aoa le gagana a tagata, ma vave ona outou lauga ai, ma fai ai a outou galuega ma fesootaiga. (Learn the indigenous language fast; use it immediately in your sermons, in your work and communications.)²¹

The **A'oga a le Faifeau** became a repository and a 'melting pot' of knowledge where Christian religion, 'civilization' and the **Fa'a Samoa** were expressed interdependently and 'intersupportively' and at times in contradiction with one another.

A very important part and one of great impact is the 'values education' the **A'oga a le Faifeau** provides. Although the study is predominantly about the literacy skills that children learn in the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, the child's 'moral and affective' welfare is also very important in his or her education. A child's safety and security needs have to be satisfied in order for effective learning of those literacy skills to take place. A child who learns for example, to respect, to have courage, to grow up in a fair, caring, compassionate and non-racist environment will demonstrate those values. I elaborate on this impact of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** later on.

Despite such good impacts of the church, many still see the church in a negative light. My study investigates and analyses the educational experiences inside those large and ornate buildings that many outside are so critical of.

²⁰ *The missionaries used the indigenous languages wherever they went. In contexts where local languages were almost lost this tended to be because of indigenous populations becoming minorities in their own countries as in Aotearoa and Hawaii.*

²¹ *Aiono, Dr Fanaafi Le Tagaloa, 1996, O La Ta Gagana, (Our Language) Lamepa Press, Apia, pp. 30-31*

The Paradox of Mission Education

There is a paradox about the historical role of the church in Samoan life. On one hand it has been seen as a colonising force. For example, the role of the church in its intensive involvement and support in the Samoan language nest movement is seen in terms of the colonial process and as a powerful and oppressive institution.²² As **Utumapu** commented in her study of Samoan language nests, of which she found that more than half were church operated, "It is argued that Samoan church's attitude towards literacy within the mandate of ministry work is motivated by perceived needs to remain powerful and that the early European missionaries colonised Samoa through literacy, by producing a written language."²³ New Zealand educationists Mara, Foliaki and Coxon argued that the curriculum of the missionary schools came to represent the knowledge that was considered to be important and that during this period (early nineteenth century) we could see the beginning of the undervaluing of indigenous knowledge and skills.²⁴ In **Hoare's** investigation of the state of Samoan and English languages in twenty Samoan families in Auckland, he concluded that although most of the families in his study were most supportive of the church's efforts at the maintenance of the Samoan language, the family was probably the best agency as far as language reinforcement was concerned.

Jemaima Tiatia, a graduate student of the University of Auckland suggested in her book, *Caught Between Cultures*, that one solution to prevent Pacific Island youths from leaving the church, their cultures and families is for the church to hold language classes both in English and the indigenous languages, to break down the language barriers between native and non-native speakers.²⁵ The Congregational Christian Church of Samoa in New Zealand (CCCS) **A'oga a le Faifeau** syllabus has an intensive program of Samoan

²² **Hoare**, R D, 1991, 'Samoan language maintenance within the *Aukilani* (Auckland), *Niu Sila* (New Zealand) Community', MA Thesis, University of Otago, Dunedin.

²³ **Utumapu**, T, 1998, *O le Poutu: 'Women's Roles and Samoan Language Nests'*, PhD Thesis, University of Auckland, p. 126.

²⁴ **Mara**, D, **Foliaki**, L, **Coxon**, E, 1994, 'Pacific Islands Education', In E Coxon, K Jenkins, J Marshall, L Massey (Eds), *The Politics of Learning and Teaching in Aotearoa-New Zealand*, Dunmore Press, Palmerston North, pp. 180-214.

²⁵ **Tiatia**, J, (1998), *Caught Between Two Cultures: New Zealand-born Pacific Island perspective*, Christian Research Association, Auckland, p.21.

language and **Fa'a Samoa** instruction, which involves all children in the church, and elders who teach them. An important role of the CCCS church is nurturing the Samoan language in all its various activities, leaving the teaching of English to the schools.

Tiatia's suggested solution initially seems a reasonable one, but for some churches it could defeat the purpose of keeping their identity as a 'Samoan' church if English classes are held as well. This is why the CCCS church for example has an **A'oga a le Faifeau (Pastor's School)** separate from an **A'oga Aso Sa** (Sunday School) because the former has a specific role in teaching the Samoan language and **Fa'a Samoa** to the church children. On the other hand some youths leave for a 'time out', such time as needed by all, to reflect. Later, some young people would actually go back into the 'fold'.

The dramatic growth of Samoan language nests in the last ten years (more than half of which are run by Samoan churches) is partly a response to the problem (among others) that **Tiatia** is concerned about. Samoan children need to be fluent Samoan speakers especially in their formative years for educational reasons that this thesis addresses. One of the main reasons is the fact that Samoan children who learn to speak their first language from their parents most of whom are very good speakers and writers in the Samoan language could transfer the skills and knowledge of learning their first language to learning new languages.

It has been said that the LMS missionaries aimed at total societal change and 'imposed'²⁶ Christianity and their 'civilised' ways.

The LMS mission was a civilising one. The missionaries believed that they not only knew the one and only true God but also that they possessed a civilization that was superior to any other. It was not conceivable to the missionaries that a people could be Christian without being 'civilised' in the same manner as themselves.²⁷

Much of the early writing of the missionaries and colonisers 'talked down' to the Samoans, branding them as 'uncivilised' and barbaric 'heathens' and atheists that needed

²⁶ *I discuss the concept of 'imposition' in Chapter 3 especially with reference to the initial contact between Samoans and the missionaries.*

²⁷ *Mara et al, 1994, (Ibid), p. 186.*

to be Christianised and 'civilised'.²⁸ That meant using every chance offered to fulfil their civilising objectives and in the process doing away with any customs and traditions that might interfere with their fulfilment. Through a print literacy education they 'colonised' the Samoan mind more quickly and more effectively to accept the new ways and practices.

The Samoan people on the other hand were most eager to learn to read and write. The literacy skills of the **Palagi** were very much associated with the superior technological knowledge that they were seen to possess. The Samoans envisaged benefits for themselves in the missionaries' Christianising and 'civilising' agenda. They were not 'absolutely overwhelmed'. There were also important reasons (referred to in Chapter Four) that accelerated the acceptance and expansion of the LMS missionaries' agenda. The attraction to literacy as a novel practice was one reason for the Samoans' expression of the desire to gain access to this 'superior' knowledge.

In considering these introduced processes and their effects, it has been argued that 'we should abandon the mistaken assumption that Pacific Islands people and their social (including their educational) institutions were totally overwhelmed by the missionaries.'²⁹ When the LMS missionaries first came to Samoa, the paramount chief **Malietoa** accepted them with grace and favour for several reasons. For example, the chief thought that this was the head of his government from heaven, as predicted by the Samoan war goddess **Nafanua**. I elaborate on this and other reasons in Chapter Four.

Despite the largely negative view of the church's role, as argued above (and such views may have truthful elements), on the other hand the church may also be seen as an institution that has done much good service to the Samoan people. For example, apart from its spiritual aspects, the church promotes sovereignty through the maintenance of literacy in the Samoan language. This is one of its most important and far reaching services. It also provides a values education. In the CCCS especially, these are exercised in the work of its **A'oga a le Faifeau**. The **A'oga a le Faifeau** thus became a most important agent of socialization and change.

²⁸ Rowe, N A, 1930, *Samoa Under the Sailing Gods*, Putnam, London, p. 55

²⁹ Mara et al, (*Ibid*), p.181

The LMS made it possible

The LMS in its 'civilising' mission also initiated the tradition of writing, which enabled Samoan stories and histories to be documented and read widely. In referring to this great contribution by the missionaries to the Samoan language **Aiono** explained:

Ua maua nei la le **Pi Faitau** o la ta gagana, ma o se maataua tautele lea na foai mai e Europa i la ta gagana. O le **Pi Faitau** e mafai ai ona tautala mai anamua ma le tala Fa'asolopito, a e le tuu tasi ai le aumai/avatu i le tuutuufofoga. (We now have an alphabet for our language and it was a most valuable treasure given to the Samoan language by the Europeans. The Samoan Alphabet (**Pi Faitau**) provided an important means by which our prehistory and history can 'talk' to us without depending solely on handing them down by word of mouth from generation to generation).³⁰

I make much of this obvious and inevitable issue of the print literacy here because it is of utmost significance. Most importantly, it has provided another tool, apart from an oral tradition, that children can use in furthering their learning capacities and potentialities. It has also made the documentation of the Samoan language possible and enabled Samoan researchers to write back, to challenge and contest colonial issues for example, as well as to document results and findings. The recording and documentation of the activities of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** has been made possible because of the print literacy. As well, it has enabled the wide dissemination of the ways in which the pastors' stories form a genre that depict incidents from the realities of their interactions with the students and the curriculum of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**.

An interesting point made by American folklorist Stahl, in her study of personal narratives, has relevance here especially with reference to **Aiono's** advocacy of the great value of the print literacy. Stahl argues that when oral narratives are committed to print, they are not usually perpetuated in tradition much past the lifetime of the stories' main character. Stories, which rely on oral telling, therefore eventually fade, for much of their colour comes from the animating voice of the person who had the experience.³¹ I would

³⁰*Aiono, (Ibid), p. 36.*

³¹*Stahl, S D, 1989, Literary Folkloristics and the Personal Narrative, Indiana University, Indiana, p.15.*

argue that the introduced process of recording and documenting those stories gives them another 'life' beyond an oral tradition (handing down by word of mouth). It is inevitable that naturally something has to 'give' when an orally told story is written down, but the story does not necessarily have to fade. The animating voice may fade from the written story but its diction lives on to inform generations to come. The print literacy has a very significant and positive role in preserving and conserving the essence of an orally told story for future narration.

The skills of reading and writing are nurtured and fostered within the Pastor's School. Importantly, Samoan children need to have those literacy skills in order to succeed in school. In New Zealand some CCCS families are prevented from providing those literacy skills needed to reinforce language maintenance in the home because of circumstances, such as working parents, beyond their control. They would find in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** a support system to fulfil this need of their children. If families do encourage literacy practices in Samoan in the home, the Pastor's School would extend their good work. Pastors' Schools provide this support for many children in CCCS parishes in New Zealand. (See Chapter Seven).

There is a strong argument in favour of the important role of the church in the strengthening and maintenance of literacy in the Samoan language, not only in Samoa but especially so in New Zealand where the Samoan language is only taught in a few schools where bilingual classes are run, and in Samoan language nests. **Utumapu**,³² who did a study of Samoan language nests in Auckland for her PhD wrote that, when she started in 1992, over half of the nests were affiliated to Samoan churches. She also maintained that the most active 'body' behind the growth of Pacific Island language nests has been seen to be the church.

³² **Utumapu**, T, 1998, '*O le Poutu: Women's roles and Samoan Language Nest*, ' PhD Thesis, Auckland University, Auckland, p.30.

In support of this view that the church contributes most significantly to the maintenance of the Samoan language, **Fetui and Malaki-Williams** claimed that:

The greatest promoters of Samoan language were (and still are) the Samoan ethnic churches. Services, Bible studies, Sunday schools and youth programmes were conducted in Samoan. The churches became meeting places for the Samoan communities and learning institutions for young New Zealand Samoans.³³

The omission of the Pastor's School by the authors in the quote above adds evidence to my argument that the Pastor's School has been 'overlooked'. Most Pastors' Schools in New Zealand are held on Sundays especially for those parishes whose children have far to travel to church during the week³⁴ (as done in Samoa). I am arguing here though that the **A'oga a le Faifeau** has its own distinctive place in church activities. In the CCCS with 34.7%³⁵ of the Samoan population as members, it is in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** that the Samoan language is taught as a subject. It is within the Pastor's School that children are engaged more intensively with the 'actual learning' of the Samoan language, than in any other church programme. Children in the CCCS for example first learn to read and write in the Pastor's School. It is their engagement with the Pastor's School syllabus that prepares them for participation in other church activities such as Bible studies, Sunday schools or youth programmes, which **Fetui and Malaki-Williams** write about.

It is important to make the distinction between the Sunday School and the Pastor's School here. In the CCCS the two have different syllabuses. In the Sunday School the syllabus is exclusively 'religious' and the children are grouped into four grades; the beginners, infants, teens and seniors. In the Pastor's School the syllabus also includes religious instruction as well as secular subjects that emphasize instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic, general knowledge and Samoan language, its colloquial form and language of respect. The latter includes the inculcation of Samoan values and protocol. Much of the teaching and learning of the latter is oral and spontaneous. In Samoa, the

³³ **Fetui, V and Malaki-Williams, A M**, 1996, 'Introduction of a Samoan Language Programme into the School System of New Zealand,' In **F Mugler and J Lynch (Eds)**, *Pacific Languages in Education*, Institute of Pacific Studies, Suva, pp. 229-243.

³⁴ *When we were with the Porirua (Wellington) parish (1981-1988), our A'oga were held during the week after school hours because most children lived within walking distance of the church.*

³⁵ *Government of Samoa, 2001 Census of Population and Housing, Department of Statistics, Apia, Tables 15 & 16.*

Pastor's School syllabus also includes sewing for girls. In its early days, carpentry was also part of the syllabus for boys. There are usually eight classes in the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, from the Preschool Class and Classes 1 to 7, similar to conventional primary and secondary school grades.

The study of emergent literacy by Professor Stuart McNaughton, an educational psychologist at the University of Auckland revealed that Samoan children develop expertise in reading and writing before being formally instructed in school and that much of this expertise in the case of many Samoan children would have been acquired in the church. As he wrote:

Explicit systems for maintaining **Fa'a Samoa** (cultural practices which constitute 'the Samoan way') have operated in Aotearoa/New Zealand. A major agency has been the church, and many families continue the daily practice of family devotions, which include Bible reading (**Lotu**). Recently, Samoan preschools have developed influenced by the struggle and successes of Maori sovereignty and language revitalization, which have included the establishment of preschool 'language nests'. Samoan language nests (over half of which are affiliated to Samoan churches) can be seen as amplifiers of cultural practices (McNaughton 1994), which for Samoan families, further contribute to sustaining **Fa'a Samoa** in New Zealand.³⁶

For those children that belong to the CCCS, they would have developed much of this expertise in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** which 'schools' the Samoan child not only in the Christian faith but also in reading, writing, arithmetic, general knowledge and Samoan culture. The preschool class in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** is called **Vasega Faitau Pi** (literally translated the 'Alphabet Reading Class'). The preschool child for example learns how to read the alphabet as well as counting numbers 1 to 10 as well as answering simple questions and reciting a verse from the Bible in Samoan. This knowledge and the skills learned to acquire such knowledge would form part of the semantic resources this child would take to his or her new entrants class at primary school. As children go through the **A'oga a le Faifeau** they develop skills and knowledge of literacy in the Samoan language. Often in the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, children are not promoted to the next class until they have mastered with some competence, the reading and writing of the prescribed syllabus for their respective classes.³⁷

³⁶ McNaughton, S, 1996, 'Ways of Parenting and Cultural Identity,' In *Culture and Psychology*, Sage Publications, No. 2, Vol. 2, pp. 173-201.

³⁷ It is not uncommon in our own **A'oga a le Faifeau** (Grey Lynn CCCS) for example to have much older children in classes normally designated for younger children. Children do not seem to be bothered by

The high competitiveness and stigma that were often associated with children repeating classes or coming last is not really an issue today. These feelings were very much 'rife' in the 1950's and early 1960's (during our **A'oga a le Faifeau** days) because all schools in each subdistrict (**pulega**) in those days sat a common exam. The candidates from Preschoolers to Class Six from all schools (4 or 5) came together in one centre to sit their respective common exams. The exams were marked on the same day and results were called out before the students went back to their respective villages³⁸. Today the norm is for children in each respective school to sit their own exams with examiners from another school, as we also do here in New Zealand.

The acquisition of skills and competence in reading, writing and arithmetic by the Samoan child in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** is not just a cognitive achievement on his or her part. It is also participation in socially and culturally defined structures of knowledge and communication. It means achieving membership in a church culture and that of his or her **Fa'a Samoa**.

The Pastors' Schools impact greatly on those children who are members of the CCCS. It is compulsory for all CCCS pastors to run these schools and a significant number of children attend. By religious denomination, in Samoa, the CCCS church has the most members. A large number of Samoan children also attend these schools in New Zealand where there are at least 51 CCCS parishes. Chapters Four to Six discuss these impacts on the Samoans with the actual research carried out which reveal the training and philosophy of some of the teachers (pastors) and the literacy and numeracy learning they have imparted to Samoan children through their teaching, assessment and evaluation procedures.

A very important impact of the Pastor's School is its contribution to the learning of the **Fa'a Samoa** and consequently its maintenance and retention. Retaining the **Fa'a Samoa**, language and values, is given high priority in the Pastor's School. The Samoan language

this and they keep coming year after year. We have, for example 18 and 19 year olds in our graduating class that had repeated once or twice. Most children would have repeated.

³⁸ **Tanielu, L S**, 1995, *Ideological Shifts in Western Samoan Education: A Critical Analysis*, MEd Dissertation, University of Auckland, p. 34.

has two forms, the colloquial everyday Samoan, and the language of respect. The two forms have to be systematically learned in order for children to be fully conversant in them. Instruction in the latter form carries more than just the mechanics of learning the Samoan language (the language of respect especially). It goes with the socialization of children and the inculcation of Samoan values, in particular the value of respect, which drives the whole **Fa'a Samoa**. The value of respect is manifest in their behaviour to their elders and to other people. Knowing how to stand, sit, walk, speak and act in the presence of Samoan people has a humbling and moralising effect. The essence of being Samoan, is knowing how to show respect by behaving 'respectfully'. The language of respect is inseparable from everyday language in the teaching of the Samoan language. In the **A'oga a le Faifeau** children learn, practise and perform this.

A 'values education' is a very important component of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, as mentioned briefly earlier in the chapter. In this day and age of dramatic technological changes, multi-ideological mentalities and a tendency towards individualization, the church provides a relatively stable and secure environment. When I interviewed one of the secondary school principals for the Achievement In Multi Cultural High Schools (AIMHI) project in 1995, he made a very significant comment about the problem students in his school, "It's not the students that go to church that are the problem, it's the ones that don't". His school was predominantly Pacific Island, with mostly Tongan, Samoan and Maori students.³⁹

An important argument supported by several educationists points to the global process of individualization as closely related to the destabilization of traditional social networks and of social control. Beck pointed out that,

The double face of individualization on the one hand (is) the liberation from traditional ties that raises expectations for a life of one's own, free from industrial and administrative interference in the personal sphere, and on the other hand, the individual increasingly becomes dependent on the labour market and on the standardized ways of life that support its operation, such as education, consumption and product offers.⁴⁰

³⁹ Ministry of Education, 1996, *Towards Making Achieving Cool: Achievement in Multi Cultural High Schools (AIMHI)*, MOE, Wellington.

⁴⁰ Beck, U, 1992, *Risk Society: towards a New Modernity*, Sage, London, p. 90.

Handy, an influential writer on organizational cultures, argued that

Centralized power structures, such as governments, political parties, churches and unions, appear to be less and less able to keep the multiplicity of social influences under control and to guarantee security and stability. The social units, which have to find their own strategies to cope with complexity, appear to become smaller and smaller, down to the smallest possible social unit, the individual.⁴¹

Porsch in agreement traced the process of individualization to changes in the structure and function of families. As he posited:

Authority relations in families have been changing in the past few decades. What is allowed and not allowed is less an authoritative parental decision and more negotiated. An increasing number of children even grow up in a *laissez-faire* situation and do not experience any leadership from their parents. The individualization process is also related to a shift from an ethic of personal obligation and responsibility to an ethic of personal development. It has promoted tendencies to seek short-term satisfaction of needs and to instrumentalize other persons. Children and young people have become more independent and more difficult at the same time, because rules from adults are less and less accepted without question. Activities that are not experienced immediately as meaningful will be opposed by many children. Increasingly schools are expected to deal with the meaning of learning and its connection with the personal life situation and future perspectives of the young, and to cope constructively with the conflict between the ethic of self-fulfilment and an ethic of responsibility.⁴²

This trend has enormous implications for schools, according to Porsch, who further argued that if social control and structures of responsibility outside school were to lose stability and legitimisation, and if the young were no longer embedded in seemingly self-evident social relationships, those structures would have to be actively constructed and schools were to be increasingly expected to provide the necessary social continuity.⁴³

According to the October 2002 issue of *Auckland Harbour News*, the Australian Council for Educational Research and the National Foundation for Educational Research in England reported that "values need more emphasis in New Zealand schools, (and that) we should teach values right across the curriculum rather than in isolation."⁴⁴ Patterson reported that about 25% of the country's primary schools were using values education

⁴¹ Handy, C, 1995, *The Empty Raincoat*, Arrow Books, London.

⁴² Porsch, P, 2000, "Community, school change and strategic networking", In Altrichter and J Elliott, (Eds.), *Images of Educational Change*, Open University Press, Philadelphia, pp. 55-65.

⁴³ Porsch, 2000, (*Ibid*), p. 56.

⁴⁴ Patterson, A, 2002, 'Schools urged to push values,' *Auckland City Harbour News*, October 30, p.1.

programmes, but fewer secondary schools were using them. Dr Rosalind Hursthouse, head of the philosophy department at the University of Auckland said that there are virtues, common to all cultures, which include honesty, truth, courage, justice and temperance. She argued that, "if you don't start training them early it becomes incredibly difficult to pick it up later. It's no use trying to teach people rules and regulations if their attitude hasn't been shaped early on."⁴⁵

The values and moral education provided by the **A'oga a le Faifeau** and the church is not necessarily to suppress or imprison people as some persons may think, but in the face of increasing violence and burglaries, with the news 'flashing' Polynesian faces as the perpetrators of those crimes, it is an appropriate response. As Pat Lynch, deputy director of the National Commission for UNESCO said, "Some schools have been reluctant to teach values in the past. There's a real readiness now, which wasn't there three to four years ago. I think that's because of what we've seen on the streets. People are saying we've got to do something about it."⁴⁶ The values, as mentioned above by Hursthouse as being common to all cultures, are also the same values among others that the **A'oga a le Faifeau** teaches. The main aim of the literacy education that it offers is so children could read and write in order to understand those values, which are also central to Christian dogma.

These out-of-school experiences could be continuous with any values education in conventional schools. Those values are taught in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** right from the preschool class. The children throughout the school are engaged in analysing bible stories that teach those values, in oral and written comprehension. Added to that is the **Fa'a Samoa** part of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** syllabus which also teaches the value of respect, respectful behaviour and the language of respect.

⁴⁵ Patterson, 2002, (*Ibid*), p.1.

⁴⁶ *Op. cit.*

Argument Two: The A'oga a le Faifeau could address the so-called literacy problems of Samoan children who are reported to underachieve in New Zealand schools

The A'oga a le Faifeau, a Preschool and Out-of-School Educational Experience could connect with School Experience in a more Positive Way to Facilitate Learning for the underachieving Pasifika Children. A Ministry of Education report in 1999, on the compulsory schools sector in New Zealand showed achievement disparities between Pacific and non-Pacific students at both primary and secondary schools. According to the report, "The reasons for Pacific students' lower achievement are wide-ranging and complex. A variety of factors impact on the situation, socio-economic status, language barriers and a lack of responsiveness by the education system to Pacific culture and values."⁴⁷ (See Chapter Two for tables that support this.)

The point made above, about the lack of responsiveness of the New Zealand education system to Pacific culture and values, is central to my second argument. Samoans make up the largest number of Pacific Islanders in New Zealand. They also belong in an ethnic minority group. Many Samoan children in New Zealand are bilingual. In matters of education, ethnicity (relating to matters of cultural practices, values and preferences) may be important over and above socio-economic factors since it bears particularly on children's upbringing, attitude to school, achievement orientation, motivation and first language learning.⁴⁸ Children enter school with different levels of achievement in different aspects of performance. Therefore the criteria of engagement in conventional school literacy cannot be a particular set of achievements. Just as children have varied cultural backgrounds, their degrees of readiness for reading for example would vary also depending on the types of literacy skills they would have and the ways and means by which they would have acquired those before starting school.⁴⁹

Critical thought has become a much talked about concept in relation to Samoan children. Some Samoan children could be slipping through the system because they are constantly

⁴⁷ Minister of Education, 1999, *New Zealand Schools, Nga Kura o Aotearoa: A Report on the Compulsory Sector in New Zealand*, Ministry of Education, p. 30.

⁴⁸ Clay, M M, May 1985, 'Engaging with the School System: A Study of Interactions in New Entrant Classrooms', *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 20-38.

⁴⁹ Harker, R K, 1978, 'Achievement and Ethnicity: Environmental deprivation or cultural difference', *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, 13 (2), 107-124.

reminded that they have to speak up all the time and if they do not, then they become ignored. Sometimes the emphasis placed on a student's ability to demonstrate critical thought more explicitly through open expression and 'outspokenness', at the expense of the assessment and evaluation of what students actually know, can be too overwhelming especially for a child that is just starting school. Expectations put on him or her to perform may alienate the child from new learning. While open discussion in class is a necessary pedagogy, its 'obsessive' and 'over ambitious' use tends to leave out students who are more comfortable with writing down their answers and thinking about them in private. Samoan students who are socialized at home and the church not to speak out of turn would find an open brainstorming session an intimidating, threatening and alienating exercise.

The relative passive and quiet approach to learning is a function of an upbringing that teaches Samoan (and Pasifika) children to respect and to obey the teacher. Their passivity and quietness in conventional school though should not be taken for granted as a sign of a lack of interest or 'dumbness'. A Samoan child in such a situation may well say that:

I may be silent
But I am thinking
I may not talk
But don't mistake me for a wall⁵⁰

The passive child at this transition period has a tendency to be ignored as teachers focus attention on more active participants in class. The study by Associate Professor Alison Jones, an educational sociologist at the University of Auckland, of Pacific Islands and Pakeha students in a girls' school in Auckland, highlights the notion that teachers are more inclined to favour the active Pakeha students over the relatively more passive Pasifika students for the reason that Pakeha students are more active participants in class discussion.⁵¹ The study addresses this 'lack of attention' as a serious concern.

The more practical and situational **Fa'a Samoa pedagogy** is closely associated with the phonetic and orographical relatively formal teaching styles. Any educational curriculum

⁵⁰ Shigeji, T, 1982, 'Race Relations Conciliator,' *Race Against Time*, Human Rights Commission, Wellington.p.12

⁵¹ Jones, A, 1991, 'At School I've Got a Chance' *Culture/privilege: Pacific Islands and Pakeha girls at school*, Dunmore Press, Palmerston North.

has components which require formal teacher initiated teaching and learning as well as attention to detail and explicitness in order for children to be able to learn. These could link with the more abstract teaching/learning style in school as the latter could build on the former.

In the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, children are also taught to take turns rather than rushing in all at once. Discussions and debates also do go on for example, of biblical and Samoan literature and cultural issues. Pupils discuss topics before essay writing, and do comprehension based on bible stories. In the case of everyday language (**gagana o aso uma**) and the language of respect (**gagana Fa'aaloalo**), the latter is essentially a genre analysis that promotes meta-linguistic skills. Children are engaged in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** in this, in a relatively more systematic way than the conventional school brainstorming exercise. Children come from different families and how they address their parents and relatives, peers and other people would vary also. This knowledge is important and children learn how to make these distinctions in their **A'oga a le Faifeau** education. This could not be more important in New Zealand where Samoan children rarely speak those languages outside their homes. The **A'oga a le Faifeau** includes the study of those 'languages' in its syllabus. There may be up to six different ways for example to ask the question, 'Where are you going?' in Samoan, depending on the status of the person one is addressing.⁵²

For many Samoan children, the formal shaping of the possibilities of literacy begins in the home and the church. There is not just one dimension that this competence may address for a Samoan child. Whether the child is in Samoa or New Zealand, the recognition of his or her prior knowledge, skills and 'affections' within the school as a starting point for learning is of utmost importance. Many Samoan children are lost at this transition period because their previous learning is not often linked to their school learning. It is a period when the child is still most emotionally attached to parents, especially the mothers, and the child brings to school not only the literacy skills acquired outside school but also his or her affective and moral values. According to Wood it is also a time when "shifts in developmental tasks in the roles of teachers, students and

⁵² Tanielu, L S, 1995, 'Ideological Shifts in Western Samoan Education: A Critical Analysis,' M.Ed Dissertation, University of Auckland, p. 12

families and in the goals of socialization are compressed into a short period of time. The transition is potentially fraught because all children face contrasts in tasks, and for some they are marked.”⁵³ Turoa, Wolfgramm, Tanielu and McNaughton recognised this in their own study of Maori and Pasifika family literacy practices. Taking the argument further they said that under optimal conditions the refocus in socialization was associated with the rapid emergence of new forms of expertise but that in less than optimal conditions children struggle and socialisation agents had to work to provide additional supports for the new forms of learning.⁵⁴ They also pointed out that despite international comparisons which show generally effective literacy instruction in the early years, beginning instruction in New Zealand is not as effective for some groups⁵⁵ such as Maori and Pacific Islands children in low ‘decile’⁵⁶ schools.

The syllabus of the **A’oga a le Faifeau** includes the teaching of reading, writing, arithmetic, religious and general knowledge and the **Fa’a Samoa**. The knowledge and the skills acquired in learning such knowledge are preschool and out-of-school educational experiences. These are important to equip the Samoan child starting school with skills that could link with school-based literacy.

The competence in Samoan literacy, acquired within the church culture provides the **A’oga a le Faifeau** children with literacy skills that they could transfer into learning other literacies in school.

The points of entrance at primary school are crucial for those children who bring with them literacies acquired in the home and other learning institutions such as the **A’oga a le Faifeau**. The most crucial point is that when these children are confronted with the tasks

⁵³ Wood, D, 1998, *How Children Think and Learn*, Oxford, Blackwell.

⁵⁴ Turoa, L, Wolfgram E, Tanielu L and McNaughton S, December 2001, ‘Pathways over the Transition to School: Studies in Family Literacy Practices and Effective Classroom Contexts for Maori and Pasifika Children,’ Woolf Fisher Research Centre, The University of Auckland, p.5.

⁵⁵ Literacy Taskforce, 1999, *Report of the Literacy Taskforce: Advice to the Government on achieving its Goal that: “By 2005, every child turning nine will be able to read, write and do maths for success,”* Ministry of Education, Wellington.

⁵⁶ “Schools in New Zealand receive a rank from 1 to 10 according to indicators of employment and income levels of the local communities and proportions in the school of Maori children (from the indigenous culture) and Pacific Islands children (from first or later generation migrant families from Pacific Islands such as Samoa and Tonga). Decile 1 schools have high proportions of Maori children and/or high proportions of children from Pacific Islands and have communities with the lowest income and employment levels.” In Turoa et al, 2001, (Ibid), p.5.

of learning to read in school, they will have skills to bring to the process. The process involved in this transfer of skills is a complex cognitive one. Reference to this process is in order and a brief discussion ensues of how cognitive scientists and psychologists explain the process. It is significant to do this as it embodies the notion of how an **A'oga a le Faifeau** and **Fa'a Samoa** education could make connections with relatively new learning in the **Palagi** School.

The process involved in this transfer of skills is a complex cognitive one. This transfer process is described by McNaughton as making connections, "by building on the familiar—a kind of transfer of learning, as expertise and activities found in one setting are incorporated into another."⁵⁷ McNaughton's theories about this connection process have significant implications for the second argument. In his book titled *Meeting of the Minds*, he argues, "the transfer of learning depends on the bridges that are made between the learner's existing activities, knowledge, and expertise and the activities, knowledge and expertise that are of high educational value."⁵⁸ An important point he makes about this transfer concerns the 'probability that incorporating out-of-school knowledge and expertise in itself, might not guarantee learning those literacy and language uses, that are at the core of school curricula because those uses could be markedly different from out-of-school ones in purposes, participation structures and rules.' To solve this problem, McNaughton suggests a process that could further enhance these connections. He refers to it as a 'kind of discrimination learning,' a process by which children can come to be aware of how their out-of-school knowledge and expertise are aligned with the instructional activities that they experience at school. McNaughton also cites the example of 'recitation' as an out-of-school experience of the Pacific Island child for example, that could be incorporated into a Pacific Island child's learning in school.

McNaughton's approach is a 'problem solving' one as it responds to the literacy problems faced by children in New Zealand, and it addresses this study's major concerns about the underachievement of Samoan children. It suggests ways in which "other" relatively 'problematic' educational experiences could be made less or non-problematic by incorporating them into children's school experiences. Recitation is one of the

⁵⁷ McNaughton Stuart, 2002, *Meeting of Minds*, Learning Media, Wellington, p.26.

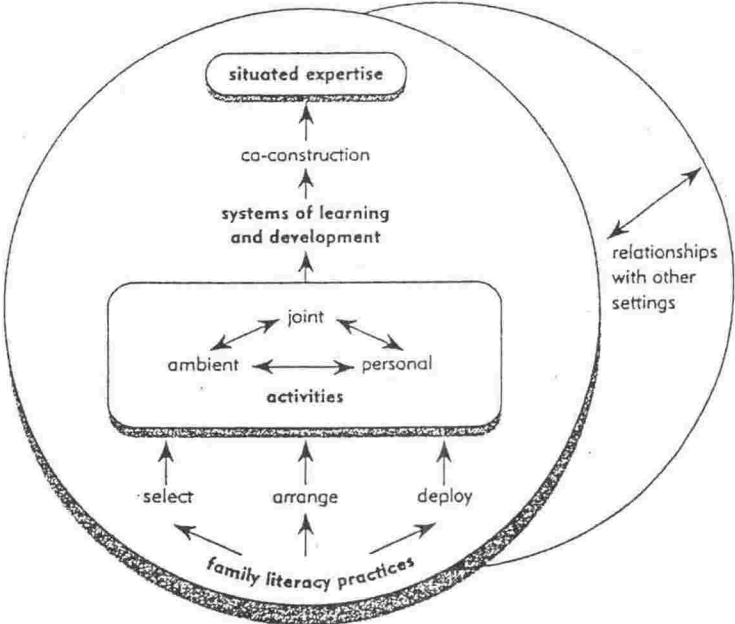
⁵⁸ McNaughton, 2002, (*Ibid*), p. 28

educational experiences of children in the CCCS Pastor’s School and there are others that the research findings reveal in Chapter Seven, which may be part of these “out-of-school knowledge and expertise,” that McNaughton argues, “could be ‘aligned’ with the instructional activities that children experience at school.”⁵⁹

Emergent Literacy and the Pastor’s School

In his study of processes of development and transition in education, McNaughton developed a socialisation model of emergent literacy, which is a useful framework with which to conceptualise the relationship between the Pastor’s School and **Fa’a Samoa**, and the conventional school. The **Fa’a Samoa** and **A’oga a le Faifeau** are a part of family practices in the model. Relationships with other settings include links with the schools and government agencies like the Ministry of Education and so on. Children learn in a formal as well as a spontaneous and simultaneous manner through personal, joint and ambient activities.

Figure 1: The socialisation model of Emergent Literacy⁶⁰ (and the Pastor’s School)



As I show in this thesis, the pastors and their wives as teachers select, arrange and deploy particular activities that reflect the socialisation practices of the Pastor’s School.

⁵⁹ McNaughton, 2002, *(Ibid)*

⁶⁰ McNaughton, 1995, *(Ibid)*, p. 20

Development and learning take place in joint, personal and ambient activities. The expertise is situated in these activities. The professional roles of the pastors and wives (the agents) and their use of particular tools, such as the **A'oga a le Faifeau** syllabus (the phonics and orthographic pedagogy, the bible stories, values and moral instruction, and **Fa'a Samoa** practices) set constraints and conditions, for what children learn and what develops which may seem discontinuous with and vastly different to other educational settings, like the conventional school educational practices. McNaughton though says that, "despite the presence of different instructional approaches, literacy and language events share commonalities across many types of schools."⁶¹

Beals'⁶² study of the conceptions of the development of re-appropriating schema posited by various psychologists and cognitive scientists, in particular Bartlett, a British psychologist, is also of relevance to this discussion. Bartlett characterized schema as the network of past experiences in the mind, constantly rearranging and reconstructing itself as old experiences and perspectives confront new ones. He claimed that those connections were active dynamic arrangements of the meaningful material. This material, the content of the mind he said gained new meanings as these connections were formed.⁶³ Cognitive scientists like Mandler, Minsky and Abelson among others define schemata as "information processing concepts."⁶⁴ Rumelhart another cognitive scientist defines schema as "a data structure for representing generic concepts stored in memory." Of particular significance are the four analogies below that Rumelhart used to outline the form and function of schemata.⁶⁵

First, a schema is like a play having characters played by different actors following a script. This play consists of what normally happens in a particular situation from which participants can predict how others will act and can make decisions about how to act. Second, a schema is like a theory allowing for interpretation of a situation, event or text. It is a world view, a way of understanding how the world works. Third, a schema is like a

⁶¹ McNaughton, 2002, (*Ibid*), p. 25.

⁶² Beals, D E, 1997, 'Re-appropriating Schema: Conceptions of Development,' In Bartlett and Bakhtin, *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, Washington University, St Louis, pp. 1-41

⁶³ Bartlett, F C, 1982, *Remembering: A Study in experimental and social psychology*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p.85

⁶⁴ Beals (*Ibid*) p.15

⁶⁵ Rumelhart, D E, 1980, 'Schemata: The Building Blocks of cognition', In R Spiro, B Bruce & W Brewer (Eds.), *Theoretical Issues in Reading Comprehension*, p. 33-58

procedure or a computer program. This computer program sifts through patterns of observation to allow us to identify things we perceive. And fourth, a schema is like a parser or a device, which tells us to read and make sense of sentences or mathematical equations.⁶⁶

Rumelhart's analogies of the form and function of schemata, plus definitions of schemata by the above psychologists and cognitive scientists, have implications for the process in which Samoan children, with a literacy education acquired in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** and the **Fa'a Samoa**, make connections with the **A'oga Palagi** literacy. My belief is that children from the **A'oga a le Faifeau** have the necessary 'schemata', created and developed in those preschool and out of school learning experiences, that school literacy could connect with and vice versa. At entrance to school they potentially have the knowledge and skills in reading, writing and numeracy that enables them to act and make decisions about how to act when confronted with learning reading and writing in English. They have the schemata not only to do the above but also to interpret the new situation and to identify the sounds, letters, words, sentences and maths equations.

A child schooled in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** and the **Fa'a Samoa** would have a 'mental computer' programmed to interpret and potentially adapt to the new literacy and numeracy learning in school. This 'computer' (Rumelhart's third analogy) would have the Samoan alphabet and sounds and numeracy skills for example that the child in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** has systematically learned. The phonetic and phonemic awareness and counting skills of this child would have been logged on to the memory of this computer (schema). Learning the English alphabet and the new maths in school is building on this knowledge. That is the most crucial 'link point' that McNaughton argues above as "making connections by building on the familiar," a process he terms "incorporation"⁶⁷, which Turoa et al reaffirm as a most significant educational prerogative.

The above psychologists also say that children are better able to engage and continue to engage in classroom instruction, and hence learn from classroom instruction, because

⁶⁶ Rumelhart (*Ibid*) pp.40-41

⁶⁷ McNaughton, 2002 (*Ibid*) pp. 26-27

they have entry skills-expertise, which is immediately functional for the activity.⁶⁸ It is likely that children who learn in the **Vasega Pi** (Preschool Class) of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, to count and do simple additions and subtractions (using fingers and toes) as well as learning the 2 and 3 times tables in Class I respectively, would 'latch' on quickly to learning those in English. This is because their out-of-school literacy experiences are at least to some extent continuous with their in-school educational experiences. The success of this process on the other hand depends on 'prerequisites' like the teacher's knowledge of what the new entrant's prior educational experiences are.

Bartlett on the other hand contended (quite rightly) that the process of learning is not merely a question of relating the newly presented material to old acquirements of knowledge. He said that primarily it depended upon the active bias, or special reaction tendencies that were awakened in the observer by the new material and it was these tendencies, which then set the new into relation with the old. Moreover, he argued that the formulation of schema is an active organisation of past reactions or of past experiences fundamentally linked to each other by a 'common interest' or theme or topic such as philosophy, science, art or sports. Those experiences, Bartlett said, must be regarded as constituents of living, momentary settings belonging to the organism, and not as a number of individual events somehow strung together and stored within the mechanism. He further said that both their contents and the connections in the mind are alive, shifting, growing.

Bartlett's arguments were based on the results of a study he carried out employing a method he called 'repeated reproduction' using the repeated retelling of a Native American folk story. In this method a subject was given a story or passage of argumentative prose to study.⁶⁹ After fifteen minutes the subject was asked to reproduce the material; this reproduction was recorded. Then at varying and increasing intervals up to two years, the subject retold it again. Bartlett used a number of different passages for this method. He was looking for transformations of the text that the subjects made in their retellings. His experiments in remembering led him to believe that we do not recall

⁶⁸ Turoa et al (*Ibid*) pp. 14-15

⁶⁹ Beals (*Ibid*) p. 33 According to Beals, Bartlett also used pictures or graphic representations in the repeated reproduction method. The results of these experiments point to similar kinds of reconstruction that he found with the stories and argumentative prose.

events as static images or movie clips but that we reconstruct past events in our minds. Bartlett also believed that the application of schema could be extended to the organization of higher psychological functions like remembering. And that what gave these psychological schema more power than biological schema was a person's ability to "turn round upon one's own schema", to rework it, to reconstruct it.⁷⁰

Bartlett also referred to these schemata as "apperception"⁷¹ systems." He also argued that it was one's culture that determined many of these "pre-formed tendencies and bias" for interpreting incoming material and reconstructing schema. He suggested that this interpretation and reconstruction in the face of cultural assumptions is not a neutral, value-free process but one that can be conflict-laden. After describing the ways in which his English subjects reinterpreted "The War of the Ghosts" (the Native American folk tale), he commented, "Before long the story tends to be robbed of all its surprising, jerky and apparently inconsequential form, and reduced to an orderly narration. It is denuded of all the elements that left the reader puzzled and uneasy."⁷²

Beals posits that reconstruction can have a flattening effect on material that does not fit into already established schemata. The indigenous American 'folk tale' did not fit the storytelling style expected by English people hearing the story so in their recall of the story, they made the story fit conventional Western narrative form and thus the resulting stories were "robbed", "reduced", and "denuded" of its original style.⁷³

Jones' study of Pacific Islands girls and Pakeha girls in an Auckland high school also has parallels with Beals' argument. The economics lesson for example that Jones observed shows a reluctance by the teacher to acknowledge or make an attempt to relate the answers given by the Pacific Island girls, by using 'everyday' or concrete examples that the girls are familiar with.

⁷⁰ Beals (*Ibid*)

⁷¹ Hanks, P, Long, T H, (Eds.) 1985, *Collins English Dictionary*, William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd., Glasgow, p.68 (*Apperception means; conscious awareness of the act and significance of perception, focused perception especially when selective of certain sensory data*)

⁷² Bartlett (*Ibid*) p. 201

⁷³ Beals (*Ibid*) p. 13

As Jones argued:

The (Pacific Islands) girls' reality was ignored by the teacher in favour of her own – or at least, that contained in the curriculum. According to the curricular notion of sex role stereotyping, girls are expected to be 'dainty'. The students' conception of girls as 'fighters' and 'sluts' is not congruent with the framework, which the teacher uses.⁷⁴

The Dilemma of some Samoan Children in New Zealand Schools

This is the dilemma that bilingual, minority group children such as many Samoan children, also face in New Zealand. Connecting what is new with what is already known is not a simple association because the new material triggers a number of applicable schemata, all of which must be sorted and adjusted in relation to each other. McNaughton also expressed a similar concern about this issue that I reiterate here, that there is a probability that incorporating out-of-school knowledge and expertise in itself might not guarantee learning those literacy and language uses that are at the core of school curricula because those uses could be markedly different from out-of-school ones in purposes, participation structures and rules.⁷⁵ There has to be a 'common denominator', which could provide the necessary link in this case, but educators have to be prepared to look for it. On the other hand a mutual understanding of differences has to be fostered in the case where this is impossible.

There is also another major concern associated with this issue. While on one hand Samoan children with a background in phonetics and other literacy skills from the **A'oga a le Faifeau** and **Fa'a Samoa** may make links with **Palagi** School literacy, there are other important related issues that have to be addressed in order for any 'incorporation' of new knowledge. One is to do with the inflexible attitude of conventional school (Western) literacies towards incorporating out-of-school experiences of those children. This attitude has been identified in New Zealand by the Ministry of Education, who

⁷⁴ Jones, A, 1991, *"At School I've Got a Chance": Culture/privilege: Pacific Islands and Pakeha girls at school*, Dunmore Press, Palmerston North, p. 126.

⁷⁵ McNaughton, 2002, (Ibid)

reported that there was a 'lack of responsiveness of the (New Zealand) education system to Pacific culture and values.'⁷⁶

Another related issue is to do with the assessment of children's out-of-school knowledge and skills in their own respective language. School teachers for example may not be predisposed to accept 'unconventional' knowledge and skills, even ones of value for children's learning. This has to do with an 'ethnocentric' view of assessing how 'rational or irrational' an educational experience or story is according to a conventional Western experience or narrative form. The tendency to 'Westernize and conventionalize' makes incorporation difficult of potentially valuable and relevant out of school educational experiences. I refer to this again later in the discussion.

Bartlett refers to this type of pedagogical 'problem' as 'conventionalisation' and he gives an example that takes place in L's retelling. L transformed the wounded Indian's thought, "Oh, they are ghosts," a quoted pronouncement to himself, to "he thought he saw ghosts around him," a statement that suggests that the Indian did not have his wits about him. L 'conventionalised' the presence of ghosts (a Native American version) to imagined presences of ghosts (an English version).⁷⁷

Research on reading in New Zealand by Clay and Watson⁷⁸ and Nash, Harker and Charters,⁷⁹ has identified differences in reading performance for those groups whose culture differs from the dominant school culture. A study of Maori, Samoan and Pakeha children, predicted (on the basis of successful older siblings) to be high progress readers by McNaughton, Ka'ai, Chun and Taogaga,⁸⁰ confirmed the significance of home literacy practices at the preschool level.

⁷⁶ Ministry of Education, 1999, (Ibid)

⁷⁷ Bartlett, (Ibid), p.64.

⁷⁸ Clay, M M & Watson, B, 1982a, *The Success of Maori Children in the Reading Recovery Programme: Project No. 1*, Child Study Research group, Department of Education, University of Auckland.

⁷⁹ Nash, R, Harker, R & Charters, H, 1990, *Access and Opportunity in Education, (First Phase Report)*, Department of Education, Massey University.

⁸⁰ McNaughton, S, Ka'ai, T, Chun, T N & Taogaga, E, 1990, *Two Studies of Transitions Socializations of Literacy; and Te Hiringa Take Take: Mai i Te Kohanga Reo Ki Te Kura*, Maori Research and Development Unit, Department of Education, University of Auckland.

The researchers considered congruence between practices in the home and practices at school to be a significant factor in how well children handled the transition between home and school and the process of learning to read.

This research, along with that of others, according to Wagemaker suggests that the ecology of the family in association with the larger social fabric is a central component of the literacy environment and is likely to have a powerful influence on learning to read.⁸¹ Professor Nicholson, an educational psychologist at the University of Auckland, supports this saying that, children learning to read discover the link between print and meaning in different ways.⁸² Children could learn to read through either one, a combination of two or the combination of the following three teaching methods - phonetic, look and say, and whole language.

Research by Tabors and Snow who studied the early literacy development of young bilingual children in the USA claims that children with a strong foundation in their home language and continuing support for that language through home activities such as book reading develop skills that will transfer to learning English later.⁸³

My study demonstrates the ways in which the Pastor's School provides children, beginning with preschoolers, with those necessary skills in reading and writing in their own Samoan language, which could assist in their learning of another language and in school. (See Chapter Six).

Tabors and Snow found that there was a lack of assessment of those 'out of school' literacy skills especially to do with first language learning, and they pose a most important question about literacy development of bilingual children: "Given that there are many questions still remaining to be answered by research, what can educators do in the

⁸¹ Wagemaker, H, (Ed.), 1993, *Achievement in Reading Literacy, New Zealand's Performance in a National and International Context*, Research Section, Ministry of Education, Wellington, pp. 13-14

⁸² Nicholson, T and Gallienne, G, 1995, 'Struggletown Meets Middletown: A Survey of Reading Achievement Levels among 13- year-old Pupils in Two Contrasting Socioeconomic areas,' In *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 30 No. 1 pp. 15-23.

⁸³ Snow, C E & Tabors, P O & Snow, C E, 2001, 'Young Bilingual Children and Early Literacy Development', In S B Newman & D K Dickinson (Eds) *Handbook of Early Literacy Research*, Guilford Publications Inc., New York, p.159-178

meantime in developing programs for young bilingual children?" In reply to the question they gave a three-fold answer of particular relevance to the study. As they said:

First, it would clearly be useful if educators would encourage parents to maintain their first language at home and use it-if they are comfortable doing so-for literacy activities. Educators know how important early-childhood interactions are but may not understand that it is the quality of the interaction, not the language that it is carried on in, that is the critical factor. Second, educators need to find out much more about the language and literacy background of the bilingual children. Detailed language histories could reveal just what types of language exposure a child has had since birth. Asking some simple questions about home literacy experiences and the language associated with them could provide further critical information. Finally, educators need to have creative ways of assessing young bilingual children's abilities. Knowing what a child knows-and in what language-is necessary before any informed placement or program decisions can be made. Often, however, assessment -if it occurs at all only occurs in English, providing no information about possible early literacy strengths that have been developed in the child's first language.⁸⁴

A vital point raised that I have underlined in the quote is the notion that it is the quality of the interaction, and not only the language that it is carried on in, that is the critical factor. How the children engage with language, that is how they learn it, with whom and with what perhaps is what Tabors and Snow are driving at. While the language is important, the skills, expertise, and competencies acquired in learning that language, would contribute more to children's literacy development, as those are what they can transfer and use to assist in their learning of another language. This is why the recognition of prior learning of Samoan children is important. What these children learn in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** could equip them with those literacy skills and could give them a head start in school.

Although the study by Tabors and Snow is about the early literacy development of young bilingual children in the United States, it is of great relevance to what my thesis is about, in particular to my second argument. An unfortunate situation though, according to Tabors and Snow is the fact that assessment tools for young bilingual children that take into account their abilities in both languages (first language and English) are only just beginning to become available or are still being developed. They suggest that in lieu of normed tests, more informal methods could be used. They also strongly recommend that educators need to know what those skills are and how to take advantage of them, so that the process of literacy acquisition can be optimised for all young bilingual children.

⁸⁴ Tabors & Snow, (*Ibid*), p. 175.

The situation for bilingual children in New Zealand is very similar to that in the United States. Very little has been done towards this end in New Zealand education for bilingual children such as Pacific Islanders. A few studies carried out on early literacy activities in reading and writing in minority language settings (Maori, Tongan and Samoan)⁸⁵ revealed the varied ways in which those respective children acquire literacy skills before starting school. As far as formal assessment of those skills is concerned, extremely little has been done. A first, perhaps, is a batch of tests devised by Stuart McNaughton and carried out in 1999 and 2000, which was piloted in South Auckland primary schools at new entrance classes. As a Samoan assessor in the program, I tested Samoan children in three of those schools on alphabet and word recognition in Samoan. I believe that so far this is the only assessment available in Samoan.

With the existence of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** and the mushrooming growth of Samoan language nests in the last ten years, the need for those assessment tools to be in place has not been more urgent as these children are acquiring literacy skills within those language nests in a more systematic and organised learning environment at a very young age. Preschoolers in the Pastor's School concentrate on learning to read the alphabet, counting numbers 1 to 10, recite simple and short Bible verses as well as hearing stories being read and told to them. For those Pastors' School children that also attend Samoan language nests, those skills are reinforced and extended.

My study of the literacy experiences of children in the CCCS Pastors' Schools in Samoa and to a lesser extent in New Zealand demonstrates examples of ways in which a significant segment of Samoan children in Samoa and New Zealand discover the link between print and meaning. Children as young as one year old are brought to the alphabet reading class (**Vasega Faitau Pi** or preschool) of the Pastor's School. As well as a

⁸⁵ McNaughton, S, Kempton, M, Turoa, L, 1994, 28 June-July, 'Tutorial configurations in an early writing activity at home. Paper presented at the XIIIth Biennial Meeting of the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development', Amsterdam.

McNaughton, S, Wolfgramm, E, Afeaki, V, 1995 March, 'Cultural processes in an early literacy activity: A storybook reading programme in a minority language setting'. Poster session presented at the biennial Conference of the Society for Research in Child development, Indianapolis.

Goodridge, M J & McNaughton, S, 1994, 8-11 May, 'How families and children construct writing expertise before school: An analysis of activities in Maori, Pakeha and Samoan families'. Paper presented at the 20th Annual Conference of the New Zealand Reading Association, Auckland.

regular orthography (spelling) and phonetic writing system, story writing in Samoan, arithmetic and Samoan language are some of the compulsory subjects in the Pastor's School.

The Pastor's School encourages a 'phonetic, phonemic and orthographical pedagogy', a cog in the wheel of educational teaching and learning styles that has been examined and investigated from various (and often contradictory and controversial) theoretical approaches by educators and academics for years in their quest to improve the teaching and learning process. Despite the introduction of more advanced and supposedly better pedagogies, such as the whole language approach, there are still many children who are slipping through the system with poor literacy skills. Many of them are Samoan.

The Reasons behind my Choice of Topic

The study has eventuated for both educational and personal reasons. Four major reasons feature strongly in my choice of topic.

Firstly, I have personal interests, which emanate from my direct involvement as a former student and teacher of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, and today as a teacher and coordinator of its programme in our parish, the CCCS in Grey Lynn, Auckland, New Zealand. I am a product of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. I learned to read and write in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** in Samoan, my first language. It was in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** that my very first engagement with print literacy occurred. My parents who were pastors were 'passionate' about their **A'oga a le Faifeau**. Even in their early seventies, just before retirement, they were still very active teaching their **A'oga a le Faifeau** mostly by themselves. During his time as an elder pastor, my father strongly encouraged the younger ministers of the church to carry out their **A'oga a le Faifeau** tasks and duties with care and perseverance. He believed in the values of an **A'oga a le Faifeau** education. He used to say to the pastors, **'Toaga e fai lau A'oga a le faifeau. O le galuega patino lava lena a le faifeau ma lona toalu. Aua le tuulafoaia i tama ma teine o le nuu.'** (Persevere with your **A'oga a le Faifeau**. It is the direct responsibility of the minister and his wife. Don't leave it to the boys and girls of the village).

Secondly, as an educator I was and still am seriously concerned about the low level of literacy of Samoan children, in Samoa as well as in New Zealand schools. My concerns query the blame so often placed on the Samoan home as well as the church, in their inabilities to provide proper educational environments for Samoan children (who then enter school as 'deprived' of and 'deficient' in proper literacy skills). The deficit theory that continues to explain the relative underachievement of Pacific Island children in New Zealand, of which most are Samoans, is a generalization that has 'stigmatised' them as more or less empty vessels starting school with none (or very few) literacy skills. I elaborate on this in a later chapter. The study has given me an opportunity as a Samoan educator to write about my struggles to come to terms with why Samoan children are still plagued by poor literacy skills when teaching and learning styles and educational resources are so much more improved.

This is one important question that I am addressing in my study. Samoan children receive a rich literacy socialisation through the church and the **Fa'a Samoa**. While the latter have been blamed for the underachievement of Samoan children, this is only one side of the story and must not be used to shirk the blame from other factors, which may also be responsible. My review of the history of Samoan education has given impetus to my argument that the colonial or state schooling system also plays a part in instigating the problem not only in Samoa but also in New Zealand.

Evidence from the Education Review Office (ERO), points to 'neglectful' teaching in New Zealand schools. An overview of the recent International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) literacy survey⁸⁶ reveals Pacific Island children as reading below average despite the IEA Survey reporting that overall New Zealand children were reading at a very high level. Jones' study in a New Zealand high school reflects teaching and learning styles that favour Pakeha students over Pacific Islands students.⁸⁷ The problem has been historically patterned and developed over many

⁸⁶ New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI), December 1993, *Comprehending The recent IEA Reading Literacy Survey: An Overview*, NZEI, Wellington.

⁸⁷ Jones, A, 1991, *"At School I've Got a Chance" Culture/privilege: Pacific Islands and Pakeha girls at school*, Dunmore Press, Palmerston North.

years. This historical patterning of the problem of underachievement in Samoan children is an important part of my writing.⁸⁸

Thirdly, I want to acknowledge the contribution that the Samoan pastor of the CCCS has made to the education of the Samoan child. The success of European missionaries (albeit the LMS British missionaries) has been the main focus of the literature on the work of the church in Samoa. The relative peaceful conversion of the 'heathens' to Christianity and the 'civilised' ways of the European, the knowledge and skills to effect that conversion and the successful schooling of the heathens' children have been hailed largely as the **Palagi** missionaries' triumphs. While it was the early LMS missionaries who introduced formal education in Samoa, the Samoan pastors were 'acutely' responsible for the successful execution of the educational mission of the LMS. The relative success of this educational mission of the LMS in other Pacific Islands also can be attributed to the work of the Samoan LMS pastors who took over the role of the British LMS missionaries, for example in the Ellice Islands (**Tuvalu**), **Niue** Island, the **Kiribati** (Gilbert) Islands and the **Tokelau** Islands. They spread the gospel and introduced formal education in the Samoan language using the Samoan Bible, hymn book, the alphabet, primer book and maths book as these then had not been translated into those respective islands' languages. The repercussions of those early teachings by the Samoan pastor are still felt today especially with the older people of those societies who are still very much conversant in the Samoan language. A form of Samoan colonization perhaps? It would be an interesting topic for another PhD thesis but I make reference to it here for argument's sake. **Keli Kalolo**, a **Tokelauan** and a former colleague and fellow PhD student, alluded to this in his MA thesis.⁸⁹

Fourthly, my writing provides a forum to express myself as a Samoan woman writing about a topic that is of great interest to me as an academic student. As a Samoan and Pacific Island woman, as well as a pastor's wife, I have found 'mixing' in the world of academics a major struggle. Within this academic sphere, not only are there extremely few Samoans or Pacific Islanders, but also it is quite divorced from the realities of my 'Samoanness' and my 'religiousness.' As a woman, I have found the world of academia

⁸⁸ See Section Three where I elaborate on this.

⁸⁹ **Kalolo**, E K, 1995, 'Changes in Tokelau schools: intentions and outcomes', M.A. Thesis, University of Auckland. (Keli and I converse in Samoan whenever we meet.)

dominated by men, **Palagi** men, and it can be quite intimidating and alienating at times. Being a Samoan elder pastor's wife comes with duties and responsibilities, expectations and religious beliefs, which at most times clash with my academic pursuits. In this awe-inspiring academic world though, I have found a 'niche' in my PhD study, where I can relate my 'non-academic' identities to it. As a fellow Samoan woman and colleague commented,⁹⁰ "We (Pacific women) have learned (not only) to 'speak' our struggles through Western frames, (but) we seek at the same time to disrupt them."

My study in many ways synthesises my experiences in **Fa'a Samoa** and **Fa'a Palagi** settings. I am a Samoan woman with a Western education. I was socialised in a mixture of the two educational systems. The two 'worked' hand in hand in providing me with an education that on one hand I am fortunate to have, while on the other hand is problematic in many ways as I am sure all indigenous people experience. That is my dilemma also in the study. While I am required to think and write 'academically', I also want to weave into my writing my **Fa'a Samoa** learning. The constant question that plagues me is how to develop a balanced approach to my writing without losing the academic focus. It is the dilemma that confronts indigenous PhD students and academic writers. Konai Helu-Thaman, a Tongan academic found it "very painful."⁹¹ Linda Mead, Maori academic and educationist found this a challenge in her own PhD study. As she stated:

To do this is to think and write differently from the way I have been trained in my academic education and to bring forward, without rejecting the 'academic', the ways I have learned to think within the Maori contexts in which I was socialised and in which I live. The effect, I think in this piece of work is that there is considerable movement, backwards, forwards and side ways. Some might refer to this as multiple positioning. I regard it as struggle or as decolonising or as being Maori.⁹²

Switching from one form of thinking to another is something that has always been problematic. Our English (subject) teachers especially in secondary school in Samoa constantly reminded us that we had to think in English. Although it is a continuous dilemma for indigenous people, on reflection it also makes learning and life interesting in many ways. It has enriched and enhanced our learning in the knowledge that achieving in

⁹⁰ Jones, A, Herda P, *Suaali'i, T.* (Eds.), 2000, *Bitter Sweet: Indigenous Women in the Pacific*, University of Otago Press, Otago, p. 11.

⁹¹ Helu-Thaman, K, 1996, 'Reclaiming An Education: Culture, Teaching and Learning,' Keynote Address, New Zealand National Symposium On Pacific Islands Learning, Auckland, p. 3.

⁹² Mead, L, Tuhiwai Te Rina, 1996, 'Nga Aho O Te Kakahu Matauranga: The Multiple Layers of Struggle by Maori in Education,' PhD Thesis, University of Auckland, p.19.

a Western type education is a 'double' bonus, as it can also mean achieving in indigenous education or the **Fa'a Samoa**.

My writing also links the Samoan children's education in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** to the historical development of their education and some of the problems encountered during this development. Although the **A'oga a le Faifeau** is rarely spoken or written about, it is a choice from yesteryear that was deliberately and consciously made and continues to be a very significant choice for many Samoans.

The study is focussed on an examination of the nature and significance of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** practices of the CCCS in Samoa and in New Zealand. It is unique in the sense that no comprehensive study of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, per se, exists.

The literature reviewed for the purposes of this study includes historical as well as anthropological and ethnohistorical literary works. There is so far no direct writing by any Samoan (or anyone else) about the activities and practices of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. As much as possible many a time reading between the lines I have attempted to synthesise those with my own research and views to construct a story about the **A'oga a le Faifeau**.

Historical sources include the unpublished primary sources and the published journals, the most notable of which is the *Sulu Samoa (Samoan Torch)* the official journal of the CCCS that was first published in 1839 by the LMS.

The A'oga a le Faifeau is a 'Success' Story

Success breeds success. The study is not about a 'crisis' though I am critical of some educational practices that have affected and still affect Samoan education in Samoa and New Zealand. It is a 'success' story that hardly anyone reads about but had forged and made early inroads into the development of formal education in Samoa, and still plays a very important role in the education of Samoan children.

The **A'oga a le Faifeau** provides an education that supplements and complements the Samoan child's **A'oga Palagi** education. It promotes their knowledge of the Samoan language and culture. It builds their spiritual and moral character. It provides background information for teachers about prior knowledge that these students bring to school. The **A'oga a le Faifeau** socialises children into ways of interacting with print, in some ways different from those used to interact with the school based literacy of today, and yet can be a starting point for their school learning.

Even though there is a lot of anti-church⁹³ feeling because of the allegation that the church exploits people, it is unfair to generalise this way about a society that does a host of good things for its members. One such useful contribution is the role of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** in the education of the Samoan child, which has never been written about as having a place of its own in Samoan education.

The home culture of the Samoan child is largely influenced by his or her parents' religion. It typically revolves around the church. The church has a strong grip on the Samoan child. Church to the Samoans means more than just religion. It means a way of life, a social and family setting.⁹⁴

The Thesis Outline

The thesis is organized into nine chapters. The present chapter sets the 'mood' of the thesis by introducing my topic and its significance, a brief summary of the history of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, and the main arguments of the thesis. Chapter Two examines the theoretical considerations of the concept of literacy, how it is defined and described, how it 'implicates' the underachievement of Samoan children in Samoa and New Zealand schools and how it might have been historically patterned and developed. Those historical practices have repercussions for Samoan education today. Chapter Three is about my indigenous education. I also critique in this chapter how some essential **Fa'a Samoa** literacy practices that have links with the present school literacies have been 'wiped out', namely the art of legend-telling. Chapter Four gives the historical

⁹³ *Utumapu, (Ibid), p. 27*

⁹⁴ *Utumapu (Ibid) p.30*

background of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, its origins and its purposes as well as its 'attendance rolls' in Samoa and New Zealand. Chapter Five is about my research methodology. It also introduces the schools in the study. Chapter Six is a general analytical interpretation of the research data, the pastors' narratives and my observations. Chapter Seven looks at the statistics of children that attend **A'oga a le Faifeau** in Samoa and New Zealand. Chapter Eight documents the findings from my research, the pastors' narratives and my observations, past and current syllabuses and samples of children's work. The final, Chapter Nine forms the conclusion to the study. It is a recapitulation of the main arguments. It also attempts to locate the **A'oga a le Faifeau** where it may have relevance to the education of the Samoan child today, given that its pedagogies are under fire, because of their relative 'outdatedness' and their tendency to promote rote learning.

Limitations of the Study

The study is confined to the work of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** in the CCCS in Western Samoa and in New Zealand. Other denominations may have their own **A'oga a le Faifeau**. The Samoan Methodist Church parishes in Samoa and in New Zealand also run their own. For the purposes of this study I only deal with the **A'oga a le Faifeau** of the CCCS.

All Samoan words, except the word 'Samoa' (the country) are in bold throughout this thesis, to facilitate reading of the Samoan words and to stress the importance of my indigenous language.

The term literacy refers to the practices of (written) symbol systems or text use, reading and writing skills.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Considerations of Literacy

Introduction

A comprehensive understanding of literacy is a vital factor in any attempt to address and understand why children achieve or underachieve in schools. The differences in the educational attainments and abilities of students are differences in how competent or knowledgeable they are in school-based literacies. In the case of Samoan children, the literacies that they may be competent in may be quite different from those practised in the schools, thus they are considered 'illiterate' or poorly literate in the knowledge, values and skills of classroom instruction. Within the dominant literacies of the classroom are criteria that measure how competent and successful children are in those knowledges, skills and values. Because it takes much time and effort for some students to actively participate in those literacies, many do not successfully meet the set criteria within the set time frame. Consequently those students would underachieve.

The mismatch between Samoan children's literacies and those encouraged in the schools is a major contributing factor to the underachievement of Samoan children. This mismatch on one hand is not so much because the two cultures (Samoan and **Palagi**) have vastly different literacies. My argument is that the mismatch, which results in underachievement, stems partly from the relative lack of assessment by school authorities of those literacies which Samoan children take with them to school, and the authorities' lack of consideration of the linkages between these Samoan literacies and school based ones.

On the other hand some of the literacies may be problematic (morally and behaviourally) for the school in which sense the school could be a site of resistance to counter them but these are often 'passively' addressed or swept under the carpet. The point about respect and passivity referred to earlier is a cultural issue that has effective educational impacts for many Samoan children if approached in a more positive way. Many Samoan children are non-English speaking background (NESB) and bilingual students in New Zealand

schools. My study acknowledges the work done by the schools but adaptive strategies to deal with Samoan children more efficiently are still largely not in place.

The present chapter examines theoretical perspectives of literacy especially in addressing the underachievement of Samoan children in school. It responds also to my study's second argument that there is a literacy problem in New Zealand (in the case of Samoan children) that the **A'oga a le Faifeau** 'literacy education' could contribute to addressing. The discussion also highlights some **Fa'a Samoa** practices that may link with school-based literacy. The chapter also includes an investigation into some of the underlying reasons of the problem, in particular its historical patterning.

What Should Count as Proper Literacy?

Literacy, according to Australian educationist Unsworth,⁹⁵ is about the distribution of knowledge and power in contemporary society. He poses important questions about what should count as 'proper' literacy. Who gets what kinds of literate competence? Who has access to texts? Where and to what ends? Who can criticise knowledge and power? How? To what extent? These issues are significant not only for students' lives and economic destinies but also for the overall distribution of competence and knowledge, as well as wealth and power. These questions have important implications for Samoan education.

The patterns of underachievement in Samoan education are described below as historically constructed. The discussion is guided by the above questions from Unsworth summarized into the question, 'Education for what?' The approach is from a historical perspective looking at the type of education that had been offered over the years and how it might have contributed to the resulting underachievement of Samoan children today, in Samoa and in New Zealand. I also examine part of the political history of Samoa, which puts in perspective some of the underlying issues, which could be the causes of Samoan children's underachievement.

⁹⁵ Unsworth, L., 1993, *Literacy, Learning and Teaching: Language as Social Practice in the Primary School*, Macmillan, Melbourne

A critical response: Defining Literacy

In response to Unsworth's question, who can criticize? As a Samoan educator I want to say I can, while at the same time I feel ambivalent about it. I am being critical in exposing vital issues concerning how literacy is defined, of my country's history, of critical thinking and the **Fa'a Samoa**, of opposing views about how minority groups learn at home and of the way Samoan education was handled in the formal colonization period from 1889 to 1961.

While the definitions of literacy are multiple, it is increasingly acknowledged that literacy is more than just the skills of reading and writing. Literacy means different things to different people. Its simple definition that most everyone knows is 'the ability to read and write.' The mere simplicity and the 'briefness' of the description and definition of literacy as such, has sparked off much controversy among educators. If defined as such, educationists like Lankshear and Lawler say it is only a technology then, or a skill to employ the technology of print, the technology of alphabet writing.⁹⁶ Freire describes this basic notion of literacy as basic or functional literacy, wherein the learner is not trained to participate in the learning process, but is merely a passive recipient of the knowledge he or she is fed, learning only those literacy skills deemed by the colonizers necessary to be able to function in society.⁹⁷

Yates agrees with Unsworth that the distinction between the definitions of literacy relate to issues of power, social reproduction, cultural differences and practices and the pedagogical processes of learning and acquiring skills. Yates further argues that in many cases, policies addressing curricula and pedagogy cannot be fully understood and appraised without considering their implications for promoting one or another form of literacy. She also summarises the various definitions of literacy below.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Lankshear, C & Lawler M, 1989, *Literacy, Schooling and Revolution*, The Falmer Press, New York, p.46

⁹⁷ Freire, P & Macedo D, 1987, *Literacy, Reading the Word and the World*, Routledge & Keegan Paul, London, p. 3.

⁹⁸ Yates, B, *Policy Analysis of the Adult Reading and Learning Assistance Federation, Aotearoa/NZ*, Education Department, p. 3.

The relevant types to my discussion are 'functional literacy,' and 'critical literacy.' Yates describes a functionally literate person as having a command of reading skills that permit him or her to go about daily activities successfully on the job, or to move about society normally with comprehension of the usual printed expressions and messages a person encounters. She describes a person who has mastered reading as engaged in 'proper' literacy, a process in which a person can bring his or her knowledge and experience to bear on what passes before him (or her). There is meaningful learning involved because the reader understands what he (or she) is reading. The latter is encouraged and relatively categorised as conventional school literacy. The 'Freirean model' according to Yates, is 'critical' literacy, that literacy which allows us to become more fully human through our becoming ever more critically aware of one's world and be in creative control of it.⁹⁹ The Freirean model is an extension of proper literacy.

Concerning 'traditional oral cultures' (including Samoa), Yates postulates that these do not fit into any definition of literacy. She adds that for these cultures, the values of the colonisers have defined what form literacy takes, and the perception has been that these cultures are without valid methods for recording and transmitting information.¹⁰⁰ Egan, another educationist, like Yates, says that the emphasis placed by the colonisers on the written word has contributed to a lack of recognition of orality, as well as other forms of literacy as legitimate forms of communication. Egan claims that the fullest achievement of literacy requires the fullest achievement of oral capacities as well. He argues that:

If instead of viewing transition from orality to literacy as unqualified progress, we were to view it as a trade-off made for obvious functional advantages in a literate culture, then we might gain a different view of what is entailed in early education and make us more wary of displacing orality with literacy, and more sensitive to how we might preserve some of the more valuable characteristics of orality.¹⁰¹

Egan implies that there are oral literacies that are continuous with school-based literacies, but because the latter and their advocates are 'set in their own ways,' they do not recognize other literacies, even if of value, as legitimate. To them, there is only one legitimate form of literacy. In that sense, Street and Lankshear refer to it as 'literacy as

⁹⁹ Yates, (*Ibid*), p.3

¹⁰⁰ Yates, (*Ibid*), p.3

¹⁰¹ Egan, K, 1987, Nov 4, "literacy and the Oral Foundations of Education", *Harvard Educational Review*, Vol 57, No. 4, p.465.

unitary essence,' because the only prerequisite for intellectual growth is seen to be through curricular study and school-based literacy.¹⁰²

Literacy: Is Multi-Dimensional, Is Many, Is not Equal, It Varies

Yates contends that the priority and focus literacy takes rests with those who wield the power to define it. A bit like, 'beauty is in the eyes of the beholder' concept. That is, as said before, literacy means different things to different people. How people define literacy depends on their worldview and ideological and historical backgrounds. A Samoan brought up predominantly in the **Fa'a Samoa** may think differently from one whose education was 'steeped' in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** and the church, and so on.

The forms of literacy, and therefore the understanding of what literacy is, are crucial to the ways in which literacy skills are transmitted and acquired.¹⁰³ Wickert defines literacy as a characteristic acquired by individuals in varying degrees from just above none to an indeterminate upper level. She claims that literacy is not a clearly definable positive-negative accomplishment because it is a relative ability and it also has many dimensions; sets of skills that people have to varying degrees. She views literacy as the application of specific skills for specific purposes in specific context and not as an isolated set of technical reading and writing skills.¹⁰⁴

McNaughton refers to this multi-dimensional nature of literacy as variability in specific socialization activities, illustrated by a series of studies on family activities within which children's early ways of reading and writing develop. He found that variability in early reading and writing activities both between and within groups of families, was manifested in several ways and that families in the same ethnic community carried out a variety of literacy activities, and could differ one from the other in their ways of carrying out the same activity.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Lankshear, C, in Yates, *Ibid*, p.4.

¹⁰³ Yates, (*Ibid*) p.3

¹⁰⁴ Wickert, R & P Ward, 1997, 'Towards a history of Adult Literacy in Australia: A Record of the history of Adult Literacy Weekend, November 1994,' *Language Australia*, ACT.

¹⁰⁵ McNaughton, S, 1996, 'Ways of Parenting and Cultural Identity', In *Culture and Psychology*, Vol. 2 No.2, pp.173-201

In a study of low and middle-income families, Sigel a psycholinguist found a wide variety of interactional environments in which children grow up, and a broad range of cognitive and linguistic outcomes, even within a single social class.¹⁰⁶ A study by Beals, another psycholinguist, of explanations occurring in low-income families of preschool children during mealtimes found that explanatory talk does occur with relative frequency within these families. Explanatory talk as a type of distancing or decontextualized talk between children and their parents is seen as having a facilitative effect on language, literacy and cognitive ability and that this ability to comprehend and produce explanations is crucial to a child's success in school.¹⁰⁷

The positive results of Beals' study dispute a major assumption that middle class ways of talking with children support literacy development while working class ways inhibit it. Bernstein, who backed this assumption with evidence from a study of working class families in England, specifically targeted social class differences in the style of interaction that occurred between parents and children at home. He posited that children from working class families were only exposed to restricted codes that were specific to the current physical context. He argued that language constrained what and how a child learned, forming a basis for future learning. He claimed that these codes 'are limited, stereotyped and condensed, inexact and non-specific.'¹⁰⁸ On the other hand, he alleged that middle-class families while using restricted codes in some situations also used elaborated codes in which the communication was not specific to the particular situation or context. 'Talk is more differentiated and more precise thus affording an opportunity for more complex thought.'¹⁰⁹ He went on to say that children who were exposed exclusively to restricted codes were not properly equipped to handle the elaborated codes, because 'the different focusing of the experience through a restricted code creates a major problem of educability only where the school produces discontinuity between its symbolic orders, and those of the child. 'Our schools are not made for these children,' says Bernstein, 'why should these children respond?'¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Sigel, I E, 1993, In Beals, D E, 'Explanatory Talk in Low-Income families 'mealtime conversations,' In *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 14, pp 489-513

¹⁰⁷ Beals, D E, 1993, *Explanatory Talk in Low-income families 'mealtime conversations,'* In *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 14, pp 489-513.

¹⁰⁸ Bernstein, In Beals, (Ibid), p. 489.

¹⁰⁹ Bernstein, (Ibid).

¹¹⁰ Bernstein, (Ibid).

Bernstein and Beals' opposing studies serve as evidence of the difficulties of the study of literacy, and its meaning. Blanket assumptions 'universalise' working class or low-income families as having 'poor' literacy or major problems of educability. Elaborated codes can build on restricted codes. Bernstein's study shows 'successful' middle class families also practise restricted codes in some situations. The major problem of educability in this case could perhaps lie in the failure of the conventional school to recognise this ability, limited though it may be, and the possibilities of making connections with elaborated codes in school. The process of 'incorporation' as advanced by McNaughton advocates this necessary connection whereby learning elaborated codes could build on familiar restricted codes.

Similarly, American psychologist Snow contends that oral language also, is not a single ability, but that different skills are developed in different contexts for different purposes.¹¹¹ Lankshear reiterates this saying, 'literacy is many,' arguing that literacy should not be seen as a particular skill or technology which people may choose to use in different ways for different purposes once they have it. Literacy rather, is not a specific thing and nor is it the same for all. Lankshear argues that one thing that typical modes of reading and writing have in common is that, 'they serve to maintain the status quo.'¹¹² This notion is illustrated by the following examples that describe the 'unitary essence' of literacy as seen in the way school-based literacies are limited and confined within certain strict prescribed boundaries.

Minority Groups and Literacy

The underachievement of Samoan children (whether in Samoa or New Zealand) is often explained by a 'deficit theory'. The deficit theory, which describes educational failure in terms of the relative lack of educational resources and literacy skills in some families, is explained by New Zealand educators, Adams, Clark, O'Neill, Openshaw and Waitere-Ang,¹¹³ as an 'off-shoot' of the much debated 'structural-functionalist and the social-

¹¹¹ Snow C E, 1991, 'The Theoretical basis for relationships between language and literacy development,' In *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 6 pp. 5-10.

¹¹² Lankshear, C, 1990, in Lauder H & C Wylie, (Eds) *Towards Successful Schooling*, Falmer press, Hampshire, p. 13.

¹¹³ Adams, P, Clark, J, Codd, J, O'Neill, A-M, Openshaw, R, Waitere-Ang, H, 2000, *Education & Society in Aotearoa New Zealand*, Dunmore Press, Palmerston North, pp19-34

conflict' perspectives. They critique and discuss these in relation to inequality and social stratification in New Zealand society. The structural-functionalist perspective according to Adams et al, proposes that, 'individuals are allocated to positions in society according to their ability and skills, and that once they reach the top of society, the power-elite interpretation suggests that this group may wield their power and influence to advantage themselves and their own interests.'¹¹⁴ On the other hand, they say that 'social-conflict perspectives propose that groups joust for wealth, prestige and power and when these groups get to the higher social locations in society, the political pluralist interpretation is that they 'veto' and restrain one another's power and influence, so that no one group gains absolute dominance.' In critiquing those theories, the educators say that 'the theories can at times appear very deterministic, that is an individual's inequality and life chances seem almost predetermined, either by their abilities and skills, or by their social location in society.'¹¹⁵ They say that criticism of these types of theories is often discussed in the literature as 'agency/structure debate' and that the debate centres on just how much individual freedom we have over our own inequality, social stratification and general place in society. They ask these important questions: Are we 'captured' by internal biological or external social structures of power and domination, so that we really have little or no choice over our own lives, or do we have 'agency'? To what extent can we freely choose our paths in life and rise above or challenge our inequality if necessary?" The authors ask that we should look critically at New Zealand society and its stratification and at who really wields the power and for what reasons.¹¹⁶

The educators above pose important questions especially in relation to the ongoing nature-nurture debate. One side of the debate argues that intelligence is inherited and another side posits that intelligence is there and can be nurtured and developed to its full potential given the right educational stimuli. This debate also relates to the reification of the process of critical thought as absent in some people and present in others. I elaborate on this in the next chapter. The 'nature' theory is based on a limited view of the potential in every human. It is a socially constructed theory that has been and still is explaining NESB children's underachievement in school. It is a traditional belief that is still held by many people and which could be responsible for the lack of any real effort to help

¹¹⁴ Adams et al, (Ibid).

¹¹⁵ Adams et al, (Ibid).

¹¹⁶ Adams et al, (Ibid).

minority groups and NESB children. The classic historical example of this in New Zealand is the limited education given to Maori, confining the boys for instance to learning manual rather than mental skills.¹¹⁷ It was also the reason why the introduction of better and higher education was stalled in Western Samoa until nine years before independence (after 64 years of formal colonisation from 1889 to 1953).

Related to this notion is the allegation by Rutherford, the New Zealand Superintendent of Schools in 1936 (in Samoa), that one of the disappointments in the work of education in Samoa was the lack, after 100 years of Christianity, of any outstanding men. He said that 'the **Fa'a Samoa** may have a lot to do with this.'¹¹⁸ This is an illustration of how deterministic the deficit theory (referred to earlier) is in 'hierarchicalising' people into those who are thought to be naturally, educable and not educable, have and have not, or high and lowly and so on. Rutherford implied that the **Fa'a Samoa** was a hindrance to Samoan education.

These notions are further exemplified in the following examples, which provide 'international evidence' that supports the need for conventional schools to be more responsive to 'other' literacies.

A British study of typical modes of reading and writing in the teaching of English to minority groups in England is a clear example of deliberate assimilation and disregard for 'other' literacies such as those of immigrant cultures in England. According to Gundara, Jones and Kimberley,¹¹⁹ "(those typical modes) serve as a metaphor for a policy of enforced cultural assimilation, an official gentling of the masses by way of induction into a culture of civilization, accompanied by the educational and political entry of the working classes into citizenship within a nation. This, dovetailed with the view expressed by a large proportion of heads and teachers, that the desire of minority groups to hold on to their respective 'immigrant cultures,' was evidence of a 'ghetto mentality.' The ghetto

¹¹⁷ Simon, J, 1992, 'State Schooling for Maori: The Control of Access to Knowledge,' Paper presented at the AARE/NZARE Joint Conference, Deakin University, Geelong, Australia, 22-26 November. P. 9

¹¹⁸ Keesing, F, 1942, *South Seas in the Modern World*, Henderson & Spalding, London, p. 6

¹¹⁹ Gundara, J, Jones, C and Kimberley, K, (Eds.), 1986, *Racism, Diversity and Education*, Hodder and Stoughton, London.

mentality was seen as an educational hindrance that required vigilant exclusion from the culture of the school.”¹²⁰

The ghetto mentality of NESB children in England is analogous to the street corner knowledge of the Portuguese Catholic students in Toronto, of Giroux’s ethnographic study¹²¹. He says street knowledge is epistemologically different from traditional conceptions of school knowledge. For the Italian and Portuguese students in his study, knowledge acquired in the streets was “lived” and mediated through discursive alignments and affective ideological investments not found in school. According to Giroux, “Knowledge in this instance is not something to be ‘understood;’ it is always, understood or not, felt and responded to somatically (relating to the body), that is in its corporeal (of the nature of the physical body, material, not spiritual) materiality.”¹²²

The children in these studies of minority cultures reacted and responded more readily to what they saw and felt; things which were more immediate and concrete, and were lived and personalised in their daily lives, rather than those that were more abstract and ‘impersonal’ as they experienced in the school. This more emotive attitude became a hindrance to their learning in school because classroom instruction had been designed to serve and to conserve a mono-literacy - a singular, monolithic and relatively non-affective mode of learning.¹²³ Those children’s experiences did not fit into such a rigid mode of learning. As Boler, an historian and educationist says, “the role of schools is not to alter social inequities but to adapt the individuals to the existing system (because) the educational aim is not to challenge the fundamental social structures.”¹²⁴

¹²⁰ Gundara, et al, (Ibid).

¹²¹ Giroux, H A, 1995, ‘Radical Pedagogy as cultural politics: beyond the discourse of critique and anti-utopianism,’ In McLaren, P, *Critical Pedagogy and Predatory Culture*, Routledge, New York, pp.29-57

¹²² Giroux, 1995, (Ibid).

¹²³ This also further explains literacy as unitary essence as advocated by Lankshear as referred to earlier on in the chapter.

¹²⁴ Boler, M, Spring 1997, ‘Disciplined Emotions: Philosophies of Educated Feelings,’ In *Educational Theory*, Vol. 47 No. 2, pp.203-227.

It is worth noting here what Boler says about emotional literacy:

Almost anyone who has spent time in a classroom can attest that the felt and expressed emotions, and the emotional dynamics of groups, shape the project of learning and the classroom environment. Yet how often do educators and cultural theorists ask: How do emotions define what counts as knowledge? How do emotions inform our ethical values and actions? How are social hierarchies established through unspoken emotional rules, and injustices perpetuated through unexamined rules of emotional expression? The phenomenon of the ignorance of emotion and the unpopularity of this subject is worthy of its own study.... The fact that educational studies rarely address emotions systematically, and even more rarely emotions contextualised by power relations, reflects neglect across academic disciplines.¹²⁵

What Boler says, reflects on the reluctance of educational institutions such as those in the studies in England and Toronto to accept, let alone address, other knowledge or literacies students bring to school. For one, the knowledge is problematic. Secondly it is emotionally charged. The emphasis of school-based literacy is to develop 'academics.' There is 'no room in the (educational) inn' for emotional 'things.'

The school site could provide problem solving opportunities for those students which would open doors to more positive learning as their needs for safety, security, self-esteem and self-actualisation are being fulfilled. Educators need not be reminded that all human beings have physical, psychological and emotional needs, and that all those needs must be met successfully in order for a child to learn effectively and efficiently. Schools in general, pay lip service to those needs because school-based literacy prioritises intellectual growth through curricular study and that discounts emotional growth. The children in the above examples are expected to leave those other literacies at home as they get in the way of school-based literacies.

The examples suggest the reluctance of classroom instruction to recognize other forms of literacies or 'knowledges' especially those that minority group children bring to school. Giroux refers to classroom knowledge as more formally differentiated, but because such knowledge was not a lived engagement it remained distant, isolated, abstract. Students chose not to invest affectively in this kind of knowledge. It was knowledge that had become safely insulated from the "tainted" production of desire, a knowledge that had been congruent with the discourse of the 'Other'. Giroux argues that classroom

¹²⁵ Boler, 1997, (*Ibid*).

instruction must be understood within a reformulated theory of ideology that problematizes the classroom as a gathering point for the construction of Otherness in which racial, class and gender determinations are tightly woven.¹²⁶

Literacy is not Equal, it is not the same for all; a paradoxical statement

This statement is paradoxical in the sense that, on one hand it denotes schooling as a benevolent and noble cause that should be executed for the good of all. It has significant educational implications. Its fulfilment would create survival strategies for other students whose literacies would not fit into the 'one size fits all' literacy practices in school. In theory, if put into practice in the classroom, it should cater for individual differences in students and thus would serve the interests of all types of students. On the other hand, this is not the reality in school. Literacy assessment still tends to be the same for all. Adherence to a relatively 'set' curriculum rules the day.

Closer to Home: The Maori and Samoa Examples

The following discussion focuses on what I see as relatively less problematic literacies and experience than those discussed above. The colonizers also saw Maori and Samoan 'out of school' experiences as interfering with their 'in-school' learning. By comparison with the above examples, Maori and Samoan 'home' knowledges are seen as much less problematic and threatening. Yet because of their mere status of 'otherness' their literacies have often been discounted as irrelevant. As Maori educators **Hohepa** and Jenkins postulated:

These forms of literacy did not fall within the scope and range of their (Western) print tradition which was indeed used as a measuring rod for judging how 'civilised' and literate society might be; these other societies are branded as 'primitive and 'uncivilised' because their pictorial representations, carving, hieroglyphics are not equated to Western alphabetical system. Therefore they are not valued as a legitimate way of communication.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Giroux, (*Ibid*), p.47

¹²⁷ **Hohepa**, M and Jenkins, K, 1993, 'Literacy, A Consequence of Racism,' A Paper presented at the Conference on Racism, Indigenous Peoples, Ethnicity and Gender in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, 9-11 December, Sydney, Australia, p. 3.

The reification of the subordinate status of colonised people in relation to the **Palagi** as naturally superior implies that their destiny, their place in society would always be as the underdog in those power relations. The colonizers' (the dominant classes) culture, values and language inculcated in school would naturally exclude other literacies.

Judith Simon, a New Zealand educationist and Maori education researcher, in writing about Maori education in New Zealand endorses those issues as also true of the type of education historically offered to Maori. She reports Taylor, a New Zealand government official, as having said of Maori schooling in the late 1800s:

I do not advocate for the Natives under present circumstances a refined education or high mental culture. It would be inconsistent if we take account of the position they are likely to hold for many years to come in the local scale, and inappropriate if we remember that they are better calculated by nature to get their living by manual than by mental labour.¹²⁸

In support of this view for Maori education, Bird, a school inspector of Maori schools said that, "it would be better and of greater use to the Maori boy to know the principles and practices of agriculture than the declension of Latin nouns and verbs." Higher education was considered too superior and would be wasted on Maori boys who would only be farm workers as nature had destined them to be.¹²⁹

The school as a state apparatus, according to Poulantzas, supports the reproduction of the notion of the division of manual and mental labour as 'natural' and by serving as complex filters for sorting students for places within the hierarchy of the market. It does this through organizational processes such as streaming where children are grouped according to their perceived natural abilities or achievement levels and then channelled into 'appropriate' curriculum areas. In this way 'knowledge power' remains the preserve of the dominant classes.¹³⁰

The situation for other minority groups such as Pacific Islands students in New Zealand has been patterned similarly. Only in recent years have any attempts been made to

¹²⁸ Simon, J, 1992, 'State Schooling for Maori: The control of Access to Knowledge.' Paper presented at the AARE/NZARE Joint Conference, Deakin University, Geelong Australia, 22-26 November, P.9.

¹²⁹ Bird, J W, 1951, 'Government Administration of Maori Education: 1871-1930,' MA Education Thesis.

¹³⁰ Poulantzas, N, 1980, *State, Power, Socialism*, Verso, London, p.55.

consider the importance of those out-of-school experiences 'lived' by these groups. The initiative has come largely from the minority groups themselves, whose traditional literacies have been seen as interfering with their respective children's learning in schools.

In the case of Samoan education, these notions go right back to when formal education was first introduced in Samoa and more so during the formal colonization period from 1899 to 1961. The London Missionary Society who introduced formal education in Samoa, at first did not use 'traditional' Samoan examples and stories, and merely translated English stories into Samoan for the Pastors' Schools. Good examples of the ignoring of local knowledge include the Alphabet Chart used by the Pastor's School Preschool Class (**Vasega Faitau Pi**), the First Alphabet Reader (**Tusi Pi Muamua**) used by Class 1 and the Samoan Primer (**Tusi a Tamaiti**) used by Classes 2 and 3. The pictures of the basket for **A-Ato**, elephant for **E-Elefane**, watch for **U-Uati**, car for **T-Taavale** or rabbit for **R-Rapiti** would have been quite unfamiliar and strange a hundred and fifty years ago, as they were not found in Samoa then. The elephant and rabbit are still relatively foreign to many Samoan children. The stories in the Primer are all about English children. The Alphabet Chart (**Pi Tautau**) has been revised with more up to date and Samoan examples used. The picture of the Samoan basket for example is used for **Ato** (basket) instead of the cane basket as the LMS missionaries originally put there. The First Alphabet Reader (**Tusi Pi Muamua**) and the Samoan Primer have remained the same and are still very useful because they have the right spelling and the use of punctuation marks (macrons and commas in particular).

Nevertheless, despite their use of English imagery, the missionaries were instrumental in the teaching and subsequently the promotion and maintenance of the Samoan language. Even though their agenda in using the Samoan language as the medium for their teaching was to effect a more rapid spread of the Gospel and 'civilised' ways, it was one of the greatest things the missionaries did because the move also facilitated the learning of the Samoan language and the **Fa'a Samoa**. The teaching of Samoan language cannot be complete without the language of respect so it has become an important part of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** curriculum.

Family Background and School Achievement

Sociologists of education like Jones¹³¹ and Lankshear¹³² recognise the patterned relationships between family background and school achievement. That is, sociological investigations show consistent relations between poor school results and students' working class backgrounds on the one hand, and between superior school achievement and privileged class background on the other. Out of this recognition was born the notion that equality of educational opportunity did not exist.

The crucial question is how can a working class student improve if only a limited type of education is provided for him or her? To illustrate and to further clarify this point, Lankshear and Lawler¹³³ compare two examples, one a historical example, and the other a local (New Zealand) and contemporary one. The historical example is that of Hannah More's work with children of coalminers in England during the late eighteenth century. She ran Sunday schools in which the children were taught religious doctrine and proper forms of behaviour. According to More, the social order was 'beautiful when each (person) according to their place pays willing honour to their superiors, when high, low, rich and poor sit down satisfied with their own place. This was where religious doctrine came in because it taught that the existing social order was God's will and plan.'¹³⁴

More was only teaching a minimal form of reading. There was no writing. She taught an approach to reading whereby children could absorb ideas, not question or challenge them. According to Lankshear, these children were not simply learning the mechanics or the skills of reading. They were also being introduced to a definite view about what they should be reading, why they should be reading it, and how they should read. The poor were being socialised into a view and practice of reading which More saw as appropriate to their social rank; one, which would keep them not only on the straight and narrow but passive and accepting.

¹³¹ Jones, A, 1987(*Ibid*)

¹³² Lankshear (*Ibid*)

¹³³ Lankshear, C & Lawler, M, 1989, *Literacy Schooling and Revolution*, The Falmer Press, New York, p.5.

¹³⁴ Lankshear, (*Ibid*).

More's approach contrasted dramatically with that of radical working class organizations, which taught reading and established study groups, based on material designed to actively encourage working people to understand and reject the social order, and as far as possible, to organise struggle against it. The ideas and practices of reading promoted by Hannah More and by radical worker groups were the exact opposite of each other. Lankshear argues that these literacies were not so much different uses of the same skill or technology. They were completely different literacies, which had quite different implications for how people responded to their world and whether or not they would passively accept their lot. Lankshear and Lawler saw this restricted literacy as a tool to guard against a critical literacy that might in turn encourage questioning of social practices and arrangements of the values of the hegemony sought by ruling interests.

The contemporary example, a local New Zealand one, is that of Alison Jones' study, also cited in the previous chapter (See p. 28), in an Auckland Girls school.¹³⁵ Jones observed the classroom practices of two streams within a single form year. One was a top stream class made up mainly of white middle class students. The other was a lower stream class, made up mainly of Pacific Island working class students. The two streams had quite different views of what was involved in classroom reading and writing.

The lower stream students brought to school with them certain ideas about the role of the teacher and what it meant to learn school knowledge, a view that the teachers themselves reinforced through their teaching approaches. For them, the teacher was the source of the knowledge they needed to pass their exams. They concentrated on copying down the teachers' words- 'getting the notes'- and memorising them later for tests and exams. They had no conception of grasping underlying principles, abstracting from general to particular (and vice versa) ordering and expressing ideas and using reading and writing for those purposes. Consequently, they failed to read and write in these ways.

The top stream class had quite a different view of what school-based reading and writing was for. For them, syllabus content was to be thought about and organised into arguments. The teacher was seen as a resource, along with books and other sources of

¹³⁵ Jones, A, 1991, *"At School I've Got a chance": Culture: Privilege: Pacific Islands and Pakeha girls at School*, Dunmore Press, Palmerston North.

information. They saw school literacy as involving much more than just copying down the teachers' notes or absorbing information for regurgitating later. It was to provide them with material to operate on intellectually, as well as the medium for expressing their intellectual work.

The common goal for these students was to pass School Certificate. Unfortunately only one of the literacies Jones describes was appropriate for passing. The literacy of the top stream class was more adequate than that of the lower stream, whose literacy was inappropriate because School Certificate assesses as valuable only the literacy taught to the top stream; it does not simply reward memorised notes.

These examples are relevant to my discussion below of Samoan education and the underlying reasons behind the problems of underachievement or illiteracy. Jones' study especially is of direct relevance, as not only is it about Pacific Island girls but it happened in New Zealand.¹³⁶ In particular, the study exemplifies some of the reasons why so many Samoan children underachieve in school.

Implications of the Study for Education

Jones' study provides concrete and 'transitional' evidence to what I term as the 'cumulative disadvantage syndrome' (cds) in the case of the Pacific Islands students in the study. It is not something that these girls only just acquired when they entered secondary school. Rather, they have been allowed to transit from class to class and from school to school, carrying 'educational disadvantage baggage'. They were disadvantaged because their literacies were relatively inadequate for and were not being practised in the school. The Pacific Island girls demonstrated a general lack of a sense of depth in meaning or any critical discourse in their responses to the teachers' questions. Although their literacies could have provided a basic foundation for critical literacy, it was not developed. It should have been nurtured and developed right from when they first started school.

¹³⁶ *I also find very close similarities in the way these girls learned to how I did back in the 1960s.*

Fondness for school learning and study is presumed to depend on the early encounters with the school. The early formative years of any child are vital and extremely important years in his or her education. Ten or so years of a cumulative process of educational deficits spell failure for those students. It is not surprising then that they are underachieving. The problem has become an attitudinal one at this late stage of the girls' education because they have internalised the school-based practices as beyond them. The study implies that the girls were 'ignored' throughout their schooling, as teachers directed their teaching to more verbal students and those who would live up to the teachers' expectations. The girls' answers were also largely ignored. The teachers instead gave the right answers. As Jones says:

The ongoing interactions in the classroom produce and confirm the girls' common-sense belief that 'I as a student do not know. She as teacher knows.'¹³⁷

The girls believed that it was the teacher's role to provide the necessary information. When Jones asked one of the girls why everyone 'shuts up' when the teacher wanted them to say something, she said, 'what's the point? Waste of time.' According to Jones, "indeed, if it is only the teacher's knowledge which is valuable, the girls' knowledge becomes irrelevant by definition, and its expression (quite logically) a waste of time."¹³⁸

Walberg says that the way in which teachers structure learning goals, determines how students interact with each other and with the teacher. He reaffirms that it is those interaction patterns that determine the cognitive and affective outcomes of instruction.¹³⁹ The girls' teachers obviously structured learning goals with middle class Pakeha students in mind. They demonstrate a much more interactive pattern with the Pakeha girls and a more restricted one with the Pacific Islands girls.

In summary

The examples demonstrate several typical characteristics of school-based literacy that contribute to the underachievement of NESB (or working class) children. First, school-

¹³⁷ Jones (*Ibid*) p.126

¹³⁸ Jones (*Ibid*) p.80

¹³⁹ Walberg, H J, 1979, *Educational Environments and Effects: Evaluation Policy and Productivity*, McCutchen Publishing Co., California.p. 102.

based literacy is designed (either consciously or unconsciously) to fail some children because it is designed for a specific group of children thus maintaining the status quo in education. According to Jones, "the net effect of schooling is that it tends to confer success and privilege on those pupils who are already advantaged within society and denies it to most of those who are not."¹⁴⁰ The economics lesson for example that she observed shows a reluctance by the teacher to acknowledge or make an attempt to relate the answers given by the Pacific Island girls, by using 'everyday' or concrete examples that the girls are familiar with.

Second, the idea behind the provision of a limited education is to maintain inequalities of power and privilege where the minority group is disadvantaged, an extension of the dominant class hegemony. This is clearly the case in More's teaching where the working class children's education was limited to reading only but not writing. Even their reading was confined to what More decided was adequate for their needs. In Jones' study, the knowledge taught was limited to by the teachers' engagement in what they thought were appropriate pedagogies for working class Pacific Island girls.

Third, 'other' literacies do not fall within the scope and range of the dominant class literacies, 'reified' as superior to all other knowledges. Jones argued that in some instances the teacher ignored the Pacific Islands girls' knowledge because it did not fit into the teacher's own or the set curriculum, which for instance examined the idea of sex role stereotyping.¹⁴¹

Fourth, streaming classes into top and lower streams is a function of a meritocratic process that rewards only the top stream students who of course would succeed with the minimum effort, as the school literacy is designed with their values in mind.

Fifth and finally, the school reproduces the notion of manual and mental labour as 'natural' by 'hierarchicalising' students into those that are better calculated by nature to get their living by mental labour (at the top of the pecking order) and those by manual

¹⁴⁰ Jones (*Ibid*) p. 13

¹⁴¹ Jones, (*Ibid*), p.126.

labour (at the bottom). In this way, 'knowledge power' remains the preserve of the dominant classes. Children are channelled into 'appropriate curriculum areas' with top order students doing more academic work and the bottom order students doing mainly practical oriented subjects.

The school reproduces the social organization of production (work) by selecting individuals and providing them with differential access to the hierarchy of occupations. Schooling and work are contexts within which men and women, Maori, Pakeha and Pacific Island Polynesians are assigned to segments within society.¹⁴²

Those five points make up part of the formula for underachievement or the conditions that are conducive to failing some children, like Pacific Islanders and those minority groups whose literacies do not match with school-based ones. The continuing underachievement of Samoan children in schools in Samoa and New Zealand can be explained by those historically patterned practices. The upward mobility of minority persons in the social and economic hierarchy can only be achieved with the breaking of this cycle.

The out of school educational experiences of those children have to be considered and assessed for what they are worth. Relevant experiences and skills must be properly linked with school literacies. On the other hand, where out-of-school literacies are problematic, the school can become a site of resistance for counter action. Underachieving parents are relatively poor and would pass on their disadvantages to their children so the cycle would go on and on until the seemingly unbreakable cycle does break, and it can with changes made as (some) suggested above.

A study like Jones', as referred to before, of the Samoan education system would be interesting - that is - one considering the internal 'inequalities' or the ways it distributes rewards and on what basis.

Why revisit the past?

The underachievement of Samoan children in schools today is an inheritance from the past. We cannot fully understand the present without consulting the past in order to

¹⁴² Jones, (*Ibid*), p. 13

understand the present that will in turn inform the future. Some very important messages about the literacy skills and education of Samoan children can be gleaned from this past. As Jones pointed out, there is a need to look at the 'world already made' as knowing the already made world is the beginning to the understanding of the world in the making and the world that will be made.¹⁴³ It would be 'cultural suicide' if we wipe the slate clean and start afresh.

The Problem in Samoa

The most recent policy document put out by the Western Samoa education department in 1994 highlighted problems in practically all aspects of education from its top management to its primary schools. The document reported the Department of Education as generally perceived to be ineffective and inefficient in its management and there was a deficient educational management information system. It was reported that in the Samoan primary schools, facilities were generally poor with equipment either non-existent or run down and curricula materials and textbooks particularly those written in Samoan were not readily available. There was an over-reliance on rote learning methods and a general lack of creativity plus extremes in class sizes of 70-80 in the **Malifa** Compound in Apia. There was also a high rate of attrition of teachers and principals.¹⁴⁴

An issue of the *Samoa Observer* newspaper in 1995 reported Western Samoa as one of two Pacific nations with the lowest literacy rate, according to a literacy survey carried out on Samoan primary school children. The following is an excerpt from that report.

In 1992, a UNDP funded survey reported that Western Samoa and Kiribati were the two Pacific countries, which had the highest rate of illiteracy among primary school children. Early this year (1995) a similar survey reported a similar result. Many children have difficulties in reading and writing comprehensively in Samoan and English. Several factors can be attributed to this; the lack of material resources, textbooks, qualified teachers, compounded by the absolute absence of parents' assistance in the teaching of their own children.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Jones, A, 1991, *At School I've Got a Chance, Culture/Privilege: Pacific Islands and Pakeha Girls at School*, Dunmore Press, Palmerston North.

¹⁴⁴ Western Samoa Department of Education, 1994, *Policy Proposals for Western Samoan Education, 1995-2005*, Government of Western Samoa, Apia, pp.17-18.

¹⁴⁵ Sa'e, L, 1995, 'Education and Literacy,' In *The Samoa Observer*, May 9, pp. 1-23.

The results reported illiteracy in both English and Samoan. For a people that could boast a high literacy rate (over 80%) in 1920, it is a very sad situation indeed. This high level of literacy displayed by the Samoans in 1920 was a direct result of the work of the church schools including the CCCS A'oga a le Faifeau, attended by most Samoan children up to 1920.¹⁴⁶

The Historical Patterning of Illiteracy and Underachievement

There are causes and reasons that explain why things happen just as the Samoan proverb in Chapter Three expresses. The term 'diminishing level of literacy' could be used to explain the notion that the ability to read and write that was there, has increasingly diminished to a disability and an inability. The term denotes that literacy levels had been decreasing over time and continued unchecked. Polarised reasons have explained this problem but the more common one has pointed to the inability of the Samoan home and Samoan race as largely responsible. These become more explicit in the historical background of Samoan education that follows which refers to how the New Zealand administration stalled the introduction of higher education in Samoa. Putting the whole onus on the Samoan race plus its 'reification' as the cause of underachievement, is only but an obnoxious and racist belief that had over many years, put on hold any real improvement in the education of Samoan people. The repercussions of those policies are being felt today. All those years of suppression cannot just be peeled away in a matter of a few years.

The literature on the history of Samoan education especially during the formal colonization period, from 1899 up to independence in 1962, portrays a rather troubled and unstable system of education in the islands. I am offering here some insights and interpretations into the historical patterning of the underachievement of Samoan children today. I have said before that the process of illiteracy is cyclical and that if left unchecked, underachieving parents would pass on their disadvantages to their children. In the same way poorly trained and 'uninformed' teachers would also pass on their disadvantages to the children they teach.

¹⁴⁶ Rowe, N A, 1930, *Samoa Under the Sailing Gods*, Unwin Brothers, London, p.88

Mission Education

The arrival of the LMS missionaries in Samoa (also briefly referred to in Chapter One), marked the beginning of a serious effort at the introduction of a type of education that was not only new, but in many ways was the opposite to the traditional education of the Samoans - an oral versus a print literacy. Not only were large numbers of Samoans converted to Christianity, they were also taught how to read and write because the bible had to be read and written about, which would aid their understanding of Christian teachings. In addition to reading and writing skills, what was included was based on what aided the civilization of the Samoans. Girls learned sewing, embroidery, English etiquette and so on. The boys learned the skills of carpentry and agriculture. These were the aims of the LMS. As John Williams the pioneer missionary of the LMS in Samoa said:

Through the conversion of the heathens and the education of the natives, the experience of a few more years will demonstrate the fact that the missionary enterprise is incomparably the most effective machinery that has ever been brought to operate upon the social, the civil, and the commercial as well as the moral and spiritual interests of mankind... The blessings conveyed to the Samoans by Christianity had not been simply of a spiritual nature but that civilization and commerce had invariably followed in her train.¹⁴⁷

The aims of the LMS missionaries were successfully carried out. They established schools in the villages under the direct control of the pastors in each village. These were the **A'oga a le Faifeau** or Pastors' Schools. Basically, a primary education was given, but it provided the much-needed educational opportunities for Samoan children. As Burton said:

Except for Christian missions the vast mass of the (South Pacific) people would have been wholly illiterate.¹⁴⁸

The education received by the Samoans under the missionaries could be categorized generally as functional literacy, a form of literacy referred to before as having the knowledge of reading and writing, which allows a person to carry out daily tasks competently with a good understanding of the usual printed material and messages.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Rowe, N A, 1930, *Samoa Under the Sailing Gods*, Unwin Brothers, London. p.46.

¹⁴⁸ Burton, J W, 1949, *Modern Missions in the South Pacific*, Livingstone Press, Westminster, p.122.

¹⁴⁹ Yates, (Ibid), p.3

This functional education provided the Samoan children with the foundations and preparation for higher learning. The LMS started a training school in 1844,¹⁵⁰ to train Samoan pastors not only to evangelize but also to teach the print literacy. They also started a boarding school for girls at **Papauta**, supposedly to provide wives for the pastors, as well as preparatory schools to feed the training school. Other missions that came not long after the LMS, notably the Methodists and Catholics, also set up their own schools and started their own respective **A'oga a le Faifeau**.

Maintaining the Status Quo in Samoan Education

German Samoa

When formal colonization began with the takeover by Germany of Western Samoa in 1889, the LMS church as well as other missions had established a well organised primary education system in Samoa. On observing this, Dr Solf, the first German administrator, decided to leave the schooling of the Samoans to the British missionaries, and over the fifteen years (1889-1914) of German colonization, education was left largely in the hands of the missionaries. Solf saw mission education as adequate for the Samoans' needs and as he said:

The object in view is not to turn natives into Europeans. Our aim can only be to introduce a higher-grade native civilization.¹⁵¹

The Germans showed very little interest in educating the Samoans. The maintenance of the status quo in education by the provision of a limited education to primary schooling offered by the missions was, according to **Meleisea**:

A tool deliberately used by Solf to maintain the relationship in which Samoans were inferior to the superior and dominant European.¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ It was then called the *Samoan Mission Seminary*. It later changed name to what is now the *Malua Theological College*.

¹⁵¹ *Keesing (Ibid)* p. 82

¹⁵² **Meleisea, M.**, 1987, *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa*, University of the South Pacific, Suva, p.177.

Although the Samoans were perceived to be improvable, the aim was to maintain inequalities of power and privilege in which the Samoans were disadvantaged.

Despite Solf's professed admiration for the Samoans he still regarded them as inferior and as possessing inherently different characteristics from Europeans. His racial views were characteristic of the time, even for a man of his culture and education.¹⁵³

The Germans set up a school in **Apia** for their own people and the children of their local marriages, where the German language was the main subject of instruction. Another school was also set up for the sons of more important Samoan leaders. This segregation had been an old bone of contention between the Samoans and the **Palagi** and **Afakasi** (half-castes) ever since the German days. They were elitist schools that offered the best education in the country because they were much more richly endowed in resources, teachers and educational facilities than the **Malifa** and village schools.¹⁵⁴ This is still the case today. The withdrawal of formal colonisation had hailed the beginning of a new form, 'neo-colonialism.' The **Malifa** schools are still the best equipped compared to the schools in the rural areas. Rural parents that could afford to send their children to the **Malifa** schools do not help the situation in the rural areas.

New Zealand Samoa

In August 1914, the New Zealand Expeditionary Force landed in Samoa to protect the territory while the First World War was being fought. In 1915, the Superintendent of New Zealand Schools, E W Beaglehole was sent to Samoa to look into Samoan education. He set up a school in **Malifa (Apia)**, to accommodate 60 pupils, and hundreds turned up for admission. Since the school was supposed to cater for the whole population of **Apia**, selection of the fortunate few was not an easy task, but it was finally opened on April 1916, with 60 selected pupils.¹⁵⁵

The administration soon realised that it could not undertake the whole responsibility for education and a temporary grant of 500 pounds was made to the Missions for their

¹⁵³ *Meleisea*, 1987, (*Ibid*), p. 162

¹⁵⁴ Ross, A, (Ed), 1969, *New Zealand's Record in the Pacific Islands in the Twentieth Century*, Longman Paul Limited, Auckland, p. 291

¹⁵⁵ Ross, (*Ibid*), p. 291

educational work. Apart from the delayed establishment and expansion of a government schooling system, it took some time to hammer out an education policy. A New Zealand Standard Four equivalent was agreed upon despite serious criticism and strong demands for educational opportunities especially for secondary schooling.¹⁵⁶

Often the administrators did not agree on a common theory of action, and the system stagnated for years and drifted on in leisurely fashion. According to Irwin a New Zealand teacher who taught in Samoa:

In those days, every officer seconded to the education department started off from scratch. Nobody was much interested in what his predecessor had done. Everybody arrived with brand new ideas of his own. It was no wonder there was no continuity of education policy, school organization or teaching methods and no wonder the Samoans sat back to see what was going to happen every time a new European teacher arrived.¹⁵⁷

In 1926, the conference held in Wellington to discuss the educational welfare of the island peoples produced some effect on education and was the last real attempt to find some basis for cooperation until the 1945 visit of Rt. Hon. Peter Fraser and Dr Beeby.¹⁵⁸

Ross reported that for many years no text books in the Samoan language existed. Thus, until 1948, no printed vernacular literature was available regularly in the schools. The LMS had printed translations of 'Pilgrim's Progress' and the 'Bottle Imp' by Robert Louis Stevenson, but apart from these, only religious literature had been produced in any large quantity. Buildings in the 1920s and 1930s were entirely of the **fale** type with open sides and thatched roofs. There were no facilities for teaching aids and children sat on mats covering pebbles. Desks were practically unknown, and children developed a curious method of writing to suit a prone position. Teachers worked under insurmountable difficulties. The local teachers themselves had very little basic training; they tried to teach English but knew practically none themselves. It was some years before a training school was started and most of the teachers learned to teach mainly by understudying others, and thereby perpetuating their mistakes.¹⁵⁹ I referred earlier to this

¹⁵⁶ Ross, (*Ibid*)

¹⁵⁷ Irwin, G, 1965, *Samoa: A Teacher's Tale*, Cassel & Company Ltd., London.

¹⁵⁸ Ross, (*Ibid*) p. 292

¹⁵⁹ Ross, (*Ibid*) p. 293

'cumulative disadvantage syndrome' where not only are literacy deficits accumulated but its cycle continues to be repeated over and over again through generations of Samoans.

The Debate Begins: What should the curriculum emphasise?

While educational administrators were busy attending to their political debates, the Samoan pastors under the guidance of the missionaries carried on with their **A'oga a le Faifeau** doing their best with the resources available.

The **Fa'a Samoa** as well as the Samoan language came under fire as they were regarded as impediments to the advancement of education. Bird,¹⁶⁰ a retired Inspector of Maori schools for example, described the Samoan language as lacking the ability to develop the Samoan's intellect. As he said:

The Samoan requires to be taught self-reliance, industry and initiative, his intellectual powers are acknowledged to be capable of much, but they cannot be developed from a primitive language whose idiom is a product of conditions fast disappearing and which is inapplicable to the condition which the entry of European civilization has produced.¹⁶¹

Bird, though, espoused one theory and actioned another. He recommended that the Samoan language must remain the medium of instruction, and he did not press for the use of English as a medium. He claimed that:

The territory's New Zealand-controlled administrative structure was so modest that there was no place for Samoans in it. Education should encourage the Samoans to live as Samoans in the village environment. Mission education was quite adequate for the very simple educational requirements of the majority of the Samoan children.¹⁶²

There is much irony and contradiction in the way some of those statements were made. The continuous refusal of the demands by the Samoans for higher education was a political decision, the discourse that serves desire and power. It had the function of maintaining the status quo in Samoan education.

¹⁶⁰ Barrington M, 1968, *Education and National Development in Western Samoa*, Phd Thesis, Victoria University, Wellington.

¹⁶¹ Barrington, (Ibid)

¹⁶² Barrington, (Ibid)

It is very difficult to come to terms with the fact that a people who have had, for 100 years, a basic primary education in the vernacular over and over again many times, would not be ready for an intermediate education at least. The old adage that 'history repeats itself' can certainly be applied to Samoan education. Poorly trained Samoan teachers did the best they could while the New Zealand administrators debated as to what would be the most appropriate education agenda for the territory. The demands for better, higher education and the teaching of English were met with reluctance because of the lack of suitably qualified teachers, the vast expense involved, plus the belief that most people were not yet ready for tuition in even the fundamentals of a Western style education.¹⁶³

When Richardson, an army colonel, became the New Zealand administrator in Samoa in 1923, education up to Standard Two level remained the responsibility of the missions in the Grade 1 (Infant or Primer classes) village **A'oga a le Faifeau**, and up to Standard Four level in the Grade 2 (Standard 1 to 4 classes) district schools under government supervision. Three Grade 3 (Standard 5 and 6) boarding schools under government control and various mission schools provided education up to the New Zealand Standard Six or proficiency examination.

New Zealand administrators continually thwarted the demands for better and higher education. **Maiai**, a Samoan educator, as well as historian Boyd and anthropologist Keesing all alluded to this lack of interest by New Zealand to 'better' the education of Samoans. The administrators favoured a policy of educating the Samoans to become good citizens, but not too much in advance of their surroundings and social conditions.¹⁶⁴

It was generally agreed that New Zealand education was too literary and that it was undesirable to Europeanise and over-educate the Samoans, and to extend the teaching of English. The aim was to train a hard-core of Samoan teachers locally through the probationer assistant method and employ them under the direction of a New Zealand superintendent and one or two New Zealand assistants. According to Boyd, "in terms of

¹⁶³ Barrington, (*Ibid*), p. 20

¹⁶⁴ **Maiai** Fanaafi, 1957, *A Study of the Developing Pattern of Education and the Factors Influencing that Development in New Zealand's Dependencies*, MA Thesis, Victoria University, Wellington, p. 196.
Keesing, F, 1942, *South Seas in the Modern World*, Henderson & Spalding, London p. 422.
Boyd, M, In Ross, A, 1969, *New Zealand's Record in the Pacific Islands in the Twentieth Century*, C. Hurst & Co. London, p 138.

present-day thinking, this policy was ill-fitted to promote Samoan economic, social and political advancement." In the 1920s however, as she observed, it seemed a healthy reaction against the assimilative tendencies, which had achieved so little in Maori education for almost a century.¹⁶⁵ Partly because of this allegation Richardson proposed:

Education should be harmonized with the future needs of Samoa, not to educate them to become Europeans in outlook, but to make them better Samoans. It would be both politically and socially dangerous for the Samoan child. Such a system would over-educate them thereby disturbing their social conditions and so causing unrest.¹⁶⁶

The whole idea was to maintain inequalities of power and privilege in which the Samoans were disadvantaged. More (referred to earlier) kept her British working class Sunday school children in the same sort of inferior position by limiting their education to reading without any writing. In both cases, the Samoans and More's children had to be kept on the 'straight and narrow,' as too much knowledge would incite them politically and might lead to their questioning of their positions as the underdogs.

Richardson though, ironically, demonstrated an ardent desire for Western progress to dominate the development of Samoa, to the extent that he felt the **Fa'a Samoa** stood in the way of his attempts to Westernize the Samoans. He prohibited or attempted to control Samoan customs relating to **malaga**,¹⁶⁷ fine mat exchange, **saofa'i** (ceremony of appointment to a title), marriage and burials and the European inspired sport, village cricket (**kirikiti**). He proposed schemes for remodelling Samoan villages to make them more sanitary and more attractive, as well as to keep the Samoans busy. He founded the **Fetu** (Star), a sort of Boy Scout movement to develop character and national ideals. Overnight as it were, he hoped to develop Samoans into healthy, hardworking and prosperous planters and good citizens.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ Boyd: *Ibid* p.138

¹⁶⁶ **Maiai** Fanaafi p.196

¹⁶⁷ *Malaga means trips or visitations. These involved parties of Samoans travelling to other villages to arrange or to participate in a marriage usually between a high chief's son from one village and a high chief's daughter from another village. The trip would often take days or weeks, (if it was a trip to another island) with much celebration that may involve the host village for several days or weeks.*

¹⁶⁸ Boyd, (*Ibid*): 138

It was during Richardson's administration (1923-1928) of Samoa that the 'Mau Movement',¹⁶⁹ an anti-New Zealand Administration movement, was formed. Their slogan was "Samoa mo Samoa" (Samoa for Samoa). This movement was formed in protest at the continuous refusal by the New Zealand Administration of the requests by Samoans for higher education as well as the Samoans' disenchantment with New Zealand paternalism. The New Zealand administration was not prepared to deal with the fundamental change in the attitudes of the Samoans towards education or anything else. A peaceful demonstration march by the **Mau** group resulted in the death of their leader, fatally shot by New Zealand police. Because of the political instability and restlessness that Samoa went through at this time, some people in New Zealand were concerned that the best interests of the Samoans would be served by a policy of isolation so that the harmful and disorganising effects of outside influences could be minimised. As Keesing wrote,

At the height of the political troubles in Western Samoa, during 1927-30, a vocal section of the New Zealand public advocated drawing a "cordon sanitaire" around the islands.¹⁷⁰

In 1936 Rutherford, the Superintendent of Samoan schools, criticised the work of the church as well as the **Fa'a Samoa** for not producing any outstanding Samoan men. He alleged that:

One of the disappointments in the work of education is the lack after 100 years of Christianity, of any outstanding men; the **Fa'a Samoa** may have a lot to do with this, but on the other hand, where young men have shown brilliance, the tendency is to become 'top heavy' and a fall usually follows. The student then drops out of the race.¹⁷¹

Given the type of education (basic primary) permitted for the Samoans, it is no wonder that there were no outstanding men. This allegation is not true though. The Samoan pastors could be counted as outstanding but then the colonisers could not bring themselves to admit so. In the **Fa'a Samoa**, the elders with their knowledge would be outstanding. What Rutherford said for whatever reason cannot be correct, but it was a very patronising and insulting statement that shifted the blame on to others from the

¹⁶⁹ Field, M J, 1984, *Mau: Samoa's struggle against New Zealand Oppression*, Reed, Wellington

¹⁷⁰ Keesing F, 1942, *South Seas in the Modern world*, Henderson & Spalding, London, p.81

¹⁷¹ Keesing, (Ibid) p.6

colonisers themselves. It was not enough that the administrators continuously thwarted Western Samoa's demands for better and higher education. The Samoans (and the church) but never the coloniser, had to be blamed for their own lack of education. In the eyes of the colonisers the Samoans were 'uneducated' because they did not have the knowledge and literacies of the colonisers, who were not prepared either to permit the Samoans to have this 'higher' knowledge. The Samoans had to remain subordinate in their relationship with the superior colonisers. It was a 'no win' situation for the Samoans whichever way they wanted to move.

The Debate Continues

During 1939 and 1940, McKenzie, the Superintendent of Samoan schools, encouraged teachers to develop school gardens where the pupils could do practical work in connection with "the only calling in post school life, work on the land."¹⁷²

The Samoans saw in schooling, restricted though it was, a practical means of gaining access to **Palagi** knowledge. Their attitude towards attempts to teach agriculture in the schools was one of apathy. The major concern of the majority was the acquiring of as much education of a literary nature as possible. Samoan parents had prioritised the value of an academic education, which was much more likely to bring about political and economic gains, social status and social esteem. They wanted 'knowledge power.' To them, agricultural work was manual rather than educational. Dr Beeby,¹⁷³ Director – General of New Zealand schools at the time explained:

It is the kind of academic scholarship their European rulers had that (which) evidently gave the European his material superiority and that offered the local boy a hope of release, from the poverty and tedium of life on the land.

A serious attempt to improve education in Samoa was not to be realized until 1949. There was pressure from the 1945 Beeby Report, the 1947 UNO Mission, the 1949 Davis Report, criticism from the Russian, Chinese and Mexican representatives during the 1949 Trusteeship Council Debate, and the inclusion of Samoans for the first time in

¹⁷² Barrington, (*Ibid*), p. 71

¹⁷³ Beeby, In Fairbairn-Dunlop, P, 1981, *Samoan Parents and the Primary School*, MA Thesis, Victoria University, Wellington, p. 34.

educational policy making in 1949.¹⁷⁴ The year 1950 saw the start of an intermediate school at **Leifiifi**, with the abolition of racial segregation in the Apia schools by the amalgamation of the European schools at **Leifiifi** and the **Malifa** School for the Samoans. In 1953, the first government secondary school, Samoa College, was opened.

The 1945 Beeby Report described the Samoan schools in 1945 as:

Beyond words, muddled and messy. Many of the classes are terribly large. Even at the Malifa grade two schools there are four infant classes with four teachers in one large room. The Samoan teachers are severely handicapped by their own lack of education and training. Very few had reached a NZ standard six level of attainment and many had not progressed beyond a standard three level. The school system is handicapped by shortages of qualified staff, lack of equipment and textbooks.¹⁷⁵

Ensuing reports revealed similar school conditions as noted in the Beeby report. The muddled and messy conditions of the Samoan schools cannot be functions of the **Fa'a-Samoa** or the Samoan language or the church. In over 30 years under the New Zealand administration, very little improvement had been made to Samoan education.

In 1959, three years before Samoa became independent, a mission of ministers from Wellington were very much concerned with the poor condition of Samoan education and reported:

New Zealand should help to remedy Western Samoa's educational backwardness. New Zealand had a special responsibility to assist Samoan education not only while Samoa remained under trusteeship, but also after independence.¹⁷⁶

In 1964, Dr Williams a UNESCO adviser in Samoa, criticised education in Western Samoa as catering for only a few and that it should change from a philosophy of the education of the elite to one of education for the masses. He criticised the selection procedures where one in every two pupils proceeded to Form One and one in every three from intermediate to secondary. As he observed:

The people have more leisure than almost any place in the world, but what do they do with it? They are often mere vegetables.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ **Maiai, F**, 1957, *A Study of the Developing Pattern of Education and the Factors Influencing that Development in New Zealand's Pacific Dependencies*. Unpublished MA Thesis, Victoria University, Wellington, p.251.

¹⁷⁵ Beeby in Barrington, (*Ibid*), p.80

¹⁷⁶ Barrington, (*Ibid*), p. 214.

This criticism came two years after Western Samoa became independent from New Zealand rule in 1962. The educational task imposed upon her as an independent nation was an immense one. Barrington, a New Zealand educator, commented on this saying:

(A huge task for a people) who had for many years watched powerless, the seemingly aimless drift of education in this country (Western Samoa). The blame lies in the long history of top-level administration sterile of educational philosophy, unable to adopt its own system and beliefs to a very different Samoan environment and society.¹⁷⁸

The debate on whether the English language should be introduced or not, if a more mental or manual education should be given, to introduce secondary education or not, or to modernise and assimilate the Samoans into a perfect community went on for years to maintain the status quo in Samoan education. The hegemonic thinking and racist views dominant amongst the administrators at the time prevented the provision of higher education.

In such an unstable and doubtful situation, one could hardly blame people if they did not want to attend school or if parents stopped their children from going to school. For one, the schools were in an appalling condition. Secondly, there was no foreseen future after a basic primary education, except to go back to tilling the soil. For those who still went to school, they could have been aspiring to more 'mental' jobs. After their appetites were whetted for more education, they would naturally refuse to go back to the land. The hunger for mental stimulation of a higher order, though, can have devastating and adverse effects on such children, which could be psychological and social in nature. Williams described them above as 'often mere vegetables.' The children had all the time in the world on their hands but many had other ideas and planting taro was not one of them. They became marginalised, having been educated in a 'half-hearted' sort of way, and probably very unsure of what the future held. What do such children turn to?

¹⁷⁷ Williams, Dr, In Lauterbach, A, & Stacy, V D, 1964, *Economic Survey and Proposed Development Measures for Western Samoa*, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNO, New York, p.17.

¹⁷⁸ Barrington, (*Ibid*), p. 215.

The A'oga a le Faifeau as 'Saving Grace' for Samoan Education

While the colonial administrators were debating on what education system would be best for the Samoans, the missionaries and pastors carried on with their **A'oga a le Faifeau**, teaching the Samoan children the three Rs and more. They ascertained the continuity in teaching Samoan children even though they had their own religious agenda to attend to. The **A'oga a le Faifeau** was actually the 'saving grace' for Samoan education during the formal colonization period.

Despite the many odds and difficulties it encountered, the **A'oga a le Faifeau** survived to carry on with the task of educating the Samoans. It was able to do this because it had a 'robust constitution' developed from careful planning and adherence to a sound belief in doing good to others, even though the missionaries also had their own agenda. The problems encountered during the formal colonisation period were only some of the inhibitions to their work. Chapter Four, that discusses the historical development of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, describes other difficulties.

The virtual absence of any real acknowledgment by colonial administrators or researchers of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, as a significant provider of education in Samoa, is one reason why many do not know what an **A'oga a le Faifeau** is. The church on the other hand has undergone much criticism, especially from those who do not really see the services that the church renders to its members. This is one such service among others, which the church provides. While no organisation or society can be described as perfect, there are things, which every group does to promote the well-being of its members and others. In New Zealand, the Samoan church also provides a village setting where Samoans express their **Fa'a Samoa**.

The missionaries were successful not only in converting large numbers of Samoans to Christianity, but also educating them in the three R's. The Samoans were well and truly prepared for the next step up in their education, having been given the 'basics' over and over again, by the missionaries. But it was not to be for some years because of the reasons detailed above.

The **A'oga a le Faifeau** had truly been the backbone of education in Samoa for over a hundred years. Although most recipients of this **A'oga a le Faifeau** education acquired a relatively basic education, it nevertheless inspired and whetted the mental appetites of many students to want to advance intellectually. Sadly it was not to be until the Samoans themselves were represented on the Board of Education for the first time in 1949.

The situation of Samoan Children in Education, in New Zealand: Background

The situation for Samoan children in New Zealand, like in Samoa, is unfortunately a grim one also. Samoan people in New Zealand are a minority group. Many Samoan children in New Zealand schools are non-English speaking background (NESB) students. They make up the largest number of Pacific Island children in New Zealand schools. Out of a total 58,402 Pacific Island students attending schools at 1st of July 2001, Samoan students numbered 28,249.¹⁷⁹ This is approximately 48% of all Pacific Island students in New Zealand schools. These figures are for domestic students only (without overseas students).

The Problem

Overall, the outcomes for Pacific Island students are significantly lower than other students, as shown by the most recent statistics below published by the Ministry of Education, which compare them with other students. To begin with, most Pacific Island students attend schools in 'poor' areas. Table 1 shows 68 % of all Pacific students go to schools in the lowest decile, while 8% attend schools in the highest deciles. Schools in the lowest deciles (1-3) draw their students from communities with the highest socio-economic disadvantage, while those in the highest deciles (8-10) draw the least from these communities. Although as deciles include ethnicity, as part of their definition, it is expected that most Pacific Island students will be in low decile schools.

¹⁷⁹ Ministry of Education, 2002, *Education Statistics of New Zealand for 2001*, The Data Management and Analysis Division, Wellington, pp. 50-51

Table 1: Number of Students attending Schools by Sector, Socio-economic Status of School Community and Ethnic Identification¹⁸⁰

Socio-Economic Decile Band for All Sectors (Primary, Composite, Secondary, Special)	Pacific	European /Pakeha	Maori	Asian
1 - 3	39661	57814	392590	8529
4 - 7	14084	435520	51420	14967
8 - 10	4369	193739	15163	19665
Not Available	288	9907	2277	492
Total	58402	462311	149590	43653

Table 2: Number of students Leaving New Zealand Secondary Schools in 2000 by Level of Highest Attainment and Ethnic Identification¹⁸¹

Highest Attainment	European /Pakeha	Maori	Pacific	Asian	Other	Total	% of Pacific Students
A or B Bursary or National certificate	8058	369	183	1746	208	10564	1.7
Entrance Qualification or 40 or more credits at National Cert. Level or above	3086	321	152	386	57	4002	3.8
Higher School Cert. or 12-39 credits at National Certificate Level 2 or above	3975	806	509	462	105	5857	8.7
6 th Form Cert. or 12 or more Credits at National Cert. Level 2 or above	10328	394	1116	892	219	14949	7.5
School Cert. or 12 or more credits at National Certificate Level 1 or above	6660	2491	705	293	94	10243	6.9
No Formal Qualifications or less than 12 credits at National Cert. Level 1	4595	3072	860	02	189	9018	9.5
TOTAL	36702	9453	3525	4081	872	4633	6.5

NB: Excludes international students. A Minimum of 3 Cs in University Bursaries-1 or more subjects irrespective of grade awarded.

¹⁸⁰ Adapted from Ministry of Education, 2002, (Ibid), pp. 37 & 54.

¹⁸¹ Adapted from Ministry of Education, 2002, (Ibid), p. 75.

Table 2 shows that 24% (860/3525) of Pacific Island students gained no formal qualifications compared with 12.5% (4595/36702) of Pakeha and 7.4% (302/4081) of Asian students.

Percentages of Students leaving School in 2000 with Sixth Form certificate or Higher

According to the 2002 New Zealand Ministry of Education statistics,¹⁸² 65% of all students leaving schools in 2000 gained a Sixth Form Certificate or higher. Asian students had the highest with 85 %, then European/Pakeha students with 69 %, and Pacific and Maori students had the lowest with 56 % and 41 % respectively. 49 % of all students leaving decile 1-3 schools gained one of the qualifications compared to 80 % in the 8-10 decile areas.

Table 3: Trends in Percentages of Highest Attainment of Pacific School Leavers for the years 1993 to 2000¹⁸³ in New Zealand Schools.

Year	University Bursary	Entrance Qualification	Higher School Cert.	6 th Form Cert.*	School Cert.*	No Qualification
1993	4.9	4.2	14.4	28	23.7	24.8
1994	5.2	4.8	15.8	30.2	20.3	23.7
1995	5.6	5.5	12.7	30.5	21.5	24.2
1996	5.8	4.1	15.5	28.4	19.6	26.6
1997	4.9	5.4	16.2	28.8	18.5	26.2
1998	5.1	5.9	14.1	26.5	20.9	27.5
1999	4.2	4.9	14.8	29.9	19.5	26.7
2000	5.2	4.3	14.4	31.7	20	24.4

* One or more subjects

Table 3 shows very low percentages in the eight years from 1993 to 2000. The range in any significant gains made is extremely small and the trends overall are inconsistent and unpredictable. The highest respective percentages were for, Bursary since 1996, University Entrance since 1998, Higher School Certificate since 1997, Sixth Form

¹⁸² Adapted from Ministry of Education 2002, (Ibid) p.37.

¹⁸³ Adapted from Ministry of Education, 2002, (Ibid), p. 79.

Certificate in 2000 and School Certificate since 1993. The lowest percentage that left without any qualifications was in 1994. The percentages for those leaving without any qualifications are relatively high.

It cannot be said that a marked improvement has been made. But it may be said that encouraging progress was made in the two years from 1999 to 2000 especially with respective increases in the Bursary, Sixth Form Certificate and School Certificate qualifications, and a decrease in the percentage of those leaving without any qualifications. Except for the highest percentage in 2000, for the eight years, of those with Sixth Form Certificates, the highest percentages for other attainments have not been reached again.

Table 3 gives graphic evidence of 'lack of improvement over time' despite widespread concerns about the poor achievement of Pacific Island students over the years. The 'significance' of the table is the lack of change.

Table 4: Summary of 2000 New Zealand Public Tertiary Graduates by Qualification Award Category And Ethnic Identification¹⁸⁴

Qualification Award Category	Pacific Students		Total for Pacific Students	All Students		Total for All Students	Percentage of Pacific Students
	Male	Female		Male	Female		
Doctorate	2	0	2	266	198	464	0.4 %
Masters/ Honours	35	51	86	2481	2612	5093	1.7 %
Postgraduate Diploma/Cert.	38	42	80	1608	2206	3814	2.1 %
Degree	187	389	576	8708	15409	24117	2.4 %
Diploma	100	194	294	2490	4679	7169	4.1 %
Certificate	490	543	1033	9693	13137	22830	4.5 %
Qualifications Completed	852	1219	2071	25246	38241	63487	3.3 %
Adjustments for Multiple Completions	33	46	79	1133	1709	2842	
NUMBER OF GRADUATES	819	1173	1992	24113	36532	60645	3.3 %

¹⁸⁴ Adapted from Ministry of Education, 2002, (*Ibid*), p. 108

Table 4 indicates very low figures and percentages of graduates in tertiary education for Pacific Islanders. The table also shows a marked difference between Pacific Island male and female graduates. Except in the Doctorate category, where there is no female graduate, totals of female graduates for all other qualifications are much higher than totals of male graduates. Of the total Pacific Island graduates, 41% (819/1992) are male while 59% (1173/1992) are female. All Pacific Island graduates make up 3.3% (1992/60645) of the total New Zealand graduates in 2002. Overall for Pacific Island students, there are comparatively few graduates in tertiary education.

In the intermediate and primary schools, the situation mirrors that of the secondary and tertiary students. Studies by educational psychologists McNaughton¹⁸⁵ and Wilkinson¹⁸⁶ indicate that Samoan children may have difficulties in beginning reading instruction.¹⁸⁷ The latest International Educational Achievement (IEA) comparisons¹⁸⁸ show that by year 5, there is a significant difference between **Pakeha** students and Pacific Island students in reading tasks. The comparisons also reveal that New Zealand has one of the largest disparities in reading achievement between those children for whom English is their first language and children for whom English is not. The IEA survey of 32 countries on reading achievement among 9 and 14 year olds reports New Zealand as having the largest gap at both Standard 3 and Form 4 levels, between non-English background students and English-background students. The survey found that Pacific Island (NESB) students had the lowest scores.

According to a report by Warwick Elley of the 1991 International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), 'parents and teachers should feel justifiably proud that New Zealand children are among the best readers in the world! This has been supported by the recent IEA reading literacy survey.'¹⁸⁹ This might be justified when looking only at the performance of a relatively few top readers. The report, on

¹⁸⁵ McNaughton, S, 1995, *Patterns of Emergent Literacy*, Oxford University Press, Auckland.

¹⁸⁶ Wilkinson, I A G, 1998, 'Dealing With Adversity: Achievement Gaps in Reading Literacy among New Zealand Students,' In *Reading Research Quarterly*, Vol. 33 (2), pp. pp. 144-167.

¹⁸⁷ McNaughton, S, 1996, 'Ways of Parenting and Cultural Identity,' In *Culture and Psychology*, Vol. 2 (2), pp. 183-201.

¹⁸⁸ Wagemaker, H, 1993, *Achievement in Reading Literacy: New Zealand's Performance in a National and International Context*, Research Section, Ministry of Education, Wellington.

¹⁸⁹ Warwick, E, December 1993, 'Comprehending the Recent IEA Reading Literacy Survey: An Overview,' New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI), Wellington, p.6

closer analysis, also makes reference to the fact that the difference between the literacy levels of Non-English Speaking Backgrounds (NESB) children and mainstream pupils is very high, greater than any other country at both 9 year and 14-year levels. 'NESB children at the 9 year level scored 70 points below children whose first language was English, and 81 points lower at the 14 year level. This result has clear implications for language support for these children, many of whom are Pacific Island children.'¹⁹⁰

Finnish children are reported by Hans Wagemaker¹⁹¹ to have performed the best out of the 32 participating countries in the IEA Literacy Survey at both age levels (9 and 14). The reasons given by Wagemaker for Finland showing consistently high average scores include the following, which I include here because they have significant implications for the study:

- an unusually regular orthography and phonetic writing system
- high pupil expenditure, spending more than twice as much per child as New Zealand
- highly valued and well-run early childhood education
- teachers highly respected and well paid
- teachers are very well qualified, requiring at least a B Ed or Master degree
- schools are linguistically homogeneous (it had the lowest percentage of second language learners)

The first four reasons are of particular relevance. The first reason connotes pedagogical implications. Interestingly, the *A'oga a le Faifeau* emphasises the orthography of the Samoan language and uses a phonetic writing system especially in its preschool and infant classes.

The next three reasons imply that it is worth investing money in education. I am digressing here to emphasise the point that this investment may be the only way to ensure highly valued and well-run early childhood education. Preschool education is important especially for NESB children in New Zealand. Although many Samoan children attend

¹⁹⁰ Wagemaker, H, (Ed.), 1993, *New Zealand's Performance in a National and International Context, Achievement in Reading Literacy*, Research Section, Ministry of Education, pp.34-35

¹⁹¹ Wagemaker, (Ibid)

the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, many still do not. The key to success in later schooling lies in good solid education especially in the first seven years.

Research on early childhood education points to the importance of the pre-compulsory education period to future educational performance. The 1996 report by the Early Child Development Unit cited research on the effect of Head Start programmes in the United States of America, which indicated "disadvantaged children do better in schools for at least 10 years after one-to-one training from infancy. The indications are that putting resources in at preschool level with the aim of reducing learning difficulties of children in later compulsory education could reduce the need for addition of resources to remedial programmes that attempt to address learning difficulties of older children."¹⁹²

Parents must value this part of their children's education and must be prepared to invest in their children's preschool education. The same goes for teachers. The success of any education system depends on good teachers. This is reflected in the Finnish successful education system where its teachers are well paid and well respected. Finland invests money in its teachers who are reported to be highly qualified.

The IEA report cites Finnish schools as linguistically homogeneous, having the lowest percentage of second language learners, out of all the participating countries. This is a contributing factor to Finland's showing consistently high average scores. The situation in New Zealand though is the opposite. New Zealand has a high percentage of NESB children. Pacific Islanders make up eight percent of New Zealand's population and is increasing at a rapid rate. In Auckland for example, there are more Polynesians than any other city in the world. In some Auckland urban schools, more than 95% of the children are either Pacific Islanders or Maori. In some classrooms teachers may have children from as many as 12 different language or cultural backgrounds. These changes have occurred partly because of the urban drift and partly because of increased immigration.¹⁹³ The IEA overview reports NESB children, many of whom are Pacific Islanders, as having very low literacy levels, 70 points and 81 points respectively, below the literacy levels of mainstream children. Schools are under increasing pressure to raise the literacy

¹⁹² Early Childhood development Unit, 1996, *Report on Current Service, Provision and Projected Population Changes, 1996-2001*, ECDU, Wellington, p. 19

¹⁹³ Nicholson, T, 1982, *An Anatomy of Reading*, Horwitz Grahame Books Pty Ltd, Sydne, p. 9

levels of children from different cultural and language backgrounds. Teachers cannot assume that most children in their classrooms will share similar language or cultural backgrounds. A 'one size fits all' curriculum will not address the individual differences and any educational problems that may arise in a multicultural classroom. The Ministry of Education Literacy Taskforce also addresses this.¹⁹⁴

A report by the Education Review Office (ERO) in 1997, compiled from reviews on 322 schools throughout New Zealand, said that in three-quarters of primary schools, the teaching of literacy skills was patchy or poor. This report was published in the September 1st edition of the New Zealand Herald in 1997 and was headed, 'Literacy by Luck, Teaching of reading, writing 'patchy'.¹⁹⁵ The main findings from this report are as follows:

1. Currently, the failure of the English curriculum to provide any more than vague indications of what teachers should include in their programmes is leaving improvements in levels of literacy to chance.
2. Student progress in literacy is at risk when the quality of learning and teaching programmes vary from year to year and it is just a matter of chance if they get good teaching in any particular year.
3. Although good and mixed literacy programmes are run in all types of schools, those with poor programmes are disproportionately rural, small and in lower socio- economic areas.
4. Teachers of first reading are well qualified and knowledgeable, but once pupils have learned to read, little more is done on teaching them to use reading to learn.

The report says that internationally, reading levels of New Zealand children, last assessed in 1990, were above average. But, analysed separately, the performances of Maori and Pacific Island children and students who did not speak English at home were substantially lower.

The cause of the problem is not entirely in 'the student' or his or her background. There is a tendency to believe that if parents do not support literacy development, there is no

¹⁹⁴ Literacy Taskforce, 1999, *Report of the Literacy Taskforce: Advice to the Government on achieving its Goal that: "By 2005, every child turning nine will be able to read, write and do maths for success."* Ministry of Education, Wellington, pp. 1-38

¹⁹⁵ September 1, 1997, 'Literacy by Luck: Teaching of Reading and Writing 'Patchy'' In *The New Zealand Herald*.

way of avoiding literacy failure. However the lack of home support for reading should not be the 'be all' excuse for the low achievement of those students. The school also has contributed to this problem as implied by the ERO report, which points to the 'patchy and left to chance teaching of reading.'

The 'patchy' and 'left to chance' nature of teaching literacy skills is not new in the history of education, even with the vast improvements and advances in literacy education. The blame put on the 'type' of literacy practised, as responsible for the underachievement of Samoan children, is an avoidance technique that shifts the blame onto the 'tools of the trade' from the users of the tools. The executors of those pedagogical practices and the 'ad hocness' in shifting educational ideologies were and are partly responsible. This 'patchy' and 'left to chance' approach to teaching, has been evident right throughout the history of Samoan education. The onus was on the educational administrators to provide proper literacy practices in Samoa. It was within their jurisdiction to do this as they were the decision makers but chose not to. This is evident also in New Zealand as the ERO reports referred to earlier reveal. In three-quarters of 322 primary schools, the teaching of reading was poor, that is 240, too many schools with such poor records of teaching reading. It is no wonder the children are underachieving. The responsibility is on the teachers to provide proper education but in many cases they have failed to.

Pacific Island children have been the targets for research in the last 10 years. As a Samoan researcher for the AIMHI project in 1996,¹⁹⁶ one of the problems I faced was the lack of enthusiasm on the part of Samoan parents to come forward with information needed. According to some parents, they had been over-researched. The words I used were, 'Samoan parents have been researched to death.' The parents were asking why their children were still underachieving when they were told that things were going to look up for their children. The problem of underachievement and poor literacy has been known for more than a decade. Still, hundreds of thousands of dollars are being poured into research that yields the same results. The Pacific Island children and parents are still targeted in much of educational research today but sadly their children are still at the bottom of the heap.

¹⁹⁶ Ministry of Education, 1996, *Towards Making Achieving Cool: Achievement in Multi Cultural High Schools (AIMHI)*, MOE, Wellington.

The Argument in Favour of 'Phonics', the Traditional A'oga a le Faifeau pedagogy "Reading Report Says Old Way Best"¹⁹⁷

This is the title of an article that headlined the New Zealand Herald on Tuesday, August 14, 2001. It was an exciting article, firstly because it was a respite from reading about the same old gory stories of rape, violence and murder, but more importantly because it added fuel and value to what I am trying to say in this study, that the phonics approach, which is also the A'oga a le Faifeau pedagogy, is the key to solving many problems of underachievement especially in reading and writing. An article titled, 'Making Sense of those black squiggles',¹⁹⁸ in the Weekend Herald of August 18-19, looks at Papakura Normal in South Auckland and Rosebank School, Avondale in West Auckland, who use an integrated approach to teaching reading. Papakura is a middle-to-lower socio-economic area. Mrs Vlaar, a teacher at Papakura Normal School says, it makes sense to use a mix of methods so children have as many clues as possible to unlock the mysteries of words. She uses both the whole language and phonics to teach reading. According to Mrs Vlaar, using solely whole language would be fruitless if children got stuck and could not sound their way through a tricky word. This is where the phonics approach works best.

Flesch in his book, *Why Johnny Can't Read*, claimed that the primary cause of Johnny's problem, the 'sight' method, was demonstrably inferior to the 'phonics' approach.¹⁹⁹ Chall says that Flesch was almost right, in that what she called the 'code emphasis' was, without doubt, superior to the 'meaning emphasis' - at least for beginning readers, particularly for children of 'average and below average 'intelligence' and from lower socio-economic backgrounds.'²⁰⁰ She went on to recommend, among other things, that publishers of 'basal' reading programs, the most widely used materials for the teaching of reading in the US, should heed her findings and shift the emphasis in reading texts and workbooks from 'look - say' to some systematic 'phonics' approach, a recommendation that appears to have had considerable influence. She argues further that a molecular

¹⁹⁷ Middlebrook, L, 2001, Tuesday, August 14, 'Reading report says old way best,' In *The New Zealand Herald*, p. A1.

¹⁹⁸ Gamble, W, 2001, 'Making Sense of those black squiggles,' In *The Weekend Herald*, August 18-19, p. 6.

¹⁹⁹ Flesch, R, In Berlak, A & H, 1981, *Dilemmas of Schooling, Teaching and Social Change*, Methuen, New York, p. 261.

²⁰⁰ Chall, J In Berlak A & H, 1981, *Dilemmas of Schooling, Teaching and Social Change*, Methuen, New York. p. 263.

emphasis in the teaching of beginning reading was superior to a more holistic approach like the whole language approach.

In 1996, Nicholson, an educational psychologist at the University of Auckland, argued that a renewed focus on the teaching of phonemes and simple phonics could make a big difference to children's reading ability - especially for children from less privileged backgrounds. He found that instruction of just 10 minutes a day over three months in phonemic awareness (for instance, alliteration and rhyme) and phonics led to significant improvements in the literacy skills of five-year-old children from low-income backgrounds. As Nicholson said:

Such training, if done more intensively and as part of the regular classroom programme, could be even more helpful in narrowing the literacy gap between children from rich and poor schools.²⁰¹

Nicholson carried out research in which a group of 82 pupils from schools in low-income areas were compared with a group of 25 new entrants from a school in a high-income area, who started schools with significantly higher readiness skills than the pupils in the low-income area. The aim of his research was to get new entrant pupils off to a better start in reading and spelling. The research results showed that the experimental group in the low-income area made significant gains, particularly in spelling, and to a small extent in reading. This supported his research hypothesis that phonemic awareness training and simple phonics would get these children off to a better start if they were added to the regular whole-language curriculum. Nicholson argued that guesswork as used in whole language teaching was not a sound basis for learning about written language because guesswork would create a crack through which too many children, particularly those not exposed to written language at home, will fall.²⁰²

The problem issue here is not so much the 'tools of the trade' as the use or user of the tools. All teaching/learning styles are 'good servants' but can be 'bad masters' depending on the user and the application of the methods. The success of any method of teaching

²⁰¹ Nicholson, T, 1996, 'Phonics helps close literacy gap,' p. 15

²⁰² Nicholson, (Ibid), p. 15.

depends on its effectiveness and relevance of application to the learners and situation. As Limbrick, principal lecturer at Auckland College of Education said,

Some children will learn to read using the whole language approach, just like some children will learn to read through a strict phonetics programme. It's really important to discuss what can make a difference, but the whole language versus phonetics debate is just so dead now. What research shows is, phonetics is really important but it's only one component.²⁰³

Milner, principal of one Auckland primary school, said that his school used a variety of approaches to reading and that different things worked for different kids and that he wouldn't discount any method.²⁰⁴

I can illustrate the point about the use and user of literacy teaching tools by referring to a personal experience. When my oldest three children were at primary school in **Porirua** in the early 1980s, they went to a small government school of less than 200 pupils.²⁰⁵ The pupils were encouraged at this school to 'read and read and read.' The teachers believed in reading as the key to success in life and they demonstrated this belief by making sure that the pupils were engaged in reading. They were encouraged to read widely right from the new entrants class. There were reading books, comics, newspapers and reading material in both English and Maori. The teaching of reading at this school was certainly neither patchy nor left to chance. The teachers believed in reading as the key to success and demonstrated their belief and conviction by providing an educational environment in which children succeeded. The parents were welcome at the school any time to observe as long as they did not create too much disruption to classroom instruction. Every month the parents were invited to come to the school to see their children's work and talk about their children's progress. The school created an atmosphere of high interaction among students, teachers and parents. Those children would have extremely enjoyed their time at that school as my own children had. They have very happy memories of the school and more importantly, it was where their fondness for reading and study was nurtured and developed. There was much individualized instruction, and this was made possible also because the pupil-teacher ratio was low.

²⁰³ Patterson, A, August 28 2002, 'Schools Stand by their Methods,' *Auckland City Harbour News*, p.3

²⁰⁴ Patterson, (Ibid) p. 3.

²⁰⁵ Natone Park School in Waitangirua, Porirua.

On the other hand my children were also being taught how to read in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** and brought their own literacy skills to reading in the conventional school. As well as the above reading experiences at their old primary school, they also learned in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** about parts of speech in Samoan Grammar and usage, knowledge and skills, which they were able to transfer into learning English. Moreover, like the above primary school, the **A'oga a le Faifeau** also gives individual attention to its students, especially to the infant classes who are only just beginning to learn how to read.

I do not advocate a 'phonics only' approach to teaching reading but I do promote an integrated approach with the inclusion of phonics as an indispensable part of the method of teaching literacy. It is encouraging to know that some schools in New Zealand use this integrated approach to teaching reading, using phonics as well as the whole language approach where applicable and appropriate.

Chapter Three

Connecting with the Past: Samoan Indigenous education

E le falala fua le niu, sei vagana ua agi se matagi

(The coconut tree does not necessarily sway unless a wind blows)

This Samoan proverb sets the mood for the present chapter and introduces the following discussion, which centres on Samoan indigenous education, the **Fa'a Samoa**, and how people learned before (and still do) after formal education was introduced. This is an important issue that affects the **A'oga a le Faifeau** because it teaches the **Fa'a Samoa**, the language and cultural values. The discussion also provides a 'theoretical context' to this indigenous education.

The history of formal education (**Palagi** schools) in Samoa started with the arrival of the LMS missionaries. The historical account though will not be complete without reference to what went on before colonial history, even if the **Fa'a Samoa** is perhaps unfairly branded as 'prehistory,' a term that carries a connotation of archaism or extinction. The **Fa'a Samoa** is very much intact even if some of its practices have been 'disgraced, devalued or dispensed with.' Samoan children continue to learn within the norms of their indigenous education, formal schooling and the **A'oga a le Faifeau** in a simultaneous existence.

Information about the setting before colonial history is a necessary prerequisite to understanding the historical development of the Pastor's School, because this setting had significant implications for the contact situation between the Samoans, who were the recipients and executors of the innovations in education, and the LMS missionaries who were the donors and advocates of those educational innovations. The status of the Pastor's School, as an introduced educational phenomenon in Samoa gives the discussion, centred on Samoan indigenous education, a necessary prerogative because the latter preceded it. It also serves to put in perspective the link with this relatively new system of education that my whole thesis is about.

The Samoan proverb above symbolises a pure oral literacy that has 'assimilated' the print literacy. Theorising about the **Fa'a Samoa** in this context gives perhaps a new meaning to the word 'assimilation' which has been closely associated with British hegemony and the colonising practices of the British Empire of old.

I attempt in the present chapter also to critique some of the issues that relate to colonising practices and their effects on the Samoan people and the **Fa'a Samoa**. A critical issue relates to some of the devalued and altogether discarded 'useful' practices that would assist the education of Samoan children if reinstated and resurrected. In particular, I make reference to the art of legend telling which is practically a thing of the past yet was vital to Samoan indigenous education and which also has spans to literacy learning in school, especially in promoting 'readiness' for reading.

Samoan Proverbs

Vaaelua, who wrote a BD²⁰⁶ thesis on the use of Samoan proverbs in theological sermons, gives a definition and description of proverbs as follows:

The Samoan translation of the word proverb is **alagaupu**, **ala** meaning way, path, cause or source, and **upu** meaning word. The word literally means the source or the way or path in which certain words or phrases came to being. They give expression to the folk wisdom and truths about life derived from the experience of past generations and express in encapsulated form the accumulated knowledge of the sages of old Samoa.²⁰⁷

Proverbs are a part of Samoan literature. The use by pastors of Samoan proverbs to promote their Christian mission is another example of how a Samoan form of literacy has spans with a 'Western' practice.

The proverb quoted at the beginning of this chapter literally means that the coconut-tree (**niu**) does not (**e le**) necessarily sway (**falala fua**) unless (**sei vagana**) a wind (**matagi**) blows (**ua agi**). On a calm day the coconut tree would be upright. On a windy day it

²⁰⁶ *Bachelor of Divinity*

²⁰⁷ **Vaaelua**, V, 1999, *Alagaupu and Preaching Ministry*, Unpublished BD Dissertation, **Malua** Theological College, Samoa, p. 1.

Vaaelua researched the meanings of Samoan proverbs with the older generation of Samoan orators and pastors.

would sway to the direction the wind is blowing. It is a simple proverb. Though its seemingly 'banal' literal meaning might appear too obvious and 'simplistic,' the proverb carries a deeper meaning in the **Fa'a Samoa**, and is used figuratively and metaphorically by Samoan orators to mean - there is always a reason or cause for everything.

Most Samoan proverbs have origins in their ecological and physical environment and the coconut tree has a fair share of proverbs deriving from it.²⁰⁸ The coconut tree is one of the most (if not the most) important trees in Samoa and the Pacific. It is looked upon as Samoa's 'tree of life' because every part from its roots in the ground to its fruits and leaves at the top have multiple uses²⁰⁹ which sustain life in a physical environment with relatively scarce resources.

In the absence of a print literacy, the proverbial terms including those derived from the coconut tree serve to store the knowledge that Samoans verbalise in their daily lives. Their use in oratory and daily conversation also remind the people of the importance of their physical environment and, in the case of the coconut tree, sources of sustenance.

The proverb is one that a Samoan orator speaking for a visiting party, that includes his high chief²¹⁰ and family, would often shout across the **malae**²¹¹ to a host family on a special occasion to mean, 'We are here for a reason, or purpose.' The occasion could be that of a birth, a wedding, a funeral or the bestowal of a **matai** title, so the visitors might have made their presence felt, because they have some connections to the host family, at these respective occasions.

²⁰⁸ Examples of other proverbs originating from the coconut tree (**niu**) are: *E suamalie a niu aati* (Sweet like a coconut husked with one's teeth, which means real satisfaction can only be achieved with your own hard labour). *O le pau a le popo uli (ripecoconut) e toe tupu* (The ripe coconut that falls on the ground will in time sprout roots and grow as compared to a green coconut that falls on the ground and rots away: This means that a person with maturity of mind will not dwell on his or her mistakes or misfortunes but will rise above them to better things given time).

²⁰⁹ The roots are woven to make fish/crayfish traps, the trunk is used for building and **umu** (open oven logs), the leaves are woven into mats, baskets, **fale** blinds, and thatches, the hard strands of the leaves are made into brooms, the flesh of the very green coconuts is food for babies and the elderly invalids, the ripe nuts provide coconut cream while their husks are used as fuel for the fire. The hard inner crusts are used as cups or made into necklaces and earrings. The very small green coconuts are used for medicinal purposes.

²¹⁰ Every high chief (**alii**) has an orator or talking chief (**tulafale**) that speaks on his behalf.

²¹¹ The **malae** is an open space in the centre of the village reserved for festivals, special events, big gatherings, or village sports and so on. On the outer fringes of the **malae** are the village houses surrounding the **malae** in a circular fashion.

The orator would first address the dignitaries and chiefly ranks of the host family, and then he would state the reasons for their presence at the occasion, going into the complexities of the genealogies involved, making connections here and there, raking up past histories and perhaps finding a common ancestor. Then the orator might say, "**O tatou lava o le aiga e tasi**," (we are one family) after having established the connection.

The visiting orator would have to tread very carefully when addressing the 'host' family and especially when speaking about genealogies and family histories. He would have researched and studied those with the help of other chiefs and orators that know about the host family. He might even have spent sleepless nights mulling over what to say because his reputation and honour as an orator would be at stake. It would be a great test of his knowledge and ability to orate. Not only would he have to address the family correctly, giving their proper titles and forms of address, but also he could not afford to forget his speech. He would not take his job lightly, because there is nothing more shameful for an orator, than to stop in the middle of a speech to jog his memory for the next line, and many half-said and forgotten speeches have brought dishonour,²¹² not only on the family, but also on the village where the orator is from. His failure to deliver would be very costly to him, his **aiga**²¹³ and his village. He would have gone over his speech many times in preparation, as he only has his memory to depend on.

The orator of the host family on the other side of the **malae** would respond by addressing the dignitaries and chiefly ranks of the visitors, extending a warm welcome signifying his family's acceptance²¹⁴ of them. Often, he would throw in a traditional Samoan proverb among others that would justify and symbolize the coming together of the two families, such as one that might have a religious connotation.²¹⁵ For example, **E ailililo faiva o Fiti**

²¹² Orators that would do this are either severely reprimanded or punished by the village council of chiefs, the dishonour means the belittling of one's village's wisdom and pride in the eyes of the host village. The Samoan orator carries his family as well as his village's honour in whatever occasion he speaks at. The high chiefs of the orator's **aiga** (extended family) would have given him their blessing. He would go with a heavy heart knowing every one's hopes of maintaining the family and village honour rest on his shoulders.

²¹³ **Aiga** is family, the extended family that includes all those people that are blood relations.

²¹⁴ If the host family is satisfied that the visitors are genuine, and have made the proper addresses and right connections.

²¹⁵ Such proverbs are traditional ones that were in use before the missionaries, to acknowledge the Samoan gods, especially their god **Tagaloa-a-lagi**. **Tagaloa** of the ten heavens, to which the Samoans owe their

(Fiti's work is a mystery), which is also used in Samoan oratory today as, **E ailililo le finagalo o le Atua**, (God works in mysterious ways) which means that God had brought the two families together even though they did not know they would meet that day.

Religion is a major part of the **Fa'a Samoa**. The Christian God is comfortable beside **Tagaloa** (Samoan god) and **Nafanua** (Samoan goddess), particularly during ceremonies. At the start or finish of a special occasion, prayers are offered to the Christian God; however as **Simanu and Simanu-Klutz** said, "all activities in between are controlled by the spirits and gods of our ancestors, proverbs from the elements, and the cunningness of the war goddess **Nafanua**."²¹⁶

The host orator would also thank the visiting orator for expounding on the genealogies and the histories of familial connections which had added a great deal of knowledge to the little they knew about the two families' relationships. He might also share his own knowledge of the genealogies and histories of the visiting family, which would benefit the visitors.

The verbal exchange and sharing of this knowledge is an important learning process for Samoans. Because it is an oral process, Samoan protocol demands absolute silence and people sitting down during speeches, as it is a process that requires close listening, attention to detail and the committing to memory of this knowledge. The prioritised formality of the occasion is not only to show respect but more importantly for people to learn and to mentally bank the knowledge acquired. You only have your mental facilities to rely on. Without the convenience of the print literacy, the **Fa'a Samoa** relied entirely on its oral literacy and pragmatic methods to educate its generations of children for over 3000 years.²¹⁷

traditional creation story, Tagaloa sent his sons down from the nine heavens to inhabit Samoa. In a kava ceremony, it is Fa'a Samoa protocol to acknowledge one's god or gods by tipping out a little kava juice from the cup and say, 'O lau ava lea le Atua. Fa'amanuia mai' (This is your kava drink God, bless us). With the acceptance by the Samoans of Christianity, the use of those proverbs and practices were automatically affiliated to the Christian God. Tagaloa-a-lagi was like the super being, but some families had their own gods, like the octopus, a fish, a tree, the owl or even a stone. The Samoan word for god is Atua. The word is often used to mean a fanatical obsession for something like, 'E te atua lava oe i meaai. (You make food your god.).

²¹⁶ **Simanu, A M and Simanu-Klutz, L**, 1999, *Samoan Word Book*, The Bess Press, Honolulu, p. v.

²¹⁷ **Aiono**, (Ibid) p. 12

This exchange and sharing of knowledge in the **Fa'a Samoa** (Samoan culture or Samoan way) is symbolic in many ways of this study and an analogy can be drawn between the two learning processes. In this study, the exchange of ideas and knowledge with my supervisors, the pastors, the Grey Lynn CCCS parish, my family, the various writers and many others has been a great learning process for me, a process driven by a great sense of purpose and necessity to achieve academic, educational and personal goals, with Samoan children in mind.

The proverb epitomises the need to explain why I am writing this thesis, why I am critiquing issues and 'colonizing' practices to do with Samoan education and Samoan history, why people say and do things the way they say and do them. There is always an agenda, obvious or hidden, behind people's statements and actions. I have my own agenda made explicit in the previous chapters; suffice to say here in connection with the Samoan proverb that, this study has a purpose and that I am writing for a reason.

Making connections

In Samoan oratory, a little story here and there will impart meaning or the clarification of meaning and most importantly there is linkage to the main plot. No matter how distant the relationship is or how little is known about a person or an event, the good Samoan orator, as the analogy of the above Samoan proverb presumes, will make connections by referring to a common genealogy or something similar or habitual or a historical event of significance to the audience that each member can connect to. Those connections of the indigenous setting before colonial history and its introduced practices are made more explicit in the following chapters.

The setting before history:

In pre-colonial days, the Samoans for centuries had lived in their own specialised world of system and thought. They had a definite system of education in the broad sense that every generation took steps to transmit their cultural heritage to its growing youth. Samoa, like other small-scale societies, may be referred to as original affluent societies, because they were independent economically and politically. They were self-sufficient

horticulturists, supplementing their diets by hunting game, and fishing as well as gathering shellfish, and edibles from the forest. Their ideas were tied up in their indigenous education system, which was their life-long process of socialisation. Individuals were given instruction concerning beliefs and ways of behaving formally and the means of producing things according to the cultural traditions of their society.²¹⁸

Education for Continuity

The aim of the indigenous education system of Samoa, as in other Pacific Island societies, was the continuity of society in which adult members passed on to the younger generations what they acquired through informal and organised experience. Their aim of continuity was achieved in different ways, depending on the nature and size of the physical environment, the availability of resources, their worldview and beliefs in the supernatural. Because Samoa was small, compared to other larger Pacific islands, like **Vanuatu**, the Solomons or **Papua** New Guinea,²¹⁹ its resources were relatively fewer in quantity and variety. The Samoan education system then revolved around socialising their people to exercise thrift and consideration in the use of those scarce resources.

In response to the need for tight control of those relatively scarce resources, a hierarchical political system developed, a **matai** (chiefly) system and a land tenure system to ensure the 'equitable' distribution²²⁰ of the resources. To support this system, there developed a 'religious' system, which sanctioned and conditioned all Samoan behaviour, in the belief that the gods controlled everything that occurred in life. Their religious beliefs sanctioned their actions in war or peace, in fishing or working on the plantation and in the way they treated elders, women and their kings.²²¹ A more detailed treatment of this religious issue

²¹⁸ *Baba, T.* 1986, 'Education in Small Island States of the Pacific,' *In Equity and Diversity: Challenges for Educational Administrations*, 'Record of Proceedings of the Sixth International Intervisitation Programme in Educational Administration, Massey University, Palmerston North. Pp 79-94.

²¹⁹ These larger islands had abundant resources and because of that, a less hierarchical system developed. The 'big man' system developed whereby such status was achieved through an accumulation of pigs and goods. They were more 'entrepreneurial' than the cultures of those islands, like Samoa or Tonga, with much less resources. Those societies also developed quite an elaborate exchange/trade system whereby coastal dwellers would trade with inland people those goods not normally found in their respective environments. For example, fish with pork or wooden or stone tools with seashell crafts and so on.

²²⁰ I refer to this in Chapter One. Though not an ideal distribution, the system must have worked as it survived for many centuries up to now.

²²¹ *Taase*, (*Ibid*), p. 66

is given in the following chapter. Its special treatment as such, is important because these relatively 'prehistorical' beliefs were a blessing and did pave the way for the more ready acceptance and consequent rapid expansion of the work of the missionaries in Samoa after the initial contact.

With a physical environment that is most vulnerable to fierce annual tropical cyclones, droughts and leaching soils, the traditional education of the Samoans revolved around maintaining the balance of ecological relationships, with a land tenure system that enabled families to have access to the land and sea resources. The **matai** of each **aiga**, appointed by family consensus, is the trustee of the family land. He or she is responsible for the allocation of land to the members of the **aiga**. It is still the practice today. Eighty one percent (81%) of Samoa's land at present is under this land tenure system. The other 19% is either government or privately owned. The German administration (1899-1914), although it took land for its purposes, passed a law prohibiting Samoan customary land from being sold.

The values of living in harmony with their environment were instilled in Samoan children through observation, imitation and practice as they accompanied their parents on their daily rounds of activities. Women gathered and collected food from the forest and sea, while the men planted, fished and cooked.²²² Samoan children are also taught from a very young age to regard wealth as a group resource. The practice of generalised reciprocity,²²³ whereby one would give without any immediate expectation of a return (but the favour would be reciprocated later), was also a means to ensure the equitable distribution of resources. It was a survival strategy. One must share so that the other would survive. Respect for one's elders and respect for the physical environment, had to

²²² The men did the cooking because the women had to concentrate on their 'profession' of making wealth-**ietoga** (the fine mats)-as well as weaving of **falamoe/falalilii** (sleeping mats) and **falanofa/papa/papa laufala** (sitting mats, the mats used daily to sit on). The women also had to look after the children and the elderly. The men did the cooking and the heavier work in the plantation. The women occasionally helped with the weeding. Cooking in the **Fa'a Samoa** is considered heavy work because in the absence of pots and pans, almost all food was baked in the **umu** Samoa (Samoan oven). Unlike the **Maori hangi**, in which the food is 'buried', the Samoan **umu** is done by making an open fire to heat rocks, and on top of these hot rocks, the food is placed and covered with banana and breadfruit leaves. It takes about two hours depending on how much food is being cooked.

²²³ This practice often clashes with the COD (Cash on Delivery) and 'user pay' values of the Western economy and has posed a dilemma for the Samoans ever since the cash economy was introduced.

be observed so that generation after generation of Samoans would be able to survive in a relatively delicate and vulnerable environment to carry on their heritage and culture.

Tapu (taboo) was often put on some crops or fishes. The Samoans also planned for bad times when food was scarce. Wild yams (**ufi vao**) were preserved for drought and cyclone times. The surplus of breadfruit during the breadfruit season was made into **masi Samoa** (Samoan biscuits)²²⁴ and buried to be dug up only when needed. Word would soon reach the village **fono** (council) if anyone sought to raid stores and the culprits would be punished accordingly. Reserved food was for the community during bad times, not for lazy people who looked for the easy way out to feed themselves. People were expected to cultivate their land and grow crops for their daily use.²²⁵ The men did the cooking to 'free' up the women to weave and look after children. The major part of a woman's work was spent weaving sleeping mats and fine mats. The women were the **faioloa** (makers of wealth). The weaving of the very fine mats, was a tenuous task that required hours, days and even years of bending over the weaving. The long and wide very finely woven mats that have a 'satin and glossy' feel were the most treasured. The owners of such were considered wealthy. These very fine mats symbolise the endurance, the ingenuity of the weaver.²²⁶ One such fine mat is referred to as 'e tasi ae afe' (only one but a thousand). The women taught their young daughters how to weave while the men took the sons to the plantation.

Most educational instruction was given by example, learning from observation and imitation of relatives, peers and neighbours. Children saw how adults performed tasks

²²⁴ *Masi Samoa is made from a mixture of breadfruit and coconut cream, then buried in the soil and only dug up when there was no food such as during drought and cyclones when the food plants wilt or were blown down respectively.*

²²⁵ *A free handout, (a bag of rice, a carton of tinned fish) from cyclone aid has taken over this Fa'a Samoa practice. People are now dependent on aid donors during those bad times as well as on their relatives overseas (eg. in NZ, USA, Australia and so on).*

²²⁶ *Today, it is rare to find these kinds of fine mats, especially the very fine ones. The large but less finely woven ones have replaced those very fine mats. Size and quantity (three or four of such big ones given for a Fa'alavelave-a special occasion) have substituted for quality. The 'mana' though of the finer mats is not there. One was enough because it had all the qualities such as, softness, glossiness, and lightness, light brown colouring and sheer beauty, almost like the feel of satin. E tasi ae afe. (Only one but a thousand). Even before the actual weaving, the processing of the leaves of the pandanus tree from which a fine mat is woven, takes weeks. It is extremely hard work. The serrated sharp edges of the leaves can injure, and if the little prickles lodge in one's hands they can become infected very fast. These have to be taken away first. The leaves are then taken to the sea and tied down under coral to soften them, before they are cleaned out in fresh water and then sun dried. All that and more have to be done before the actual weaving takes place.*

and how they behaved. The education process was direct, situational and practical. The **Fa'a Samoa** was handed down by way of mouth and Samoan 'literature' was manifest in their **tapa**, mats, baskets, **fale**, dances, rites, rituals, their tattoos and their oratory.

The **Fa'a Samoa** value of **Fa'aaloalo**²²⁷ (respect) must be observed first and foremost in everything. This tradition that must be observed in one's relationship to other people as well as to one's physical environment, had been the mainstay of the existence and more importantly of the survival of Samoan people before contact with the West. The hierarchical chiefly (**matai**) system that developed was accompanied by a land tenure system that would ensure the 'equitable distribution'²²⁸ (an ideal) of those scarce resources, land in particular. The traditional land tenure system of the Samoans is unique perhaps in the sense that the matai title is the owner of the land, while the person with the matai title is only a trustee of the land, whose job it is to allocate this resource. Every Samoan is directly related to a matai either through his or her mother or father and thus is eligible to become one. Every Samoan family is entitled to land under this matai system.

The **Fa'a Samoa** system of course had not survived without its fair share of shortcomings and problems, but then no system is free from these. An 'ideal' system is only but a dream. However, the **Fa'a Samoa** seemed to have worked well as the system has survived, even if in a form 'corrupted' by commerce, technology and the internet. It has survived to tell its own lived and living history.

²²⁷ The word **Fa'aaloalo** means respect/ to respect/ be respectful or politeness/ be polite. Its root word is '**alo**' which literally means to face the front/people. When you face people your body must immediately respond by sitting cross-legged, pay attention and be prepared to speak in the language of respect. For those not 'conversant' with the **Fa'a Samoa**, it is rude to sit with your legs stretched out with feet pointing to other people. It is not **Fa'aaloalo**. (**Fa'a**=to make, **aloalo**=know how to face people)

²²⁸ Even though a hierarchical system suggests a fair measure of inequality, especially in rank, and this is also true in the Samoan **matai** system where at the top are paramount chiefs then orators then lesser chiefs, then untitled people down to the children, it is not as rigid or as formal a system as it is often made out or seen to be. The selection of a paramount chief is by consensus agreement of his/her extended family. Although he/she expects to be served by the extended family, the paramount **matai** (**alii sili**) or any chief (**matai**) is also expected to hold the family together and to show justice and honesty in dealing with family affairs especially in the allocation of land. Any goods that he/she may bring back home from a **Malaga** (trip) or a special occasion are expected to be shared with the family. It is a reciprocal relationship where the favour has to be returned, maybe not immediately but at a later time. It is not uncommon for a **matai** to be stripped of his/her title if the family expectations are not lived up to. There is no such thing as a free lunch.

A Critical Reflection on some Fa'a Samoa Issues

Customary Land versus Private-owned Land

While Samoan 'prehistory' tells me that the Samoan people owned 100% of its own land, Samoan 'history' informs me that the people now own 81% of that land. The other 19%, which is mostly prime land, and close to **Apia** was taken over first by Germany, then was passed on to New Zealand, and now that Samoa has become politically independent since 1962 the Samoa government, a relatively new political institution, now owns it. Some of it has been sold to private owners that include our family. We bought our half-acre from the government in 1988.

Since independence, the villages whose land was taken over by Germany and New Zealand and which are now with the government and private landowners have been fighting to get their land back or some form of land compensation. Where the government has refused to do that, some villages have 'illegally' occupied these lands and refused to leave. About a hundred metres from where we have bought land in Samoa, the neighbouring village protested in 1999 against a national stadium proposed to be built on land they claimed as their traditional land. A new golf course has already been built on part of this land. The altercation between the police and the villagers resulted in violence and imprisonment of some protestors.

Critical thinking and the Fa'a Samoa

It has been said that Polynesian societies (including Samoa) 'are complex and beautiful creations, but none of them developed the analytical tools for their own criticism.' In other words, these cultures have not created nor developed a tradition of critical thinking.²²⁹ This supposed lack of a tradition in critical thinking in the **Fa'a Samoa** has been claimed as a contributing factor to the underachievement of Samoan children in school, because school values an inquiring and critical mind, manifest in the ability of a student to question and to speak out his or her mind. Although this presumption might

²²⁹ Twyford, P, 1988, October 5, 'Teacher to the Revolution,' *Auckland Star*, p. 10

have truth in it, it should not however be taken to mean that there is no critical facility whatsoever in the **Fa'a Samoa**. A culture that does not employ this mental facility would not survive because culture is not static; it changes and before any change is effected it must first be thought about and 'mentally fleshed and thrashed out.' In order to survive over so many centuries, Samoa as a small-scale society would not have been able to without improving its 'primitive' and 'simple' technology.²³⁰ Subsequently any attempts to 'perfect' their tools would have involved this higher mental culture, the process of critical thinking. Careful planning for example of; a **malaga**²³¹ (visitation or trip), building of a Samoan guest house or a long boat,²³² a 'war' against another village, a special occasion such as a Samoan wedding or a bestowal of a title, or even a taro patch, would have involved some critical thinking at least.

The decision to appoint a **matai** had to be by consensus agreement of the **aiga potopoto** (extended family). The best candidate to be entrusted with a **matai** title had to have passed a test defined in the Samoan proverb, **O le ala i le pule o le tautua** (the way to the top is through service).

There are several types of **tautua** (service) in the **Fa'a Samoa**. For example, **tautua toto** ('blood' service) demands laying down one's life for the family. **Tautua matavela** (service with 'burnt or cooked eyes') means long and untiring service. **Tautua tuavae** (service at the feet) means to be constantly ready or alert, on your feet immediately, to carry out however difficult, the **matai** and **aiga's** instructions.²³³

²³⁰ Primitive here means of old, and simple refers to the comparatively simple materials used in the absence of any iron and such tools. Wooden and stone tools were the only types available.

²³¹ A **Malaga** (visitation/trip) to another island for a special occasion would involve not only planning for the actual event, but also of the route they would take, the kind of long boat suitable for the trip, and of course the kinds and amount of provisions that would last them during the **malaga**.

²³² The Samoa Islands are also known as the Navigator islands (named so by the Dutch Navigator Rogeveen who first discovered the Samoa islands in 1722) because of their ability to navigate the ocean.

²³³ Much of this is experienced daily in the lives of the Samoans even in New Zealand. I am also very much involved in my own **aiga's talatalaga** and **tautua**. It is important as in future **talatalaga**, my service to the **aiga** would carry much favour especially if a sister or brother or a very close relative of mine is to be put forward as candidate for a title.

All parties connected to the **matai** title have to be represented at the **talatalaga**.²³⁴ This **talatalaga** may be repeated many times until there is a consensus agreement. Each party would come prepared to argue about the suitability of their candidate for the title. Each must have evidence to support their claim. **Matai** titles are not necessarily handed down from parents to siblings. They are ascribed to people who deserve them through untiring services (**tautua**) to their respective **aiga** (extended families). The discussion in a **talatalaga** would centre on this very important concept of **tautua** (service).

Another instance where this thinking process would have readily occurred would be during the telling of legends by grandparents. This was an informal time when formality was relaxed and children and adults alike would ask questions of the storyteller.²³⁵

Legend Telling: A Fa'a Samoa pedagogy

Profound changes in thought processes and in personality and social structure were brought about by the introduction of the print literacy and Christianity in Samoa. The new process of education induced a transformation from one stage of consciousness to another, for example from a pure oral literacy to a mixed oral and print tradition. With the introduction of formal schooling, there was also a shift of emphasis in the way Samoans were taught, and who was responsible for their instruction. The missionaries and later the schoolteachers, in assuming the primary role in education, resulted in the loss of instructional autonomy at the Samoan family and community level.

²³⁴ *Talatalaga* comes from the verb, *talatala* that means to speak openly revealing everything in one's mind about the issue being discussed. Associated with this word are other Samoan words like *tatala* = to open, *tala* = a story, *talatala* = to loosen up, to spread out wide, to untangle (to do with a tangled up fishing net). The term *talatalaga* is confined to familial meetings of people that have relatively close family connections, especially when important family matters arise, **matai** titles, weddings or funerals. This sharing of opinions and the openness involved in this sharing within *talatalaga* is not often found in village meetings. The term *fono* is given to the latter, which are also more formal meetings whose membership is usually of people not necessarily related to each other. *O le fono a le nuu* = the village meeting, *ole fono a matai* = the titled people's meeting, *o le fono a le aualuma ma tamaiti'i* = the village unmarried women's meeting.

²³⁵ *Tanielu, L S, 1995, Ideological Shifts in Western Samoan Education: A Critical Analysis, Med. Dissertation, University of Auckland, pp.7-23.*

As a result of this new form of education, Samoan stories increasingly paled into insignificance, as bible and 'other' stories were used in the schools. The habitual telling of legends at night, especially by parents and grandparents, came to be replaced by bible reading and learning of the 'new' stories. The relative ease with which people could move from one place to another, with the development of modern transport, encouraged the exodus of people to urban areas and overseas. The resultant more mobile Samoan society increasingly separated the parents and children from grandparents, the legend tellers, and eventually the telling of legends became history. The Print literacy has made the documentation of Samoan stories possible so that Samoans can hear those stories again. The 'prioritised status' (the 'nightly' ritual of listening to those stories) of story telling however, is a thing of the past. The written stories often do not include the chants and music that traditionally accompany the telling of Samoan stories.

According to MacGill,²³⁶ fairy stories, myths and legends provide a very simple way of handing down cultural wisdom and that, even if one generation were to entirely neglect their spiritual wisdom, it could be later retrieved from beneath the sands of time. So long as the children still heard these simple stories, the following generations could then live full and rich lives again.

Legend-Telling/Story telling: Its Implications for Education **A Samoan Framework to guide literacy training in the Samoan home**

Bedtime stories are not new to the Samoans. The Grandparents played a vital role in the education of their grandchildren, as they were the storytellers. This legend telling served very significant cultural and educational purposes which include: the handing down of cultural, moral, and spiritual knowledge and values, the acquisition of the cognitive skills of comprehension, listening, language, critical thinking, numeracy skills, music skills, geography skills, cultural history and drama skills.²³⁷

Of direct relevance to this discussion is the fact that this traditional **Fa'a Samoa** art is at least continuous with formal school culture. It has parallels with reading to children, by its nurturing role, in the intellectual and affective development of children. This was also

²³⁶ MacGill V, 1995, *When the Dragon Stirs*, Dragon Enterprises, Dunedin.

²³⁷ Tanielu, (Ibid), pp.7-23

where it was of extreme importance in the **Fa'a Samoa**. The development of an inquiring mind was nurtured and encouraged during this process in the children from a very young age. It was an informal time when children could ask questions without having to observe formality. Children learned spontaneously in a relaxed atmosphere. The only formal order was for them to say, "**ae**", every now and then in the course of the story, a cue to the teller that they were paying attention. Story telling can be said to be an indispensable practice in the **Fa'a Samoa**, as it developed early in the children this critical thinking. Legend telling was a necessary pastime for an oral culture that depended on the mental facilities of its members to carry on its heritage. It was a form of socialization practice that developed cognitive and affective skills in Samoan children. It was the time when they acquired a set of meanings and cultural values with the type of vocabulary developed with the kind of control and discipline they could identify with.

If Samoan children today could be equipped with those skills, the task of adjusting and adapting to the wider world at school should not be as daunting as many Samoan children are experiencing, as the gap between the home culture and the school could be bridged. The transfer of skills (which children learn during those story telling times) is an educational prerogative. What was there in the Samoan home should be replaced by storybooks but in many homes this is a virtual impossibility for several reasons. The present day realities are products of historical and colonial conditions. Resurrecting the traditional pedagogy by reinventing legend telling is a cultural and educational priority. These educational opportunities, if fostered again in the Samoan home, would provide skills which children could transfer into their learning at school. Participation of parents and family members in the education of their children by providing such support in the home is important. Education begins in the home with parents as the child's first teachers, as it used to be!

The Legend: "Tui – o le - Tafu'e the Ogre"

I have selected a legend called *Tui-o le-Tafu'e the Ogre* to illustrate the point made earlier about how a Samoan legend could be instructional and educational, and entertaining at the same time. It also provides elements through which literacy can develop in the Samoan home and which the Pastor's School could redevelop for the

invaluable skills it offers. I have said earlier that the introduction of formal education in Samoa was also the beginning of the undervaluing of the **Fa'a Samoa**.²³⁸ Also as Samoans literally threw themselves into learning the print literacy and Bible stories, Samoan stories became increasingly ignored. They were considered with other indigenous practices as too mythical and belonged in a 'prehistorically, heathenistic, unenlightened and uncivilised' world.

The relatively recent use of Samoan proverbs and legends by pastors in their sermons and speeches heralds an informal 'indigenisation' of the Christian ministry. It is commonly held that Christianity has been 'indigenised' by the Samoans, as explained in the chapter on the historical background of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. The church is like a Samoan village setting, a meeting place for Samoans to practise their **Fa'a Samoa**, and this has not been more true as in New Zealand. The **Fa'a Samoa** hierarchy 'sits' quite comfortably (though at times it is a 'trouble-shooter') with the hierarchy of the local congregation. The origins of this go back to the initial contact between the paramount chief **Malietoa** and the LMS missionaries in 1830 when the Samoan chief transferred his own status and honour to the Christian God in favour of a lesser position.

The legend below is an allegory that the older generations of Samoans are familiar with. It is an entertaining story, which has a moral and deeper meaning. I have presented only a much-shortened version of the legend. Its inclusion in the discussion is necessary to illustrate some of the educational skills and values of legend telling.

The legend goes:

*There was once a couple in the island of Savaii. Their names were **Tapitofau** and **Ogafau**. One day they had a child; a boy and they named him **Tui**. The next baby was also a boy. They named him **Tui**. The next baby again was a boy and they also named him **Tui**. The couple kept on having babies until there were ten boys. All were named **Tui**.*

*Then one day, another baby was born. This time it was a girl, and they named her **Sina**. **Sina** grew into a beautiful girl with long, silky black hair, and the parents and brothers doted on her.*

²³⁸ Mara et al, (Ibid)

One day the parents said to their children, "We are going to visit your father's family. Look after your sister, **Tui** and **Tui** and **Tui**.... and do not leave her alone in the house. Look after her and make sure you do what she wants."

Then the parents were gone. One day, while **Sina** and her brothers were playing outside, **Sina** saw this beautiful white bird, the seagull flying overhead, and she cried,

"I want that bird, I want that bird. Please go and get that bird for me."

The ten boys went looking for the bird. They searched far and wide; over the mountains and down the valleys they went. It became dark and the boys were still looking. **Sina** became really afraid being all alone in the house. Then she started calling out to the boys,

"**Tui** and **Tui** and **Tui** and **Tui** and **Tui**..."

She called out the name **Tui** ten times. An ogre named **Tui-ole-tafu'e**, **Tui** for short heard her. Well, **Sina** heard this gruff and throaty voice say,

"O.....e, what do you want eh?"

Sina looked up and saw this giant of a man, with long dirty hair and beard. Then she screamed!

The ogre said, "You wait, if you don't do as I say, something terrible is going to happen to you."

Sina crying said, "Oh... Alright, I... I will do anything you ask, a... anything."

"Come and sit down. You are to pick the nits off my hair," said the ogre in a throaty voice, which made **Sina** more afraid.

Sina sat down, and immediately the ogre lay down with his head on **Sina**'s lap. Soon he slept and started snoring so very loudly and so very 'gruffly' that **Sina** was so scared she could die. The older nine boys came back and saw this huge and fearsome person sleeping on their sister's lap, and were so frightened that they all ran off to hide. The youngest boy, who was the last to arrive, saw his sister's predicament and went to her help. He helped **Sina** to lift the ogre's head off her lap taking every care so they do not wake the ogre. Together they carefully tied the long tufts of the ogre's hair to the posts of the house and then they took off. When the ogre woke up, he could not move his head. With all his might he pulled and pulled bringing the house down on himself. That was the end of the ogre.

THE CHANT: Come Lady **Sina**, Come Lady **Sina**

The female child of the covenant

You cried for the seagull

You wanted its beautiful feathers

Down the valleys and over the mountains

Here is your bird, I am going

Before I fall and faint

During the telling of the legend the storyteller would often stop to ask or to answer questions. The intermittent reversion to discussion would revolve around the following:

1. The names: What are the names of the parents? (An explanation of the origins of the parents' names would follow) They derive from a very useful tree in Samoa, the **fau** tree. **Tapito-fau** and **Oga-fau**. The explanation of names would involve - their origins - their meanings. **Tapito** means a side or small piece, and **oga** means a big chunk, the concepts of size - big and small and parts of a tree.
2. The skills of numeracy: Counting from 1 to 10/11.
3. The gender of the children (Boys and one girl). The boys have the same name, **Tui** to differentiate them from their one sister. Girls and boys' names. **Sina** is always a girl's name.
4. Geography: Flora and Fauna: The island of **Savaii**, the biggest island in Samoa, the mountains, the valleys and the birds.
5. The Moral and Values: In the **Fa'a Samoa**, there is a **feagaiga** (covenant) between the brother and sister. The brother protects the sister, lays down his life for her. The brothers always accompany girls wherever they go. Girls are not to be left alone in the house. One of **Sina's** brothers at least should have stayed behind with **Sina**, or when it was growing dark they should have come home then. In the **Fa'a Samoa** we say, *O le mea uliuli o le mata o le tama o lona tuafafine*, literally translated, the black part of the Samoan boy's eye is his sister. (May perhaps have the analogy in the English saying - She is the apple of her father's eye?).
6. Music: The storyteller sings the chant and the audience joins in.
7. Comprehension skills: Why, Where, did the boys go? What is the moral? And so on. The moral analysis is also part of comprehension.

During legend-telling time, caution to formality was relaxed, as children and adults alike shared views and ideas about the story without paying heed to who ought to speak first or have the last say. Children learning in a relatively happy and relaxed atmosphere, one that was conducive to learning.

A Difference in degree not in kind

The analysis of the legend above demonstrates how a **Fa'a Samoa** practice cultivated literacy skills necessary for the development of creative and critical thought in Samoan children.

The difference perhaps in terms of the critical thought required by the conventional school learning would not be in the 'kind' of thinking but in the degree and frequency to which this mental facility is employed in the **Fa'a Samoa**. Understandably so, it would have been much less used in a more pragmatic culture where educational instruction was given by example, learning from observation and imitation of relatives, peers and neighbours. But even with a more practical oriented culture, there would have been a questioning of some practices for example, as to how and why certain things were done this way or that way, why certain species of **taro** or yams for example would grow well in some types of soils and not in others. During the practical process of planting the fathers would have explained to their children why. Likewise, in the case of Samoan women and their daughters, the questioning of the ways of weaving the various different mats and baskets, how to differentiate between the respective edible and inedible shell fish and vegetables during food gathering would have been in order. These are developed from an early age as the children accompanied their parents during their daily activities. Critical thinking is a process that is present in every human being in different degrees of intensity depending on the goals and purposes for which it would be developed, how it is nurtured, how often it is used and how urgent the need is to use it. Practice makes perfect. In today's school, for students to be successful they have to nurture, develop and perfect this mental facility. It is a good thing to be critical; to be aware and be wary of what is going on. On the other hand, critical thought has been 'reified' to mean that some people have it and some do not. I make a strong stand on this in the discussion about underachievement of Samoan children in the previous chapter. I cite the provision of Samoan and Maori education that was manually, rather than mentally orientated. In the case of Samoa, it prevented the introduction of higher education despite the demands made by the Samoans. The lack of resources and teaching personnel foiled the underlying reason and the hegemonic stance of the colonisers. In school, critical thought is

synonymous with abstract thinking. Children in the **Fa'a Samoa** mostly learn to do things in informal but more practically oriented situations. Critical thought is employed relatively less frequently and with much less immediacy. There are thus fewer chances of using their critical thinking processes and especially so as people live and work according to Samoan time,²³⁹ which is within any time, two hours, a day, a month or even a year later.

In school, children learn in a more formal situation as well as to a timetable that controls what and when to learn. While special occasions may demand formality in the **Fa'a Samoa**, in a child's own family a less formal and relaxed existence is the norm. The father may take his son to the **taro** patch for some planting or other garden work, and the child may be taught how to plant or he may just be left to observe and practise with his own digging stick or do his own thing. In such an informal situation, the child learns at his or her own pace, at times with a person directing his or her learning on a one to one basis, without the pressure of having to complete work according to a timetable. Learning is relatively spontaneous and likewise is the need to employ a critical thinking process. In the classroom and for this particular child, he or she suddenly finds that one has to work many times as quickly, thinks many times as deeply and consequently fails as many times to cope or catch up.

Samoan Oratory: A Fa'a Samoa Pedagogy

In Samoan oratory, critical thought is integral. Samoan orators (**tulafale** or talking chiefs) may be referred to as the intellectuals of Samoa because they are expected to have the skills to argue, to debate, to think on their feet all the time, to be able to employ lateral thinking when needed, and to have wit and good memories. Paramount chiefs (**alii sili**) may call on their talking chiefs any time, and many times on short notice, to speak at gatherings or to make presentations on their behalf. In a **fa'atau** (verbal exchange among orators bidding for who to speak at a special occasion), orators must have the skills to

²³⁹ *There is no word for time in the Fa'a Samoa, as we know it in the modern school and world of work. The word used is **avanoa**, which means when there is a 'chance' or space, and time is 'relational' to what a person does. I will do the cooking as soon as I finish weeding the taro patch. When I have a chance from looking after my sick mother I will come for a visit. We now have a word '**tuimi**', derived from its English version time.*

analyse and synthesise what other orators say to prepare his retorts. It is like campaigning for an election. In order to be the speaker of the event, the orators have to out do and out wit each other by expounding on the reasons why one should or should not be the chosen speaker. This is no mean feat because an orator must be able to speak with authority on the points he puts forward. The art of good oratory is to speak with dignity and authority and at the same time showing respect (**fa'aaloalo**). An orator must make critically sound and intelligent remarks in arguing about his rights to orate at the occasion. This oratorical debate is an essential part of the **Fa'a Samoa**, even though it can be lengthy and may become a heated argument in which case a paramount chief might put a stop to it. When this happens the paramount chief would usually speak himself, and this would be a poor reflection on the ability of the concerned orators to carry out a proper **fa'atau**. In such an occasion, the paramount chief's role is to **fa'afilemu ma fa'alelei se fa'atau ua fai le mafaufau ma le le fa'aaloalo** (calm down and smooth out an over-heated debate that has developed into a disrespectful argument among orators). It means that orators have failed to carry out their role as stipulated by the **Fa'a Samoa**.

The debate is a show of oratorical talent and ability. The winner of the debate is often rewarded materially (a few fine mats or dollars as often done today). Socially, his status as a good orator is highly regarded and he brings honour not only to himself but also to his high chief, his **aiga** and his village. This is much more important and satisfying than any material rewards. An orator's task is not easy and he must be prepared mentally most of the time. The ability of a person to orate is part of the criteria used to assess the suitability of a candidate to a **matai tulafale** (an orator or talking chief) status.

In situational and experiential learning, such as in Samoa and other Pacific cultures, a more abstract and critical thinking process would not have been used as often, but it was there, because the practical knowledge and skills learned are lived and experienced on a daily basis. As Professor **Helu-Thaman**, a Tongan educationist argued:

For most of us who still identify with Pacific cultures, culture is not something to be defined; rather it is something that is lived and continually demonstrated as a matter of behaviour and performance. Within each culture there are processes and contexts within which values, knowledge and understanding are analysed, stored and transmitted from one generation to another.²⁴⁰

²⁴⁰ Helu-Thaman, K, 1996, February 15-16, 'Reclaiming An Education: Culture, Teaching and Learning,' Keynote Address, New Zealand National Symposium on Pacific Islands Learning, Auckland, p. 3

In the analysis of those values, knowledge and understanding, critical thinking would naturally occur. The **Fa'a Samoa** would not have survived for centuries without this thinking process. Even if it occurred in small doses and not as often, it would have been vital to their existence and survival. There was no great need for any urgency for its use as there was plenty of time, as the **Fa'a Samoa** 'evolved'²⁴¹ empirically, over scores of centuries. The notion of the **Fa'a Samoa** or Polynesian cultures as having no critical thinkers, and Samoans as having little critical thinking ability should not be entertained nor condoned at all.

We are what we are today because of the choices made yesterday

Historical events of great impact

Any real contact of Samoa with the West, as said before, started in 1830 with the coming of the missionaries. This contact also marked the beginning of Samoan 'history.' It aimed at total societal change and consequently revolutionized the **Fa'a Samoa** in many ways, comparatively speaking, in a matter of a few years.

People who had been used to evolutionary²⁴² changes in their lives cannot cope as quickly nor as efficiently with any relatively revolutionary and sudden changes to their way of life, within a short time. There have to be adaptive strategies and orientation processes in place for the smooth transition from one stage to another. While there were spans between the old and the new educational systems, these were not encouraged nor developed. Even though many Samoans were mentally prepared to advance educationally, they were not 'smoothly transitioned' into the next step up in their education. This has been the dilemma for the Samoans since contact with the West, attempting to cope with growing up in two 'large' worlds, theirs and the **Palagi's**. The children in particular are most affected by these changes. Children grow up to become adults, parents and elders, carrying with them the marks, bitter and sweet, of this dilemma. Any expectation for these people to snap out of this dilemma is unrealistic, because those much sought after adaptive strategies and orientation processes to bridge the gap are still not in place.

²⁴¹ The term evolved as used here refers to a slow and undramatic change occurring over a long time.

²⁴² These are only very gradual changes that happened slowly over many years.

Political Expediency always takes precedence over the Learner

In the seven years from 1995 to 2001, the following account of the history of colonial Samoa was an important part of my lectures in one of the education courses (165.207) at the University of Auckland. Most of the students over the years in this course were Maori and Pacific Islanders. The highlights of these lectures for many students have been the historical events, the part of their Pacific history that most had never heard about, and for me as a Samoan lecturer it was an opportunity to talk about a history that was more or less 'hush-hushed.' That is, I never got to study it in school in Samoa while pursuing a New Zealand school-based curriculum.

When Hon. Helen Clark, Prime Minister of New Zealand apologised during the 40th Samoa independence celebrations in June 2002, for the 'atrocities' done to the Samoans during the New Zealand administration of the country, I was hoping that those students would be able to understand her act, because they would know the history to which it refers.

When I originally wrote this chapter in October 2001, I never dreamt then that this 'piece' of history would become a controversial issue in New Zealand and Samoa the next year 2002, with the formal apology given to Samoa by the Prime Minister of New Zealand. I had thought that this part of Samoan history was pushed to the background. The New Zealand Herald newspaper at the time (May-June) printed articles that depicted mixed feelings and ambivalence amongst Samoans. Why now and not before? Why has it become politically expedient now and not after the actual events, in particular the peaceful **Mau** Movement march (1929) and the influenza epidemic (1918) that killed eight (including the leader of the movement, Paramount Chief **Tupua Tamasese**), and 8,500 people in two weeks respectively.

I read the related articles in the local newspapers of the week leading up to Samoa's 40th independence anniversary (June 1st 2002) with much interest. I even thought of having part of this writing published in the New Zealand Herald, especially the story below, handed down from grandparents, survivors of the epidemic, to their children to the

grandchildren, which would have added another view. The number of people slain by the epidemic in Samoa was almost three times the number of people that died during the September 11th attack in 2001 on the United States of America. The whole world became and still is much involved and justifiably so, because terrorism is an evil that must be stopped. In the case of Samoa, the New Zealand administrators, Colonel Logan Richardson was associated with the flu epidemic and Richardson the oppression that gave rise to the **Mau** movement. Allen was the New Zealand administrator at the time of the Black Saturday when the New Zealand police fired the fatal shots that killed the Mau leader.

The point I stress here is the fact that 8,500 people died, from a population of 45,000 already 'denuded' by introduced diseases, was comparatively 'genocide'. The official apology had to wait until 84 (since 1918) and 71 (since 1929) years later respectively. It was unexpected after such a long lapse of time. The New Zealand Prime Minister's apology was a most noble, honourable and justified gesture as so many people were allowed to die in an epidemic that could have been avoided and the **Mau** movement's march was a peaceful one. Help was at hand in American Samoa, yet politics seemed to have over-ridden justice and humanity. As one friend rhetorically said, "What's in an apology anyway? Mere words! Promises were made to help the country after independence. Who has really benefited from the New Zealand occupation of Samoa?"

The history of contact with the West is full of strange and rather ironical political situations. For example, this history tells me that my mother hails from Eastern Samoa and my father is from Western Samoa; two different Samoas that used to be one, that speak the same language and practise a similar culture. The country was split up into Western and Eastern Samoa in 1899, a decision made by the three great powers, Great Britain, USA and Germany.²⁴³ Western Samoa went to Germany and became known as German Samoa, while Eastern Samoa went to the USA,²⁴⁴ and became American Samoa. As a direct result of this partitioning, the relative ease by which the islanders had visited one another at any time without restrictions suddenly was not there any more. Thus 1899 was the year, figuratively speaking, when the 'twin sisters' were separated from their 'mother' and from each other. While people before then had often rowed their **paopao**

²⁴³ Boyd, M, 1969, 'The record in Western Samoa to 1945', In Ross, A, (Ed), *New Zealand's Record In the Pacific Islands in the Twentieth Century*, Longman Paul, Limited, Auckland, pp. 115-118

²⁴⁴ The two Samoas became German Samoa and American Samoa respectively.

(canoes) and **fautasi** (long boats)²⁴⁵ back and forth without any restrictions (apart from natural disasters like cyclones or earthquakes) to see parents or relatives, they were suddenly banned from doing so. Political expediency took precedence over a people's normal way of life and close family connections. The power play between Germany and the United States came to the fore as more important.

Immigration since then has become more restrictive. A 'Western' Samoan that wants to travel to American Samoa would have to get a visa to go there. With my New Zealand passport I can visit my mother's family in American Samoa any time without a visa. If I use my Western Samoa passport, I have to get a visa. That is one story of our history with an ironical twist to it. Another consequence of this split is the comparison made between the two Samoas, where Western Samoa is known as the poorer sister and Eastern Samoa the richer one. Although Western Samoa approached American Samoa about reuniting and becoming an independent nation before 1962, the pull of 'Uncle Sam's' dollar perhaps was too strong for American Samoa to sever ties with the most powerful nation in the world. In 1914 New Zealand troops, on behalf of Great Britain, took over Western Samoa from the Germans.

The Samoans were not prepared, either, for the indentured Chinese and Melanesian labourers 'imported' by Germany to work the plantations as the Samoans showed no desire to forsake their customary village life to become wage earners. German plantation interests claimed 19 percent of Samoa's land. During the German Samoa years, German planters produced copra, rubber and cocoa for export. They formed a planters' association that was licensed to import Chinese and Melanesian labourers, on three-year terms with provision for two-year renewals and compulsory repatriation.²⁴⁶ All Chinese and Melanesians without Samoan families, except for those who had Samoan wives and children, were eventually sent back. The indentured labour policy was one of economic expediency that some Samoans did not like and one that has become problematic for some Pacific nations.

²⁴⁵ *The long boats are much wider and longer than the two-seater canoes. A long boat can be built to carry up to 50 people. Long boat racing is a highlight of every independence anniversary celebration.*

²⁴⁶ *Logan to Liverpool, 27 October, 1914 In Boyd (Ibid) p. 116-117*

A most disastrous event in Samoan history

Another story of great impact was the disastrous influenza epidemic (briefly mentioned before), which hit Western Samoa in 1918, killing almost 25 percent of its population.²⁴⁷ The epidemic was directly attributed to the failure to quarantine the ship **Talune** on arrival from Auckland where the influenza was already raging. Lack of medical services and Samoan susceptibility to introduced diseases contributed to the heavy toll. Medical help was not available until a relief expedition arrived three weeks later from Australia. Foreign diseases had been the great destroyer in Samoa in the nineteenth century and the fear of epidemics, coupled with the belief that the Europeans were the cause of them, was widespread.

The survivors of the epidemic felt that the authorities could have prevented the disaster as the Americans did in American Samoa, and could have obtained more immediate medical relief from American Samoa. Logan, the New Zealand administrator in Western Samoa at the time, under great strain because there was no advice from New Zealand of any danger, had suffered severe criticism from American critics during the war years. He misunderstood an offer of help from the governor of American Samoa and closed down all wireless communication. After the epidemic, the Samoans requested a royal commission to investigate the circumstances leading to the epidemic. A petition was presented by the Samoans, requesting that Western Samoa be handed over to the United States or failing that, be administered directly under the Colonial Office but on no account by the Government of New Zealand. They had learnt from bitter experience that they could not stand-alone in the modern world, but they naturally preferred to look to the dignity and authority of a big power to protect them, not a small dominion. Provided they were left to live in their own way, it was in a sense immaterial whether their protector was Germany, Britain or the United States.²⁴⁸

The epidemic struck at a time when there was a debate going on about who would administer Western Samoa at the end of the First World War. A New Zealand military force led by Colonel Robert Logan on behalf of the British Government seized and

²⁴⁷ Boyd, (*Ibid*), p.119

²⁴⁸ Logan to Liverpool, 27 Dec. 1918, *Report of Samoan Epidemic Commission*, In *Samoa Times*, 13 Sept. 1919 In Boyd, (*Ibid*), pp.119-120

occupied the German colony in August 1914, and Logan became the administrator in Western Samoa pending a decision by the League of Nations. In 1919 New Zealand, much to Samoa's consternation (in the aftermath of the epidemic) was officially given a mandate to administer Western Samoa. The mandate was not formally conferred until December 1920, and the New Zealand Parliament could not pass the Samoa Act incorporating the Samoan Constitutional Order until its next session in November 1921. The Act did not finally come into force until May 1922. The long delay in introducing civil government and enacting a constitution meant that Samoa's affairs were in chaos. Although the delay was largely the fault of forces beyond New Zealand's control, the Samoans added it to their list of grievances against New Zealand.²⁴⁹

Logan discovered that the Samoans did not approve of the indentured labour system. Logan personally sympathized with such feelings and felt that it was his duty to help the Samoans 'to keep their race pure.' He sought and obtained British approval for a repatriation policy with short-term re-indentures to cope with labour needs and shipping difficulties.²⁵⁰ Tate succeeded Logan, who was repatriated to New Zealand and was not reappointed to administer Western Samoa, who was still reeling from the effects of the epidemic disaster. Like his predecessor, Tate showed a genuine concern for Samoan well being. In supporting a policy that aimed at the reasonable conservation of native interests, Tate advised the Samoans to, 'always go slow; do not go too fast.'²⁵¹

Whose history gets to be told? What type of history? The history of colonization, the history of assimilation, the history of resistance or the history of independence?

If the history of Samoa was never studied during my generation's schooling, how can we be critical of or learn from it? It is only now that I am able to be critical of what went on as I have become more and more aware of my own history. This study especially has done that for me. Awareness by Samoan children of their own history is important not only for an appreciation of who they are but more importantly of why they are what they are. History not only repeats itself, it continues to shape people's lives in various ways,

²⁴⁹ Gray to External, 16 Mar. 1920, In Boyd (ibid) p. 127.

²⁵⁰ Logan to Liverpool, 12 Apr. 1917, 14 July 1917, 15 Dec. 1917 In Boyd (ibid) pp. 117-118

²⁵¹ Tate, in a Speech to the Fono of Faipule, 16 March, In Boyd, (ibid), p.131.

not always of their own making but of what others, such as politicians, may see as appropriate.

I have learned from this bit of history that the Samoan people had generally led an unstable and insecure existence because of dramatic disruptions to their lives. They had to contend with several different cultures; their own, the church and the colonizers. While they were recovering from the onslaught of Christianity on their supposedly 'barbaric' and 'heathenistic' culture, they were thrust into the claws of three great powers, which unilaterally made the decision to partition them into two different colonies. Then some of their land was taken from them. It did not help when an influx of indentured labourers was suddenly imposed on them.

The First World War and the epidemic that wiped out many of their people must have been harrowing and threatening times. Stories of the latter disaster handed down by word of mouth to our generations will likewise be related to coming ones. Mass graves were dug, and bodies piled up because they were just thrown in. They were extremely sad and sorry sights. They passed on without the dignity of a proper burial. There was no one to do that when everyone was suffering. Some were 'hurried' to their deaths because there was not enough food to go round as the less affected, though weak, tried to gather some strength to cook food for the children and the elderly. My father was four years old then. He was born in 1914. In the village where his father was the pastor, a mass grave was dug not far from the pastor's house. He also became a pastor in this village for 14 years. A mound of lime indicates where the mass grave used to be. It is left well alone by superstitious people who would scare the hell out of any one that might do anything unbecoming to it.

The Samoans showed resilience in the midst of adversity. Even with the great reduction in their population, they survived to fight for their independence from colonialism, and became the first Pacific nation to do so. The history of Samoan education that I write about in Chapter Two tells of the struggles by Western Samoa for better education for her people as well as for political independence.

What happened to Samoan education while all that went on?

The missionaries and Samoan pastors carried on with the education of the Samoans, with intermittent disruptions. The First World War did not affect the people that much as it was being fought far away in Europe. The presence of the New Zealand troops in Samoa though might have been disconcerting. The influenza epidemic would have closed down the schools for quite some time. Because medical help did not arrive until three weeks later, the aftermath of the epidemic would have meant weeks or months of recuperation. It is inevitable that the education of Samoans had to be put on hold during these disastrous times. Partly because of those reasons, and others detailed in the previous chapter, Samoan education has always been in a 'catch up' mode, a mode that has become the norm for Samoan education up to now!

In Summary

The earlier section of the chapter highlights some of the **Fa'a Samoa** knowledge and skills that Samoan children acquire in their continual contacts with, and participation in, various **Fa'a Samoa** occasions. Reference is made also to an important component of Samoan indigenous education, that of legend telling, with a view to reviving it because it is now a thing of the past. Its educational implications, clearly, have spans with literacy learning in conventional schools. Critical thinking, greatly encouraged in the latter school, is nurtured and developed in legend telling.

The latter part of the chapter is a critical response to some crucial issues of Samoa's history. They are 'lived' experiences, and even though painful and bitter, they have social and moral implications for Samoan education. Samoan children need to know about their past in order to put their future in a better, or perhaps the right perspective and understanding.

Chapter Four

The historical development of the A'oga a le Faifeau

Introduction

The initial contact process between people of different cultures is extremely important, especially if one group of people is aiming to introduce its own culture into another. The process may involve either acceptance or resistance on the part of the receiving culture. It is extremely important also to introduce this chapter with a discussion of this initial contact process between the Samoans and the LMS missionaries because the consequent formation of the institution of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** depended on the success of this initial contact. Some of the important reasons behind this success are discussed below.

The Initial Contact

According to John Williams, the pioneer LMS missionary in Samoa, no other islands visited before by missionaries had offered a secure and peaceable settlement on the initial visit.²⁵² The initial contact between the Samoans and the LMS missionaries was peaceful, with no resistance. Historians Wright and Fry said that, "the reception of the missionaries in Samoa was exceedingly cordial and although a civil war was raging on the neighbouring island of **Upolu, Malietoa**, the leading chief, came in person to welcome them."²⁵³ Williams gives a generous account below of his first and most amicable meeting with the paramount chief **Malietoa** at his home in **Sapapalii** village:

We scarcely expected to secure any more than a safe and peaceable settlement for our teachers, and even that had not been obtained on the first visit at any other islands where missionaries had been previously established. In some places, indeed, the teachers landed at the peril of their lives and in almost all the Hervey Islands they were plundered and ill used, while here they were welcomed with open arms both by chiefs and by people who vied with one another in expressions of kindness and delight. Instead of losing their property, four excellent dwellings were given to them and the very best and largest house in the settlement was set apart for public worship and instruction. In addition to this, we ourselves were permitted to land in safety, and to live amongst the people not only without molestation and dread, but distinguished by every mark of their attention and respect and importuned by neighbouring chiefs to furnish them also with missionaries.²⁵⁴

²⁵² Williams, J, 1888, *Missionary Enterprises in the South-Sea Islands*, Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath School Work, Philadelphia, pp. 267-298

²⁵³ Wright, L and Fry, M I, 1936, *Puritans in the South Seas*, Henry Holt and Company, New York, p151

²⁵⁴ Williams, (Ibid), p. 267

The relatively peaceful contact between the Samoans and the first LMS missionaries, and the subsequent success of their mission, is not to be taken for granted though as a sign that the Samoans were 'totally' overpowered or overwhelmed. It is important to keep in mind that how this process was worked out, and its consequences for Samoa depended largely on the particular indigenous context in which it occurred. Resistance to, negotiation with and manipulation of external forces such as the missionaries and colonisers, meant that the subsequent social (including religious and educational) political and economic changes were not just imposed.²⁵⁵

Malietoa Vainuupo, Nafanua's prophecy and the LMS Missionaries

The paramount chief **Malietoa** is renowned in Samoa and in the writings about Christianity in the Pacific, as the man who accepted Christianity in Samoa. The story about his acceptance of the new religion in a most peaceful manner, owes its beginnings to a prophecy made by the Samoan war goddess and prophetess named **Nafanua**. The story goes that **Malietoa** was the last paramount chief to request from the war goddess a head for his government. When he finally went to her, she had already appointed all the heads to the other paramount chiefs. She then said to **Malietoa**, "**Tali i lagi se ao o lou malo**" (Await a head (ao) for your government from heaven). When John Williams arrived in **Savaii**, **Malietoa** was in **Upolu** fighting a war. He left for **Savaii** immediately, when he was told of the arrival of the LMS missionaries, on the premise that this was probably the head of his government from heaven, according to **Nafanua's** (the war goddess) prophecy.

Malietoa welcomed the LMS missionaries with open arms, and the Christian God became the head of his government. The honour accorded him as the paramount chief and how he was addressed were likewise bestowed upon the Christian God. The address, **Lau Afioga** (Your Highness) was given for the Christian God, while an address of lesser significance, **Lau Susuga**, he gave for himself. The pastors were thus given status as paramount chiefs, even though they were not to hold chiefly titles. They were to be addressed as '**ao o Fa'alupega**' (heads of all genealogies) or **feagaiga tau lagi** (heavenly

²⁵⁵ Coxon, E, Jenkins, K, Marshall, & L Massey, (Eds.), 1994, *The politics of Learning and Teaching in Aotearoa-New Zealand*, Dunmore Press, Palmerston North, pp. 180-214.

covenant). The pastor was to be seen as **O le sui vaaia o le Atua i le lalolagi** (God's representative on earth) and thus was to be served and revered.²⁵⁶

The success of the LMS mission can also be attributed to the following story. Even before Paramount Chief **Malietoa** had met with the LMS missionaries, negotiation had gone on in Tonga between them and **Fauea**, a Samoan **matai** Williams met when he arrived in Tonga in early August 1830.

While in Tonga: The Meeting with Fauea and his wife Puaseisei

Fauea was a **matai** from the village of **Sapapalii** in **Savaii**, which is also the village of **Malietoa**. **Fauea** and his wife **Puaseisei** went to Tonga by canoe and, being caught in strong winds, were stranded there. They stayed on for eleven years. John Williams was in fact on his way to Fiji via Tonga. His original travel itinerary was to go from Tonga to the Fiji Islands then to the New Hebrides (Vanuatu) and then to the Navigators' Group (Samoa).²⁵⁷ John Williams and Charles Barff, LMS missionaries, became acquainted with **Fauea** and his wife who, during their time in Tonga had converted to Christianity. A request made to Williams by the Wesleyan missionaries in **Tongatapu** to leave the Fiji Islands to them, plus **Fauea's** persistent persuasion of John Williams to go to Samoa first and William's own conviction that this was the Lord's will, were reasons enough to convince him to sail straight to Samoa.

²⁵⁶ Perhaps for many that do not know this story, it can be very difficult for them to understand why Samoan people accord so much honour and respect to their pastors. It was a tradition that indirectly began with **Nafanua's** prophecy and became manifest in the actual initial contact between the paramount chief **Malietoa** and the LMS missionaries, Williams and Barff. For the Samoan people who had been used to treating their paramount chiefs in such manner, it was just a matter of transferring their loyalty and allegiance to the pastors (the new paramount chiefs without **matai** titles). The same went for their relationship to their god **Tagaloa-a-lagi** and the Christian God. However, this relatively new high status of the Samoan pastor came with all the responsibilities and expectations that Samoans have of their paramount chiefs, plus his religious duties. The honoured position definitely does not make the Samoan pastor indispensable. Just as in the **Fa'a Samoa** practice, where the chief can be stripped of his title if the **aiga's** expectations of his obligations and responsibilities as the head of the **aiga** are not efficiently carried out, likewise the pastor is expected to perform accordingly. A 'fall' from a pedestal can be very painful and demeaning. Many Samoan pastors have experienced this. It is a fact of life and is like in any other career situation. Positions and statuses are only names and titles. More important are the good interactions and communications that should be nurtured between the individual pastor and his parishioners, and between the chief and members of his **aiga**. These make up the more important parts of living and develop the values that are more important.

²⁵⁷ Hutton, (Ibid), pp. 138-139. Samoa is known in many history books by the name, The 'Navigator Islands' conferred upon them by the French Navigator De Bougainville in 1768, by reason of the great number of canoes he observed flitting to and fro along the coast.

According to Hutton:

Fauea was very anxious that his countrymen should be instructed in the "new religion". He (**Fauea**) is represented as an exceptionally sensible and intelligent barbarian, actuated chiefly by motives of personal ambition and interest, but who, during his eleven years of expatriation, had learned to respect the spiritual and humanising influences of Christianity. His wife appears to have been a truly estimable woman, and a sincere Christian, and subsequently co-operated with the missionaries in a highly efficient manner. Those gentlemen, (Williams and Barff), it may well be imagined, were not a little pleased when **Fauea** asked permission to accompany them on their projected mission to his fellow-islanders, and they frankly admit that their early successes were largely due to his shrewdness and direction. For instance he counselled them to restrain their native teachers from premature denunciations of the Samoan pastimes and social usages.²⁵⁸

Fauea became a most important 'counsellor' for the missionaries. He warned them to tread slowly and carefully and not be too hasty in banning those Samoan practices that they might consider indecent and unchristian. Wright and Fry also refer to this warning by **Fauea** to the missionaries saying:

In order not to prejudice the Samoans against the white men's religion, **Fauea** the friendly chief who had returned from **Tongatapu**, warned the missionaries not to condemn at once the games and sports of the people; later when they had won the confidence of the Samoans, **Fauea** assured them they could increase their power and enforce laws against dancing, boat-racing and other iniquities. It was advice that was well heeded by the missionaries.²⁵⁹

While at Sea: On the way to Samoa

A mutual and 'reciprocal' relationship had developed between Williams and **Fauea**. Sailing to Samoa enabled **Fauea** to reach his own home in a more rapid and a much safer passage than he would have if he had to row his canoe back. Williams' account tells of how **Fauea**, though converted, was not as keen a Christian as his wife, but he wanted his people to have the new religion and its civilising influences. He wanted to show his own people his new 'life style' and knowledge of the gospel and the print literacy. **Fauea** might also have had political motives. As Wright and Fry said of him, "This chief had not accompanied the missionaries to Samoa for nothing, he proposed to rise to power through the missionaries' influence."²⁶⁰

²⁵⁸ Hutton, (*Ibid*) p.142

²⁵⁹ Wright and Fry, (*Ibid*) p.152

²⁶⁰ Wright and Fry, (*Ibid*), p.152

On the other hand, Williams had his own 'ulterior' motives. **Fauea** was a godsend to Williams for several reasons. He had heard of the altercation between the Samoans and La Perouse's crew when eleven were slain. **Fauea** would effect a more peaceful contact, him being a Samoan and a chief (**matai**). Williams found in **Fauea** a keen facilitator that would greatly assist his work in converting the Samoans to Christianity. **Fauea** being Samoan would provide a more convincing story and would effect a more rapid conversion of his own people. His outward appearance, a Samoan in **Palagi** clothes, and with knowledge of **Palagi** education as well as owner of **Palagi** goods, was the role model to win over his own people. **Fauea's** long absence from home, his status as a **matai** as well as being a relative of **Malietoa**, would carry favour and respect among his own people.

Fauea's presence had certainly been a great help, to put it mildly. Williams interpreted all this as divine providence. Tippet in support of Williams said, "Who turned John Williams away from **Fiji** to go to Samoa? Who provided **Fauea**, the Samoan who was converted in **Tonga**, as a spokesman? Who directed that ship to Samoa at precisely the time they had no High Priest? Who opened the door to the converted Samoan to witness to his friends who thought he was lost? I believe the Lord was in this."²⁶¹ Whatever the reason, Williams was greatly impressed with **Fauea** and the decision to take him on board is made clear in how Williams described this Samoan **matai**:

In all our conversations with that individual we were impressed with his intelligence, shrewdness and good sense, but never more so than on the morning we arrived at the place of our destination, when he led us to a private part of the vessel and requested us to desire the teachers not to commence their labors among his countrymen by condemning their canoe-races, their dances, and other amusements to which they were much attached, lest in the very onset they should conceive a dislike to the religion which imposed such restraints. "Tell them, said he, "to be diligent in teaching the people, to make them wise and then their hearts will be afraid and they themselves will put away that which is evil. Let the 'word' prevail and get a firm hold upon them, and then we may with safety adopt measures which at first would prove injurious." Thus we were constrained to admire the goodness of God in providentially bringing to us an individual whose character and connections so admirably fitted him to advance the objects we had in view.²⁶²

²⁶¹ Tippet, (*Ibid*), p.8-9

²⁶² Williams, (*Ibid*)

During this trip **Fauea** related to Williams the story about the Samoan chief **Tamafainga**²⁶³ the 'devil', as he was referred to, because he terrorised the Samoans. This story (I wonder) if told earlier to Williams perhaps could have changed his mind. It was a strategy leaving this story until they were so close to Samoa. **Fauea** was determined that Williams would not be given any cause not to go to his home island, and perhaps **Fauea** also predicted that a bit of fear might assist Williams' loyalty to him. Although Williams found the information rather discouraging, there was no alternative but to proceed, in the belief that divine Providence would protect them.

On arrival in Samoa

Fauea directed the missionary ship "**Savali o le Filemu**"²⁶⁴ (The Messenger of Peace) to his own village of **Sapapalii** in **Savaii**, and consequently to his paramount chief **Malietao**. Nearing shore, people arrived in their canoes and **Fauea** asked them about **Tamafaiga** the 'devil' and was told that he was slain a few days before. As Williams reported:

Fauea asked a variety of questions, to all of which he received satisfactory answers. At length, with a tremulous voice, as if afraid to hear the reply, he said, "And where is **Tamafainga**?" "Oh," shouted the people, with evident delight, "he is dead, he is dead! He was killed only about ten or twelve days ago." Frantic with joy at this unexpected intelligence, **Fauea** leaped about the vessel and ran toward me, shouting, "**Ua mate le Devolo, ua mate le Devolo!**" etc. ("the devil is dead, the devil is dead! Our work is done: the devil is dead"). Astonished at this singular exclamation, I inquired what he meant, when he replied, "The obstacle we dreaded is removed, **Tamafainga** is dead; they have killed him. The people now will receive the **lotu** (religion)" From this intercourse we were convinced that **Fauea** was really a chief, for his countrymen addressed him as such, the common people kissed his hands and the chiefs saluted him by rubbing noses.²⁶⁵

The death of **Tamafaiga** was great news to the LMS missionaries. It could not have happened at a more opportune time for them. The Samoans had not had time to choose **Tamafaiga's** successor who, according to Williams, would have put up some resistance to their mission.

²⁶³ The name **Tamafainga** is spelled without the *n* before the *g* in the Samoan language and books written in Samoan. While English writing of other Polynesian languages such as Maori and Rarotongan used *ng* rather than *g* alone this was not the case in the introduction of spelling in Samoan. I refer to this later in the chapter with the discussion of the Samoan alphabet.

²⁶⁴ **Savali o le Filemu** is the translation of the name of the missionary ship, Messenger of Peace. Messenger=**savali**, filemu=peace

²⁶⁵ Williams, (*Ibid*)

Fauea amongst his own people

At the time of their arrival, **Malietao** was fighting a war in **Upolu** to avenge the slaying of **Tamafaiga** to whom he was related. While a message was dispatched to **Malietao** in **Upolu** about the arrival of the LMS missionaries in **Savaii**, **Fauea** became the indispensable guide and liaison person for the missionaries. He was already negotiating with his own people, trying to convince them to accept the new religion. **Fauea** gave a persuasive speech, which must have given his Samoan brethren hope for a future in peace and harmony with Christianity. As **Fauea** said:

Can the religion of these wonderful **papalangis**²⁶⁶ (foreigners) be anything but wise and good?" said our friend to his naked countrymen, who had filled the deck and who with outstretched necks and gaping mouths were eagerly catching the words as they fell from his lips. "Let us look at them, and then look at ourselves. Their heads are covered while ours are exposed to the heat of the sun and the wet of the rain; their bodies are clothed all over with beautiful cloth, while we have nothing but a bandage of leaves around our waist; they have clothes upon their very feet while ours are like the dogs. And then look at their axes, their scissors and their other property! How rich they are!" They all appeared to understand and appreciate this reasoning and gazed on us with great interest and surprise. Some of them began to examine the different parts of our dress, when not meeting with any repulse one pulled off my shoe. Startled at the appearance of my foot with the stocking on, he whispered to **Fauea**, "What extraordinary people these **papalangis** are! They have no toes as we have." "Oh," said our facetious friend, "did I not tell you that they had clothes upon their feet? Feel them and you will find that they have toes as well as ourselves."²⁶⁷

Fauea desperately wanted this new 'life' for his people. He had been away for such a long time and what better way than to arrive in a white man's ship dressed in white man's clothes. The story goes that when they reached shore, **Fauea** was quite an attraction because his people thought he was lost, and now that he had come home there was much rejoicing. But he also came back a 'converted' man. He had befriended the white man and his people were keen to find out what had happened to him and his wife **Puaseisei** while they were away. Everyone wanted to listen. Everyone wanted to know.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁶ *Papalagi* means sky bursters – *Papa*=burst, *lagi*=sky or heaven-It is the name given to Europeans/white foreigners

²⁶⁷ Williams, (*Ibid*)

²⁶⁸ Hutton, (*Ibid*), p.143

The meeting with Malietoa in his home

When **Malietoa** finally arrived from **Upolu** he was taken to the ship. He met **Fauea** and the LMS missionaries and invited them to his home. During this meeting Williams put a formal request to **Malietoa** for the Christian mission to be carried out amongst the Samoan people. The paramount chief gave his official consent with grace and favour. The missionaries then gave him gifts, which he accepted with much gratitude. According to Williams:

We then desired one of our people to open a basket and place before the two chiefs the articles we had brought as a present. The scene that followed both amused and delighted us, for as soon as the articles were laid out, the chief took up an axe and placing it upon his head exclaimed, "**Fa'afetai le toi tele**" (Thank you for this large axe). Having observed the same ceremony with every other article, he concluded by saying, "Thank you for all! Thank you for all!" He then said that, "delighted as he was with his valuable present, he thought far more of us than our gift – that, though he was always a great man, yet he felt himself a greater man that day than ever he was before, because two great English chiefs had come to form his acquaintance and bring him good." "This," continued the delighted chieftain, "is the happiest day of my life, and I rejoice that I have lived to see it. In future I shall consider ourselves and you as **ainga tasi** (one family) and hope you will do the same."²⁶⁹

The missionaries were more than pleased. Not only were they given the much sought official consent from **Malietoa**, they were treated like royals, given houses, sleeping mats, food, Samoan kindness and hospitality. The teachers to be left behind were promised protection also and were to stay with the paramount chief himself and his brother. So began a 'phenomenon' that spread like the 'proverbial' fire, which brought revolutionary changes to the life of the Samoan people.

In Summary

Five main factors were crucial in Samoa's ready acceptance and the subsequent rapid expansion of Christianity, and formal education in the islands. Some of those factors also have very important educational and psychological implications especially in the case of **Fauea**.

²⁶⁹ Williams, (*Ibid*)

First, and not necessarily in order of importance, there was the prophecy of a head for **Malietao's** government, as said above, from heaven, which the paramount chief saw the LMS missionaries as its fulfilment.

Second, there was **Fauea** a Samoan **matai** related to **Malietao**, brought by Williams from Tonga, and who acted as liaison person between Williams and the Samoans. **Fauea** negotiated first with the LMS missionaries and later with his Samoan brethren on arrival. He was the catalyst in the bringing together of the Samoans and the missionaries. He was also a good role model for his fellow Samoans. He instructed his people by posing as an example, appearing outwardly dressed in **Palagi** clothes. First impressions and appearances are lasting experiences. Starting with what the learner is familiar with, then moving on, gradually introducing more difficult and unfamiliar content, such as the gospel and the print literacy. This is an important educational strategy.

Fauea was Samoan, a relatively familiar face that the Samoans identified with. Starting with something interesting and captivating would create and develop the interest in the learner to want more. **Fauea** and his wife definitely captured the interest of their people. All those stories about how other islanders were converted, and were communicating without the need to leave home, is captivating 'stuff' for a person who had never experienced it. Fauea was also very convincing. Williams quotes Fauea as possessing 'fluency of speech as would rivet the attention of listening multitudes for hours together and always secure him the victory in a dispute.'

The introduction of a lesson is a critical time in teaching. Fauea instructed the missionaries to "Go slow" so as to allow time for the learner to be oriented to the new material. If the learning conditions are right the child will learn.

Third, the missionaries made good impressions on the Samoans on initial contact. First impressions are very important and often lasting. When **Malietao** and his entourage visited the LMS ship, they were enamoured of the goods and gifts of the **Palagi** and these might well have whetted their appetites for things 'foreign'.

Fourth, it was an opportune time to arrive not long after the death of **Tamafaiga** who 'terrorised' the Samoans, as **Fauea** described to Williams. The new religion promised hope and peace for a people who had lived in fear and insecurity, especially also with civil wars such as the one that **Malietoa** was involved in when the missionaries arrived.

The fifth and last factor points to the fact that there were **Fa'a Samoa** practices that could be described as the pre-contact preparation for the relatively new way of life. Although Williams would put it down to divine Providence, the Samoans were in many ways quite prepared to fit in and adapt to the Christian religion, and the print literacy education because the new ways connected with some aspects of the **Fa'a Samoa**.

The first four factors were most important especially during the initial contact. They are also quite explicit and obvious as they were more 'physically' and personally experienced. While those factors might have set the precedent to be followed by many other Samoans later on, it was the last and relatively more implicit factor that was the force behind the effective continuity and rapid expansion of Christianity and 'civilisation' in Samoa. That is, some of the social, political, and religious conditions in Samoa made for a smoother and more congenial spread of the new ways and practices, because the former connected in some ways, with the latter. This entails the occurrence of the educational and psychological process of 'incorporation' as advocated by McNaughton, which I discussed in Chapter One. The process essentially involves 'building on the familiar' by incorporating children's out-of-school experiences with conventional school experiences.²⁷⁰

Pierson refers to those factors as, "historical contextual conditions" which he describes as the key element in new movements of renewal and expansion. He explained that there are, for example, certain times when the contextual conditions are right, so that when new alternatives are introduced, they will be received and incorporated without much resistance. He also argued that in the study of culture change, it is recognised that change comes as a result of the interaction between advocates from outside of culture, whose

²⁷⁰ McNaughton, 2002, (*Ibid*), p. 27.

message presents new alternatives and the innovators or implementers inside culture who accept the new alternatives and consequently seek to implement the desired changes.²⁷¹

One of those more obvious conditions was the fact that one of Samoa's paramount chiefs had accepted the new religion first. It was a political move by the LMS missionaries to include **Fauea** in their plans, who in turn introduced them to his paramount chief **Malietoa** who, once converted, would induce his people to follow suit. Williams was able to secure a base and the subsequent expansion of the LMS mission by seeking the patronage of the paramount Samoan chief **Malietoa**. This was the outcome as desired. An old Samoan adage that originated from this, which Samoan orators have used since to refer to how **Malietoa** was a role model for his people goes: '**O lau susuga Malietoa e te afio i lou nofoa vaevaeloloa, na Fa'alogi iai Samoa.**' (Your 'Highness' **Malietoa**, you are seated on your high throne, and the Samoan people listened and obeyed you). This is said in reference to the Samoans' ready acceptance of Christianity because their chief set the example, which his people followed.

There were also some parallels between the indigenous Samoan religious beliefs and cultural practices, and the missionaries'. Already there were similar Samoan frameworks and 'moulds' that could accommodate the constructs of the new religion and education system. In other words, the 'historical contextual conditions' in Samoa provided a favourable 'climate' in which to sow the seeds of Christianity and 'civilisation'. Those favourable conditions paved the way for the peaceful contact between the Samoans and the LMS missionaries and the subsequent rapid expansion of their mission. It was also the human psychologist at work; if the political leaders were converted first their subjects would naturally follow. This was the outcome as desired.

Taase details these important 'contextual conditions' in his thesis and I include the following information concerning Samoa's religious beliefs to support my foregoing argument of the contextual conditions, which **Taase** also includes in his writing in greater detail. In the general introduction in Chapter One, I referred to **Taase's** study of the history of our Samoan church as the most complete and comprehensive to date. His study

²⁷¹ Pierson, P, 1994, *Dismantling the welfare state? Reagan, Thatcher and the politics of retrenchment*, Cambridge University, England, In Kraft, 1994 pp. 422-480

contributes much to this chapter in particular to the following discussion of Samoan religious issues.²⁷²

Samoa's Religious Beliefs

Taase defines religion as habits and behaviours that have to do with the supernatural. He said that religion permeated all facets of Samoan life, and that Samoa had its own creation story, its beliefs in life after death, and its own rites and rituals, prayers and worship and priests that carried them out. According to Taase, almost every form of Samoan behaviour, practice and custom and visual art form had religious connotations and their worldview was also a reflection of their religious beliefs.²⁷³

Every culture has its own creation stories as well as its own supernatural and religious beliefs, and Samoa is no different. Although the Biblical Genesis story about Adam and Eve has now become the more accepted creation story by the Christianised Samoans, Samoa had its own traditional one about their God, **Tagaloa-a-lagi** or **Tagaloa** of the ten heavens. The religious awareness and sense of the supernatural in the life of the Samoans was a good preparation for the work of the missionaries. The fact that they believed in the gods, especially the one Great Supreme Being of heaven they called **Tagaloa (Tangaroa)**, provided a good basis for and transition to the basic beliefs which the missionaries brought, of a faith in the one great God of heaven. There were rituals, the prayers, the offerings, the discernment of the will of gods through observations in nature and the things that occur in life. There were religious practitioners, the **matai**, and the special priests. The missionaries would have no difficulty introducing these elements because similar factors already existed as part of Samoa's own religion.²⁷⁴

The Samoans also had beliefs in life after death. Like many other Polynesian people they had a firm and distinct belief in the immortality of the soul. The Samoans believed that the **agaga**, "the soul" or "spirit" would leave the body when a person passed away. If a person died of unnatural causes, the **agaga** would remain wondering on the earth, haunting the living until it was freed by rituals performed by the living. The souls of

²⁷² Taase, (*Ibid*), pp.62-67

²⁷³ Taase, (*Ibid*)

²⁷⁴ Taase, (*Ibid*)

those who departed naturally, however, immediately embarked upon their journey to the land of the spirits at **Pulotu** in the village of **Falealupo**, on the western end of **Savai'i**.²⁷⁵

In special occasions when chiefs come together in council or during their frequent social occasions in the villages, a **kava** ceremony is usually performed. It is especially made elaborate when the village welcomes visitors to their midst. When a chief is served, he will hold up the cup before the assembly, pour out a small portion of **kava** from the cup and declare for everyone to hear,

This is kava for you O God
Be present with us and help us as we fellowship
As we have met in good health and happiness
We may also part in peace²⁷⁶

The small portion, poured out is the libation²⁷⁷ to the gods, which accompanied the petition for favours. This idea of a sacrificial offering out of the common things in life is recognition of the omnipresence of the gods and man's responsibility of recognising that presence in everyday life. Thus, whenever people gathered, whether in councils or in ceremonies of exchanges, the **inati**, "portion", for the priests and hence the gods was taken before everyone else's.²⁷⁸ I make brief reference to this also in Chapter One.

In another practice for example when the village **fono** (council) came together to sit in judgment for criminal acts, the **tautoga** (confession by swearing by something) was used in Samoa to invoke a confession from a person, guilty of committing a crime or sin for which no suspect had been apprehended. There were two forms of this ceremony; the ordinary **tautoga** and the **tautoga oti**, "confession of death". The ordinary **tautoga** would be performed as often as there were reports of stealing, of untoward behaviour like shouting in the village under cover of night, of **moetolo**, "unlawful entry" into another family's house for the purpose of having sexual relations with a young woman in the house. When the council of chiefs could not coerce confessions by questions, a **tautoga** was called for. An object, the incarnation of the village god, like a cup, a bowl, a conch shell, would be laid in the house in front of the chief.' All the young men of the village

²⁷⁵ *Taase, (Ibid)*

²⁷⁶ *Taase, (Ibid)*

²⁷⁷ *Taase, (Ibid)*

²⁷⁸ *Taase, (Ibid)*

would be called one by one into the house. Each would hold the incarnation of the god in his hands and swear his innocence on pain of injury, and even death. When Christianity came, people were required to swear by the bible.²⁷⁹

All Samoan behaviour and action was sanctioned and conditioned by the religious understanding that the gods controlled everything that occurred in life. Favour and good fortune were the consequences of maintaining good relations with the gods while misfortune and disfavour resulted from insensitivity to and treating gods with contempt. They rationalized that the gods gave them everything, their land, their political and social systems, their food, their riches, and even their sacred relationships. Their religious beliefs sanctioned their actions in war or peace, in fishing or working on the plantation, and in the way they treated elders, women and their kings. When the Samoans met the fair skinned **papalagi**, "sky bursters", as they called the Europeans, and marvelled at the strange technological objects they brought, the Samoans could only reason with their basic worldview assumptions. Thus **Malietoa Vainu'upo** when shown a pocket watch marvelled and declared that, "...it must have been made by the new God as no mortal could have framed so curious an article."²⁸⁰

The Samoan Art of Legend-telling, a Prerequisite to 'Reading Readiness'

The **Fa'a Samoa** practice of legend telling was an integral part of the education of the Samoan child. It is not much different from bedtime story telling today except that the latter is helped along by storybooks. Because of the great significance of this **Fa'a Samoa** pedagogy, I am reiterating here that the legend-telling process can create a schema that promotes reading readiness and encourages the development of semantic resources in children. When print literacy was introduced to the Samoans, those schemata for literacy created by the legend-telling process were already in place to facilitate the learning of the three Rs. The transferring of these skills to learning reading and writing would have helped many Samoan people to quickly learn the skills of the print literacy. This could be one reason why the missionaries found the Samoans a most enthusiastic

²⁷⁹ *Taase, (Ibid)*

²⁸⁰ *Taase, (Ibid), p.76*

and fast group of learners as those literacy skills acquired in learning about the **Fa'a Samoa** stories would have had spans with the print literacy skills.

Naturally the novelty of the new process, curiosity and the acquisition of any benefits from the new practices would also have something to do with this reported 'over-eagerness'. The zest for learning was boundless. From an education standpoint, the Samoan people's states and conditions of mind and thought were prepared in advance for the relatively new literacy, so much so that it was reported in 1920,²⁸¹ when the New Zealand administration took over the control of the schools from the pastors, that Samoa had a high literacy rate (over 80%) in the basics at least.

People were so keen that they travelled long distances to learn to read and write. Williams, who was at the centre of it all, experienced this enthusiasm in Samoans for the print literacy. He expressed this in his tribute to **Fauea** saying:

Facts so well attested and so forcibly described (by **Fauea**) had immense weight with the natives. Of this we had an interesting proof. When they were told by **Fauea** that those who had embraced this religion could communicate their thoughts to one another at a distance and while residing even at a remote island, they flocked to the teachers' houses to learn this mysterious art, many of them coming eight or ten miles each day to be taught their letters.²⁸²

Aiono, in her latest book written in Samoan, wrote of the LMS missionaries' experience of people who converted to Christianity because they wanted so much to learn and become skilled in the art of reading and writing and not necessarily to embrace the new religion.

O le iloa Fa'aA'oga le Pi Faitau, o le isi poto, agavaa faigata lea. O le molimau a misionare, o le agai mai i le 1836 na matua tino u tagata Samoa ina ia latou iloa faitau le Pi Faitau, sosoo ai ma lo latou fia iloa tusitusi. E iai isi Fa'amaumauga o le vaiata lea (sefuluiva senetenari) o lo o aumai ai le manatu, e iai le vaega o tagata na liliu i le Lotu Kerisiano, ona o le fia iloa ma popoto i tusitusi ma faitautusi a e le na o le fia avea ma kerisiano. (The knowledge of how to use the alphabet is a special ability or expertise, a difficult skill. According to the missionaries, towards the year 1836, Samoan people were intensely devoted to learning how to read and write. Other records about this time (during the nineteenth century) postulated that a group of people converted to Christianity in order to learn and to become proficient in reading and writing and not only to become Christians).²⁸³

²⁸¹ Rowe, 1930 (*Ibid*) p.46

²⁸² Williams, J, 1888, *Missionary Enterprises in the South-Sea Islands*, Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath School Work, Philadelphia, pp. 267-298

²⁸³ Aiono, (*Ibid*) p. 34.

There is also the story of the Samoan man who occasionally 'canoed' from **Tutuila** (Eastern Samoa) to **Savaii** (Western Samoa), a long and treacherous journey, to get some religious education from the 'native' teachers left behind by Williams. During Williams' first visit in 1830, he left without visiting any of the Eastern Islands of Samoa. In 1832 on his second visit, he called first to the Eastern Samoa Islands of **Manu'a** and **Tutuila** before going on to the Western Islands, **Upolu** and **Savaii**. Word of his first visit, and the work of the indigenous teachers Williams left behind, spread quickly. This surprised Williams himself who did not think the Eastern Samoa Islanders could, in the two years he had left the teachers, be converted so soon. This was especially the case given the simple means of transport and the long distance between **Tutuila** and **Savaii**. As the man excitedly said to Williams on his first arrival in **Tutuila**:

That is my canoe, in which I go down to the teachers (in **Savaii**) and get some religion, which I bring carefully home and give to the people; and when that is gone, I take my canoe again and fetch some more. And now you are come, for whom we have been so long waiting, where's our teacher? Give me a man full of religion, that I may not expose my life to danger by going so long a distance to fetch it.²⁸⁴

The early history of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** is very interesting and the events certainly promoted and expanded the cause of the LMS as well as formal education. It is also very important to look at Williams' background and the origins of LMS. These have particular significance because they have their own story to tell about why and how Williams and the LMS missionaries sailed to the South Seas. As the analogy of the Samoan proverb in the previous chapter presumed, 'there is a cause and reason for everything.' (The coconut tree does not necessarily sway unless a wind blows).

The Origins of the London Missionary Society (LMS)

The Historical setting for discovery, exploration and evangelisation

The Industrial Revolution

Two important processes gave rise to the growth of The London Missionary Society. These were the Industrial Revolution and the development of the social classes in England. The exact starting point of the Industrial Revolution is a subject of debate by

²⁸⁴ Williams, (*Ibid*), p. 270

economic historians. It is generally held that the Industrial Revolution was preceded by revolutions in almost all areas of life in pre-industrial England; in population, in agriculture, in commerce and the manufacturing industries, in the roles of labour, of capital and banks. These revolutions provided not only the changes, which encouraged separation from the old methods but also started and sustained growth towards industrialisation.²⁸⁵

As a result of the Industrial Revolution, especially with the discovery of iron and coal, there was increased wealth, the growth of commerce and urbanisation increased, agriculture and industry became increasingly mechanised, health and education greatly improved, and more money was available for investment, discovery, exploration and evangelisation of the 'heathens', including the Pacific Islands.

It was also a time of new discoveries outside of England as methods of transport, communications and navigation increasingly improved. Sailors explored new oceans and came home with tales of people with strange customs and languages. Captain Cook had explored the Pacific and his reports were printed in England. Carey read them and asked the question – "We have found new seas and new races of people who had never heard of Christ, What does this mean to Christian people to whom God has committed the Gospel in our day? What does the Great Commission mean for the Missionary Society (WMS) and the Church Missionary Society (CMS)?"²⁸⁶

British Society and the Development of Social Classes

English society of the time was described by Perkin²⁸⁷ as an aristocracy, a hierarchical society in which men took their places in an accepted order of precedence, a pyramid stretching down from a tiny minority of the rich and powerful through an even larger and lesser wealth and power to the great mass of the poor and powerless. At the top of the pyramid were the aristocrats of noble birth, such as the sovereigns and peers, the dukes, the barons, the earls and viscounts. They were also the owners of huge land estates like

²⁸⁵ *Taase, (Ibid), p.80-87*

²⁸⁶ *Tippett, (Ibid), p.3*

²⁸⁷ *Perkin, H J, 1969, The Origins of modern English Society 1780-1880, Routledge and K Paul, London. p. 17*

mini kingdoms and magnificent mansions in the country where their land was. Below those were the gentry who owned land, but who through their accumulated wealth from trade and industry bought their way into the high echelons of society. These classes controlled the government as hereditary members of the House of Lords and elected members of Parliament.

Occupying the middle ranks of the pyramid was a wide range of people collectively called the middle ranks. These included those engaged in agriculture, like the yeomen, those involved with industry and commerce like the merchants and manufacturers and those employed as professionals like engineers, lawyers and the clergy. This rank was distinguished from the nobility by lower and earned, rather than inherited income. At the base were the lower orders in which the artisans, the country poor and the miserable were classed. The poor working classes were distinguished by very low or no income at all. They depended on the charity and generosity of the rich for work and food.

The division of society into ranks was defended with the argument that it was the 'Architect of the Universe' who distributed men into different ranks and at the same time united them in society. By divine degree rather than by human contrivance, the poor, the greater part of society, were placed under the superintendence and patronage of the rich.²⁸⁸ As previously discussed, Hannah More a missionary who taught the children of the coal miners in England during the late 18th century held such a view and said that the social order was beautiful when each person according to their place paid willing honour to their superiors, when high, low, rich and poor sat down satisfied with their own place. She argued that this was where religious doctrine came in, because it taught that the existing social order was God's will and plan.²⁸⁹

The Evangelical Missionaries in the Post Industrial Revolution

The Industrial Revolution brought changes especially to the poor people's way of life. They became increasingly less reliant on the nobles and landed gentry for work. The industries offered them better deals and if they worked hard and saved they could better

²⁸⁸ Briggs, A, 1959, *The Age of Improvement*, Longmans, London, p.89.

²⁸⁹ More, In Lankshear and Lawler, (*Ibid*), p.5

their lot. This was the beginning of a "working class consciousness" when the lower class rose above their poverty line to a working class status, and kept rising in the social hierarchy to middle class status as long as they worked hard, saved enough to get a good education and increased their wealth.

The bulk of the Evangelical missionaries to the South Seas with few exceptions, according to Gunson, belonged to the lower middle classes. He argued that even though their origins were sometimes very humble, they were quickly drawn into middle classes because they began to acquire skills, began to save and they cultivated middle-class attitudes. They were not content to remain labourers. Gunson said the best word with class connotations that described them, but which has now lost its 19th century meaning, was the word 'mechanic'. The early 19th century was very much the age of the mechanic class, the latest addition to the lower ranks of the middle classes.²⁹⁰

The goal of respectability, so long the prerogative of the middle classes of the 17th and 18th centuries, was postulated as an ideal for those who had been less fortunate in their birth but who had the character to rise above their origins. In one sense, the Evangelical Revival was responsible for this social emancipation of the lower classes. Evangelical religion had a greater appeal to the labouring man and simple artisan than had the Puritan 'revival' to the 'lower orders'. The emphasis of the Revivalists on the right use of time and on stewardship was naturally compatible with the attempt to move into another social scale. Men accepted their social vocation very much as a task imposed by a higher religious discipline. If a man was a steady, industrious worker he might be regarded as one favoured in the sight of the Lord, and his outward well-being, provided he had faith, would show that he had attained the perseverance of the saints. Religion, in being applied to business life, the Protestant work ethics, had come to make rules for it. The effect of this doctrine of the calling on the missionaries was not only to confirm them in their own vocation, but also to give them a more exalted opinion of the dignity of labour and the rightness of trade. It gave them the feeling that material prosperity would be conducive to good living and a proof of spiritual progress.²⁹¹

²⁹⁰ Gunson, N, 1978, *Messengers of Grace: Evangelical Missionaries in the South Seas 1797-1860*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 31-39

²⁹¹ Gunson, (Ibid) p. 38

In summary, with the development of industrialisation and the spread of scientific knowledge in the 16th century, people in Europe especially were driven to explore and investigate lands for different reasons.²⁹² There was the scientific motive for exploration. Out of curiosity people wanted to know more about the earth, the origins of man, other lands and people and so on. Captain Cook was sent by the British Navy to discover the Great South Land that lies between South America and South Africa. Because of economic motives, people wanted to sell and buy surplus goods and to acquire more wealth by trade. The Dutch were eager to develop their trade so Abel Tasman was sent to discover new lands where spices and precious metals could be found.

People with political motives wanted power, to rule over more people, to make their countries and empires more powerful. Europeans were able to invent new weapons and later gunpowder. Power was increased and it became easier to overcome new found lands and add them to their empires. Some people also had religious motives and felt it was their God given duty to spread the gospel to the 'heathens'. For the above reasons the Pacific was discovered, explored and colonised. According to Wallerstein,²⁹³ from the 16th century onwards, a "World System" had developed which was a series of economic and political connections stretching across the globe. The Pacific region was not drawn into this World System until the 18th century.

Before the arrival of the first Europeans, Samoa's knowledge of the outside world extended only to nearby islands inhabited by people whose social and cultural attainments were similar to their own. For example, Samoa sent parties to Tonga and vice versa, to secure fine mats and other goods, to contract marriages or to wage war. Samoan and Tongan legends, oral traditions, names and descendants of both islands go back for many generations. Some of the Samoan **matai** titles originated in Tonga. Samoa also received and assimilated settlers from other islands like Wallis and Futuna and Fiji. There are Samoan legends that tell stories of these contacts. There is a village in **Savaii**, the big island that lays claim to the 'spiritual' presence of **Tui Fiti**²⁹⁴ amongst them even today.

²⁹² Tippet, A R, 1977, *The Deep Sea Canoe : The Story of Third World Missionaries in the South Pacific*, William Carey, California, p.3.

²⁹³ Wallerstein, I, 1979, *The Capitalist World Economy*, Cambridge University Press, England.

²⁹⁴ **Tui Fiti** or **Tuifiti** – **Tui**=King/royal/paramount chief. **Fiti**=Fiji. The story goes that every time there is a collection of mats, food, and even today of money, there is always something extra. If for example, in this village there are 21 **matai**, and each has to contribute a dollar for something, the total usually comes to

If there were any changes because of these interactions, they were minor and slow paced, and more evolutionary than revolutionary. Any major and dramatic changes came about with contact with the Europeans in the 19th century. The missionaries, especially of the London Missionary Society, first brought about these more dramatic changes. The arrival of the LMS missionaries marked the steady beginnings of the Christian era in the life and history of the people of Samoa. It also marked the inevitable development of the encounter with western civilisation and culture.²⁹⁵

The London Missionary Society (LMS) in Samoa: Its Beginnings

The LMS is a Protestant interdenominational body formed in 1795 in the Savoy Hotel in London. According to **Aiono**, she did not find any record of the Society's original constitution or philosophy. What was foremost in the minds of the Board of Directors of the Society was to send out missionaries to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the four corners of the globe. A set of instructions from the Board of Directors was given to the missionaries. I make reference to these instructions also in Chapter 1.

In compliance with the instructions from the LMS Board of Directors, the missionaries first of all learned the languages so they could speak, write, and communicate in the indigenous languages of the respective societies they worked with. The effects of educational policy decisions made during the early period of the missionaries' work are still being felt today. One of these policies had important implications for the Samoan language. The Samoan alphabet was developed and Samoan Readers were soon printed and used in missionary schools. These resources are still being used today. Copies of these are documented in Chapter Eight.

The LMS influence in the South Seas began in 1796 when its missionary ship took missionaries to Tahiti, Tonga and the Marquesas. This was the first group of missionaries that arrived in the Pacific Islands. It was not until the 1820s and thereafter however that

\$22.00, and no one claims to have given the extra dollar. They usually say it is Tui Fiti's contribution. The village always reserves a seat for Tui Fiti in their fono (meetings), in the belief that he would be there even if they cannot see him. The story goes (way back) that one Tui Fiti swam all the way from Fiji to Samoa seeking the hand of a Samoan maiden for marriage.

²⁹⁵*Tanielu, (Ibid) p2*

missionary work became more prolific, especially with John Williams as the leading missionary. Williams was neither a scholar nor a scientist, but he brought with him to his work in Samoa in 1830 his wealth of experience acquired in his work with the Society Islands (Tahiti) and Rarotonga.²⁹⁶

After the Initial Contact

After the successful initial contact, Williams and Barff left the eight 'native' teachers from Tahiti and Rarotonga with **Fauea** and **Malietoa** after three weeks in Samoa. It was the responsibility of the native teachers to spread their knowledge and understanding of Christianity amongst the Samoans and thus prepare the ground for white missionaries to follow later on. Williams visited them in 1832, and Barff and Aaron Buzacott, from the LMS Mission in **Rarotonga**, visited in 1834.

The word spread quickly and in no time it had reached the four corners of Samoa. Within two years of Williams' first visit to one part of Samoa, the whole society was practically reached by the news of Christianity. Even the remotest one from **Savaii (Manu'a)** was not spared. In the absence of Williams or any **Palagi** missionary, **Fauea** the Samoan **matai** who converted to Christianity in Tonga, and the teachers from Tahiti and Rarotonga had done what they were left to do and more. The work of the LMS in Samoa in those two years (1830-1832) may be summed up by the story of the man who went to fetch 'some religion' for his people in **Tutuila**.

The quest for the new knowledge in Samoa was so great that people risked their lives, as the man in the story did, to receive it. **Savaii** is about 600 km from **Tutuila**, and is about 20 hours travel by boat. By canoe it would take about twice as much time. It is a dangerous journey in a small canoe, and to do it often would be quite a feat. People that go to **Savaii** from **Tutuila** today have to go to **Upolu** first. The way this man explained it is very touching and talked about religion like it was tangible wealth, "Get some religion which I bring carefully home and give it to the people, and when that is gone, I take my canoe again and fetch some more." A man all alone out in the deep blue sea carefully guarding his knowledge, making sure that his little canoe would not capsize or the

²⁹⁶ *Aiono, (Ibid), p.31*

knowledge would go to waste. He made it his calling and obligation, risking his life to fulfil it. If he had ulterior motives apart from a genuine concern that his people have this new knowledge, the story does not reveal. He laid down his life to acquire this for his people and such benevolent and noble reasoning is the most important human or Christian motive that any one can engage in.

In 1836, the LMS Mission in Samoa was established with the help of six missionaries from Britain, five of who were married.²⁹⁷ From this point onwards, according to Goodall,²⁹⁸ the history of Samoa became the story of a people's development from barbarism to civilization, chiefly through the impact of Christian missions. This statement by Goodall may be disputed, as it was from the earlier point when Williams and Barff and the native teachers first met with **Malietoa** that this history really began.

The Three R's Education: An Indispensable Feature of the LMS Work

Education was always a fundamental feature of the London Missionary Society work in Samoa. In order to achieve their goal of converting the Samoans to Christianity, the Samoans needed to know how to read and write so that they could understand the religion of the LMS missionaries. Educational activities were begun, not for their own sake, but in order that the Christian message might be understood and heeded. The ready response of the Samoans to the missionaries' evangelisation efforts, lead rapidly to the establishment of schools and classes. These not only provided the further opportunities to impart knowledge en masse, but were also places where the Samoans could also be taught some of the useful arts enjoyed by 'more advanced civilizations' such as reading, writing and arithmetic.²⁹⁹

In order to facilitate the spread of Christianity throughout Samoa, the missionaries engaged the help of Samoans willing to undertake teaching duties. These were selected from the more able students as assessed by the missionaries. Initially these teachers had little training and limited knowledge to impart but without them, missionary work would have been seriously impeded for many years since the missionaries were few in number

²⁹⁷ Carson, (*Ibid*), p.14

²⁹⁸ Goodall, (*Ibid*), p. 352

²⁹⁹ Carson, (*Ibid*)

and the Samoan people lived in many villages scattered throughout several islands. Under the missionaries' leadership, within six years, the number of schools introduced by the native teachers increased markedly from a mere handful to over two hundred.³⁰⁰ These early missionary schools were described as:

Primitive in methods, subjects and teachers, and above all in buildings. They did not aim very high either in scholastic standards, but they did blaze the trail for most of the modern educational systems.³⁰¹

Such were the humble beginnings of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. Christianity had brought dramatic changes to the Samoans' worldview and ideology and the resulting **A'oga a le Faifeau** was to become the most important agent of change in the training and education of future generations of Samoan children.

With the arrival of the permanent missionaries from London, each respective island, **Savaii, Manono, Upolu and Tutuila**, was divided into various mission stations each to be occupied by a **Palagi** missionary. Every **Palagi** missionary was given a Samoan name, for example, Mr Ellis was known by **Misi Elise**, Mr Newell as **Misi Neueli** and so on.

The Infant School System

John Williams had felt the need for more efficient training of the very young in the islands. During a stopover in Capetown in 1838, he took to Samoa Ebenezer Buchanan, a 'normal'³⁰² schoolmaster involved in infant school teaching. Dr Philip, a missionary in Africa who prioritised establishing first a theological seminary, tried dissuading Williams from carrying out his plans. Williams maintained that training in the infant school system was preferable to training received in a theological college and so took Ebenezer with him to Samoa. Williams looked to the future generation as the key to the success of Christian missions. The younger generation could be moulded to the desired ends. Ebenezer's father, James Buchanan was one of the pioneers of the Infant School System

³⁰⁰ Carson, (*Ibid*), p 8

³⁰¹ Northcott, G, 1980, *Glorious Company. One Hundred and Fifty Years Life and Work of the London Missionary Society, 1795-1945*, p 142.

³⁰² Carson, (*Ibid*), p. 120. A normal school was a Continental development, which was introduced into England in the nineteenth century. The term was used to denote a school specifically established to train students in the art of teaching and to provide them with practical experience in the classroom. A 'normal schoolmaster' was thus one who trained others in the art of teaching.

in England. Buchanan introduced the Infant School system in Samoa and other islands like **Tahiti** and **Rarotonga** and trained teachers to introduce infant schools in other Pacific Islands. His experience in teaching both European and native children and his familiarity with his father's teaching methods were of great benefit to the LMS mission.³⁰³

Buchanan was assigned to establish an Infant Model School to which the missionaries sent people from different villages to train as infant school teachers. He began a very intensive programme at the LMS station at **Falealili**, about 40 kms south of **Apia**, where he conducted five schools each day, and gave his teaching instruction in English in the afternoon for two months. He was also employed in making 'arithmeticians' and lesson boards for the use of the schools. During his first year, twelve schools were established on **Upolu** and the same number on **Savaii**. He continued his duties of training infant school teachers and opening schools in **Samoa** until 1841 when he moved to **Tahiti** to set up similar schools there.³⁰⁴

In 1844, the year the Samoan Missionary Seminary was founded in **Malua**, Buchanan returned to Samoa. On his return he trained twelve young men in the Normal School at the LMS station at **Saluafata**, 30 kms east of **Apia**, in a course of reading, writing, arithmetic, astronomy, scripture and natural history. He made counting frames, blackboard and maps and other aids to teaching. He conducted a Normal School, a boarding school and an infant and day school in **Apia**.

The missionaries who were conducting the Theological Seminary at **Malua**, to give theological training to Samoan teachers though, did not appreciate Buchanan's good work. They tended to be jealous of Buchanan's separate institution and wanted the two merged at **Malua**. It was intended that Buchanan should join the staff at **Malua** but he decided to leave the mission and return to England.³⁰⁵ With Buchanan's departure, educational work in the LMS missions once again came under the more exclusive control of the ordained missionaries.

³⁰³ Gunson, (*Ibid*), p.121

³⁰⁴ Gunson, (*Ibid*), p. 43

³⁰⁵ Carson, (*Ibid*), p. 28

Buchanan's work was hampered by the lack of teaching resources. These had to be sent from London by boat and often arrived much too late and were not near enough for the number of children that needed them. Carson referred to these difficulties saying:

Following requests from Buchanan the LMS Board of Directors sent out supplies of materials and Infant School lessons, but they were inadequate to the need and so long in arriving that Buchanan must have wondered if education really was as important to the Directors as they claimed. The pleas from Samoa for more people like Buchanan who could set up model schools on the British and Foreign School design or the Infant School System appeared to go unheeded yet the Directors saw Buchanan's work as one essential means under the Divine blessing, for elevating the social and moral character of the people.³⁰⁶

Buchanan brought to the educational scene in Samoa valuable experience and skills in a specialised area. Labouring under many difficulties he sought to impart both knowledge and training and thereby laying a solid foundation for the advancement of Samoan education and no doubt of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. His work gave the village school teachers the much-needed knowledge that formed the basis of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** infant syllabus.

The educational work of the missionaries was 'dogged' by problems of the lack of teaching resources as well as trained teaching personnel right from the beginning. While the 'native' teachers had done the foundation work, those resources were not forthcoming in a manner as to satisfy the quest for knowledge of the Samoan people. The original enthusiasm and pride in learning to read and write that were there in the beginning began to wane in the wake of these problems. Buchanan's good efforts were thwarted by these very same problems as referred to earlier in the discussion of his work.

Despite the many requests to the Society's Directors for supplies and teachers, adequate support could not be offered from the LMS Directors in London for several reasons. The Society was dependent on the generosity of its supporters for its financial income and there was never enough money to satisfy all the demands of the missionaries since the limited finances had to be spread among many missions and not just those in the South Seas. There were also just not enough schoolmasters coming forward for overseas service to fill all the requests for teachers. Furthermore, India and China, with such large

³⁰⁶ Carson, (*Ibid*), p. 28

populations still unconverted, demanded a lot more of the LMS resources than the Society could cope with. As a long-term solution to the problems, the LMS Directors sought to encourage the raising of a 'native agency' in Samoa.

The Samoan Missionary Seminary (SMS)

The missionaries, dissatisfied with the relatively slow progress in the education of the Samoans, decided to set up an institution to raise the educational standards of the Samoan teachers, and ultimately through them the Samoan people in general, and to provide a trained, educated ministry for the developing church. In other words, the missionaries trained a native ministry to give the trainees an education designed to make them not only evangelists but also teachers. When the Samoan Mission Seminary was set up in **Malua**, the curriculum featured two main aims. One was to teach a religious content since it was necessary to furnish the students with a sound knowledge of the Bible and Christian doctrines before sending them to the villages to preach and teach. The second aim was the promotion of the arts associated with a literate society and civilization, with subjects of a more secular nature such as writing, geography and arithmetic. The idea was to produce well-educated Samoan pastors and teachers through a course of mental and moral training. The curriculum was weighted in favour of the inculcation of facts, moral habits, right principles and religious feelings.³⁰⁷ As Carson reported:

The Seminary played an important role in providing men to spread an English-style education amongst the Samoan people.³⁰⁸

The Samoan Missionary Seminary was established at **Malua** in 1844.³⁰⁹ It later became the **Malua** Theological College, as it is known by today.

Eventually every village was given its trained pastor cum teacher to spread the gospel and to teach the Samoans the print literacy, reading and writing in the vernacular.³¹⁰

Meleisea, a Samoan historian, argued that the missionaries saw the pastor's school as a

³⁰⁷ Carson, (*Ibid*), p. 46

³⁰⁸ Carson, (*Ibid*), p. 51

³⁰⁹ Carson, (*Ibid*), p. 47

³¹⁰ Rowe, (*Ibid*), p. 120

main agency for training oncoming Samoan generations to the type of moral and practical life, which they conceived to be desirable.³¹¹

The original syllabus

The original syllabus of the pastor's school was based on the syllabus taught at the Samoan Mission Seminary (SMS) at **Malua**. The syllabus at the SMS included reading, writing, composition, arithmetic, geography, astronomy, natural history, church history and biblical or systematic theology and scripture exposition. The secular subjects were included in the curriculum from the very beginning since mastery of the arts of reading and writing was essential to the purpose of offering an advanced education. Without these two skills, students would have been unable to progress with their studies. Other secular topics such as geography and natural philosophy were included because they were means of broadening the students' outlook by introducing them to the knowledge of civilisation. The men were also taught carpentry skills and their wives learned how to sew and do crochet as well as cooking the **Palagi** way. As each graduate pastor was appointed to a village, he and his wife taught these subjects at simpler levels in their **A'oga a le Faifeau**.³¹²

Trained pastor cum teachers eventually replaced all the 'native' teachers who were looking after the schools in the villages. Many of them went to the Seminary to train and later went back to the schools as trained pastors and teachers. This was the beginning of the 'proper' **A'oga a le Faifeau**. I do not want to make too much of this in my study because literacy education in the villages did not start with the trained **faifeau** from the Samoan Mission Seminary. It was the teachers with very little training that kept the light glowing in the wake of severe educational difficulties.

A syllabus for the year was printed and circulated by the missionaries throughout Samoa. The students in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** were examined at the end of the school year in oral and written Samoan Grammar, simple arithmetic and scripture. Later on other subjects like geography, maths and church history were added to the syllabus. It was

³¹¹ *Meleisea*, 1987, *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa*, University of the South Pacific, Suva p. 53

³¹² *Carson*, (*Ibid*), p.56

expected that every child should have a minimum of 50 marks in each subject in order to be promoted to the next class. The **Palagi** missionary in charge of each particular district held the examination, and the results were carefully tabulated and announced (the marks and places of all who sat) at a public meeting of villages in each examination centre. There was keen rivalry between the villages. Individuals were played off against individuals, village against village, district against district and to a lesser extent, island against island.³¹³

The missions that came after the LMS, the Methodists in particular, basically followed the LMS example, much of which continues today. The content of the present curriculum of the pastor's school remains basically the same. The changes have come about mainly in the use of resources. For example, books have replaced the slates. There are more books to go round and there is supplementary reading material available in Samoan. The formal atmosphere of old has become more relaxed and informal. The use of the strap and the stick are confined to more serious misdemeanours. In most instances the stick is only a symbol of authority, carefully displayed for all to see beside the teacher.

The early schools were either conducted in the compounds of the local pastor or in the church. The pastor's house became a very important focus for the education of the people. The opportunity to serve in the pastor's house was a great privilege because it allowed one to witness 'civilised' behaviour and living first hand, and thereby to acquire the social skills and graces befitting a good Christian woman. The skills of carpentry were taught to the boys for the purpose of building European type houses as well as other types of buildings. The houses had walls and rooms walled off from each other. Ideas of privacy and later of private property were thereby introduced. The house was for the nuclear family consisting of a man and woman, married in the eyes of God forever, with their own children.³¹⁴ The teaching of domestic and carpentry skills has phased out from the present curriculum of some of the Pastors' Schools, with the convenience of buying ready-mades and the introduction of these courses in the **Palagi** schools. Some still practise these skills today. Two of the pastor's schools interviewed include sewing in their syllabuses.

³¹³ Rowe, (*Ibid*), p.126

³¹⁴ Mara, Foliaki, Coxon, 1994 (*Ibid.*) p.188

Each village school was thus named, **O le A'oga a le Faifeau**, translated as the School of the Pastor, because the pastor was the head teacher, the only trained teacher, and the only teacher. The pastor's wife was his assistant. While the missionaries selected the first teachers from more able students, with the opening of the Samoan Missionary Seminary, graduates from the seminary became the teachers.

The early history of formal education in Samoa, especially from 1830 to 1919, is the history of church run schools. Even with formal political colonisation beginning in 1889, with the annexation of Samoa by Germany, the latter left the schooling of the Samoan children to the pastors. The Germans built only a few schools³¹⁵ in Apia for their own children, and half-caste children with **Palagi** surnames.³¹⁶ When New Zealand took over the administration of Samoa, in 1919, she eventually took over the running of the schools from the church in 1920. It was a slow start though as the older students were taken over first while the infant classes were left with the pastors. School buildings had to be built and furnished before a full takeover and this was a slow process.

Whereas the ministers used to conduct their schools in the first half of the day, with the takeover by New Zealand, the ministers then ran their schools in the afternoons, carrying on the tradition, except for the **Vasega Faitau Pi** (Alphabet Reading Class, preschoolers) which was and still is held in the morning. Preschool education is not new to the Samoans. This is traditionally the pastor's wife's special class and it is still the practice in the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. It is one reason why the pastor's wife in Samoa is not allowed to work outside the ministry. She has a preschool to run in the morning and assists in the teaching of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** in the afternoon.

The situation is different in New Zealand. The pastor's wife here is permitted to hold a job outside the ministry for several reasons. Many of the parishes in New Zealand are relatively recent ones, and while some are paying off loans for their church buildings, others may be working towards building their own churches. The wife's job would provide the much-needed financial assistance given that the faifeau's 'salary' is not set,

³¹⁵ These schools were a bone of contention for many Samoans because they were elite schools better resourced with highly qualified teachers.

³¹⁶ Rowe, (*Ibid*), p. 126

but depends on the 'love' of the church members. The donated money is called **alofa** (love) for that reason. It has been a church tradition since the first missionaries arrived that the pastor is to be 'paid' this way. The donation is never called **totogi** (salary or wages in Samoan). It is also referred to as the **faifeau's peleti** (plate), because some churches take the plate around like during the offering on Sunday.

The Samoan alphabet

The Samoan alphabet has fourteen letters. **A E I O U F G L M N P S T V**. Later on the missionaries added on **H K R**. The Samoan phonological system does not have phonemes (**k**, **h** or **r** sounds) corresponding to the English ones. These are introduced sounds. The alphabet introduced by the missionaries which is still used today, allowed adaptations of English words into Samoan, such as rabbit, **rapiti**, cricket, **kirikiti**, and Herod, **Herota**, **keke** for cake, **kapisi** for cabbage, **karoti** for carrot, **araisa** for rice, **risiti** for receipt, **rosa** for rose and so on. The use of the letter **h** is not as common, except for names of people especially biblical ones like **Hamo** (Hem), and some Samoan names that people have substituted the 'r' for the 'l', to make them sound **Palagi**.

With the introduction of the letter **k**, the **t** in many Samoan words has been substituted with a **k**. Speaking with **t** is referred to as **tautala lelei** (good speech), and with **k** as **tautala leaga** (bad speech). An example of good Samoan is: **Ua tele le timu**, and of bad Samoan, **Ua keke le kimu**. Note in the second example the **t** is replaced by the **k**. Most Samoans today speak the **k** language, with the use of the **t** language confined to formal occasions, reading, public speaking, newspapers articles and so on. Children are taught in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** to speak good Samoan, but outside of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** they cannot keep it up because most other people speak the **k** language. It is relatively easier to speak with the **k** than it is with the **t**, and for this reason a lot more people choose to speak bad Samoan. It is considered a lazy way of speaking.

The **n** and **g**, **r** and **l** letters are also often mixed up as well. Where words are supposed to be spelled with **n** for example, the **g** has often been substituted and vice versa. The same goes for the **r** and **l** letters. This is part of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** work. In New Zealand, it is not only teaching children how to speak and write Samoan, but also to speak and

write proper Samoan. The name **Tamafainga** is spelled above **Tamafaiga** without the **n** before the **g** in the Samoan language and Samoan books. While other people, like the **Rarotongans** and **Maori**, were taught to sound and spell words with **g** with the help of the letter **n**, this was not the case in the introduction of education in Samoa. **Aiono** said:

O loo tusia i Fa'amaumauga a le CWM (Council for World Mission) ia minute o le fono na usuia i luga o le vaa, i gatai o le Ava/Taulaga i Apia "Dunnotar Castle" 3 June 1836 ao lei tuu taula upu ia: "Ua Fa'aiugafonoina e le Komiti a Misionare o le misiona i Fa'amataitusi ai leo ma iu leo e Fa'aleo i le isu pe peiseai e Fa'aifoaluga (!). (O le upu Peretania o le nasal)." Sa Fa'alautele le iugafono i le tusi i lalo ina ia maoti ma manino, o le mataitusi e tusi lava na o ia "g", e le tusia i ona luma po o ona tua se isi mataitusi, e le se "ng" po o "gn". (It is written in the minutes of a meeting held on 3 June 1836 at Apia Harbour, on the missionary ship the "Dunnotar Castle" before it anchored, these words: "The Council of Missionaries of the East-West Mission have resolved that the letter 'g' would be used for sounds and end sounds that are made through the nose (nasal)." The resolution made it very definite and clear that the letter "g" would be used by itself without another letter in front or after, it is not "ng" or "gn" respectively.³¹⁷

Aiono argued that the Samoan alphabet was constructed before the missionaries actually landed on Samoan soil during their second visit. She describes in her book from which the above quote was taken, how the Samoan alphabet was written and constructed by the LMS missionaries.

People who have not learned to read Samoan or have not been told of this rule would pronounce the letter '**g**' in Samoan words as a hard sound such as the letter **g** in words like logo or piggery, almost like the **k** sound. The words **A'oga** (school) and **aiga** (family) for example would then sound like **aoka** and **aika** respectively. The latter actually sound 'insulting' because the first word does not exist in Samoan vocabulary while the second word means something else and not family. In Williams' writing like the above, he uses **ng** such as in the name of **Tamafainga** perhaps for the sake of non-Samoan speakers so that the Samoan words are not pronounced in a 'corrupt' and 'insulting' way. The Samoan words **A'oga** and **aiga** that are frequently used in this study should be pronounced as **aonga** and **ainga** respectively. (Some people have speculated that the letter '**n**' was probably missing from the keys of the missionaries' typewriter). The **ng** combination has never been used in the Samoan language except as instructions, to show how these words should be pronounced, for non-Samoan speakers. Every

³¹⁷ *Aiono, (Ibid), p.32*

Samoan word with a letter **g** has an **ng** sound. Samoans have learned to read and write using this rule since 1836, when a proper Samoan alphabet was written and given to the early teachers.

In Summary

The first part of the chapter has provided great insight into what might have been if the initial contact process between people of different cultures had not been of a peaceful nature. It would have been a different story. The rest of the chapter is a success story as it relates the development of the institution of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** that so depended on the success of the initial contact between the LMS missionaries and the Samoans. The historical contextual conditions were right. Based on a phonetic and phonemic approach to teaching reading and writing, literacy spread quickly. The novelty of the new form of education might have worn off but still people came from six miles away to be taught their letters. Lack of resources and poor teachers did not deter the LMS missionaries and pastors from running their schools making the most of what they had.

The alphabet charts, the primers and readers that were used then, are still being used today, with revisions, because their successes have withstood the test of time and 'criticism'. I reiterate here that the primary purpose of the study is to argue, and show, that the **A'oga a le Faifeau** played and still plays a significant role in the education, socialisation and enculturation of those Samoan children in the CCCS in Samoa and New Zealand. The **A'oga a le Faifeau** has profoundly significant educational content and impacts. It has helped in the maintenance of the Samoan language and could address the reading writing and numeracy problems encountered by many Samoan children.

Chapter Five

The Research Methodology

Introduction

When I was deciding on a topic for this study, I was very much influenced by three issues of equal importance to me. These are: Samoan education, the church and the **Fa'a Samoa**. I wanted to research a topic that would encompass and address these three issues in a more positive way than they have been 'treated'. I was aware that the **Fa'a Samoa** has been blamed for the underachievement of Samoan children who constitute many of those who underachieve in New Zealand schools. I was also conscious of the fact that there is an anti-church feeling among those who blame the church for 'exploiting' the Samoan people. I was not blind either to the fact that Samoa was bringing up the rear in reading literacy in a 'queue' of Pacific Island nations. In my writing, not only do I expose the positive roles played by the church and the **Fa'a Samoa**, I also attempt to make more explicit some of the contributing reasons for the underachievement of Samoan children.

Even before embarking on a 'topic search', I had more or less made up my mind that I would look at Samoan stories, and try to revive the art of legend-telling that is practically lost now among Samoan families. I have great pride in the knowledge that bedtime stories are not new to the Samoans. I wrote about it in my Masters dissertation,³¹⁸ and the particular chapter that includes this was published in 2000.³¹⁹ Although this was and still is of great importance to me, the pull of the three-fold issue as referred to above became the stronger force in choosing a topic. I settled for 'Literacy education in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** (Pastor's School) of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (CCCS).' The **A'oga a le Faifeau** addresses the education of Samoan children, the Christian-Protestant ethic that was behind its introduction and which has driven the **A'oga a le Faifeau** up to now, as well as the **Fa'a Samoa** and the teaching of Samoan Language in particular. My original interest in the revival of legend telling is not lost in choosing such a topic. Indirectly the **A'oga a le Faifeau** addresses this art. If children can read and write

³¹⁸ *Tanielu, L., 1995, 'Ideological Shifts in Western Samoan Education: A Critical Analysis,' MEd Dissertation, University of Auckland, p. 15*

³¹⁹ *Jones et al, 2000, (Ibid), p. 54*

Samoan well, they can 'hear' those stories again. The **A'oga a le Faifeau** provides the means through which children can enjoy those stories, by teaching them to read and write in Samoan. One of the pastors in my study (the **Aisa Sisifo A'oga a le Faifeau**) uses the Samoan pedagogy of **Fa'amatala Fa'a fagogo** (legend-telling) to tell bible stories in his **A'oga a le Faifeau**. As he said:

Mo le Faitau Pi-E lagi le pi Fa'atasi pe a uma ona faitau Fa'asolosolo. E fai fesili ma tali mai le Tusi Paia. E Fa'amatala Fa'a fagogo tala o le Tusi Paia. (In the beginners' class, the alphabet is read in a 'chanting' way after the children take turns reading it. Questions from the bible are given with answers for the children to learn. A bible verse is given to be memorised and a selected bible story is told, legend-telling style, for the children.)(Narrative Three).

My topic can thus be referred to (justifiably) as an 'all encompassing' one, because it addresses all those important issues referred to before, and for me personally it encompasses my work as a pastor's wife in the **A'oga a le Faifeau**.

The present chapter focuses on a study of **A'oga a le Faifeau** in practice, carried out largely in Samoa and to a lesser degree in New Zealand.

Methodology

The system of methods and principles used in a particular discipline is referred to as its methodology.³²⁰ My methodology is necessarily eclectic; I use several methods and principles, styles, approaches and processes, both in my actual research and writing. Interviews and questionnaires, a critical analysis of historical and contemporary literature, personal critiques, personal narratives, a historical and geographical approach, and a **Fa'a Samoa** approach in conformity to the necessary face to face 'ritual', the 'reciprocal exchange', and the 'oratorical' exchange, are all part of my research methodology.

Qualitative empirical research is the dominant methodology in this study. As well as conducting interviews with the pastors and their wives, I was an active observer in two of the schools as a participant observer taking part in the actual teaching process. I took a preschool class for reading from the **Pi Tautau**, the Samoan Alphabet chart, during a

³²⁰ Collins, H, 1994, *Collins English Dictionary*, Harper Collins Publishers, Glasgow, p.529.

visit to one school. For another **A'oga a le Faifeau**, I took Class 2, a mixture of six and seven year olds, for **Tusilima** (writing and dictation). In this class the children were just learning to write simple words from the reading book, **Tusi a Tamaiti** (the Samoan Primer). My role of participant observer also extends to my involvement in our own parish **A'oga a le Faifeau** in Auckland, New Zealand, where I teach the Vasega Faitau Pi (Alphabet reading Class/Preschool) as well as assisting in coordinating our **A'oga a le Faifeau** program.

My review of the literature on the **A'oga a le Faifeau** forms a significant part of my research. The historical evidence is pertinent, firstly because it supports and authenticates my research, and secondly because it has offered material from various sources that needs to be integrated under one document. The documentation of this historical evidence is a most necessary part of the methodology.

A good part of the study is given to a critical analysis of educational and literacy practices in the schools in Samoa and in New Zealand, practices I claim to be responsible in some ways to Samoan children underachieving in school. This has necessitated a much wider literature review. Evidence and material to support my arguments are both from 'contextual'³²¹ and international sources.

The interviews and observations and the historical material on the **A'oga a le Faifeau** are mostly in Samoan. Much of this material has come from the official journal of the CCCS, *O le Sulu Samoa* (The Samoan Torch), published monthly by the CCCS Printing Press in Apia. This Journal publishes church news in Samoan. Their English translations are necessary to effect a wider dissemination of this information for the purpose of the study. Translating is part of the methodology for this study; very time consuming but absolutely essential.

³²¹ By this I mean local, referring to Samoa and New Zealand as the context of my research.

The “Lived Experience” Approach

The study is basically a history of the **A’oga a le Faifeau** that focuses more on educational behaviour than on educational structure, more on the lived experience of the **A’oga a le Faifeau** than on a chronological order of past events. Past events are included as re-lived experiences because they have links with the present. The approach is both narrative and evaluative with emphasis on interpreting - the difficult, controversial and interesting part of history. According to **Meleisea**, “nothing is more boring (or uninformative) than lists of facts without interpretations.”³²²

Interpretations are the parts of history that live on. The ‘why’ and the ‘how’ of the event constitute its interpretation. Historical facts and events can be verified and examined by looking at various written works, or by asking people concerned with those events, so that they can be put in “truthful” contexts. It is the interpretation, though, that adds quality and ‘finesse’ to any historical writing. The study attempts to do that. The documentation of data collected from history books, church official journals and documents and church archives are not just a mere collection of information on the **A’oga a le Faifeau**. While some of the information documented offer their own interpretations or are interpretations in themselves, I also include my own.

Researching the Contemporary A’oga a le Faifeau: The ‘Lived Experience Approach’ in Action

Finkelstein,³²³ an educational historian, advocates the ‘lived experience’ approach. She critiques the traditional focus of educational history as overlooking the inner individual processes that lead to the shaping of consciousness and how education is used in everyday life beyond the pursuit of power and status. She addresses the need to ‘diversify’ the method and methodology of our research to include the lived experiences of our subjects. She also goes on to say that the reigning myths of education history – benevolence, paideia, oppression, and modernization - had all favoured elites because they focused on the centralizing tendencies of modern urban life, linking education to the

³²² **Meleisea**, M, (1987), *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa*, University of the South Pacific: Suva.

³²³ Finkelstein, B, 1992, *In Review of research in Education*, Vol. 18, pp. 255-297

evolution of economic, political and intellectual macro structures, revealing the evolution of high rather than folk culture, of large educational traditions rather than small ones.³²⁴

Finkelstein's argument has clear implications for my study. What she says about the traditional focus of educational history is also true of the history of Samoan education. I critique this history for being one-sided, for failing to recognise that **Fa'a Samoa** literacies contribute positively to Samoan children's schooling and instead blaming the **Fa'a Samoa** as the inhibiting factor in their educational progress. This history fails to recognise the part played by the church in the education of the Samoan child, in particular the role of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** as the provider of necessary literacy skills that have some spans with school-based literacies. As well, this history concentrates on demonstrating the 'reification' of the notion that Samoan children are more suited to 'manual' labour than 'mental' labour. This history is about maintaining the power and the status of the **Palagi** as superior. It is about favouring 'elites', the respective educational echelon and government officials of Germany and New Zealand. While this history recognises that the LMS missionaries introduced formal education in Samoa and that the church played a part in the education of Samoan children; that was about all it said about the educational mission of the church. In some historical accounts as I mentioned in Chapter One, the church is described as 'exploitative' and oppressive.³²⁵ My study provides a closer examination of the positive side of this history through analysis of what actually went on and still goes on in one important aspect of church life.

With Finkelstein's advocacy, my study uses the 'lived experience' approach, focussing on the lived experiences of pastors and their wives. The CCCS pastor and wife spend a lot of their time with the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, yet the latter is a relatively unknown phenomenon. The school has been paid little attention. My study brings to attention the important contributions the **A'oga a le Faifeau** makes to education, especially that of Samoan children.

The **A'oga a le Faifeau** may be categorized as a small educational tradition rather than a large one, considering the fact that it has not been written about in any lengthy detail,

³²⁴ Finkelstein, (*Ibid*)

³²⁵ Barrington 1968, Keesing 1942, Ma'ia'i 1957

except for brief passing comments in theses and dissertations by CCCS theological students and church historians who are mostly non-Samoan. The **A'oga a le Faifeau** is an institution in itself and one that has developed its own culture that has survived as a traditionally powerful but relatively quiet and unassuming practice within the work of the CCCS. It has developed 'folk culture' characteristics, as its values have become a way of life for many Samoan people.

The **A'oga a le Faifeau** is an institution that has been taken for granted throughout the years because it is compulsory for a pastor to have a school and therefore the school has a 'permanent fixture' status in the pastor's calendar of duties. If there is any activity the pastor and his wife are totally involved in, it is the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. The pastor and his wife are the principal teachers. The CCCS ministry has always been regarded as a joint responsibility between the pastor and his wife. Candidates for the **Malua** Theological College are always encouraged to bring wives to the College to learn and familiarise with the roles of a Samoan pastor's wife. As Dr Fairbairn-Dunlop, a Samoan educator, said:

Ministry was regarded as a joint responsibility, thus as the pastors were trained for their ecclesiastic duties, their wives were taught to be role models and leaders of village women. The pastors' wives followed a rigorous training in community leadership skills, housekeeping and agriculture.³²⁶

Their 'team ministry' is most obvious in their joint role as teachers of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. They may call upon the assistance of members of the parish, as done in New Zealand, for the **A'oga a le Faifeau** is mostly held on Sundays because many children live far from the churches. In Samoa the village children go to the **A'oga a le Faifeau** most days of the week because their homes are within walking distance of church. The pastor and his wife very rarely leave the running of the school to others except when they are on furlough for three months after every six years, or are away for longer than two weeks, the duration of time that the pastor is allowed to be absent from the parish at any one time. One measure of a good and hard working **faifeau** (pastor) is his dedication to his **A'oga** (school). This is revealed in the pastors' stories and my analysis where some parents and 'school teachers' evaluate the outcome of the pastors' teaching that includes

³²⁶ Fairbairn – Dunlop, P, 1996, *Tamaitai Samoa-Their Stories*, Institute of Pacific Studies, The University of the South Pacific, Kin Publications, California, pp. 10-11

turning out good readers and writers of Samoan and well disciplined children. (Narratives One and Two).

While the pastors are accorded a relatively high standing in the Samoan society and thus have power and status, they are not expected to exercise these for their own ends, as this would defeat the very purpose of why they are **faifeau**.³²⁷ They are not to take advantage of their 'honorary' high status. To pursue power and status goes against Christian principles of humility and love. The Protestant work ethics (the desire to achieve and persevere, hard work and mental toughness) instilled in Samoan pastors during their theological training³²⁸ do not include seeking power and status for themselves. Instead they are to demonstrate dedication and perseverance, honesty and humility in their work. This is one reason why from the very beginning Samoan pastors were not permitted to hold **matai** titles and consequently cannot become members of Parliament, although with universal suffrage introduced in 1992 they could vote. They were not to be involved in government politics; instead they were to demonstrate their own calling as astutely as possible. Pastors' wives in Samoa are not allowed to work outside of the ministry because they have duties and responsibilities that includes running the **Vasega Faitau Pi** in the morning and helping their husbands prepare for the **A'oga a le Faifeau** classes in the afternoon during the **A'oga a le Faifeau** term and to help plan and teach Sunday School and Children's Sunday activities.

Multiple Realities of a Common Experience

Human beings, according to Jack, an educational writer, create their own reality through language and therefore lives may be read as text. He argues that in turn, the ebb and flow and the tensions between discourses, create humans who therefore have variable agency

³²⁷ The word **faifeau** is formed from two Samoan words, **fai** which means to make, to do, to carry out and **feau**, which means message, work or task. The word describes the pastor as the doer of the task or work of spreading the Christian message or the Gospel.

³²⁸ Theological students spend four years in the **Malua** Theological College. The first week of every term (usually three terms) is referred to as **o le vaiaso u'amea** (the iron week) when students and their wives go through a programme of intensive physical work, cleaning up the campus, doing renovations to living quarters, planting (and weeding) taro, bananas or coconut saplings in the plantations or cleaning out the swimming and fish pools. The College aims to give (ideally) a balanced programme of physical, social, intellectual and spiritual activities for the students and their wives. This training is essential preparation for the CCCS ministry. It is also one of the reasons why it is extremely rare to call Samoan graduates from other Theological institutions of the same Protestant faith (Eg. Presbyterian or Anglican) to CCCS parishes. While those other theological institutions may fulfill the social, academic and spiritual side of the training, the physical component does not usually measure up.

in constituting themselves. Jack refers to these as 'multiple realities' of a common experience.³²⁹ The **A'oga a le Faifeau** is a common experience in which the pastors, wives, students and parents create and develop multiple realities through their interactions, relationships, the various perspectives and expectations.

A characteristic feature of the study is its promotion of the diversity of meaning for individuals, about a common experience. The pastors, wives and students each contribute to the complexity and multiplicity of meaning of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. According to Lankshear and Lawler, "different people come to understand reading and writing in different ways from the very beginning and to have these uses reinforced in their daily experience."³³⁰

The multiple realities that the pastors, wives and students create and develop within their common experience of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** are their "lived experiences". Finkelstein argues that those lived experiences emphasize the context in which they occurred as well as relating and explaining how and why people interact as they did and still do in the **A'oga a le Faifeau**.³³¹

The word 'lived' as a past tense verb connotes finished or past. The word in the context of the study is interpreted to mean showing the results or the 'scars' of work well done, and that would live on. Those lived experiences have left their mark and models for generations of **A'oga a le Faifeau** participants to carry on.

Students and others involved with the **A'oga a le Faifeau** also bring their own 'cultural' characteristics and informal values into the school. In the institution of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, cultural connections are strong and are therefore of great consequence. There are for example, indigenous Samoan values at stake, Samoan language, respect, generalised reciprocity, the introduction and acceptance of religious and 'civilised' values like privacy and private property, and those associated with the print literacy, that is,

³²⁹ Jack, C T, 1995, 'School History: Reconstructing the Lived Experience,' In *Orthodoxies and Diversity: Collected Papers of the Twenty-Fourth Annual Conference, ANZHES, Sydney*. Pp131-143.

³³⁰ Lankshear, C & Lawler, M, 1989, *Literacy, Schooling and Revolution*, The Falmer Press, New York, p.23

³³¹ Finkelstein, (Ibid), p.257

knowing how to read and write opens doors to other 'lives'. There are also 'cultural' connections among the pastors and children, Samoans and missionaries and so on, which make up the **A'oga a le Faifeau's** own culture.

Several educationists have pointed out that liberals and revisionists had too often utilised only official accounts and official syllabuses, with the result that the voices of both teachers and children have been rarely heard. Openshaw et al³³² and Moss³³³ have argued that educational historians have all but ignored the teachers, children and the classroom setting and instead focused almost exclusively upon the pronouncements of politicians and administrators. The old and new historical writing have tended to neglect the 'living' and the 'lived,' the more active part of education. The practice of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** is the result of actors' value-laden interpretations of their world and as Robinson argues, "we cannot understand practice without understanding these interpretations."³³⁴ What went on in the classroom was often not written about because educational historians tended to focus on material from official sources and policy documents rather than on the dynamics of the classroom and the relations between the teacher and the learner. Information from official sources and policy documents is important, but equally significant are the lived experiences of the teachers and learners. An over-emphasised structural methodology leads to the acceptance of a simple linear relationship between attitudes and performance.³³⁵ A mere description of the structural elements of any education system ignores the lived experiences of the people directly involved in it. The lived experiences are the actual social interactions and educational outcomes that teachers and learners would demonstrate while engaging in and with the structural elements of an education system.

My study is not only about the pastors, wives, students, parents or the CCCS accomplishing independent or personal objectives in the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. It is about achieving 'interpersonal' goals to do with teaching and learning. It is also about the

³³² Openshaw, R, Lee, G, Lee, H, 1993, *Challenging the Myths*, The Dunmore Press, Palmerston North, p 15.

³³³ Moss, L, 'Whatever happened to teachers? Marginality and invisibility in the history of education,' A paper presented to the NZARE conference, Auckland, December 1990, p 1.

³³⁴ Robinson, V M J, 1993, 'Current Controversies in Action,' In *Public Administration Quarterly*, Vol 17 (3), pp 263 – 290.

³³⁵ Sergiovanni, T, 1990, 'Advances in Leadership Theory and Practice,' In *Advances in Educational Administration*, Vol 1, Part A, pp 1-26.

calling of the 'pastors cum teachers' to carry out their double mission of spreading the gospel and teaching the print literacy. It is about fulfilling the expectations of parents about their children's education. There are multiple realities created and developed by those people in constituting themselves, within the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. It is about their visions and transformations, exchange of ideas and beliefs. It is about cross-cultural and intra-cultural exchanges and their experiences as the 'converted' from a so-called 'heathen' existence into a 'civilised' one. It is about how the Samoan learners coped with a relatively revolutionary rather than an evolutionary change and how they responded to the changes in roles, for example when being slotted into predetermined Western gender roles. It is about their thoughts on changing from an oral literacy to the print literacy. It is also about a most important opportunity for students to free their own intellects and to learn necessary skills that would prepare them not only for school but also for life.

Researching in Samoa

I have summarised the general methodological procedures above as well as defining the type of approach that I take in my thesis, which is manifest especially in my actual research that follows. The following account pertains directly to my visits with the **A'oga a le Faifeau** in Samoa, when I arrived in Samoa on Friday, 5th of March 1999 to carry out my research.

A blessing: Getting permission from the Chairman of the CCCS Elders' Committee

The CCCS Elders' Committee is seen as the top 'political' body in the CCCS. It is made up of all elder ministers in the church. Each elder minister heads each subdistrict or **pulega**. According to the CCCS records,³³⁶ in March 2001, there were 42 **pulega**, including overseas ones; 25 in Samoa, 8 in New Zealand, 4 in Australia, 2 in Hawaii and 3 in the USA. The last **Fono** or Annual General Meeting, in May 2002, approved the formation of two more **pulega** in Australia. The actual figure now is 44. The pastors of each **pulega** appoint its elder minister either by vote or consensus agreement.

³³⁶ Semau, T M, March 2002, *Personal Communication*.
(*MaiavaT Semau is administrative assistant responsible for the collecting and recording of CCCS statistics. He sends out forms to the pastors every year to update church records. These statistics are for the year 2001*).

I could not carry out this research without making a formal request for permission from the Chairman of the Elders committee at the time. On March 9th of 1999 three days after arriving in Samoa, my husband and I went especially not only to ask for permission but also for his blessing, which would also be given on behalf of the CCCS. He was more than pleased that I was embarking on a study of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, an important part of the ministry in which he and his wife were also directly involved.

Malo lava le taumafai i lena foi suesuega taua. O le mea lava foi lena o lea e pisi ai. A uma atu foi le Fa'a Mati, ua toe amata foi le A'oga a le Faifeau, Ia manuia tele lena Fa'amoemoe taua ia Fa'aiuina i le fesoasoani mai o le Alii. (That is very good. We are also busy with that. After the **Fa'a Mati** then we will start the **A'oga a le Faifeau** again. May the Lord bless such an important project you are involved in).³³⁷

He gave his blessing for my research and was looking forward to reading the end result. It was essential that I went through this formality for several reasons. Firstly it was culturally appropriate. I had to do it out of respect for my elders. There is a Samoan proverb, which explains the necessity of this process. '**E manuia se faiva pe afai e tapuaia,**' which means, 'any task or work that is 'blessed' will succeed.' In the **Fa'a Samoa**, before embarking on an undertaking of great importance, one must be given the blessing of either the **aiga**, the **matai** or the **nu'u** (village). Secondly, it was politically correct. I went to the Chairman of the Elders' Committee first before making any contact with the pastors. All the pastors in the CCCS are under the Chairman's 'jurisdiction'. I was indirectly asking for protection, along similar principles perhaps as getting a University of Auckland Human Ethics Committee (UAHSEC) approval. Thirdly, it had spiritual significance for me as a pastor's wife. As my research as well is church - based the blessing had to come from the '**auauna a le Atua**' (servant or man of God).³³⁸

The Initial Visits: Getting to know the 'researched,' the pastors and their wives and the schools in the study. Doing it the Samoan way

I spent seven weeks in Samoa during this initial visit, three weeks doing my preliminary contacting and familiarising and devoting the last four weeks to observations,

³³⁷ Stanley, Rev Elder Hini, March 9, 1999, Personal Communication.

³³⁸ This means, servant (**auauna**) of (**a le**) God (**Atua**), which is another, address for the minister or pastor.

interviewing and general data collection. I visited the schools again in May of the same year, 1999. The purpose of the May 1999 visit was to ascertain the numbers of children as the March figures given were only enrolment estimates, and to finish off my interviews with the pastors and their wives. At the time of the first visit, the pastors were only just starting back at their **A'oga a le Faifeau** after a break during the **Fa'a Mati**, the annual church inspection of church properties, for which each respective church has to prepare every year. This is always held in the month of March. **Mati** is the Samoan translation of March so the event got its name from the month it is held in.

During the first few weeks of the year, as the children came to the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, their names were added on to lists of classes. Because the **A'oga a le Faifeau** is not compulsory, the true numbers of students could not be determined until the teaching of the syllabus had started, during which time the pastor and his wife became more strict about the students' attendance. According to the pastors, most children attend because they are strongly encouraged to by the pastors and parents. Some pastors have their own means of ensuring that children do come to school. In the **Tolo** village **A'oga a le Faifeau**, the absent child brings two ripe coconuts. Children would rather go to the **A'oga a le Faifeau** than go to the bush to do heavy chores, which would be an incentive that drives them to school. The children see the pastor's school as a means of socialising with other children also.

In May 2000, I visited the two rural schools again. For the other two schools I only spoke with the ministers and their wives. During these visits I checked with them about what I had written and to ask about some of the queries that I had about the data collected in 1999. The two rural schools were both revising their syllabuses for **A'oga a le Faifeau** exams to be held in June after the **Fono**, the Annual General Conference of the CCCS in May.

There is no one correct way of getting to know or to contact people targeted for research. Contacting them by telephone or sending letters of introduction, participant information letters or consent forms are some of the standard methods. In the **Fa'a Samoa**, the face-to-face contact is desirable mainly out of respect for the other person.

The word respect means **Fa'aaloalo** in Samoan, which means knowing how (**Fa'a**) to face (**aloalo**) a person. This means visiting the people and schools to be researched in person, to make arrangements for when the research would be carried out, and more importantly to inform them of what the research is all about. Letters of introductions and consent forms are quite irrelevant in the **Fa'a Samoa** especially if research is to be carried out with Samoan people, and in particular in the rural areas where the indigenous values of respect and reciprocity are 'ritually' observed. Those pastors in the rural villages especially are relatively more conforming to Samoan protocol because the village people's expectations of the pastors and their wives are more bound by tradition than for example the more 'urbanised' villages. It follows that the letters of introduction, and the various forms were given only to fulfil the 'ethical' requirements for research, as set by the University.

As said before, the pastors in Samoa are accorded 'paramount chief'³³⁹ status and even though the pastors and their wives are known to me personally, being former students of my husband at the **Malua** Theological College, that close relationship made it even more 'proper' to see them in person. Although in a way it put some pressure on me as the researcher because they have their own expectations of me too, at the same time I found knowing them well, worked more to this study's advantage. They carried on relatively naturally when I visited to carry out my observations and interviews. They were more 'giving' and less 'held back' than I think they would have been had they been less familiar with the researcher. It was relatively easier to approach them even though a small degree of formality and respect had to be observed between us. That was a blessing in disguise because too much familiarity could create a contemptuous relationship.

The value of reciprocity is very strong in the **Fa'a Samoa**, and dictates the 'giving' relationships and respect for one another among Samoan people. The same goes for my relationship as researcher with the 'researched'. It is not a 'user pays' relationship although it may seem that way to some people. If the relationship is looked upon as such

³³⁹ I discuss this in detail in the historical development of the *A'oga a le Faifeau*. *Malietoa* the paramount chief that accepted Christianity by welcoming with open arms the LMS missionaries also gave his form of address of '*afioga*' (most honourable) to the Christian God, and the address of *susuga* (honourable) lesser form of address to himself and the pastors.

then it becomes 'negative reciprocity'³⁴⁰, because one can never repay the 'researched' enough for what they give (time, information, mental and social graces/graciousness, and food and gifts of mats) if compared to what the donated information could yield later on, especially in the advancement of others' lives and possibly in monetary value. It is the spirit in which it is done that counts most. It is a give-and-take relationship which requires one human's kindness shown to another human for his/her own kindness, without the element of an 'economic' or commercial exchange involved.

In this spirit of reciprocal giving, and out of respect, I took a **oso** or **tauga**³⁴¹ in my first visits. I also gave some money as **meaalofa** or gift when I finished the bulk of the research.³⁴² During later visits, I also donated exercise books and pencils for the pupils bought from money given in the spirit of reciprocity by my supervisor who came to Samoa. It was the least I could do to show my appreciation for their efforts. It was not to 'bribe' or to 'toady' or to pay them for their information and time. I consider any information given in a research as much too valuable to put a value, monetary or otherwise on it. Those people not only welcomed me into the privacy of their homes but that of their lives and their work which includes the pupils in their respective **A'oga a le Faifeau**. What I gave, though small by comparison, was much appreciated. They said, **E le tau totogia le galuega a le Alii** (We don't have to be paid for doing the Lord's work).

In their respective personal beliefs, they were doing it for the Lord. In their personal commitment to the Lord's work, they would be rewarded manifold later, so long as they were faithfully and 'devotingly' doing it. They saw that my research would contribute to the improvement not only of their own work, but that of the education of Samoan children.

Establishing good rapport with one's subjects is very important. In the **Fa'a Samoa**, this means making the right connections as well as observing 'proper' protocol. This particular aspect in my research was minimised by the fact that I knew the people

³⁴⁰ Negative reciprocity is stealing, or cheating someone to take advantage of a situation whereby one would gain while the other loses.

³⁴¹ A '**oso**' or '**tauga**' is something that you take to give the family or person that you are visiting. It may be food, or a gift of any kind. Today money is often given. Food was usually the main item for a '**oso**'.

³⁴² **Meaalofa** literally means: item, article, or something of or expressing love. It is made up of two words, **mea**=item, article, something; and **alofa**=love.

personally. I was introduced to the children and the pastors explained why I was there. Although I did not want the pastors to ask the children to behave when I was there, as I wanted them to act naturally, they did. The pastors would have told them anyway prior to my visits.

During my initial visits, we arranged times for interviews and observations, and each pastor and wife team was given a participant information sheet, detailing who I was and my purposes, and who to contact for further information, as well as questions on which my interviews and observations were to be based. Copies of these are included in the Appendix. I also ascertained with them the absolute confidentiality of their information and assured them that their identities and those of their **A'oga a le Faifeau** would not be mentioned in the text unless they agreed to. To this end, I have used pseudonyms for the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, the pastors and their wives. The real names of the sub-districts (**pulega**) are retained though.

The 'Researched', the Pastors and their wives, the A'oga a le Faifeau

I had the freedom to do research on any number of **A'oga a le Faifeau** in Samoa, given that I had got the approval from the Chairman of the Elders' Committee. For the purposes of my study and due to time constraints, I carried out research on four **A'oga a le Faifeau**. Two in-depth studies or full observations were carried out to supplement the interviews. These two studies were in 'representative' **A'oga a le Faifeau** and gave information supplementary to the narratives, and my own observations and experiences. For the urban and suburban schools, I carried out interviews with the respective pastors and their wives.

Two methods were used to acquire information. The interview approach was employed to procure narrative accounts of the teachers' work and experiences of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. The observation technique was used to record the teacher/pupil interactions and the pedagogies involved in an **A'oga a le Faifeau** teaching/learning situation. These observations were in a form of running records. The interviews and observations were most appropriate methods to obtain pertinent data that could respond to the two main arguments of the study. The arguments were seeking to establish the content, impacts and

pedagogies of the **A’oga a le Faifeau** and how these could address the reported underachievement of some Samoan children in New Zealand schools.

The schools were selected to represent variation in size and locality of communities. I wanted to examine one large school of over 200 children, a school with above 100 pupils and two small schools of less than a hundred children. A relatively large urban school, a small suburban school and two rural schools were selected. The in-depth observations were carried out in the rural schools, one a large school and the other a small school. The schools in the study were selected from three different church subdistricts (**pulega**). Two schools were selected from the same subdistrict. The following Table shows each **A’oga a le Faifeau** in the study, the subdistrict it is in, and the student enrolment estimates for March 1999, and the actual totals ascertained for May 1999 and August 2001.

Table 5: Rolls for the A’oga a le Faifeau in the Study

Pastors’ Schools A’oga a le faifeau	1999 estimates March	1999 May	2001 August
1. Puna (rural))	44	71	105
2. Tolo (rural)	230	372	415
3. Aisa (suburban)	30	33	38
4. Lape (urban)	105	104	161

Of the two schools from one **pulega**, the **Lape A’oga a le Faifeau** is the urban school and the **Aisa A’oga a le Faifeau** is the suburban school. The two rural schools are the **Puna A’oga a le Faifeau**, the smaller of the two and the furthest from **Apia**, and the **Tolo A’oga a le Faifeau**, both located to the east of **Apia**. The latter is the largest school of the four **A’oga a le Faifeau** in the study. It is also the largest school in the whole of Samoa with 415 pupils at the latest count in 2001, according to the data compiled during August of the same year. The two schools belong to two separate subdistricts. Apart from the **Aisa School**, the other three are located in traditional Samoan villages. At the time of my initial contact in March 1999, the figures given by the pastors were only estimates. There has been an increase in the number of children attending since 1999.

Introducing each A'oga a le Faifeau briefly

The Puna A'oga a le Faifeau

Puna village is a relatively small traditional Samoan village. The main churches in the village are the CCCS and the Catholic. There are also smaller congregations of Mormons and Methodists.

The Tolo A'oga a le Faifeau

Tolo village is a typical traditional rural Samoan village. It is relatively isolated from neighbouring villages. Two rivers bound it on the east and west end respectively. There are two main church denominations in **Tolo**, the CCCS and the Catholic Church. In recent years, a Seventh Day Adventist church was built at the east end and a Methodist church at the west end. There are also people of the village who belong to other denominations, but they commute to their nearest respective churches. The CCCS is attended by more than half of the village population.

The Aisa A'oga a le Faifeau

The **Aisa A'oga a le Faifeau** is located inland from **Apia**. **Aisa** is not a traditional Samoan village but started off as a plantation community of mainly **Afakasi** (part **Palagi**/part Samoan and part Chinese/part Samoan people) who worked the plantations during the German and New Zealand administrations and at the same time leasing land from them to live on. With independence they were able to buy land from the Samoan government. Some people still live on leased land. The CCCS acquired land from the government in this area to build churches and there are two CCCS parishes in this area today, one of them is the **Aisa** parish that is in the study. A lot more people, especially from the outlying areas and islands, have bought land in this area and have migrated to live there. The area has grown to include many other church denominations such as the Mormons and Assembly of God.

The Lape A'oga a le Faifeau

Lape village is within walking distance from the **Apia** Central Business District (CBD). Although it is a traditional village and a fairly large one, it is surrounded by the urban

sprawl of **Apia**. It is one of the most beautiful villages in the urban area (and in Samoa) and although influenced by the growth of urbanisation, it has retained its typical Samoan village physical setting, with the house of the paramount chief conspicuous because it has a high foundation which makes it the central focus of the circular row of Samoan houses (with roofing iron replacing the traditional thatches), that surrounds the **malae**. Skirting the 'proper village' are the various churches, which includes the CCCS church, the location of the **Lape A'oga a le Faifeau**. Right next door is the headquarters of the Mormon church, to the immediate south of the village is the Catholic Schools Compound and church) shops, bakeries, mechanical repairs and so on - evidence of modernisation and urbanisation.

My supervisor's visit to Samoa

My first week of research in Samoa started with my arrival on Friday, 5th of March in 1999. After a week in Samoa, one of my supervisors arrived to do a series of lectures and to meet the lecturers about staff development at the National University of Samoa. As well, she was there to support my research. It was her first time in Samoa and it was great having her experience the setting and contextual background of my research rather than just be an 'armchair' supervisor. I make a strong stand about the necessity for supervisors, if practical and realistic, at least to experience and have a feel of the 'contextual location' of their students' researches especially during the initial stages, for PhD especially. These are crucial stages in the setting of research precedents and the subsequent follow up. Even the best laid plans, great expectations and enthusiasm can be 'dashed' by the 'unexpected.' It can be quite a daunting experience doing research overseas even though for me it was my home country. My other supervisor was able to visit our **A'oga a le Faifeau** in action at Grey Lynn, Auckland in July 2002, during our **A'oga a le Faifeau** examinations. He actually observed children engaging with the **A'oga a le Faifeau** syllabus during its assessment procedures. Given that Pastors' Schools are a relatively unknown phenomenon outside the CCCS, as said before, my supervisors' respective visits familiarised them with the 'context' of my research.

It was most advantageous for me as a student doing research overseas, isolated and far away from the 'home base' of my studies, the University of Auckland. I greatly

appreciated having a supervisor at the initial stages of my research as I ran into some problems and not only did I share with her my frustrations, I was given the much-needed assistance. I was very appreciative of this help, as I could have given up the research altogether as I originally thought, but the help was there when I needed it. Her suggestion that I research about the 'Rise and Fall' of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** gave impetus and a new meaning to my study, which meant that I could still carry out my original research as planned, but with a new and much different focus.

On my supervisor's first day in Samoa I took her to **Tolo** village, the location of the larger rural **A'oga a le Faifeau** in the study and the largest **A'oga a le Faifeau** in Samoa, according to the latest, August 2001³⁴³ survey by the CCCS. I had originally planned to start my research with this particular **A'oga a le Faifeau**. We met with the minister's wife and found out that their pastor's school was to start in the first week of April as her husband, one of the syllabus writers for their sub-district was recovering from surgery done in New Zealand two months before. We were also told that the first two weeks in March were set aside for preparations for the **Fa'a Mati**.³⁴⁴ It was not a good time to visit, as most **A'oga a le Faifeau** would be involved in the **Fa'a Mati** preparations. The children during those two weeks would be helping their mothers clean up, weeding and cutting grass, sweeping and burning up the rubbish, and scrubbing floors and so on so that the pastor's house and church buildings and compound would be clean and tidy, ready for inspection.

When I first visited the **Puna A'oga a le Faifeau**, the remotest from **Apia**, I mentioned to the pastor and his wife about our initial visit with my supervisor to **Tolo** village. They said they were actually holding classes that week, as it was the week following, that they had their **Fa'a Mati**, and we could have visited them then.

³⁴³ See Table 1 below, which lists all the **A'oga a le Faifeau** in Samoa with their respective rolls for 2001.

³⁴⁴ In March every year the elder deacon (and his wife), of each church district (*matagaluega*) carries out an inspection of every minister's house and church buildings, in their respective district. Before the day each parish carries out any necessary cleaning and renovations of the manse and church. The minister's house is stocked up for the year by the women's group, with new sleeping and sitting mats, (in Samoa only), beddings, kitchenware and so on. The manse is cleaned inside out and painted if needed be. Every bed is made up with the best linen, pillowcases and bedspreads. It is called the **Fa'a Mati** (the March culture or the March event) because it is held in the month of *Mati*, Samoan for March.

Although I was disappointed because my supervisor was only in Samoa for those two weeks, and therefore would not be able to see an **A'oga a le Faifeau** in action, it was a pleasure to drive her to one of the villages where I would be doing my research. More importantly she was able to visit the 'contextual locality' of my research. To the east of **Tolo** village, about 6 km away is the other rural **A'oga a le Faifeau** in **Puna** village. The visit to **Tolo** gave my supervisor an idea of where I would be doing my research, and during this visit also I arranged with the pastor's wife my following visit to their school.

Informal Conversations as Methodology

The following discussion is about information gleaned from informal conversations with family and friends during this research visit to Samoa. Although it was not intended to include such information in my study, as I do not give much credence to information acquired this way, it nevertheless did have a purpose, as it alerted me to the 'multi-dimensionality' of information sources, as well as its credibility. This also illustrates the points made earlier about the multiple realities and perspectives created and developed about the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. More significantly, for the first time in many years, it weakened the very core of my definite and determined belief in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** as a surviving institution. I was extremely disappointed and I became frustrated. It was 'shocking' news.

I shared with my supervisor in her first week in Samoa the causes of my frustrations. One that almost put me off doing research on the **A'oga a le Faifeau** was the 'unfounded' view of some people that came to visit us the week before she arrived in Samoa. These views tended towards the negative. Some relatives and friends said things like, "I'm not sure whether the **A'oga a le Faifeau** exists any more." Another said, "We still do it but not as seriously as we used to." Yet another said, "It's not the same, I hardly see it done in our village."

Why I was in Samoa at that particular time had to be explained, and although the issue of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** was discussed in informal situations, during dinner, family gatherings, over a cup of Samoan cocoa and so on, what transpired did not sit well with what I had expected. The enthusiasm and passion that I had for my research began to

wane there and then. They gave the impression that I would be wasting my time pursuing a topic that, although I was most passionate about it, it was not functioning any more. What is more, I had gone to Samoa believing that the **A'oga a le Faifeau** was still carried out in earnest, as was being done in New Zealand.

An incident that was almost the 'last straw that broke the camel's back', is worth noting here. The week my supervisor arrived, the National University of Samoa Council was meeting. The University of Auckland has a member in this Council. My supervisor and I were invited to the Council's dinner hosted by the Minister of Education, who is also the Chairperson of the Council. I introduced my supervisor to the Minister and the Principal of one of the local Theological Colleges. The discussion that ensued after the introductions centred on the **A'oga a le Faifeau** and why I was in Samoa at that time.

The minister was quite adamant about the great contribution made by the **A'oga a le Faifeau** to the education of many Samoan children. She informed us that she had learned to read and write in the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. She also claimed that if it were not for that basic schooling she received in the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, she would not have gone far in her education. She went on to study politics and philosophy at Victoria University in Wellington. She seemed to think, though, that the generations of pastors that run their schools with much enthusiasm and dedication were coming to an end.

According to the Theological College Principal, about twenty years ago, there was a concern about the pedagogies employed in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** and how they differed from those employed in the **A'oga Palagi**. The Western Samoan Government Education Department thought at the time that there was too much rote learning in the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. The Education Department wanted the pastors to concentrate on teaching the gospel and leave the teaching of the 3Rs, and other secular subjects, to the **Palagi** schools. At the time also, an expatriate lecturer at a local Theological College, who was also lecturing part-time at the Western Samoa Teachers Training College, supported the government stand and discouraged the pastors from teaching those subjects in their **A'oga a le Faifeau**.

The above concern was fuelled by developments in education occurring at the time (1970s and 1980s), especially in the teaching of reading. This was the introduction of the 'look-say' and later the 'whole language' methods of teaching reading, which supposedly promoted better understanding and child-centred education. The old phonics method, an important pedagogy of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, was considered too 'mechanical' as it promoted rote learning and not much comprehension of what the children were reading. At the time also, the rote learning of times tables was discouraged for the same reason that there was not much understanding involved and children were only memorising them to be forgotten in no time. The new maths developed more child-centred methods of teaching the subject that assisted the children's comprehension of maths concepts especially with the use of sets.

The relatively 'negative' views of the visitors that came to our house in the first week in Samoa, our visit to **Tolo** village to find that the **A'oga a le Faifeau** was on hold until after the **Fa'a Mati**, plus the above discussion, dashed my hopes of finding any **A'oga a le Faifeau** in action. I could not help but feel ambivalent and confided in my supervisor this emotion, in our following meeting, especially as my clear expectations of finding a proper **A'oga a le Faifeau** programme in operation had well and truly waned. After conferring with her, she suggested that I might want to write about the history of the 'Rise and Fall' of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, referred to before. I was filled with great sadness by the thought that the pastor's school that had been so much an important part of many Samoans' and my own education had somehow been reduced to a mere 'piece of history', to be forgotten and lost forever. Was it going to suffer the same fate as the **Fa'a Samoa** in being written about as 'history'?

This was not to be, though, as I soon found out during a most unlikely and sad event, at the funeral of a brother-in law who was also a pastor. At this funeral, there were a lot of pastors, and I had the opportunity to informally ask some pastors about their **A'oga a le Faifeau**. I do not need to go into the details, as yes, they all had **A'oga a le Faifeau** and they all wanted to be part of this study. I was in a better frame of mind about my study after that. My supervisor left at the end of that week before I could tell her the good news.

My first three weeks of research in Samoa, though seemingly wasted, offered an opportune time for reflection and I was able to put my research in perspective. I was also able to make contacts with my 'people', the pastors and their wives I was to interview. Those 'other messages' though not substantiated, and not often written about because of the 'informality' of the situations in which they were made, plus their relative disputed origin, authorship and credibility, reflected the **A'oga a le Faifeau** in a different light. Such information also showed up the **A'oga a le Faifeau** as a small educational tradition, a tradition with folk characteristics which people do not hear too often or read about, and which therefore does not carry the same interest that people concentrate on larger educational traditions, like the **Palagi** schools, secondary and tertiary institutions.

The **A'oga a le Faifeau** has evolved 'folk' culture rather than high culture characteristics.³⁴⁵ The **A'oga a le Faifeau** is relatively unknown for this reason, yet it is also one of the reasons why it has survived, because it touches base with a lot more people, especially in their formative years, the important years when children develop lasting social, intellectual and affective knowledge and skills. The **A'oga a le Faifeau** has been in operation in Samoa for over 160 years. Given that a significant number, over 20,000 of children (See page 231) in Samoa attend CCCS churches, the **A'oga a le Faifeau** for most of these children is their first point of contact with formal education. The **A'oga a le Faifeau** offers relatively small and basic educational traditions to do with the teaching of the three Rs in Samoan as well as some aspects of the **Fa'a Samoa** and religious education, to those village children that attend the CCCS. Large educational traditions focus more on the centralizing tendencies of modern urban life, and thus are more conspicuous by comparison.

In my renewed and much elated frame of mind, I became more enthusiastic and looked forward to starting my interviews and observations. The **Fa'a Mati** fever had subsided, the pastors had settled back into their normal routines, and the **A'oga a le Faifeau** was in full swing again.

The rural schools, **Puna** and **Tolo** were visited five and six times respectively during March and April in 1999. I interviewed the pastors and their wives on those occasions

³⁴⁵ Finkelstein, (*Ibid*), pp 255-297

and made observations as well. On one occasion for each of the two rural schools, I made observations that I have included under the heading, 'A Day of Observations' in Chapter Eight. For the urban school I made two visits, and one observation of the pastor's wife with the younger classes. Of the suburban school I only interviewed the pastor and his wife on two occasions. I took a preschool class for reading in the **Puna School**, and Class 2 for the **Tolo School**.

Personal Narratives with Folkloric Content as Methodology

The write up of my interviews with the pastors and their wives is in narrative form. I have decided for several reasons to let the pastors and their wives tell their own stories about their **A'oga a le Faifeau** in the text, with very little assistance on my part, except for the sub-topics given as guidance and my translations of the interviews and responses from the questionnaires that were in Samoan. This may, in a way, interrupt the conventional academic discourse, with its caveats and footnotes, its quotes and citations.³⁴⁶ The reasons for this decision are incorporated into the following discussion.

Narratives tend to lose some of their integrity when presented in a much different or more systematic editorial style. Presented in their 'untouched' narrative forms, the stories are not only of theoretical interest, but their relative 'originality' of meaning, whether implicit or explicit, is still very much intact. While this may be a debatable issue, it is my argument for writing into the text these narratives as they were told. The 'true voices' of narrative tellers often become 'sanitised', 'out of tune', and are 'muffled' by the need to present their stories in more fragmented and analysed ways.

Associated with this and in support of the above argument is the main thrust of a study by Bartlett, which I discussed in Chapter One, of the interpretation and reconstruction of a Native American folk story by his English subjects. Bartlett suggested that such interpretation and reconstruction is not a neutral, value-free process but one that can be conflict-laden.

³⁴⁶ Smith, S G and Walker, R, 2000, 'Case study and case records: a conversation about the Hathaway Project,' In Altrichter, H and Elliott, J, (Eds), *Images of Educational Change*, Open University Press, Philadelphia, p.137.

I refer to Bartlett's comments about this reinterpretation again here as he claimed:

Before long the story tends to be robbed of all its surprising, jerky and apparently inconsequential form, and reduced to an orderly narration. It is denuded of all the elements that left the reader puzzled and uneasy.³⁴⁷

I claim that the integrity of the storytellers' accounts can only come about with the presentation of these stories as closely as possible to their original narrations, so that the strength and passion of their messages do not become obscured by the researcher's own 'narrative' voice. Given that there is a dearth of research material on the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, this is also one major reason why these stories merit their inclusion in the text as such.

The stories were prompted by the interview questions because of the need to satisfy the study's purposes. Otherwise these are 'spontaneous' personal stories. The sub-topics or themes, on which the interview questions were based, to delineate one aspect or theme from the other, have been omitted because they disrupt the flow of the stories. Those themes are included in my analytical interpretation of the narratives in the following chapter. The narratives are not 'censored' and if they appear so, it would be a fault of my translation skills plus the exclusion of some material that the pastors preferred being left out, being ever so conscious of cultural and traditional sanctions. I have endeavoured to translate as closely as possible so that their meanings in the Samoan version do not become obscured or lost in their English translations.

Oring, a folklore researcher, claimed the functions of folklore to be validating culture and education and maintaining conformity. He also maintained that the stories have been propounded with regard to the entire group, the culture, rather than the individual storyteller.³⁴⁸ Those functions are relevant to my study and I have adapted them to the purposes of the research. Firstly the research seeks to corroborate and validate the culture of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** as an educational institution that has made and still makes a significant contribution to the education of many Samoan children in Samoa and New Zealand. Secondly the research aims to 'educate' people about what the **A'oga a le**

³⁴⁷ Bartlett, 1932, (*Ibid*), p.64

³⁴⁸ Oring, E, 1984, 'Dyadic Traditions', *Journal of Folklore Research*, pp. 19-28.

Faifeau does, its educational activities and values and how it upholds those values. Thirdly it describes and explains the functions of the culture of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. Fourthly it makes the role of the pastors and their wives more explicit as the sole teachers of the school as well as promoters of 'educational' values using the Samoan language as the medium for instruction.

The narratives do not divorce the more secular parts of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** from its religious values and beliefs. In the narratives, the three Rs and the Samoan language and their use to promote 'religious' aims, make the relationship between the two a symbiotic and reciprocal one. This relationship is at the 'heart' of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** and the very reason why it was first developed. It is the essence of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** because one promotes the other and it is what gives the **A'oga a le Faifeau** its own character, personality and culture. The pastors and their wives are church leaders. They are also the exclusive teachers of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** because primarily they have a mission to accomplish through the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. In their quest to accomplish their primary mission, they are providing the children with an education that not only does that but also 'creates' other realities, not often consciously realised, such as an education that has psychological, cultural, and educational values. It can be seen as a double mission for the pastors and wives. They cannot accomplish their primary mission which is the inculcation of their Christian faith's ideas, customs and traditions in the children, without accomplishing their educational mission, that is the teaching of reading and writing and 'civilised' behaviour, so that the children would better understand their religious instruction. This relationship between the CCCS's religious mission and its educational mission cannot be separated, because without it, there is no **A'oga a le Faifeau**. The LMS (later renamed the CCCS) church could have just run Sunday schools, which do not have the 'print literacy instruction' component in their syllabus, but because of the connection between the two missions, the **A'oga a le Faifeau** cannot simply be done away with. In accomplishing its educational mission, the **A'oga a le Faifeau** provides some spans with the **A'oga Palagi**. This is where the **A'oga a le Faifeau** makes a significant, potential contribution to the education of Samoan children.

The documentary - instructional text for the reader of the pastors' narratives

In her study of the folklore text, Elizabeth Fine³⁴⁹ describes what often occurs in the initial task of collecting and transcribing a folk narrative text. She refers to the difficulties encountered by a transcriber in moving from the symbolic system of oral performance to that of print. The primary difficulty, she suggests, is in maintaining the type of perceptual 'focus' employed by a participant engaged in an aesthetic transaction. The transcriber is challenged by the obvious task of representing on paper what happens as the listener observes and hears the performance. How does the listener hear? She goes on to say that the transcriber is in danger of 'overloading' or 'underloading' the text, and readers may be unable to 'read' the information supplied about the performance if they are not familiar with the transcription symbols used, and therefore the reader must be given an instructional documentary.

The pastors' narratives are personal narratives with a difference because the researcher prompted them with certain given themes. The documentary - instructional text for the reader of these narratives is a theme or topic-centred one. The 'perceptual focus' in presenting the narratives is on the original themes, the sub-topics as in the interview questionnaire, and the overall aims of the study. These are the points of emphasis. These are themes about the aims and structure of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, the worth of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** as well as the personal attitudes of the storytellers, the pastors and wives. These narratives would have to be read with those themes in mind.

The themes include: the aims and philosophy of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** - the structural theme under which are the calendar for the school year, the recruiting of the children, the teachers of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, the syllabus, the records kept by the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, the pedagogies, and the assessment and measurements procedures. The value and attitude themes are about the worth and significance of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, how successful the **A'oga a le Faifeau** is in achieving its aims, the contribution made in the overall education of the Samoan child that attends the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, and finally the themes based on the future of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**; what could improve the current

³⁴⁹ Fine, E C, 1984, *The Folklore Text: From Performance to Print*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, p. 107

teaching styles for example, resources and so on and how the **A'oga a le Faifeau** could improve its relationships with other educational institutions, especially the **A'oga Palagi**.

The CCCS does not have a systematic record or documentation of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** syllabuses except for what were published in the *Sulu Samoa*, copies of which, plus those of the schools in the study, are documented in Chapter Eight. My 'written' story will enable the 'unwritten' history, stories and literature of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** to speak to us.

When I interviewed one of the pastors about the particular pedagogy he and his wife employ, he said:

Pastor's school has no set up styles of teaching. We pastors of nowadays are still following the styles we know from the past generations of pastors.³⁵⁰

Those pedagogies, peculiar to the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, have not been previously documented. My study does that. The pastors themselves are all products of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. During their theological training they were also involved in Sunday School teacher-training classes. As the Theological College increasingly raised its minimum entrance, for example from Form Two to School Certificate to Sixth Form Certificate Level (and over 21 years of age), the College has concentrated mainly on a theology-based syllabus (A few of the students from year to year are also degree holders from overseas universities). There is less need for any strong 'arts' content in the syllabus because the students had this education on entrance. The Sunday School teacher-training in the College gives them the necessary training plus their knowledge of how they themselves were taught in the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, would equip them for their **A'oga a le Faifeau** teaching.³⁵¹

The syllabuses and the pastors' narratives are important records because they impart knowledge about how and what the pastors taught in the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. The inclusion of those stories in the text rather than the 'appendix' (which has an 'added on'

³⁵⁰ *Puna A'oga a le Faifeau* story

³⁵¹ *Tanielu, L I, 2002, Personal Communication.*

Tanielu was a lecturer at the *Malua* Theological College for 11 years (1968-1979) and was Vice Principal for the last four of those years.

connotation that is prone to 'disconnection' altogether) is a strategy. The stories also represent the active part, the 'life' of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, which has been responsibly carried on from generation to generation - generations of pastors and children.

The A'oga a le Faifeau as a Folk Group

The respective meanings of 'folk', 'folklore' or 'folksy' are: to do with the 'common' people or people in general of a country; to do with a relatively unwritten literature of a people, traditional to, simple and unpretentious.³⁵² These terms quite aptly define the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. Compared to the high degree of professionalised expertise in mandatory 'curricula', as defined by the state, as well as the relatively more dramatic modifications that those curricula go through, the **A'oga a le Faifeau** has changed very little. It owes its survival to its folk group status and folk pedagogy framework. It has become a way of life for CCCS members. The latter claim also closely connects with the argument made earlier that the changes to the **A'oga a le Faifeau** have been more evolutionary than revolutionary and this has contributed also to its robustness.

It is its 'simplicity' and 'unpretentiousness' that has partly contributed to the relative absence of any systematic reference to the **A'oga a le Faifeau's** educational activities in the literature. It has become a way of life for many Samoans as said earlier. I 'voice' this also in Chapter One, in relation to the church as meaning more than just a religion to the Samoan people; it is a way of life for them. Some of the 'reminisced' stories about the **A'oga a le Faifeau** of the Samoan folk revolve around the way they were taught by their pastors.³⁵³ Given also that a relatively large number (34.7 % of the population of Samoa) attend CCCS churches, the **A'oga a le Faifeau** teachings have become folklore for many.

³⁵² *Folklore* (from which the adjective *folkloric* comes), according to the *Collins English Dictionary*, p.323, means the unwritten literature of a people as expressed in stories and songs, passed on from generation to generation. The word *folk* means originating from or traditional to the common people of a country, of or like ordinary people, simple and unpretentious.

³⁵³ These stories deserve to be documented in future. People bring these up in casual conversations, telling of how they were taught in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** during the old days, for example saying of how different the way generations of nowadays are disciplined in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** compared to their days. There is so much folklore about the **A'oga a le Faifeau** that needs to be documented. We never see the **A'oga a le Faifeau** on TV, even on TV Samoa; it deserves also to be documented on film.

Chapter Six

A general discussion and interpretation of the Narratives

Introduction

The present chapter is a discussion of the narratives based on the themes as set out in the interview schedule. The chapter begins with a justification of why the pastor is the exclusive narrator and not his wife, or both. There are significant reasons why this is so as explained below.

A team ministry

The CCCS ministry has always been referred to as a team ministry. The pastor and his wife share responsibilities. Apart from the 'sacraments' and special services like the Sunday, funeral and wedding ones that are strictly the pastor's domain, most other duties are shared.

The Role of the Pastor's Wife: A 'Gender' Issue

One of the reasons why the CCCS pastor's wife, in Samoa especially, is not allowed to work outside the ministry is because she has a fair share of responsibilities within the ministry that occupies her on a daily basis. One of these is the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, which she and the pastor must prepare for. In the mornings, during the **A'oga a le Faifeau** term, she runs her **Vasega Faitau Pi** (Alphabet Reading Class or Preschool), while in the afternoon she usually teaches the younger classes while the pastor takes the older ones. Her other duties include chairing meetings for the women's fellowship, coordinating and teaching the Sunday School and assisting her husband in other 'ministry' duties. Her talents and interests are to be incorporated into the ministry to assist their pastoral work.

The Pastor as the Narrator

The pastor narrates the story on behalf of his wife and the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. This is in keeping with the tradition that he is the speaker on matters pertaining to the church. Also he is the 'principal' of the school. This is not to say that the pastor's wife had a passive

role in the research though. Each pastor and wife team was interviewed together most of the time. They also edited the narrative and approved the final version of the narrative given for the study. I discuss very briefly below the 'tradition' that has a bearing on the decision to record the pastor as narrator, which has to do with the 'mandatory' role of the CCCS pastor's wife.

Pastors' wives may be seen to work more behind the scene and are expected to assist their husbands in a relatively **Fa'amamalu** (quiet and sedate) manner. In actual fact the pastors' wives can be generally seen as the 'backbone' of the CCCS pastoral ministry. They are commonly referred to as the **faufautua o le galuega** (advisors of the pastors' work), even though in the church hierarchy there are male lay preachers and deacons. The lay preachers' role is generally referred to as that of **lagolagosua** (supportive role) more than **faufautua** (advisory role). The advisory role of the pastor's wife is influenced by her **Fa'a Samoa** title, **faletua**.

The Samoan word **faletua** is the title of respect given to the pastor's wife. It was, before the LMS arrival and still is, the title given to a high chief's wife. When **Malietao** bestowed his own high chief status on the LMS pastor, the pastor's wife also received the title of the high chief's wife. The term **faletua** literally means house (**fale**) in the back or behind (**tua**). While it may seem 'a shame' to call a pastor's (or a high chief) wife a 'back house' or a 'house behind' (the main one), the title carries socio-political significance and status in the **Fa'a Samoa** which consequently went with the according of the title to the pastor's wife.³⁵⁴

In effect, the wife of the pastor or high chief greatly influences the decisions made by her husband even if she appears to be sitting quietly or 'hidden' in the 'back' preparing food or instructing her children and family members. The successes or failures of a pastor's ministry (or a high chief's **aiga**) are mostly accorded to the wife.

³⁵⁴ Every Samoan guest house (**fale talimalo**) or main house (**fale tele**) has a house immediately to the back (**faleoo** or **fale i tua** 'faletua', where decisions are made and passed on to the house in the front where the high chiefs or orators (in a special occasion) front house. The **faletua** is seen as being behind her husband (pastor or chief) in decisions making. And the down side of this 'status' is that she gets the praise when things go well in the ministry or aiga, and the blame when things go wrong respectively.

A common Samoan belief about this is:

A lelei le fautua a le faletua (o le faifeau poo le alii sili) e manuia le galuega (poo le aiga). If the pastor (or the high chief's wife) offers good advice the pastoral ministry (or aiga) will be successful.

About the Narratives

The narratives relate the pastors and their wives' experiences of a single episode in their lives, one that takes on average up to 6 months every year. During the rest of the year the knowledge and skills acquired in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** are practised and lived out within the church during Sunday School, **Fa'a Samoa** activities, preparations for Children's Sunday in October in which the pupils perform drama, music and so on in Samoan, and the Christmas activities in December.

The **A'oga a le Faifeau** transcends church hierarchy. Whether one is the chairman of the church or an elder minister, young or old, a novice or a retiring one, the **A'oga a le Faifeau** is the pastor and wife's responsibility until the pastor reaches the ripe old age of 70, the official retiring age of the CCCS pastor. It used to be 75 until 1991, and before that it was a life-long commitment, 'until death us do part.'

The Interview Questionnaire

A questionnaire comprising 16 questions (See Appendix Two) was given to each pastor and his wife. The questions are organised into Part A and Part B. In Part A, questions 1 to 10 are on the more structural area of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** - the school calendar, aims, recruitment of children and classes, the syllabus and resources, teaching and learning styles, assessment and records kept. Part B, questions 11 to 16, is based on a more personal level, about values and attitudes.

The first narrator requested that he write his story in English himself. I did not have to translate this narrative and I have not attempted either to change the way he wrote it. If there are any errors for example in its language structure (grammatical and so on) I have made only a very few corrections especially in the spelling. The other three narratives are

translations, except for a few important 'quotes' in Samoan that I have left in because they stand out, and I felt their English translations would not deliver the same 'passion' and 'integrity' that their Samoan versions would. I include their English translations also.

The responses of the pastors are extremely similar to the research questions. 'Uncanny' was the word used by one of my supervisors to describe this close similarity when she first read the narratives. I had expected the pastors' responses to show little difference from one narrative to another. If I were to use a null hypothesis such as that 'the narratives would not yield similar results,' the narratives would have disproved such theory. The similarity displayed reflects the focus one would expect with a 'folk group' across generations. The concept of the 'folk group' as having its own coherence that would be unlikely to change for a long time certainly applies to the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. The narratives demonstrate this aspect. This also relates to the point I argue in the previous chapter about the **A'oga a le Faifeau** sustaining change, in an evolutionary way, that is happening over a long period of time, rather than in a revolutionary way, that is, happening over a relatively short period of time and quite dramatically. In the latter way, changes would be more obvious because they tend to be ongoing.

All CCCS pastors are 'committed' by vocation, profession and calling, to teaching the three Rs in what has been the **A'oga a le Faifeau** traditional (of old) pedagogy, the phonetic approach. While I had looked forward to seeing differences and some changes (which I discuss below), overall, my observations of the schools and their stories were not too dissimilar to my own **A'oga a le Faifeau** experiences as a student of fifty years ago.³⁵⁵ The teaching of the three Rs is basically the same. The students in the two rural schools (Narratives One and Two) for example still 'chant' their times tables like I did. Their preschool classes still learn to read from the **Pi Tautau** (Alphabet Chart, a revised version though). The infant classes still learn to read and write using the Alphabet Book **Tusi Pi or Pi Nofoa** (Alphabet Book). Class 2 children still use the **Tusi a Tamaiti** (Samoan Primer) or **Tusi 'Oti**, the latter being a 'nickname' given to the Primer because it has a story about an 'oti (goat). The older classes use **O le Gagana Samoa** (Samoan Grammar) **O le Tusi Paia** (the Bible) and the **Tala i le Tusi Paia** (Summary of Bible

³⁵⁵ *They are not much different either from what goes on in our own A'oga a le Faifeau today.*

Stories). The children still sit on the floor bending over their books to write exactly like I did over my slate. Those 'traditions' handed down from the early missionaries have changed very little.

In responding to the question about pedagogy, the first narrator said, "The Pastor's School has no set up styles of teaching. We pastors of nowadays are still following the styles we know from the past generations of pastors." A reiteration of this by the third narrator was, "We employ the usual **A'oga a le Faifeau** styles of teaching. The blackboard and chalk are the main tools, apart from the textbooks and the teacher." The word 'usual' in the latter quote connotes it has always been done this way. The teaching of phonics and spelling, memorising and recitation of Bible verses and times tables and oral bible story telling make up the basic teaching-learning process. In the descriptions of their **A'oga a le Faifeau**, the pastors imply that they have contributed much to the education of Samoan children even though people have been critical of the Pastors' Schools. As the **Aisa** pastor (Narrative Three) said, "The pastor's school at least gives the Samoan child a stronghold in God, and Godly values are good moral and spiritual values, even though this has come under fire from parents, the highly educated people and non-believers especially." The **Puna** pastor³⁵⁶ introduces his story with a much-concerned retaliation to those criticisms. He said:

The development and an improved standard of education in the country puts a question mark and many queries are placed upon the use of the pastors' schools. Considering and comparing the high standard of education and the low level of the pastors' schools, as some well educated people think, causes the under-estimation of the pastors schools. This is always the way that the people of the world look into the value of things but not the quality. The pastor's school and its philosophical ground are very important. The church leaders (missionaries especially) realised in the beginning of the 20th century³⁵⁷ that the government schools could not cater for the majority of the Samoan children in the schools they established at that time. So to help those children in far away (rural) communities from the schools the pastors had to carry on their schools by teaching the children how to read and write. According to some verbal reports, a boy or girl could not attend the government school until he/she was 10 to 12 years of age. So the boys and girls were well prepared in mind, by the pastors and wives for any subject they learned when they started at government school (Narrative One).

³⁵⁶ The first narrator wrote his own narrative in English. He requested this.

³⁵⁷ This pastor is talking here about the formal colonisation period when Western Samoa was under New Zealand rule. The younger classes, were left to the pastors in the villages, and were called Grade One schools.

The pastors also imply that the teaching methodology of old is still the best and because it has withstood the test of time, to survive up to the present, it has to be good to have lasted this long. The children are eager to attend and parents of other denominations send their children to the CCCS **A'oga a le Faifeau** (Narratives One and Two). The pastors argue that it is this methodology that has made the Samoan children clever in reading, writing and thinking. As the **Aisa** pastor said:

Ua tele naua le mau ituaiga metotia e fai ai A'oga i nei aso ua le iloa e tamaiti filifili. O le metotia lava lenei mai anamua lea ua popoto ai tamaiti Samoa e faitau ma tusitusi ma mafaufau. O aso nei ua televave le nanu ao le leaga ia o le sipela. O nisi foi tamaiti ua le iloa lava faitau pe tusitusi ae sa le fa'apena i aso ia. Ua tele foi le poto fa'aneionapo ua le usita'i tamaiti. (There are so many teaching methodologies these days that children are confused. This is the methodology from a long time ago that has made Samoan children clever in reading and writing and thinking. These days the children speak English more fluently but they cannot spell. Some children cannot even read and write properly. There is too much modern **poto** (knowledge/smartness/cleverness/intelligence) so much so that children today lack respect and discipline.)(Narrative Three)

On closer examination of the individual narratives and by comparison with my own Pastor's School days and experiences as a teacher, there are certain changes. The changes can be seen as more evolutionary, happening gradually over a long period of time, rather than revolutionary or dramatic. The changes are mainly in the use of resources for example. Exercise books are used instead of slates, the 'modern maths' and Samoan textbooks (Narrative One), the idea of more self-study, which also reduces the times to two to three days a week, when children attend the school, the use of videos of bible stories and 'model making' of geographical features such as of mountains and so on (Narrative Four). As the narrator of this story explained:

We give them (the students) especially the older classes, the pages from the texts for them to read and study at home, to write down any questions on what they cannot understand. I explain and assist them but I don't want to spoon-feed them. We also use activities such as we made models of a mountain, boat or yacht, we also let them see videos of some of the bible stories. At the end of each month we give tests to show their understanding of what was taught and what they self studied at home. The big exams are held in September.

There are inter-school differences. One school is using modern maths and Samoan language textbooks given by the government schoolteachers in their parish (Narrative One). There are also differences in their respective school years as well as their responses

to the pressures from outside such as government schools, the 'educated elite' (Narrative One).

Each storyteller may be aware of esoteric lore or professional pedagogical knowledge through his or her education and other outside agents like government schoolteachers, the Samoa Education Department or other Samoan people, and the narratives reflect these. The pastors are aware of the need for students to study for national exams and future plans include holding **A'oga a le Faifeau** exams earlier in the year in June or July so children could concentrate on their 'swotting' for nationals. They are also 'wary' of the fact that their work has been evaluated against how **A'oga a le Faifeau** children perform in the **A'oga Palagi**. Teachers of the latter commented on the 'facilitating' role of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** in the children's learning in the **A'oga Palagi** especially in the subjects of Maths and Samoan language, the issue of discipline as well as the relatively 'smooth' transition of **A'oga a le Faifeau** preschoolers to new entrants classes (Narratives One and Two). This is positive evaluation. Sometimes though as the **Puna** pastor (Narrative One) said, "Pastors are sometimes blamed for the children's bad behaviour in the **Palagi** School, implying that the pastors are not doing their job well in teaching children good morals, to obey and to show respect. The faifeau's work is evaluated here, and if the child misbehaves, it reflects on the pastor."

On the other hand, the prejudice in favour of esoteric lore, in this case of the CCCS traditions, is natural and necessary for the development of a personal sense of identity. Each storyteller identifies with his religious faith, his own congregation, **A'oga a le Faifeau**, village children, the **Fa'a Samoa** and education. These are important in the development of his identity, calling and reality as a pastor cum teacher.

The personal perceptions of each respective pastor and wife team are the key to the identification of the event of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. They are the narrators. The basic function of their storytelling is to illustrate their 'calling' as teachers and mentors of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. The underlying potentiality that is actualised can be expressed as to demonstrate this calling.³⁵⁸ This is the literary goal directing their telling of the stories. This basic function, according to Stahl, can be interpreted in a 'three-step sequence'.

³⁵⁸ Stahl, (*Ibid*), p. 25

Firstly, their calling to “demonstrate” what their work is about; the aims and philosophy, values and attitudes; secondly, the “procedure for demonstrating” their calling, as the plot of each story unfolds it reveals what they do and how they do it, the structure of their work; and thirdly, the “success” (or failure) of their calling as “demonstrated” through their teaching and assessment procedures and self-evaluation of their work that includes plans for future improvement.

Aims and Philosophy

For the pastors and their wives, their calling means much more than just a job of teaching the **A’oga a le Faifeau**. The first narrator talks about the **A’oga a le Faifeau** as a necessary burden that must be shouldered.

It (the Pastor’s School) is a necessary burden for any pastor, but a burden that must be shouldered because the school prepares the child from early childhood for his/her future life in the education field. When people say that if it were not for the pastor’s school, they would not have learned to read and write, it brings a lot of satisfaction to my heart and is rewarding for any pastor (Narrative One).

This quote expresses the great value that pastors and wives put on the **A’oga a le Faifeau**. This is one pattern identified in their narratives. For them, their work is a mission to be accomplished, accompanied by a strong inner urge to follow their calling; a specific task assigned that must be carried out for religious (Christian) and educational reasons. The **A’oga a le Faifeau** is part of their profession, their vocation, their trade and occupation as pastors and wives. Their full potentiality as such is actualised here.

The pastors all agree that the aims of the **A’oga a le Faifeau** are the teaching of the skills of reading and writing, the attitudes and values of Christianity, the values of the **Fa’a Samoa**, such as the Samoan language and respect, and the development of the children’s characters and personalities to prepare them to face the wider world. The pastors’ narratives reaffirm the values of Christianity as most essential, especially today where children are exposed to a host of various different lifestyles and values, vastly separate from their Christian and **Fa’a Samoa** upbringing.

As the **Aisa** pastor said:

If, as it seems today, the **A'oga Palagi** is concentrating too much on the English language and general knowledge at the expense of teaching good behavioural, Christian values and developing good people relationships, the pastor's school prioritises these as integral and essential responsibilities of its work. It nurtures in children these values. Many children today do not have much faith in anything, not even in their own parents. The pastor's school at least gives him/her a stronghold in God, and Godly values are good moral and spiritual values, even though this has come under fire from some parents, the highly educated people and non-believers (Narrative Three).

The pastors also reaffirm the role of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** as giving a more balanced and holistic approach to the teaching of children than the **Palagi** School offers. They imply that not only does the **A'oga a le Faifeau** develop the intellect of the children it also instils in them those values that build good character or 'good all round' persons. In other words, children are educated in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** as whole human beings, not just academically but spiritually and morally. The **Aisa** pastor refers to this as "to make a 'whole' person" in his explanation below.

The **A'oga a le Faifeau** will never lose its essence as the instigator of good behaviour and discipline, the **Fa'a Samoa** value of respect for other people, good Christian values, and especially faith in God. The **A'oga Palagi** concentrates on teaching English and general knowledge. The **A'oga a le Faifeau** balances this out by teaching those values that are most necessary to make a whole person. A Samoan child can be really smart in school, but if he or she does not know how to respect other people in every way, then he or she is missing out on a lot of the essential values that are taught in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** that would build his or her character.

The narrators also demonstrate historical attitudes and values about education that the LMS missionaries inculcated in their ancestors in the past, as they also reaffirm in their stories. As the **Aisa** pastor said:

The priority goal of the pastor's school is to teach the child to be able to read and write so he/she can understand the bible and the faith of the church as well as to be able to apply the skills learned in reading writing, arithmetic and Samoan to his/her own life, to respect others and grow in the Christian faith (Narrative Three).

These are their personal values also, as they have internalised them. The aims of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** are driven by those values. They demonstrate how they themselves, as pastors-cum teachers, have been and are instilling these values in their pupils. Some very strong and convincing messages about those values come through in the narratives.

The **Aisa** pastor explains that:

The **A'oga a le Faifeau** aims to teach children right from the early age, to build a sound foundation in the values of Christian life and principles, good behaviour, obedience, respect their elders and the **Fa'a Samoa** and good discipline. The **A'oga a le Faifeau** also teaches them to become competent in reading, writing and arithmetic. We know that every child that finishes **A'oga a le Faifeau** can read and write and do arithmetic at least. If the child was attending from the beginners' class, we make sure that when he or she leaves, he/she can add and subtract and do division (Narrative Three).

The passion, the strong convictions about their calling, is a pattern that continues to dominate the narratives.

The pastor's school is an old tradition. It is a legacy from the LMS missionaries but a tradition that has survived because its importance has not diminished even with the introduction of the many modern 'methods' in the **A'oga Palagi**. It has not died out because its constitution is strong and it is people oriented. It teaches the whole person. I believe that there will never be a time when I will say the pastor's school is no longer useful (Narrative Three).

In yet another passionate and convincing message, the **Lape** pastor claims:

The pastor's school is a model school for Samoan children as it prepares children for life and the **Fa'a Samoa**. It builds a foundation on which the Samoan child will grow spiritually, culturally and mentally. The child's participation in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** activities develops him or her as a whole person. Good solid foundations in a child's own language will prepare him or her to face difficulties of learning new languages and subjects. The Samoan child's faith in God is built up in this school, which will stand him or her in good stead when he or she goes out to face the world's many temptations. The pastor's school has a special place in the education of children. It is a most important part of the total ministry of a pastor. It aims for the wider education of the child, not only in developing the good values of a Christian or spiritual upbringing but also the social, intellectual and physical skills needed by a child to cope with the wider world (Narrative Four).

The narratives also reaffirm the role of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** in preparing the child for the **Palagi** School and also in reinforcing and consolidating some of the work that he or she does in that school. The **Tolo** pastor related:

The child attends the **A'oga a le Faifeau** before he or she starts at primary. This means that problems of familiarising with the new school are virtually solved because the **A'oga a le Faifeau** has prepared the child. The **Palagi** school is less daunting as he /she would start school together with children he/she knows and has made friends with. The atmosphere of learning and teaching would be similar to that of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. The child would start school with skills in reading and writing and speaking as he was introduced to those in the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. We believe that if the child were well grounded in his or her early years in his or her own language, this would facilitate his or her learning of a new language and other subjects. The pastor's school reinforces what the children learn in the **A'oga Palagi**, especially in their maths and times tables, reading and writing in **Samoan** and good discipline (Narrative Two).

The pastor's school prepares the child for the primary school. The above quote from Narrative Two stresses the importance of this. This preparation has great educational significance for the child who goes to the **Palagi** School for the first time. The preschool children learn to read the Samoan alphabet as well as count 1 to 10 in the pastor's school and by the time they enter primary, they would have gained this knowledge as well as the confidence to speak. This means that the problems like shyness, getting used to the new educational environment, new teacher and those practices associated with introducing the child to school, are usually minimised at the new entrants' class. The children also already know their peers. The skills that children acquire in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** could be transferred to learning new skills in the **Palagi** School. These are very important contributions of the pastor's school to the Samoan child's education.

While the above conditions create an 'ideal' educational situation especially for 'incorporation', the 'process of building on the familiar'³⁵⁹ in the **Palagi** School, this is not usually the case, because the transition is not 'managed' by the **Palagi** School without knowing what to incorporate, as there is no link with those out of school experiences. The process is not necessarily natural in the context of cultural discontinuity. While children from the **A'oga a le Faifeau** for example, may have 'relevant' knowledge for 'incorporation' to occur, conventional school literacies may not allow for the process to eventuate because of the 'otherness' of out-of-school literacies. The study's second argument relates directly to the above discussion, especially to the question about why some Samoan children underachieve in the **A'oga Palagi**.

The pastor's role in counselling students with behaviour problems is considered of great importance by the pastors. All pastors in the study uphold, as extremely important the value of discipline manifest in good behaviour, obedience to parents and teachers and respect of elders and other people. The **Puna** pastor (Narrative Four) claims it as one of the most important subjects of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. In this area they work together with the **Palagi** schools. Principals sometimes refer problem students to the Pastors, not only in the village primary, but high schools in Apia. There was an incident that one pastor dealt with of a student that was referred to him, but he found out that the 'kid' had never attended the pastor's school.

³⁵⁹ McNaughton, 2002, (*Ibid*) p. 27.

According to the **Puna** pastor:

The emphasis in the **Palagi** School of today is building good academic students in science, commerce and technology. The building of a child's moral and spiritual character is given a low profile and rating. The pastor's school prioritises this. Parents are supposed to be the children's first teachers but some parents are caught up with other activities and lifestyles and rarely have time to teach their children anything. The pastor's school is for these children. The pastor and his wife become the parents. The Samoans refer to the minister and his wife as '**matua Fa'aleagaga**' (Soul or spiritual parents). The pastor and his wife are looked upon by the parents as the father and mother of all the children in the congregation. We must then commit our lives into caring physically, mentally and spiritually for the children. The fellowship must be warmer and interesting. The pastors are sometimes blamed for the children's behaviour. I faced one case like that in the first year of our mission here. One boy from our congregation had a fight with his former teacher in **Maluafofua** College. He was sent to me with a letter from the Principal. I found out when he came and we talked, he did not attend the pastor's school in his whole life. A Samoan child who is brought up and well cared mentally and spiritually within the Pastors school will always be like a "tree Planted By the Waters", as the Psalmist says (Psalm 1:3). He or she yields much fruits in due season (Narrative One).

The pastor acts as a liaison person between the school and the parents. A suspended or expelled child is often referred to his or her pastor first before the parents, or the parents usually seek the pastors' help. A particular incident about this is referred to in the quote above. It shows that the pastor holds much authority in his relationship with the **Palagi** School and parents respect him in this role. As said above, pastors are sometimes blamed for the children's bad behaviour in the **Palagi** School, implying that the pastors are not doing their job well in teaching children good morals, to obey and to show respect. The faifeau's work is evaluated here, and if the child misbehaves, it reflects on the pastor. Although it is too harsh a judgement to be dished out to the pastors, it shows how Samoan people value the pastor as a model and source of good behaviour and Christian ethics.

The following summary refers directly to the more structural and procedural pursuits engaged by the **A'oga a le Faifeau** in the fulfilment of the above aims. They are the common patterns that are occurring in all the **A'oga a le Faifeau** in the Samoa study.

The A'oga a le Faifeau Calendar

During the **A'oga a le Faifeau** term, all children, on a daily basis usually go to the **A'oga a le Faifeau** when **Palagi** School breaks up in the afternoon. The dates and times during which each school is open varies from school to school. Even the schools in the study vary in terms of the days and times in the week when they are open. Of the four schools, one runs every day except Sunday. The daily management and organisation of each school is the responsibility of each respective pastor and his wife.

Traditionally, the **A'oga a le Faifeau** school year used to run from January to August. The exams were held during the **Palagi** school holidays in August. The church has shown leniency and flexibility especially in so far as allowing each **pulega** to structure their own syllabus and to decide on how long the pastor's school year would be and when to hold their own respective exams.

All **A'oga a le Faifeau** in each **pulega** have a common syllabus that has to be completed. In the early days of the church, the LMS missionaries did the syllabus for the whole country, and then as the church membership grew, it became the responsibility of the district (**matagaluega**) made up of two up to four sub-districts (**pulega**). The general practice now is for each **pulega** to do their own **A'oga a le Faifeau** syllabus and exams.

The school year for each of the three subdistricts in the study is shortened by at least one to two months. The important reason for this, common to all sub-districts, was to free the children for the rest of the year to prepare for national exams like the Form 2, Form 5, School Certificate and the Pacific Senior School Certificate (PSSC). In this way the church considers the children so that they are not unnecessarily burdened with having to cope with both lots of exams (**A'oga Palagi** and **A'oga a le Faifeau**) at around the same time.

Records

All schools have roll books but roll calls are not taken every day. The pastor's school is not compulsory, but according to the pastors, most children of their respective

congregations attend. In the beginning of each school year, the children are sorted into their classes, and their names are taken down and filed away. The lists are updated the week before the main exams. After exams, the lists, with marks included, are kept and used for when children are allocated to their classes the following year. The ages are not necessarily written down, except for any new pupils from outside the church like from other denominations. For the children of each respective parish the pastors and their wives know all the children in their respective schools as each CCCS pastor keeps copies of the children's baptismal certificates. In the rural schools especially, it is rare to have new children enrolling in the older classes except for the occasional child from another denomination in the same village. In the urban school, students of other denominations often attend at much older ages. Although age is also taken into account when promoting children, it is not considered by the pastors as too important as children are generally promoted when they have mastered the work assigned for each respective class.

The Children

The children within the church make up the pastor's school, with children from other denominations, especially the Catholic and the Mormon churches (Narratives One, Two and Four). The interest shown by parents of other denominations in sending their children to the CCCS **A'oga a le Faifeau** is more a matter of their wanting their children to succeed in the **A'oga Palagi**. When asked about this, the **Puna** village pastor said the parents were former CCCS members. Their children were not learning too well, especially in Maths and Spelling. Those parents knew the value of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. They left the CCCS for personal reasons.

The classes vary from school to school but each school has a **Vasega Faitau Pi** (the preschoolers) and classes 1 to 7. The largest school in the study has a beginners' class and classes 1 to 8. The usual starting age for the beginners' class, **Vasega Faitau Pi**, is 3 years, but all schools accept children below three if they are brought along.

The exam results of the previous years are used as a basis for promotions. While for all schools the first three placings (a traditional practice) are certain promotions, they also promote according to the children's ongoing progress during the school year. Sometimes

children who do exceptionally well during classes but perform in the exams below expectations are allowed to go up. The minister and his wife know well their own children's abilities and are not entirely dependent on exams as the determining factor for the promotion of children. Sometimes children that get an aggregate of 50% and over in the exams may be promoted subject to each pastor and wife's judgements. It is not uncommon to have children repeating classes once or twice, as said earlier, and there seems to be little 'stigma' attached to this.

The classes are usually split up between the minister and his wife. The minister takes the older children, usually classes 4 to 8, while the minister's wife takes the younger children from the Beginners to Class 3. There is no particular reason why the classes are allocated thus. It has always been done this way. Tradition rules the day. In the bigger schools the classes come on alternate days. In one school, half the classes come on one day and the rest the next day and so on. The minister and his wife each have two to three classes to take at the same time. This is the usual practice at the largest school in the study. Closer to exam time, about two weeks before, this school has its own preparatory exams before the main one and the pastor usually asks people in the church to help out with supervision. In some smaller schools, such as the **Puna** School, the students go everyday during the week including Saturday. It is not unusual either for the minister or his wife to take all classes on a day when the other is away.

In the **Lape** School, the older children in classes 5 to 8 are encouraged to do their own study and research on their own. The pastor gives the children of these classes the textbook pages and verses and they do their own study at home. The idea is to encourage them to be self-motivated to study. Once every fortnight the minister meets with these students to monitor their progress. Two weeks before exams they come every day to school for revision and 'dummy' tests.

The Syllabus

The following syllabus is common to all schools in the study. I selected the following elements that were common to all from the syllabuses that were given. The selection of

additional subjects depends on each individual **pulega**. Copies of the complete syllabuses are included in Chapter Eight.

The Common Syllabus:

Preschool Class (Age: 2 - 4 years)

Vasega Faitau Pi: The Beginners' Class (Alphabet Reading Class /Pre school)
Reading from the Samoan Alphabet Chart (**Pi Tautau**)
Numbers from 1 to 10
A verse from the bible to memorise
A bible story and simple questions based on the Bible
Texts: **Pi Tautau** (The Samoan Alphabet Chart) Bible

Class 1 (Age: 5 - 6)

(Vasega 1) Reading and Writing, Arithmetic (simple additions, subtractions, multiplications and times tables) a verse from the bible to memorise, dictation, bible story, questions on Christian faith.
Text: **Tusi Pi** (The Alphabet Book) Bible, **Mataupu Silisili** (Christian Faith)

Class 2 (Age: 6-8)

(Vasega 2) Reading and Writing, Arithmetic, Verses from the Bible to memorise, Dictation, Bible story, questions on Christian faith.
Texts: **Tusi a Tamaiti** (The Samoan Primer), Bible, Christian Faith

Class 3 (Age: 7-9 yrs)

(Vasega 3) Reading and Writing (Dictation), Arithmetic, Verses from the Bible to memorise, Summary of Bible Stories.
Texts: **Tusi a Tamaiti** (The Samoan Primer), Bible, Christian Faith, Arithmetic Book.

Classes 4 to 8

(Age: Class 4: 8 - 10 yrs, Class 5: 11 - 13 yrs, Class 6: 12 - 14 yrs, Class 7: 13 - 16 yrs,

Class 8: 15 - 18 yrs)

(Vasega 4 i le 8) *Reading and Writing (Dictation), Arithmetic, Verses from the bible to memorise, **Gagana Samoa**, (Samoan Grammar), **Tala i le Tusi Paia** (Summary of Bible Stories), Dictation, Christian Faith.
Texts: Bible, Summary of Bible Stories, **Gagana Samoa** Book, Arithmetic Book, Christian Faith.

*Work in these classes increases in difficulty from Class 4 to Class 8, but these classes use the same texts.

Age is not a big issue when allocating classes. The 'logic' behind promotion is for children to have mastered the work especially in the lower classes where particular attention is given to reading, writing and arithmetic. They must know how to read, write and count competently before they are promoted. Children expect that they might repeat a class if they are not good enough. At the same time, children who are ready to go on (even though age-wise they are below the average age of higher classes) will be promoted.

The Writers and Teachers of the A'oga a le Faifeau Syllabus

The writers of the syllabuses vary from **pulega** to **pulega** but according to the pastors, it is the sole responsibility of the pastors of each respective **pulega**. The usual procedure is to look at the current year's syllabus at the end of the year and improve upon it for the following year. The changes are usually made so that each class does not get to repeat, for example, the same scripture stories, the bible verses to be recited and the passages for dictation from year to year. Syllabuses are usually revised yearly but one **pulega** revises after every two years (Narrative Four). The syllabuses for the **Puna A'oga a le Faifeau** (Narrative One) and **Tolo A'oga a le Faifeau** (Narrative Two) are revised annually. These schools belong to different **pulega**.

The syllabus for the **Puna A'oga a le Faifeau** is reviewed and edited by the pastors who take turns yearly to do this. Three prepare the syllabus for their eight schools in November to present to the elder minister and the other four ministers to approve.³⁶⁰ It goes back to the syllabus committee of the year if there are any changes to be made, and final copies are given to each minister in late December. The **Tolo A'oga a le Faifeau** syllabus is the responsibility of the elder minister and secretary of their **pulega**, who prepare the syllabus after which a copy is given to each of the seven ministers, before their schools start in February. The suburban and urban schools (Narratives Three and Four) belong to the same **pulega**. The seven ministers in this **pulega** all contribute to the preparation of the syllabus. Each minister is given a class for which he will write up a

³⁶⁰ *Preparing the syllabus for the coming year involves making changes and improvements on the current syllabus.*

syllabus. A meeting is held in January when the syllabus will be put together, edited and finalised.

Each **A'oga a le Faifeau**'s respective teachers are the pastor and his wife. They may ask people of the church to help them out, especially in the supervision of exams. Sometimes helpers are called upon for revision, especially close to the exams. This is done in the largest school in the study with over 400 students (Narrative Two). In one school, the pastor and his wife work together with the schoolteachers of their parish (Narrative One). The bulk of the teaching rests on the shoulders of the minister and his wife. It is an old tradition, and the reason why the school is aptly named, the pastor's school. It is like 'second nature' to the pastor and his wife because they do it year in year out, as long as they are in the parish.

Pedagogy

The styles of teaching are basically the same throughout the schools. The pedagogies have been handed down from generation to generation of ministers, although the formality of old is very much relaxed. The narrator of Narrative Three, in reminiscing about his own **A'oga a le Faifeau** days as a student, considered that children in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** of today have a relatively easy time. In his days, over 50 years ago, he said that when the bell rang, latecomers usually got the strap, that children were sent home if their **tauloto** or times tables had not been learned. But he also said that the **A'oga a le Faifeau** students in those days were much older and that some even in their early twenties still attended then, implying that the punishments dished out in those days were appropriate as students could withstand the sting of the strap and there was no excuse not to have learned their **tauloto** and times tables.

The Phonics Approach

The phonics approach is a method of teaching people to read initially by explicitly teaching them to associate letters with their phonetic values or distinctive speech sounds. Connected to this approach is the development of phonemic awareness which consists of being able to use and monitor several phonetically distinct components of a language,

including alliteration and rhyme. Associated with the above is an orthographic methodology or the study of spelling. The pedagogy as such uses direct models and imitation question feedback together with graduated introduction of difficulty of components.

Those closely related pedagogies are central to an **A'oga a le Faifeau** education and are most appropriate, especially in the teaching of the Samoan language, its 'everyday' and 'respect' components. All **A'oga a le Faifeau** in the study employ them for all their respective classes. The younger classes in particular spend most of their times in school learning how to perfect their reading and writing through a phonetic, orthographic and phonemic approach. The preschoolers practise sounding the Alphabet and reading from the Alphabet Chart or **Pi Tautau**, each letter and the name of the 'object' that starts with each respective letter (see copy of chart in Chapter Eight). In Class 1 children learn to write the alphabet and then simple two or three letter words and so on to writing a whole sentence. Class 2 children learn, to write short stories and use punctuation marks. Older classes have drills in spelling and dictation.

Rote Learning

Children in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** also engage in rote learning especially the bible verses (**tauloto**) for recitations, and times tables. Younger classes (Preschool to Class 2) learn one or two Bible-verse **tauloto**. The older classes learn three or four Bible-verse **tauloto** as well as the answers to the questions on Christian faith, as documented in the **Mataupu Silisili** or Christian Faith booklet.

Story-telling

Bible stories are related, legend telling style, according to the **Aisa** Pastor (Narrator Three). Children do not copy any notes about these stories. While young children who cannot read listen to the narrated versions, the older children listen to the stories during the **A'oga a le Faifeau** sessions as well as reading the stories in the bible and the **Tala Tusi Paia**, a textbook of bible story summaries, at home.

Comprehension and Discussion

Story telling and discussion are simultaneous activities in the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. Oral comprehension based on bible stories is important in the younger classes (Preschool, Classes 1 and 2). Older classes do written comprehension and character studies based on bible stories. The questions based on these bible stories are written on the board and children answer the questions in their books, after which the pastor and the children discuss them. The pastor usually does the marking then, while the children are doing other work (arithmetic problems or Samoan language) but children also exchange books and mark as they go along when they discuss the questions. The same goes for arithmetic problems. The pastor works out these problems on the board with older students. When the pastor's wife finishes her younger classes early, she helps her husband with the older classes. I observed this with the **Puna A'oga a le Faifeau** when she took over Class 3, working out the arithmetic problems with the children of this class.

The pastor and children also discuss issues concerning the use of the 'everyday language' and 'language of respect' and how to address people.³⁶¹ This involves giving the proper address, for example: **Lau susuga** - the reason for the address, (because he is a pastor) - and the event or place (at any special occasions), or **Lau Afioga** - (because he is a paramount chief or King - at all times), or **Lau Tofa** - (because he is an orator or talking chief - at all special occasions).

Pedagogies In Action: Observations

My direct observations of the **Puna** and **Tolo A'oga a le Faifeau** follow immediately below. Their inclusion at this point is to demonstrate examples of pedagogies discussed above and some of the content, the literacy skills and knowledge, which Samoan children acquire in their out-of-school educational experiences in the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. More importantly, they directly address and strengthen the study's main arguments. As well,

³⁶¹ This is an important subject for the **A'oga a le Faifeau** in New Zealand. In Samoa the children actually 'live' their language on a daily basis in school and outside school. Their engagement in it in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** is reinforcement or revision. Outside Samoa, CCCS children have to learn and practise their Samoan language as a rule in the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. For many the **A'oga a le Faifeau** may be the only place where they actually learn the language in a formal way.

they display the 'lived' experiences of the teachers and learners and the multiple realities they create and develop in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** as their common experience. This is the 'crunch' of the thesis. The observations, like the pastors' narratives discussed and interpreted above, also tell a story about those very important educational experiences that could have spans with conventional school literacies, which the latter schools could address. My observations are central to the study's major arguments.

A DAY OF OBSERVATIONS

Puna A'oga a le Faifeau

April 7, Wednesday, 1999

I arrived in the afternoon about 2.40 pm., as the pastor told me the children usually trickled in after 2.00 o'clock. I greeted the pastor and his wife and went straight to doing my observations. The school has 7 classes, from 2 year olds in the **Vasega Faitau Pi** to 16 year olds in Class 6, and they were all going that day. The village is relatively small so the school is a relatively small one and the pastor had recorded 44 as having started since February until the day of my observations. All 7 classes come after the **A'oga Palagi** from 2.00 to 6.00 pm, from Monday to Friday, and from 8.00 am to 12.00 pm on Saturday. They tell the children that school starts at 2.00 pm so that by 3.00 pm they would all be there when they 'officially' start. The pastor said that if they say 3.00 was the starting time the children would come one hour later 'Samoan time.' At the latest children finish **A'oga palagi** at 1.30 pm. They go home, get changed and maybe do home chores before they go to the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. The pastor's wife usually takes **Vasega Pi** in the mornings, but if for some reason she cannot, she tells the parents to bring them in the afternoon, like today for my observations, so that I did not have to come in the morning, go home to **Apia** then come back in the afternoon. In the afternoon the pastor's wife usually takes classes 1 to 3 while the pastor takes classes 4 to 6. All 7 classes were held in the hall. One half of the hall was for the younger classes while the other half was for the older classes.

I observed the pastor's wife taking the Preschoolers, (3-4 year olds), Class 1 (5-6 year olds), Class 2 (6-7 year olds) and Class 3 (6-8 year olds). The pastor's wife started off by telling Class 1 to copy their alphabet from the board, Class 2 to write down their times tables (2 to 5) and memorised verses, and Class 3 to do the sums she had already written on the board, then she sat down with the six Preschoolers or the **Vasega Faitau Pi**. I refer to the pastor's wife as the teacher

below. The teacher considered the six preschoolers and the same number for Class 1 as good turnouts. Class 2 had three and Class 3 had four students respectively.

A Typical School Day at the Puna A'oga a le Faifeau

Reading with the Vasega Faitau Pi (Alphabet Reading Class, the Preschoolers)

The class of six children sat in a circle with the pastor's wife. The children were three and four year olds. The teacher pointed to each letter on the alphabet chart (see Chapter Eight for copy of chart, **Pi Tautau**) as she was sounding it. Each letter was followed by the name of the corresponding picture that started with that letter. For example, "A-Ato". Letter A, the first letter of the Samoan alphabet, is with the picture of a basket-Ato in Samoan. The second letter is E with the picture of the elephant, so the teacher said "E-Elefane", and so on. The children at first followed the teacher. After teaching children to read each letter in alphabetical order, then the children together read the whole **Pi Tautau** right down to the numbers and the 'jumbled' letters. Each child then, one after the other, said his or her memorised verse (**tauloto**) a simple verse from the Bible.

Story Telling With the Vasega Faitau Pi (Alphabet Reading Class/Preschool)

The teacher then told a short story about Zachaeus, which I document below. The bible story was told similar to how a Samoan legend would be told, with the teacher pausing every now and then to ask questions, followed by the song about the story.

Teacher: E manatua e outou tamaiti le tala ia Sakaio? (Do you remember the story about Zachaeus?)

Children: Ioe (Yes, Together)

Then the teacher started telling the story. Because the children knew the story already, this exercise was more to test them.

Teacher: O Sakaio o si tamaloa laititi lava, e puupuu toe saasaa. Ua oo i le isi aso, ua Fa'alogo Sakaio o le a sau le malaga a Iesu i lo latou nuu. O le aso la lea ua o uma tagata e fia vaai ia Iesu, aua ua Fa'alogo o Iesu e alofa i tagata ma Fa'amalolo mai o tagata. O le tumu ia o tagata na o, na alu ai foi ma Sakaio. Ao si tamaloa lenei o Sakaio ua le mafai ona vaai atu ia Iesu. Ua fiu e tau falo i luga le ulu e le iloa atu a Iesu. Aisea tamaiti? (Zachaeus was a small man, a very short man. One day he heard that Jesus was going to visit their village. On that day lots and lots of people went to see Jesus. They had heard that Jesus was a loving man and that he healed sick people. Zachaeus went also, but he could not see Jesus above all the other people. Why, children?)

Child 1: **Aua e puupuu saasaa o ia** (Because he was short and a very short man was he)³⁶²

Teacher: **O le a le mea na fai e Sakaio?** (What did Zachaeus do then?)

Child 2: **Na a'e loa i le la'au** (He climbed up a tree)

Teacher: (Continuing) **Ioe na a'e loa Sakaio i luga o le laau. O le igoa o le laau o le sukamoru. Ae le iloa e Sakaio o Iesu o le a savali mai i lalo o le laau lea ua a'e ai. Ua manatu Sakaio e le mafai ona iloa atu ia e Iesu i luga o le laau. Ua te'i lava Sakaio ina ua vaai atu i luga Iesu. O le a le tala a Iesu na fai ia Sakaio? Fai Fa'atasi tamaiti** (That's right, Zachaeus then climbed the tree called the sycamore. He did not know that Jesus was going to walk right under this tree. Well, he was really shocked when Jesus looked up and saw him. What did Jesus say to Zachaeus children? Together)

Children: **Sakaio, vave ifo i lalo aua e tatau ona ta o i lou fale i le aso nei.** (Zachaeus come down quickly, because you and I must go to your house today).

Teacher: **Lelei tele! E iai foi le tatou pese ia Sakaio aea? Tutu i luga e usu ma fai taga** (Very Good! We also have a song about Zachaeus don't we? Get up to sing and do the actions)

Teacher: (Started off and the children joined in)

Children: (Sang the song); **"Sakaio le tagata puupuu saasaa, tagata puupuu saasaa!"**

(Zachaeus was a very little man, a very little man was he!).

(The teacher then asked each child a question to answer before he or she was allowed to go home.)

Teacher: **O ai na a'e i le laau?** Who climbed the tree?

Child 1: **O Sakaio** (Zachaeus)

Teacher: **O le a le laau na a'e ai Sakaio?** What tree did Zachaeus climb?

Child 2: **O le sukamoru** (Sycamore tree)

Teacher: **Aisea na a'e ai Sakaio le sukamoru?** (Why did Zachaeus climb the sycamore tree?)

Child 3: **E fia matamata ia Iesu ae puupuu ma saasaa o ia** (He wanted to see Jesus but he was a very short man).

Teacher: **Aisea na fia matamata ai Sakaio ia Iesu?** (Why did Zachaeus want to see Jesus?)

Child 4: **O Iesu o le alii alofa i tagata mama'i.** (Jesus loved sick people)

Teacher: **O le a le tala a Iesu na fai ia Sakaio?** (What did Jesus say to Zachaeus?)

Child 5: **Sakaio, vave ifo i lalo o le a ta o i lou fale** (Zachaeus, come down quickly, we are going to your house)

Teacher: **Na iloa e Sakaio o le a ui ane Iesu i lalo o le laau lea na ae ai?** (Did Zachaeus know that Jesus was going to walk right under the tree he was on?)

Child 6: **Leai** (No)

³⁶² The word *saasaa* describes a very short person-*puupuu* is short but *saasaa* emphasises the shortness of a person. -dwarf like.

The story was told in very simple words. The teacher took her time with the young children and there was much repetition so that the children would get the answers to the questions. Her manner was gentle but firm. She had a stick beside her on the floor. I refer to this below. During the course of her narration, she also demonstrated for example, how Zachaeus climbed up, Jesus looking up pointing at Zachaeus up in the tree, how short Zachaeus was and so on. The children would have learned literacy and numeracy skills from this lesson. There was a mixture of (mostly) recall questions for example, 'What is the name of the tree?' 'What did Jesus say?' inferential and inquiry questions such as, 'Why did Zachaeus climb the sycamore tree?' and evaluative questions for example, 'Why did Zachaeus want to see Jesus (that he risked climbing up a tree to do that)?' The answer to the latter two types of questions requires the child for example, to go beyond just answering why Zachaeus climbed the tree. The song about Zachaeus reinforced the children's learning about the story just like the singing of a chant that accompanies the telling of a Samoan legend. The actions were performed according to the words in the song. After the story, the preschool children said their **tauloto** (one verse from the Bible) one by one first and then as a group. After this the children were sent home. The teacher then moved on to her normal afternoon classes.

Cursive Writing with the Vasega Muamua (Class 1)

The teacher was doing cursive writing with the children. She demonstrated on the blackboard to the children of Class 1 how to write the alphabet. She had written the alphabet on the board and the children copied from it after her demonstration. There was a gaping hole in the board and the alphabet was written around it. The children were sitting cross-legged on the floor and were told to fold arms and look at the board while she was demonstrating. She made the motions of going over each letter. For letter A for example she said "**Amata mai i lalo, alu i luga, sau i lalo ona vase loa lea Fa'apea.**" (Start at the bottom like this, then up and down and tick like this, referring to the 'tick' like mark that goes through the letter A in cursive writing). After each demonstration, she told the children to go over the same motions. After the demonstrations, she told the children to write down their alphabet again. She then picked up a stick and went around her classes checking on the children's work. When asked why she was carrying the stick she said: "**A le Fa'alala le laau e le vave ona tusia ni mea.**" (If I do not hold the stick to them, they would not write fast.)

The stick is more a threat to get the children to do the work, to discipline them by its mere appearance in the teacher's hand. When she actually used the stick, they were only mild strokes that made the children laugh out loud and made a teasing game out of it. While the pastor's wife was taking another class, the children took to disciplining other children, using her stick,

pretending he or she (the child) was the pastor's wife. When the children saw the teacher coming towards them one child said: "**Oki! Sau le fafine ma le laau.**" (You're dead! Here comes the woman with the stick.). The children seemed to be enjoying their learning and despite the pastor's wife's constant 'nagging' and stern looks at them, the children were quite relaxed.

Dictation with Vasega Lua (Class 2)

The teacher moved on next to Class 2. She took them for dictation. She used a passage from the **Tusi a Tamaiti** (The Samoan Primer), reading out twice each clause or sentence before the children wrote it down. She then marked the dictation keeping close attention to neatness, the correct formation of the letters, the correct use of punctuation marks and beauty of presentation. The class was then told to go and learn their **tauloto** (bible verses) while she took Class 1 for reading. In the meantime, Class 3 was still doing arithmetic problems written on the board.

After taking Class 2 for dictation and marking them as well, the teacher told Class 2 to do their corrections by writing out the whole dictation again while she moved again to Class 1.

Reading with the Vasega Muamua (Class 1)

The six children and the teacher sat in a circle. The children read from the **Tusi Pi**, the Alphabet Reader. The teacher pointed to each letter and the children as a group had to say whether it was a printed or written letter, capital or small letter. When I asked her afterwards if the children always read as a group, she said that when they first started school, each child learned to read on a one-to-one basis with her. Any new reading material is taught this way. Reading in a group, or 'chorus' reading is usually done with letters and words that the children are able to read. The following example shows part of this reading lesson with Class 1.

Teacher: **Faitau** (Read.)

Pupils: (Chanting in unison) "**A tele Tusilima**" (Written Capital Letter A) "**a laititiTusilima**" (small written letter a), "**A tele lolomi**" (Printed Capital letter A) "**a laititi lolomi**", (small printed letter a), **a - i - ai, a - u - au, i - a - ia, e - a - ea, A - t - u - a - Atua** (and so on)
In spelling the words, the children said the word first, then spelled it and said it again after.

Numeracy with the Vasega Muamua (Class 1)

After reading, the teacher took the children for simple additions and subtractions. The children were told to use their fingers as counters.

Teacher: **Tasi Fa'aopopo le tasi Fa'aopopo le lua ua fia?** (One plus one plus two equals how many?)

Pupils: (After counting, two pupils said), “Fa”(Four)

After 3 additions and 4 subtraction sums the children then said their memorised bible verse one by one at first and then together, after which they were sent outside to pick up the rubbish before going home.

Tauloto and Numeracy with Vasega Lua (Class2)

Class 2 was called back. She tested them one by one on their memorised bible verse, and the two and three times tables. The times table is tested as in ‘mental.’ As each child got a right answer, he or she went outside to pick up the rubbish.

Arithmetic with Vasega Tolu (Class 3)

The pastor’s wife now moved to Class 3 who had, by now finished and were talking to each other. Two of the four students present at this particular day were lying on their stomachs having a good old gossip. They all sat up straight when the teacher came along. She told the children to exchange books, and each marked the other’s work. Together with the children, the teacher worked out the answers on the board while the children called out the process. It was a spontaneous process. As the answer to each sum was worked out each pupil marked each other’s work.

There were five sums on the board, two were additions, two were subtractions and one was a division sum.

1) $26+45+142+60$

2) $239+795$

3) $705-227$

4) $877-598$

5) $475-4$

The working out of the last sum is related below, as this was the method employed to do the rest of the sums, and the method that I observed during the five days that I was with the **Puna A’oga a le Faifeau**.

Teacher: “**Vaai uma i le laupapa. Aua nei vaai se isi i se api**” (All eyes on the board. Do not look at your books). She then pointed to the numbers while the children ‘shouted out’ the process. As the children worked out the sum orally, she was writing the numbers on the board. She started off by pointing to the number 4, and then the children began.

Pupils (In unison started off saying): “**Fa i le fa e tasi**” (Four into four is One), “**fa i le fitu e tasi**” (Four into seven is one), “**toese mai le fitu toe le tolu**” (subtract from seven equals three), “**aumai i lalo le lima ua tolusefulu lima**” (bring down the five equals thirty five), **fa i le tolusefulu lima e...**? (four into thirty five is... There was a pause as the children thought hard, some quickly muttering the four times table to themselves, then one child called out)

Pupil: "**E valu**" (It's eight)

Teacher: **E sa'o?** (Is that correct?)

Pupils: **I** (pronounced 'ee', which means Yes)

Teacher: **Ia vaai, vaai mai i le laupapa, o le a po!** (Okay, look, look at the board, it's getting dark)

The teacher and children settled back to the flow of the division process. She wrote the number eight on the board and pointed to 4 again to start off the process.

Pupils: "**Fa ni valu ua tolusefulu lua, toese mai le tolusefulu lima toe le tolu, tolu o vae fa** (Four times eight is thirty-two, subtract from thirty-five the remainder is three, three over four.)

Teacher: **O le a la le tali?** (What is the answer?)

Pupils: (In chorus) **E tasi le selau ma le sefulu ma le valu ma le tolu o vae fa.** (One-hundred and eighteen and three over four.

At the end the books are handed back to their respective owners, then the teacher said:

Teacher: **O ai e sa'o uma?** (Who got all the sums right?)

Pupils: **O a'u, o a'u** (It's me, it's me.) Two children got all the sums right, two got one wrong and one got two wrong.

Teacher: **Ua malamalama uma outou? O ai e le o malamalama?** (Do you all understand? Who does not understand?)

Pupils: **Malamalama Fa'afetai** (We understand, thank you)

Teacher: **Outou na e sese tou numera, ia o mai taeao ua uma ona Fa'asa'o, ma Fa'alogo lelei pe a Fa'amalamalama mea.** (Those who got wrongs, do your corrections for homework and show me tomorrow, and pay good attention when things are being explained.)

Teacher: **Tutu i luga** (Stand up), **Fai taitoatasi mai le tauloto.** (Each one of you say the memorised verses).

The children said their verses one by one. Each got the verses right, then she told them to say the verses together.

Teacher: **Lelei tele** (Very Good). **Ia fai mai le Fa'a fa** (Say the four times table), **Fai le Fa'a lima** (Say the five times table). **Lelei** (Good). **Ia o le tagata e muamua sa'o ana mea e tolu e alu loa i le fale e le tae otaota.** (All right, the first person to get three rights will go straight home and the rest of you will go outside to pick up the rubbish.)

The children were not in a hurry to go home. They had picked up the rubbish and were now playing **lape**, a softball like game without a bat but using one hand to hit the ball, outside. The younger children were waiting sitting on the steps in front of the hall watching. When it got a little dark, the pastor's wife told all the children to go home. They did not have far to go as all

lived in the same village. They were coming back for evening prayers with the pastor and his wife, after which there was bible reading practice before the children went home.

The pastor and his wife had prepared their blackboard work before the children came in the afternoon. The alphabet for Class 1 was already on the board and as the children came in, they sat down and away they went writing. The children bring their own books, pencils and pens. They told me that they had never used work sheets or photocopied work for the students except during exams. The pastor and his wife tell the stories to them orally and questions based on the stories are written on the board. Students did not copy any notes off the board except for those questions and arithmetic sums they had to answer in their books. All other activities were orally done except for writing and dictation. For the older classes taken by the pastor one set of questions on biblical stories was written on the top half of the blackboard and arithmetic problems went on the bottom half. As the children in the older classes came they went straight into answering those questions. The pastor took one class at a time marking their work together with children exchanging books. Like his wife did with Class 3, the pastor also worked out arithmetic problems on the board with the students calling out the 'process'. Books were also exchanged by children for marking.

According to the pastor and his wife, the above is their daily routine. I observed that the pastor's wife took at the most 5 to 8 minutes respectively with each of the two classes (1 and 2). The relatively 'smooth' movement from one activity with one class to the next with another class could only come with lots of practice. She (and her husband) had been with this parish for 14 years. There were times, as expected with individual differences, some children finished earlier than others and I also noted that Class 3 had all finished and were talking to each other while waiting for the teacher. There was not any problem with noise or overcrowding at this particular school. This is a small school and the children were engaged in doing work most of the time except when they finished I noted some talking but voices were not raised. The pastor's wife especially had time to correct Class 1 children's writing individually showing each child how to correctly write their letters. The pastor's wife's classes finished at least forty minutes before the pastor's classes. She told me that sometimes she helped her husband with narrating of Bible stories to the older classes.

Six classes going at the same time in one large room was a sight to see. The pastor and his wife, through years of practice in doing this, took it in their stride. It is something to see and experience for what it is worth.

Comprehension for Vasega Fa (Class 4)

Class IV answered the following questions, based on the Old Testament Story of 'Joseph in Egypt'. **Fesili Tala Tusi Paia Feagaiga Tuai Vasega IV**

1. **O le fia o tausaga talu ona Fa'atauina atu Iosefa i Aikupito, na o ai ona uso e Fa'atau saito?** (How many years after Joseph was sold as a slave when his brothers went to Egypt to buy food?)
2. **O a ni foliga o Iosefa na Fa'aali i ona uso ina ua ia vaaia i latou?** (How did Joseph appear to his brothers when they first met in Egypt?)
3. **Fa'amatala manino mai le mafuaaga tonu lava na manao ai Iosefa e noanoatia se tasi o ona uso i Aikupito.** (Explain clearly the true reason why Joseph wanted one of his brothers to be left in jail in Egypt.)
4. **O le a se mea na faia e le fanau a Iakopo ina ua tau atu lenei manao o Iosefa?** (What did Jacob's sons do when Joseph told them what he wanted?)
5. **Aisea na tagi ai le toeaina o Iakopo ina ua ta'u atu le tala e le mafai ona Fa'asaoloto lo latou uso i le falepuipui seiloga e o ma Peniamina i Aikupito?** (Why did the old man Jacob cry when he was told that one of his sons was in jail in Egypt and would not be released unless they took Benjamin back with them?)

When the children had finished answering the questions, the pastor and the pupils got together to mark the questions. The pastor asked the pupils to read each respective question together. When each question was read out, the pastor picked a pupil to read out his or her answer. There was an oral discussion of the answers, which also 'sparked' off other questions from the teacher about the events in the story. After this discussion, the pastor told the next part of the story, when Joseph admitted to his brothers that he was one of them, as the questions on the next day were to be based on this part of the story. The children were told to go home after that.

The questions on the bible story display a mixture of recall (1, 2) and more inquiry and evaluative (3-5) questions. The skills of comprehension and critical thought are literacy skills children learn in the above lesson. The discussion also centred on some important core spiritual and moral values such as honesty, reliability, respect for others, tolerance, caring and compassion and so on. The story also teaches about relationships between parents and their children, and the effects, for example when the brothers sensed their father's preference and favouritism for Joseph over them. Also the fact that the brothers ganging up to sell their little brother and lie to their father, backfired when they went to Egypt and were 'threatened' by the very person they least expected to see.

The pastors in the study stress the importance of this 'values and moral education' in their narratives. This is something also stressed with the more secular stories that children study in English literature, drama or prose in conventional schools.

Tolo A'oga a le Faifeau

April 13, Tuesday 1999

The **Tolo A'oga a le Faifeau** has over 200 children, a rough estimate given by the minister. This is a relatively large number of children but not uncommon as the tables of the Samoa schools show (Chapter Eight). At the time of my visit, the minister was not able to ascertain the number but on the day, for the 5 classes, there were 76 children: 16 in Class 1E, 13 in Class 1A, 22 in Class 2, 15 in Class 4 and 10 in Class 5. The pastor's wife had taken 16 preschoolers (**Vasega Faitau Pi**) in the morning. They had only started classes the previous week and as the children attended they were allocated into classes. It would not be for another two to three weeks before they would know exactly the average number of children that would be attending every day.

According to the pastor, it is not compulsory for children to attend, but they expect 99% of the church children would attend and would sit the exams. Whereas this pastor's school is for children of the Congregational denomination, the pastor's wife pointed out that three of the children in class 1A were Catholic. The minister and his wife were only too happy to accommodate children from other denominations. Because of the large number of children, Classes 3, 6, 7 and 8 attend on Mondays and Wednesdays while the other classes come on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Closer to exam times, all classes attend every day except Saturday and Sunday. It is then also that the pastor and his wife request the help of assistant teachers. Most of the students are promoted each year to the next class, but it is not uncommon to find much older children in lower classes. Those children have either started pastor's school for the first time, or have repeated once or twice the same class because their work had not been up to standard.

I arrived at 2.30 pm and already the minister and his wife had started their teaching. The **Palagi** School finished at 1.00 pm and by 2.00 pm the children had trickled in. The minister was taking the older children, classes 4 and 5, aged 9 to 13. The two classes were taking dictation together from him. He was reading out from the bible a passage and said each clause, phrase or sentence twice before the children wrote it down. After writing, each child put his or her hands on their heads, a signal to the minister for the next piece of dictation to be read out.

The minister's wife was taking Classes 1A and 1E, aged 4 to 6 and Class 2, aged 5 to 7. I concentrated my observations on the pastor's wife's classes. Class 1E is for children who are promoted from the beginners class and are learning to write for the first time. The children in this class do printing. They copy the alphabet and numbers printed on the board. Because age is not a big issue for their **A'oga a le Faifeau**, some of the children in this class are four, five and six years old, according to the pastor's wife.

The promotion depends on their competence to read and print the alphabet according to the pastor's wife's assessment and evaluation. Children start to read words and learn how to print in this class. Class 1A is the special class for those who have become more competent in reading and writing the alphabet and simple two or three letter words. This class practises cursive writing of the alphabet as written on the board. The textbook for these classes (1A and 1E) is the **Tusi Pi**, The Alphabet Reader, and the textbook for Class 2 is the **Tusi a Tamaiti**, The Samoan Primer.

As the children came in, the younger classes went straight to printing and writing their respective alphabets. Class 2 children were told to write the alphabet, and according to the pastor's wife, it was a practice exercise for the older children in cursive writing. It was a necessary exercise according to her, as they had only just started the previous week and it was to familiarise the children with writing. Class 2 finished writing their alphabet first. The teacher marked their books and told them to go and get ready for spelling dictation. The pastor's wife said that the children usually take their books home unless she could not mark them during class, and then she would keep them until the next class. Apart from learning their bible verses, answers to questions from the **Mataupu Silisili** (the Christian Faith booklet) and times tables, the younger classes do not do any written homework.

As children finished, they took their work to the pastor's wife who was sitting at the table in front. She corrected each child's work and handed it back for corrections. The children stood in line to wait their turns. The younger classes took longer to finish, so while they were practising writing their alphabets and numbers, the teacher did spelling dictation with Class 2. Copies of the children's writing for this dictation are included in the samples of children's work in Chapter Eight.

Spelling Dictation with Vasega Lua (Class 2)

Teacher: **Nonofo i lalo ma sauni api mo le Tusilima.** (Sit down. Prepare your books for spelling). **Tusi lou igoa i luga** (Write your name at the top of the page).

Teacher: **Nofo sa'o i luga. Fa'alogo lelei mai, e Fa'alua ona Fa'alau le upu, ona Fa'atoa tusi lea i lalo. A uma ona tusi ona tuu lea o lima i luga o le ulu.** (Sit up straight. Listen carefully, each word will be said twice before you write it down. When you finish, put your hands on your head).

Teacher: **O le upu muamua, Herota** (The first word is **Herota**). **Toe Fa'alogo, Herota** (Listen again, **Herota**). **Fai Fa'atasi** (Say the word together).

Pupils: **Herota**

Teacher: **Toe fai** (Say it again)

Pupils: **Herota**

Teacher: **Sipela mai le upu Herota Timi** (Spell the word **Herota**, **Timi**)

Pupil: (Spelling) **H-e-r-o-t-a - Herota** (The spelling of this word sounds like this; Heh-eh-roh-oh-tee-ah. The letters are pronounced as in the following English words; H and e as in Hen or ten, r as in rod, o as in ought, t as in tea, and a as in par).

Teacher: **O le a le mataitusi e amata ai le upu lea?** (What letter starts this word).

Pupil: **O le H tele** (Big **H** or Capital letter **H**)

Teacher: **Aisea?** (Why?)

Pupil: **O le igoa o le tagata** (Name of a person).

Teacher: **Sipela Fa'atasi** (Together spell the word **Herota**).

Pupils: **H-e-r-o-t-a, Herota**

Teacher: **Tusi, a uma tuu lima i le ulu** (Write, when finished, put your hands on your head). She looked around to see if the children had finished then said:

Teacher: **O le upu lona lua, Roma** (the second word is **Roma**). **Toe Fa'alogo, Roma** (listen again, **Roma**). **Fai Fa'atasi le upu** (Say the word together).

Pupils: **Roma**

Teacher: **Sipela mai e oe Lula le upu Roma** (You **Lula**, spell the word **Roma**)

Lula: **R-o-m-a, Roma**

Teacher: **Lelei** (Good)

Teacher: **O le a le mataitusi e amata ai le upu Roma** (What letter begins this word?)

Pupil: **O le mataitusi tele** (Big or Capital letter)

Teacher: **Aisea?** (Why?)

Pupil: **O le igoa o le tagata** (Name of a person)

Teacher: **Lelei, ia tusi** (Good, write the word down).

The teacher said each word twice, picked on a child to spell it, and then together the children spelled each word then wrote it down in their books. She gave 10 words for this spelling dictation. Six were people's names, three were names of places and one was the name of a reptile

(snake). Soon after this dictation she marked it with the children, at the same time teaching them the use of capital letters and small letters as follows.

Marking the Spelling

Teacher: **Vaai lau api poo sa'o le sipelaina o upu** (See if your spelling is correct). **Sipela mai le upu muamua** (Spell the first word). As the children as a group spelled, she wrote the word on the board, asking if the word should start with a big or a small letter and why.

Teacher: **Sipela mai le upu lona lua**

Pupils: **R-o-m-a, Roma**

Teacher: **O le a foi le mataitusi e amata ai?**

Pupils: **O le mataitusi tele** (Capital letter)

Teacher: **Aisea?** (Why?)

Pupils: **O le igoa o le tagata** (name of a person)

Teacher: **Lelei, aua e tele tagata Samoa e igoa ia Roma. O fea e sau ai le igoa Roma?** (Good, because many Samoan people are named Roma. Where does the name come from?)

Pupils: (Nobody knew)

Teacher: **Ia vaai outou, o le upu lea e maua i le Tusi Paia. O le igoa o le laumua o le isi atunuu o le lalolagi, e igoa ia Italia. O le igoa la o le nuu, e pei foi o le igoa o le tagata e tatau ona amata i le mataitusi tele. Malamalama?** (Look here, this is a name found in the Bible. It is the capital of one of the world's nations, Italy. Because it is the name of a town or village it must also start with a capital letter. Understand?)

Pupils: **Malamalama Fa'afetai** (We understand, thank you).

This was done for all the ten words, after which she told the children to do their corrections using the correctly spelled words on the board.

Teacher: **A uma ona Fa'asa'o le tusilima, ona tuu lea o lau api i luga o le laulau, ae a'o le Fa'alua na i le laupapa** (When you finish your corrections, put your book on my table then sit down and learn the two timestable on the board).

The teacher left Class 2 to do their assigned tasks and went to take Classes 1A and 1E. By this time, most of the children in these respective classes had finished, and were lying on the mats, some comparing their writing and correcting each other's work, some were just talking amongst themselves. Some children were walking around checking on others' work and some were playing games. Two pupils were standing at the blackboard, closer to where I was. One was telling the other how to write the letter V (Pupils 1 and 2).

Pupil 1: **Ia vaai, e le Fa'apena le tusiga o le V, o le U lena. E leai se vae o le V** (See, that is not how you write the letter V, that looks like a U, the V does not have a 'leg').

Pupil 2: **Soia, e le o oe lava o se faia'oga** (Stop it, you are not even a teacher).

Pupil 1: **Ia e Fa'asese nei lau api e le faia'oga** (Teacher is going to mark your book wrong).

Pupil 2: **Ia e a la, alu ia oe e nofo i lalo, sei fai mai le faia'oga**, (So what! You just go and sit down. I will wait for the teacher to mark my work).

Marking Class 1E Printing and Class 1A Writing

Teacher: **Muamua mai le Vasega Muamua laititi. Fai le laina** (Class 1E first, stand in a line) **Aua le pisa outou le Vasega Muamua matutua. A aumai a outou Tusilima e le lelei, e vaai iai** (You older ones (Class 1A), do not make too much noise. You will see if your work is not good enough).

Class 1E were now lining up and the teacher started marking each pupil's work one by one, pointing out the errors and making the appropriate marks on each child's book and sent them back to do corrections. After this class, it was Class 1A's turn. The children lined up with their books waiting their respective turns. The teacher marked each one, and sent them back to do corrections. The teacher collected the books again so I could have a look at them and to select samples for the thesis. The teacher then did simple additions and subtractions with them orally. The children enjoyed this and were all 'fired up' for this was to be the last lesson for the day.

Numeracy with Classes 1E and 1A

Teacher: **O mai Vasega Muamua e lua. Fa'avave.** (Classes 1A and 1E come to the front, hurry up). **Fai laina e lua, pito i luma le vasega laititi** (Sit in two rows, with Class 1E in the front row, and Class 1A in the back row).

Teacher: **Sauni lima. O le tagata e muamua fai mai le tali sa'o e alu i le fale** (Get fingers ready, the person with the first correct answer will go home).

The children put their hands up in front of them, ready for the first sum to be called out.

Teacher: **Lua Fa'aopopo le lua Fa'aopopo le tasi?** (Two plus two plus one?)

Pupil(Sau): **E lima** (Its five).

Teacher: **Lelei, alu oe Sau i le fale.** (Good, You go home Sau). **O sa'o i le fale, aua le toe taaalo i fafo ua leva le afiafi** (Go straight home, do not play outside it has been a long afternoon-meaning it will get dark soon).

The teacher kept on doing this until six children were left, then she said:

Teacher: **O outou e tae Fa'avave le otaota i fafo ona o ai lea i le fale** (You go and quickly pick up the rubbish outside, then go home). She got up to check on the children who had gone before to pick up the rubbish, told them to go home, then she went back to do work with Class 2).

While the teacher was taking the younger classes for oral mental, Class 2 children took an interest in what those children were doing. They in turn counted on their fingers and muttered the answers to themselves. They were also gearing themselves up for the last lesson.

Teacher: **Tutu i luga outou, soso mai, laina mai i luma** (Stand up all of you and line up in front).

Teacher: **Fai le tou tauloto, amata mai i le itu lea** (Say your bible verse, start from this side - pointing to her left).

Pupil 1: (Said the first two lines and stopped).

Teacher: **O oe** (You -pointing to the next one).

Pupil 2: (Said the whole of the first verse then stopped).

Pupil 3: (Stumbled over the first verse then stopped).

Teacher: **E iai se isi ua maua uma lana tauloto** (Has anyone learned off the three verses?- No one answered) **Lelei, ia o mai uma taeao ua maua le fuaiupu muamua** (Good, learn the first verse off by tomorrow). **Fai le Fa'alua** (Say the two timestable).

Pupils: (Most had learned off the timestable but some were also stumbling)

Teacher: **Matua leva ona fai atu e a'o le Fa'alua, ae le maua lava, na'o le talanoa ma taaalo le mea a outou sa fai. Ia o mai taeao ua maua le Fa'alua. Ia mautinoa tou te o mai taeao ua maua** (You took a long time to learn this timestable but still have not got it right. All you did was talking and playing. You have to learn this off by tomorrow too. Make sure you say them right tomorrow).

They are expected to learn their times tables at home but the pastor's wife also gives them time during **A'oga a le Faifeau** to learn them, especially as they had only just started their syllabus for reasons that I refer to in Chapter Four for this particular **A'oga a le Faifeau**.

All three classes were held in one half of the hall, while Classes 4 and 5 were in the other half. The classroom atmosphere was generally very informal. There was much interaction between the teacher and the students and the formality that was there in our **A'oga a le Faifeau** days (as students) has somewhat mellowed down a lot. There were still no desks or chairs. All the children sat on the floor bending over their books. Most children in the lower classes were lying on the floor and were quite at home writing in their books while doing so between talking to their

neighbours. The pastor's wife did not seem to mind whether the children were doing their work sitting up or lying down. The children on the other hand did not seem to mind the teacher's stick at her side. It was more a symbol of authority. The children were enjoying learning this way. Apart from the occasional "keep quiet," "finish your work" and such like instructions from the teacher, as well as the banging of the desk with her stick every now and then, the children were not under any undue pressure. It was a joyful sight seeing children learning in such relaxed circumstances. Each child was attended to individually and each child worked at his or her own pace.

The A'oga a le Faifeau Pedagogy in General

The general method includes demonstration and imitation, rote learning, repetition and practice with a lot of feedback and components introduced on a graduated difficulty basis. The pedagogy also involved the teacher question-child response-teacher evaluation sequence. Within this general approach the teachers and students had to do some checking and rechecking and these processes involve heuristic approximations. This means the students not only learned through trial and error, but they were also guided to learn things for themselves, by reasoning from past experience acquired through their engagements with the above educational practices. The latter can be seen as predictable innovations or inventions within the formats provided which are mostly teacher directed.

The **A'oga a le Faifeau** general pedagogy is a mixture of teaching/learning styles and types, and the pedagogy takes several forms to suit different purposes. The pedagogy also includes inquiry, in the form of comprehension, inferencing and synthesising but within a relatively fixed format of inferential-recall-evaluative sequences. This is demonstrated by the oral comprehension during story telling by the teacher, the pastor's wife, and the preschoolers, as well as the written comprehension and discussion of the story about Joseph in Egypt, between the pastor and Class 4 children of the **Puna A'oga a le Faifeau**. Some of the questions asked in these exercises are inference questions for example. The children in Class 1, where they begin to learn to write for example, learn to perfect their cursive writing and recitations of bible verses and timestables through practice and practice and more practice. Even though there is also much copying, especially when practising writing, the children also develop 'personal' ways in which they do this. It may be argued that there is no interpretation involved in this but the

perfection of one's writing style has to involve interpretation in order for the child to perfect his or her own style.

There is a parallel, basically between explicit and rule-governed teaching and that of immersion in language experiences with the use of the phonics and whole language approaches to the teaching of reading. If the use of both in each case facilitates learning then they should be used. Individual differences require varied teaching approaches. These methods are useful when applied at the right time in the appropriate situation. McNaughton argued that we would need to teach to increase children's awareness, so that we could better monitor and control children's learning especially in their progress. The concept of explicitness that he advocates supports the above argument.³⁶³ This is most appropriate where there is need to 'perfect' for example in 'factual' and 'formulaic' or 'accuracy' learning. Practice and more practice can only achieve those objectives.

In the largest school in the study, I observed children correcting their own work in an informal way, by looking at the ways the letters were written on the board before the teacher saw them individually. Some children, while lying on the floor, corrected other children's work, pointing out that some letters should be written this way and not that. A 'heated' discussion ensued in which I actually experienced children 'debating' between themselves in an informal way how writing should be done. These informal learning experiences of children are not often written about. There are multiple realities and experiences even for children in such young classes. Just as the reader of a story or novel for example may often have to read between the lines to experience what the author means, in the same way an observer of a teaching/learning process must observe between formal teaching situations to experience informal learning that really goes on, and it is meaningful learning. The atmosphere was one of learning and while the pastor's wife was attending to the other children, the rest were discussing and correcting their own work. These are five to seven year olds.

The children were also involved in joint activities learning as a group with the teacher. The activities in which the children and the teachers were more interactive, include Reading with Class 1, Arithmetic with Class 3, working out the sums on the board with

³⁶³ *McNaughton, (Ibid)*

the teachers in **Puna School**, doing Spelling Dictation and marking with Class 2, and doing 'mental' sums with Classes 1A and 1E in **Tolo School**. These are the more obvious activities in which the children, the teachers and the pastors' wives were more interactive in, on a face-to-face involvement. The children seemed to enjoy what they were doing, working at their own respective paces. The 'relaxing' and the 'formal' teaching times complemented each other.

The types of questions used by the **A'oga a le Faifeau** teachers were a mixture of recall, inferential and evaluative questions. Examples of these were used in the preschool class lesson taken by the pastor's wife in **Puna School** referred to in Chapter Three. The questions based on the New Testament story for Class 4 in the above school also displayed a variety of recall, inferential and evaluative objectives.

Children in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** while observing other children and the teacher also carried out ambient activities, though not actively or directly involved in a particular lesson. Ambient activities, according to McNaughton, are ones in which children are peripherally involved as observers.³⁶⁴ Examples include the children of the **Puna A'oga Faifeau** emulating the teachers' actions, using the stick, going up to the board and teaching other children, while the teacher was taking another class. In the **Tolo A'oga a le Faifeau**, while the teacher was taking Class 2, children of Classes 1A and 1E were 'teachers unto themselves,' correcting each other's work, and showing on the board how letters should be written as the teacher had demonstrated. Class 2 children, who were supposed to be doing spelling corrections and learning the two timestable, were observing the pastor's wife taking Classes 1A and 1E for simple additions and subtractions, using fingers and toes as counters. They too started counting on their own fingers and 'mouthing' the answers to themselves.

The above observations also show how children's learning and development are 'co-constructed' in a community's practices.³⁶⁵ Valsiner's co-construction theory finds proof in the setting where the children's ways of constructing and their teachers' patterns of guidance are mutually constituted. The children construct ways of acting with their

³⁶⁴ McNaughton, 1995, (*Ibid*), p. 20

³⁶⁵ Rogoff, (1990) and Valsiner, (1988) In Turoa et al, (*Ibid*), p. 10.

teachers, the pastor and his wife, who are the significant socialisation agents in this 'educational' setting. The concept of 'spiritual parents' (**matua Fa'aleagaga**), that apply to the Samoan pastor and his wife, originates in the belief that the pastor and his wife can do more for the children than biological parents, especially in developing their **poto Fa'ale mafaufau** (intellect) and **Fa'aleagaga** (spirituality). The reference to the Samoan pastor and his wife as such is not a misnomer. The pastor and his wife also provide food for the children sometimes.

There is a very important reason why children would feel comparatively less pressured in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** than in an **A'oga Palagi** setting. The Pastor's School has a more 'familial' setting than the latter because in the former, even though children learn in classes, with a more defined teacher/pupil element as in the latter, a more relaxed and a much less formal atmosphere is experienced in the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, closer to that of the children's own family setting. Going to the Pastor's School for a Samoan child is like going to his or her second home. Also, the formats are very familiar and very predictable.

Assessment and Evaluation

Assessment and evaluation are ongoing processes within the pastor's school. One minister carries out tests for his older classes every month (Narrative Four). For the times that I visited each respective **A'oga a le Faifeau**, I observed that exercises and questions were given to the pupils daily and the pupils' work were marked daily also. The usual marking was done in class with students in older classes exchanging books, especially for arithmetic and comprehension. In the **Tolo A'oga a le Faifeau**, pupils were often picked to work out the sums on the board. In the **Puna A'oga a le Faifeau**, the usual practice as I observed was that the minister worked from the board, while the students called out the process.

I also observed that the pastor's wives, in the two rural **A'oga a le Faifeau**, also tested and corrected their infant classes' work daily. All four **A'oga a le Faifeau** had similar routines. The students practised their writing and reading, and did arithmetic and comprehension. The times tables were tested orally and younger classes did simple additions and subtractions orally too.

The major form of assessment, according to all the pastors, is the examinations at the end of the pastor's school term. This is very much like sitting national exams. The dates for examinations are usually set at the beginning of the term when the ministers meet to approve the syllabus. Each respective **pulega** differs from each other in setting exams. For example, in the **pulega** that the **Aisa** and **Lape** schools belong to, pastors work in pairs. One minister sets the exam and examines the other **A'oga a le Faifeau** and vice versa. In the **pulega**, to which the **Puna** School belongs, there are eight schools. Four ministers set the exams and examine the other four schools and vice versa. According to all the pastors in the study, the exam papers are marked on the day of the exam, and the prize giving is held straight after, with the children's marks and placings called out by the respective examiners.

Educational Significance of the Pastor's School

The pastors take their **A'oga a le Faifeau** work seriously. The Pastor's School is one of the most enjoyable and satisfying parts of their ministry. One pastor said that children may miss out on learning how to read and write in the **A'oga Palagi** because often, children that do not pay their school fees will stay away from school (Narrative Two). In the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, every child is welcome, there are no school fees, and every child does learn to read and write because they are not promoted until they have done so competently.

There is no question about the **A'oga a le Faifeau** as a significant part of a child's education. It teaches the Samoan child to develop in all-important spheres of his/her life, his spiritual, mental, social, emotional and physical. Some children cannot afford to pay school fees, so they stop going to the **Palagi** School. The **A'oga a le Faifeau** will give these children skills in reading and writing and arithmetic by which they can relate to other people and the wider world.

The pastors see the Pastor's School as a very important support system for these reasons. It is a preparation for the children to proceed to a better life in the future. It opens the way for the child to enter into higher levels of education. It is the first school where the child is taught to read and write, to learn about the bible and the skills and arts of good living. The pastors feel strongly that apart from the **A'oga Palagi**, the **A'oga a le Faifeau** gives children the best alternative where they may revise their reading, writing and arithmetic

especially for those students who are not encouraged in the home to do school work.

O le talitonuga o le toatele o tagata Samoa, o faia'oga pito sili ona lelei o le gagana Samoa o faifeau (There is a common belief that the best teachers of Samoan language are the pastors).

The children not only have the pastor and his wife to look upon as parents but the children have fellowship with each other in the school. The pastors offer counselling to the children, they also know the physical and social environments and backgrounds of the children's families (Narrative One).

The **Palagi** Schools often seek the help of pastors when there are problem children. Narrative One reports that **Palagi** School teachers know that the pastors can speak to the parents and give effective counselling to the children, and that the principals of those schools know that they can count on the pastors to help them out in this area, because the pastors know the children better. It qualifies this by reporting that the pastors have contact with the children every week right throughout the year and this is one reason why, when children get into serious behavioural problems in the **Palagi** schools, the pastor is often the first person to be consulted.

All pastors regard the **Faitau Pi** class as an important class in the Pastor's School because it is the nurturing class where children are introduced into the skills of reading. It is also the class that opens the door to further learning. The pastors imply that this is a bridging class for the home and the child's formal learning and it is usually held in the morning, so children gradually get used to a morning start, especially when they go to the **Palagi** School which starts in the morning. The minister's wife is always the one that teaches this class. The mothers (fathers rarely) who bring their children usually stay on. The mothers are also involved directly in the teaching of their children, as they are given the syllabus for their children's class. The **Vasega Faitau Pi** was the first preschool in Samoa and has always been part of the pastor's school right from when the pastor's school first began. The infant school system, pioneered by Buchanan (a British missionary whom I refer to in Chapter three) in Samoa, greatly influenced the teaching of these young classes in the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. He is written about as having offered

invaluable assistance to the education of Samoan children during the late 1830s and early 1840s.

Many of the pastors today have started **A'oga Amata** (kindergartens) incorporating the **Faitau Pi** syllabus into them. On the other hand, where some **A'oga a le Faifeau** are working together with **A'oga Palagi** teachers of their parishes, this ensures a complementary relationship where one could benefit from the other. The **A'oga a le Faifeau**, especially in Samoan language and arithmetic, often consolidates what the **A'oga Palagi** teaches. The **Palagi** School on the other hand incorporates into their curriculum the singing of hymns and prayers. Many start the school day with a hymn, followed by a prayer or the Lord's Prayer.

Narrative Two tells of parents who cannot afford school fees, so the only education some of these children might get, at least while they are not at **Palagi** school, is a pastor's school education. This is probably the only chance they will ever get to learn how to read and write and get an education to enable them to communicate with other people and the wider world. At the same time, the pastors would encourage the parents to send their children to the **Palagi** School.

Improvements

Gradual improvement is a significant part of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. This means that any changes, as said before, are evolutionary rather than dramatic. There is general agreement amongst the participants that there are areas in which the pastor's school needs improvement. For example, all said that the **A'oga a le Faifeau** needed to be resourced more adequately. One of the ministers (Narrative Four) has introduced videotapes, based on the bible stories, to his students as back up, to facilitate their understanding of the bible stories. The use of paper crafts to construct maps for example and scenes in the stories has been incorporated into the work of his older classes. He also encourages, especially the older students, to self-study so they are not too dependent on the teacher.

Even though traditionally the use of desks and chairs was out of the question, some felt that there is a need for desks or tables to relieve the children from the backbreaking

process of bending over their books. None of the schools in their respective sub-districts, according to the pastors interviewed, use desks and chairs. Even during exams, desks or tables are not used. Because the churches are used during exams, the children usually use pews as desks. The pastors had never really felt the need for them until I pointed it out.

The participants generally felt that the Samoa Government Department of Education needed to work together more with the church. They would like the Government education department to recognise the value and importance of the work done by the **A'oga a le Faifeau** and should help resource it, especially with books, paper, chalk and so on. The church now enforces the use of macrons and apostrophes in its teaching of the Samoan language as the government schools have now gone back to using them, and the **A'oga a le Faifeau** would have to follow suit. One pastor in the study (Narrative One) never stopped teaching Samoan language, using macrons and apostrophes. He was quite adamant about the fact that the use of these facilitated the children's learning of the language. He also felt that the pastor's school should teach the different measures as the **A'oga a le Faifeau** used to. He commented on how they used to teach the different mathematical measures (weight, length, volume) in the old way, but with the introduction of the metric system, the pastors, many of whom were educated in the old system of yards and pounds, found it difficult to convert and have shied away from using these. He felt that the teaching of the new mathematics should be encouraged more in the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, saying that there was a dire need for the pastors to update their knowledge in this area. He implied that the mathematical measures (weight, length, volume) that were an integral part of the pastor's schools arithmetic teaching should be revised and accommodated into the present syllabus for all schools.

The **A'oga a le Faifeau**, according to Narratives Three and Four, should play a more interactive and complementary role, with the **Palagi** School, in the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics so that the students that attend the Pastor's School would have the knowledge of these subjects reinforced and consolidated. They felt also that maths textbooks used in the **Palagi** School must also be used in the **A'oga a le Faifeau**.

According to two of the pastors, the **A'oga a le Faifeau** today is not looked upon by some Samoans, and even by some church members themselves, as it was say 15 to 20

years ago. In the last two stories (Narratives Three and Four), they are relating these concerns. Once, parents would not think twice before, about sending their children to the Pastor's School, but today some parents actually discourage their children, saying that the **Palagi** School was quite enough as it was also teaching what the pastor's school was teaching and more. 'Educated' and urban parents tend to say this, according to Narrative Three, which also implied that the absolute trust that was once held regarding the value of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** was being questioned.

The regularity of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** is taken as a measure of whether the pastor is doing his work or not, according to one pastor. If the pastor does not hold his **A'oga a le Faifeau** regularly, some parents say the pastor is not doing enough for their children and in turn saying the minister is not doing his work properly. One of the rural schools pastors (**Puna** School) though does not have this concern because he runs his school every day except Sunday.

The pastors say that, despite the growth of some negative or questioning attitudes, the pastor's school will continue to advance because nothing of more value or importance is threatening to take its place. They are confident the pastor's school will survive to support the education of those children that are still in the church.

The 'macron' and 'apostrophe' debate

Reference to whether or not to teach macrons and apostrophes is made by the pastors in their narratives.³⁶⁶ This, according to the pastors, is extremely important in the teaching of Samoan as a language and is one area in which the **A'oga a le Faifeau** and the **A'oga Palagi** have 'clashed' in the past. The **A'oga a le Faifeau** (with the exceptions of some like the defiant pastor in the first story) had to remove macrons from the teaching of the written form of the Samoan language because the Director of Education of government schools, in 1980, said the macrons were hindering the learning by the children of reading and writing in the Samoan language.

³⁶⁶ A macron marks an elongated sound Eg. *taofi*, Maori. The apostrophe marks the glottal stop, Eg. *fa'a*, to 'a.

The use of macrons related in the first story is a major concern of this particular pastor and his wife. They support the use of macrons because they believe macrons facilitate the children's learning, in particular their reading and writing of the Samoan language. The children would find it easier to get the meaning of words with their use. As Narrative One argued:

There is also a sad thing about the work that was carried out with a lot of commitments by any Samoan pastor. As it was the first priorities of the pastor's school to teach the children how to read and write, both are now in danger. For example, the removal of signs (**Fa'aailoga**)³⁶⁷ in the written form of the Samoan language corrupts the reading of a Samoan story or book. If I refer you to the textbook used by the pastor's school, "**O LE TUSI A TAMAITI**"- by Rev J W Hills page 9, you may realise what I have in mind. The first short verse reads – **UE! O LE 'OTI** (Behold! The goat). If the apostrophe is omitted then the verse reads – "**UE! O LE OTI**". (Behold! the death). The corruption then affects the reading in the Samoan language. The danger involved is being told by the Government education department that one way of teaching the language was not good and five or ten years later they tell us to go back to revive the old method. We stopped teaching "**Fa'aailoga**"(macrons) before and now they tell us to use them again. The children become confused and sometimes we do not know what to do. It is just like with the timestables. They told us to stop because the children were just memorising them but did not understand. At our school we kept on teaching the timestables. We thought that without the timestables the children couldn't do maths properly (Narrative One).

When the new change was introduced he said there was a lot of criticism because instead of facilitating the children's reading in Samoan, it took a child longer to determine the meaning of words and thus slowed him or her down. The Government schools have now gone back to using the macrons and the pastor's school have had to follow suit.

Most Samoans 'grew up with' macrons and apostrophes. I remember there was reluctance and confusion among the Samoan people when the Education Department stopped the macrons from being used in the teaching of Samoan. It is understandable that with any major change, there is bound to be a lot of criticism and after more than a hundred years of macrons this is to be expected. The instigator of the change was **Aiono Fanaafi**, who was Director of Education at the time (early 1980s). Her argument was that macrons were important especially to facilitate the pronunciations of the written language for non-Samoan speaking people. Without those she claimed non-Samoans would find it a long and difficult process.

³⁶⁷ *These are macrons, which facilitated the learning of the language. I refer to the use of these later.*

She implied that Samoan speakers who were brought up in the language would not find the process difficult as they could easily interpret how words are pronounced from the meaning of any written Samoan.

As she said in Samoan:

O le Fa'aaogaga o Fa'aailoga nei'- i le Fa'aleoga o le gagana Samoa-tusi, e tagata ese, e matua taua tele ia i latou, a aunoa ma Fa'aailoga Fa'aleo ia, e fufou gata ma folofolo faua (!) mo se taimi umi, ona Fa'atoa Fa'aleo ai lea o se faitautusi.³⁶⁸ (These macrons and apostrophes are important especially to facilitate the pronunciations of the written language for non-Samoans).

I am also of the 'macron and apostrophe age' and I can see why there was so much angst about the change. There are many Samoan words which are spelled the same but which are totally different in meaning depending on the location or presence of a macron or apostrophe. Take for example the following Samoan words, spelled using macrons and apostrophes to differentiate their meanings and parts of speech:

taua n = war	a'oga n = school	pa'u n = skin, tyre
ta'ua v = called/ named	aoga adj = useful	pa'u v/n = fall
taua adj = important	aoga n = gathering	pau v = finish
		pau adj = eerie, scary
		pau adj = stern-faced

The pastors in the study are all for the use of macrons and apostrophes in the teaching of Samoan language in the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. If macrons and apostrophes do facilitate the pronunciations of the written Samoan language, then they should be used. In the **A'oga a le Faifeau** in New Zealand, their use would definitely help Samoan children in the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. These children are growing up in a multicultural society where English is the dominant language and would need all the help they could get in learning their own indigenous language.

³⁶⁸ Aiono Fanaafi (*Ibid*) p. 35

Chapter Seven

The Children that attend the A'oga a le Faifeau: A Significant Number

Introduction

The **A'oga a le Faifeau** is a small educational tradition and is less conspicuous by comparison with the large educational ones such as the **Palagi** schools. Though small and relatively less conspicuous, it offers important educational knowledge and skills to a significant number of children. A high percentage of Samoan children attend the **A'oga a le Faifeau** in Samoa. In New Zealand a large number also attends. The present chapter documents the statistics for the **A'oga a le Faifeau** in both countries. An important section of the current chapter is the investigation into the historical development of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** in New Zealand.

The **A'oga a le Faifeau** is a very important part of the CCCS ministry in New Zealand. The **A'oga a le Faifeau** that began in Samoa spread to New Zealand, Australia and the United States of America. Just as it does for CCCS children in Samoa, the **A'oga a le Faifeau** in New Zealand is a huge resource for the Samoan community, for teachers and **Palagi** schools, providing knowledge and literacy skills that have spans with school-based literacies.

The inclusion of the New Zealand description of the CCCS and **A'oga a le Faifeau** in the present chapter is to illustrate, and to add weight and evidence, to support the general description of the role of the Pastor's School and its significance in the CCCS. The CCCS can be seen as a folk group for its adherents have made the church their way of life. It is also a 'cultural institution', which socialises the core values of Christianity as well as the **Fa'a Samoa**. Wherever the Samoans migrate, they take with them their 'cultural institutions', their 'church' and **Fa'a Samoa**. They have done that coming to New Zealand, in effect transcending geographical regions and divides.

The A'oga a le Faifeau in Samoa

With the exception of a handful of villages, every village in Samoa has a CCCS parish. Each parish has an **A'oga a le Faifeau**. It is 'compulsory' for every CCCS pastor, in and outside Samoa, to have one. In Samoa 34.7 % of the population are CCCS members. The table below shows the population of Samoa by religion and sex. Table 1 is adapted from the population tables (Tables 15 and 16) of Samoa's latest Census of Population and Housing in 2001.³⁶⁹ The table below shows the CCCS as having more adherents than other denominations.

Table 6: Population of Samoa by Religious Affiliation: 2001

Religion	Male	Female	Total	%
Congregational (CCCS)	32,027	29,417	61,444	34.7
Catholic	18,174	16,580	34,754	19.7
Methodist	13,851	12,609	26,460	15.0
Latter Day Saints	11,786	10,749	22,535	12.7
Assembly of God	6,077	5,674	11,751	6.6
Seventh Day Adventist	3,220	2,978	6,198	3.5
Others	6,863	6,630	13,493	7.7
Not Stated	132	81	213	0.1
TOTAL	92,130	84,718	176,848	100.0

The A'oga a le Faifeau age groups

The Census statistics show that the CCCS in Samoa has 30, 299 children in the age group from 0-19 years.³⁷⁰ This is the probable number of children that potentially could be enrolled in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** for the year 2001.

As is the practice of the church, as the numbers of churches grow, a subdistrict (**pulega**) is formed. The constitution of each **pulega** varies (as shown below in the tables) from a small **pulega**, of about 4, to a large one of 12 to 13 parishes. Several subdistricts make a

³⁶⁹ *Government of Samoa, 2001, Census Of Population and Housing, Department of Statistics, Table 15 and Table 16.*

³⁷⁰ *Government of Samoa, 2001, (Ibid), Table 15.*

church district (**matagaluega**). Each **pulega** or district in Samoa adheres closely to the traditional political divisions. Each rural village has its own parish. With the exception of a few, all villages in Samoa have CCCS parishes.

Each **matagaluega** (church district) is made up of several **pulega** (church sub-districts). Each **pulega** is made up of a number of parishes or churches (**aulotu**). The tables below include all the parishes in Samoa, compiled from lists of church districts, sub-districts and parishes from the CCCS headquarters at **Tamaligi**, Apia.³⁷¹

There are four islands in Samoa with CCCS parishes; **Upolu**, (where **Apia** the capital is located), **Savaii** the big island, and two smaller ones, **Manono** and **Apolima**. The tables below show the number of children in each school. The schools are arranged under each district and subdistrict. The name of each subdistrict is italicised. Beside each subdistrict's name (in brackets) is the total number of schools that belong to it. There are six districts in **Upolu**; **Apolima** and **Manono** and there are two in **Savaii**. The **Manono** and **Apolima** parishes are grouped under **Aana** District in **Upolu**.

³⁷¹ *Semau T Maiava, 2001, Statistics of A'oga a le Faifeau rolls, CCCS Headquarters, Tamaligi, Apia.*

Table 7: Number of Children in each A'oga a le Faifeau (Upolu and Savaii)³⁷²

Matagaluega Apia Sasa'e (Apia East District)	Matagaluega Apia Sisifo (Apia West District)	Matagaluega Fa'asaleleaga	Matagaluega Ituotane
<i>Pulega Vaimauga Sisifo</i> 1. Vaiala 397 2. Levili 45 3. Moataa 410 4. Vaivasetai 48 5. Tanoaleia 90 6. Fagalii 205 7. Vailele 118 8. Mauga Fiafia 42	<i>Pulega Apia Sasae</i> 1. Magiagi 356 2. Toomatagi 82 3. Fa'atoia 215 4. Vinifou 36 5. Vaipuna 44 6. Apia Uta 95 7. Matautu Tai 76 8. Matautu Uta 105	<i>Pulega Salega (9):</i> 1. Salailua 131 2. Taga 122 3. Faiaai 25 4. Samata 72 5. Vaipua 87 6. Fogatuli 72 7. Siutu 101 8. Foalalo 37 9. Fagafau 81	<i>Pulega Gagaemauga (8):</i> 1. Patamea 145 2. Samalaeulu 126 3. Saleaula 76 4. Satoalepai 104 5. Fagamalo 116 6. Lelepa 65 7. Avao 47
<i>Pulega Vaimauga Sasa'e (6)</i> 9. Letogo 87 10. Lailii 387 11. Leusoalii 126 12. Luatuanuu 81 13. Solosolo 415 14. Eva 27	<i>Pulega Apia Sisifo (12)</i> 9. Apia 176 10. Vaoala 55 11. Vailima 62 12. Loimata Apaula 45 13. Tanugamanono 174 14. Leufisa 31 15. Falemai 34 16. Aai o Niue 70 17. Alamagoto 94 18. Sogi 70 19. Mulinuu 28 20. Fugalei 37	<i>Pulega Palauli (9):</i> 10. Vailoa 138 11. Fa'ala 108 12. Vaitoomuli 98 13. Gautavai 162 14. Sili 135 15. Puleia 83 16. Tafua Tai 80 17. Papa 75 18. Maota 50	<i>Pulega Gagaifomauga (12):</i> 9. Manase 35 10. Safotu 60 11. Samauga 66 12. Paia 43 13. Lefagaoalii 85 14. Matavai 71 15. Faletagaloa 82 16. Fatuvalu 24 17. Fagae 36 18. Sasina 105 19. Letui 28 20. Aopo 76
<i>Pulega Anoamaa (8)</i> 15. Fusi 36 16. Saoluafata 210 17. Manunu 20 18. Lufilufi 89 19. Faleapuna 105 20. Falefa 131 21. Lalomauga 86 22. Falevao 161	<i>Pulega Faleata Sasae (9):</i> 21. Vaimoso 186 22. Sinamoga 135 23. Alafua 53 24. Lepca 274 25. Ululoloa/Siusega 50 26. Lotopa 22 27. Matafele Fou 72 28. Aleisa Sisifo 38 29. Aleisa Sasae 62	<i>Pulega Amoa (7):</i> 19. Siufaga 78 20. Luua 82 21. Saasaai 101 22. Saipipi 216 23. Lano 78 24. Asaga 86 25. Puapua 92	<i>Pulega Itu Asau (8):</i> 21. Auala 310 22. Vaisala 224 23. Sataua 97 24. Papa 212 25. Falealupo Uta 52 26. Avata 23 27. Vaotupua 36 28. Tufutafoe 42
<i>Pulega Fagaloa (7)</i> 23. Sauano 71 24. Musumusu 55 25. Taelefaga 62 26. Maasina 62 27. Lona 11 28. Samamea 51 29. Uafato 75	<i>Pulega Faleata Sisifo (8):</i> 30. Toamua 154 31. Vaigaga 123 32. Tulaele 73 33. Vaitale Uta 137 34. Vailoa Tai 94 35. Vailoa Uta 92 36. Elise Fou 93 37. Petelema Fou 36	<i>Pulega Safotulafai (8)</i> 26. Lalomalava 178 27. Sapapalii 282 28. Iva 305 29. Fusi 125 30. Fogapoa 92 31. Salelologa 75 32. Salelavalu 80 33. Fatausi 74	
TOTAL 3703	TOTAL 3579	TOTAL 3601	TOTAL 2386

³⁷² Source: Semau, T M, 2001, CCCS Headquarters, Tamaligi, Apia

Table 8: Number of Children in each A'oga a le Faifeau (Upolu, Apolima, Savaii)³⁷³

Matagaluega Falealili Sisifo (Falealili West District)	Matagaluega Falealili Sasa'e (Falealili East District)	Matagaluega Malua (Malua District)	Matagaluega Aana (Aana District)
<i>Pulega Falealili (12):</i> 1. Salesatele 141 2. Vaovai 121 3. Sapunaoa 101 4. Saleilua 93 5. Satalo 86 6. Poutasi 73 7. Matautu 86 8. Salani 75 9. Siuniu 27 10. Sapoe 78 11. Piu 21 12. Malaemalu 36 <i>Pulega Safata/Siumu (9):</i> 13. Saanapu-Uta 256 14. Saanapu-Tai 210 15. Sataoa 175 16. Lotofaga 61 17. Vaiee 121 18. Fausaga 50 19. Tafitoala 56 20. Siumu 134 21. Saaga 74 TOTAL 2076	<i>Pulega Aleipata Sasae (6):</i> 1. Lalomanu 189 2. Ulutogia 75 3. Satitoa 65 4. Mutiatele 62 5. Saleaumua 84 6. Samusu 21 <i>Pulega Lepa ma Lotofaga (6)</i> 7. Saleapaga 108 8. Lepa 254 9. Aufaga 186 10. Vavau 76 11. Lotofaga 114 12. Matatufu 96 TOTAL 1330	<i>Pulega Malua Sasae (5)</i> 1. Faleula 84 2. Malie 156 3. Afega 248 4. Tuanai 121 5. Leauvaa 82 <i>Pulega Malua Sisifo (8)</i> 7. Fasitoo-Uta 212 8. Faleasiu 123 9. Utualii 87 10. Saleimoa 356 11. Togo 24 12. Levi 73 13. Lepale 26 TOTAL 1592	<i>Pulega Alofi (6)</i> 1. Nofoalii 380 2. Leulumoea-Tuai 100 3. Fasitoo-Tai 405 4. Vailuutai 208 5. Satapuala 115 6. Etena Fou 37 <i>Pulega Lefaga (9)</i> 7. Matautu-Tai 115 8. Matautu-Uta 68 9. Savaia-Tai 124 10. Savaia-Uta 65 11. Faleaseela 87 12. Gagaifo-Uta 76 13. Tanumalala 42 14. SaFa'atoa-Tai 97 15. SaFa'atoa-Uta 55 <i>Pulega Manono (10)</i> 16. Lalovi 26 17. Satuimalulufifi 98 18. Apolima-Uta 156 19. Apolima-Tai 36 20. Salua-Uta 64 21. Salua-Tai 87 22. Faleu 48 23. Apai 39 24. Lepuai 68 25. Fuailoloo 232 <i>Pulega Falelatai (4)</i> 26. Matautu 354 27. Siufaga 90 28. Pata 158 29. Samatau 16 TOTAL 3506

³⁷³ Source: Semau, T M, 2001, (Ibid)

Table 9: Summary: Total number of A'oga a le Faifeau students in each district and total for Samoa.

District (Matagaluega)	District Total	Upolu Total	Savaii Total
UPOLU			
1. Apia i Sisifo	3,579		
2. Apia i Sasae	3,703		
3. Falealili Sisifo	2,076		
4. Falealili Sasae	1,330		
5. Malua	1,592		
6. Aana	3,506	15,786	
SAVAII			
7. Fa asaleleaga	3,601		
8. Ituotane	2,386		5,987
Total Number for Samoa	21,773*		

21,773 as the total number of children in all the **A'oga a le Faifeau** in Samoa is 'correct', compared to 30,299, the 'probable' number of CCCS children that could be enrolled in the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, (as recorded in the 2001 Census, also see page 231). There are at least 8,526 children not accounted for. One possible reason for this is that there are infants and babies under three not yet enrolled, but are included in the CCCS, 0-19 age group population that make up the probable number referred to above. The Census records all those children in the 0-4 age group. It is difficult then to ascertain exact figures for the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, suffice to say here that over 20,000 children is a significant number of children that attended the **A'oga a le Faifeau** in Samoa in the year 2001.

The urban migration into the **Apia** area has given rise to the formation of parishes that do not have the constitution of a traditional Samoan village but are made up of migrants of the different villages from the rural sector. This is the pattern in New Zealand also where Samoans from different villages in Samoa get together to form a parish here, either through their close proximity to a Samoan church, affiliations as relatives, friends at work, or because they are connected in some other way and not necessarily through a traditional village affiliation. The church has provided an **A'oga a le Faifeau** education for those families' children as well as a village setting where their **Fa'a Samoa** is practised.

The A'oga a le Faifeau in New Zealand

New Zealand has the second highest number of CCCS parishes apart from Samoa. The beginnings of the CCCS in New Zealand also hailed the beginnings of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** in Aotearoa. The following brief history of the church in New Zealand introduces the growth and development of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. The **A'oga a le Faifeau** is an indispensable part of the church programme in New Zealand, where the Samoan language, the official language of the CCCS, is not readily taught in schools and is not used as often in the Samoan home in New Zealand as in Samoa. The church became the focal point for Samoans to worship in their own language and to practise and perform their **Fa'a Samoa**, the church provides a Samoan village setting for this. The initiative in starting up CCCS parishes in New Zealand has come from the lay people rather than the pastors or the headquarters in Samoa. The CCCS Elders' Council and Assembly give the final approval but the lay people have always been the founders of parishes in migrant countries. The parishioners also choose and call their own pastors and are at 'liberty' to remove them also.³⁷⁴

Historical Background

Danny **Ioka** wrote the first complete history of the CCCS in New Zealand in 1993,³⁷⁵ for his PhD thesis. According to **Ioka**, the CCCS began in New Zealand as a 'settler church', which was also part of the CCCS in Samoa. The leader of the founders of the CCCS in New Zealand, **Fuimaono Taala** was a Samoan high chief and deacon who started the CCCS in December, 1962 "for the sole purpose to found a **Lotu Fa'a Samoa** (A pure Samoan church.)."³⁷⁶ **Fuimaono**, his wife and members of his **aiga** resigned from the Pacific Islands Congregational Christian Church (PICC) to start a separate Samoan

³⁷⁴ As an 'insider', this is first hand information and my direct experiences of part of the structure of the CCCS church. My husband and I have been called to two parishes this way. The appointment of my husband to the job of General Secretary was from the CCCS Assembly in 1988 while we were in the Porirua parish. The CCCS Grey Lynn parish of which my husband (the second pastor called) was the first parish of the CCCS in NZ. The late pastor (Rev Elder Siasia Ieriko) was the first pastor called a year after the parish was founded.

³⁷⁵ Danny **Ioka** was a PhD student at Knox College, Otago University from 1990 to 1996. He carried out extensive research on the origins and beginnings of the CCCS in New Zealand. His thesis is a comprehensive account of the origin and beginnings of the CCCS in New Zealand.

³⁷⁶ **Ioka**, D, 1997, 'Origin and Beginning of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa, (CCCS) in Aotearoa, New Zealand,' Unpublished PhD Thesis, Otago University, p.171.

church with the hopes of “preserving true Samoan worship, social and cultural forms of Samoan Christianity, migrant loyalty to poor families, poor villages, a newly independent Samoan Church and Samoan government in need of assistance, and other issues relating to the future of Samoans migrating to New Zealand to settle.”³⁷⁷

Ioka refers to the beginning of the CCCS in New Zealand as a significant expression of the migration of the Mind of modern Samoa which, through the courtesy of modern communication and transport, and the push and pull of migration, had extended its ‘home horizon’ in countries of Samoan migration. **Ioka** writes about the founding vision of the church in Samoa as the guiding light of the development of the church in New Zealand.

The founding vision encapsulated certain important aspects of the wider historical context of the origin of the CCCS. One was the transplantation to New Zealand of Samoan Christianity and the worldview of modern Samoa in which it was formed—a biblical culture and a Christian society in the holy land of Samoa. Secondly, the link between, this migrating world view modern Samoa and the historical movement and migration of Christian civilisation means that the growth of Samoan migrant churches in countries of Samoan migration was Samoa’s authentic contribution to the historical movement and migration of civilised societies and Christian civilisation.³⁷⁸

Ioka raises two very significant issues. Firstly, the CCCS migrants in New Zealand have in turn followed and continued the process and tradition by which they were Christianised and ‘civilised’ by the missionaries. This meant the ‘transplantation’ also of the CCCS practices in Samoa to New Zealand, including the **A’oga a le Faifeau** with its ‘civilising’ role in imparting the skills and knowledge of the three Rs. Just as it did not occur to the missionaries, that people could be Christianised without being civilised in the same manner as themselves, the Samoans in ‘constituting’ their own form of Christianity have added another dimension to the missionaries’ agenda. In the CCCS, people have ‘Samoanised’ the church, that is ethnic culture (the **Fa’a Samoa**) has become an inseparable part of the CCCS.

The Samoans were clear right from the start when **Malietoa** accepted Christianity that their **Fa’a Samoa** and Christianity were to work in equal partnership with each other

³⁷⁷ *Ioka, (Ibid), p.181.*

³⁷⁸ *Ioka, (Ibid), p.133*

(even though some **Fa'a Samoa** practices were banned).³⁷⁹ This notion has been a bone of contention between the pastors who see the **Fa'a Samoa** in a more supporting role and the Samoan chiefs who say, **e tumua'i tutusa le lotu ma le Fa'a Samoa ma e le ola le lotu pe a leai se Fa'a Samoa** (the church and the **Fa'a Samoa** have equal status and the church cannot survive without the **Fa'a Samoa**). I discussed in Chapter Four some of the underlying causes that explain this with reference especially to the 'contextual conditions' within which Christianity was accepted.

The relationship of the CCCS in New Zealand (and Hawaii, mainland USA or Australia), with its mother church in Samoa, is characteristic of that between the LMS in London and the LMS church in Samoa before the latter became independent in 1961 when it also changed its name to the CCCS church. The LMS church in Samoa was 'remote-controlled' from London and in a similar manner today, the migrant CCCS churches are 'governed' from Samoa. Even though each respective migrant church has a certain degree of independence and freedom in how it operates locally, its activities are on the whole guided by the rules and regulations made in Samoa.

The LMS in London were referred to as the **Au Matutua**, literally translated 'Team of Elders or Seniors'.³⁸⁰ The relationship was like a mother/ daughter one. The CCCS today still speaks with great affection for the LMS. While the missionaries banned some **Fa'a Samoa** practices, on the other hand, much of it is still retained and simultaneously 'played out' with church activities. The transplantation of 'Samoan Christianity', as embodied in the CCCS, also involves promoting the learning of the **Fa'a Samoa** in a migrant country such as New Zealand. This process has important implications for my study, especially the notion of the interconnection of culture, literacy and pedagogy. The **A'oga a le Faifeau**, an inseparable element of 'Samoan Christianity,' is a powerful 'instrument' that promotes this. The relationship between the church and the **Fa'a Samoa**

³⁷⁹ The practice for example of *poula*, a Samoan dance entertainment equivalent to the modern 'strip tease' was banned. The church also ex-communicates the person undergoing a tattoo and the tattooist and assistants because of the *Fa'amaligi toto* (unnecessary blood letting) process involved and the *samiga* (celebration) of the completed tattoo that involved 'sexual' practices considered unchristian. The ex-communicated members though are reinstated after going through a 'grace repentant' period. Ironically the tattoo cannot be removed.

³⁸⁰ *Au* = team, *Matutua*=seniors or elders

is an interdependent one and in a migrant country, Samoan culture is highly dependent on this link.

Secondly, the latter assertion in the quote implies the CCCS missionary work among those people (**Palagi**) who originally introduced Christianity to the Samoans (but who are now leaving the church in droves). Concerning this, **Vavae Toma**³⁸¹ a Samoan retired minister of great vision and intellect said:

Ae peiseai o la'u lava va'ai i le tuputupu a'e o le Ekalesia Samoa i fafo, e pei o se galuega fa'a-misionare a le Ekalesia Samoa i na atunu'u na aumai ai le lotu, ma itu eseese o le lalolagi. E pei ua fai ifo le ola tapua'i o tagata i le Atua. E moni o la e lolotu, ae ua fulisia atunu'u i fafo i polokalame fa'afafo (fa'a-le-lalolagi). (My vision of the growth of the CCCS overseas is like missionary work to those people who brought Christianity to us. It seems there is a reduction in the number of people going to church. It is true that they still go but most have become more materialistic and worldly).³⁸²

According to **Ioka**, the preservation of the Christian heritage of modern Samoa became the incessant goal of the founders of the CCCS in New Zealand, and other Samoan migrant countries like Fiji, USA, and Australia. He claimed that this heritage could only be preserved and perpetuated in a truly 'Samoan' worship.³⁸³ As **Fianiusila**, the founder (a female relative of the founder of the first parish) of the second CCCS parish (Otarā) in New Zealand said:

The Samoan Church is most dear to me because I can fully understand God in the Samoan language. I know my God in my language. The Samoan Language through which I first knew God and God who is like a Father to me and has given me the ability to make sense of anything. We were frustrated in useless worship without understanding in the Otara PCCC.³⁸⁴

This implies that worship only becomes meaningful when Samoans worship in their own language. "About the need to accommodate cultural foundation and expressions of

³⁸¹ Rev **Vavae Toma** is an experienced and highly regarded pastor in the CCCS. He has wide experience within the CCCS as well as in the ecumenical movement in which he has held the post of General Secretary of the Pacific Council of Churches PCC, (affiliated to the World Council of Churches WCC) in Suva for several years. **Ioka** interviewed him for his PhD research and this interview (in Samoan) is published in his memoirs as a tribute to his work and as an 85th birthday present in 2000. His daughter compiled work for this book.

³⁸² Weir, M, (Ed.) 2000, *Tusitusiga O Le Talalelei e Vavae Toms F.S. Ma Ni Tala E Manatua Pea o V.Toma* (The Good News by Rev **Vavae Toma** Plus Memorable Tales of **V.Toma**), Brisbane, Australia, p.277

³⁸³ **Ioka**, (Ibid)

³⁸⁴ **Fianiusila** In **Ioka**, (Ibid), p. 309

Samoan Christianity, the fundamental understanding was, that only a Samoan Church can incorporate all that Samoans include in their church life and their worship of God.”³⁸⁵ Toma, in support of this, said (at times in an ‘entertaining’ way):

E pei e susua le tapua’i i le Atua i la ta lava gagana. E pei ta te lagona o le Atua o le Samoa. A ta alu i luga i le Atua, e le Fa’apea mai le Atua – “Good Morning Vavae”, E leai. E Fa’apea mai-Talofa Vavae. Susu mai i’i. O le manatu malosi lena i le tagata tapua’i lava ia. E Fa’atoa lelei la’u tatalo i lo’u Atua, pe a ou tatalo i ai i la’u lava gagana. E tusa pe ou te iloa le gagana fa’a Peretania e eseese mamao ma la’u tatalo i le gagana na faia ai a’u e le Atua...O le mea moni a ia, i totonu o le tagata, o lo’o i ai le galala lena. (Its ‘delicious’ ‘scrumptious’ worshipping in my own language. I feel like God is a Samoan. When I go up to God he does not greet me-(In English) “Good morning Vavae”, No. He says - (in Samoan) Talofa Vavae. That is the strong mentality of the worshipper. It is only when I pray in my own language that I feel good. Even if I speak English fluently it is vastly different from the language in which God created me. The truth is, within every person, there is that need or hunger).³⁸⁶

The first church, the Auckland Parish now the Grey Lynn Parish, was founded in December 1962. By 1993, according to Ioka’s survey, the CCCS in New Zealand had grown to a membership of 51 parishes. The total number of parishes, according to the year 2000 annual offering³⁸⁷ statistics, compiled by the CCCS head office, stood at 52.

The overall total of people attending the 51 churches in 1993 was 11,304. Most of the parishes (32) are located in Auckland. There are two in Hamilton and Tokoroa respectively, 14 in the Wellington region, and three parishes in the South Island.

Each table below shows the district, its subdistricts and respective parishes. For each parish, the total number of children involved in the A’oga a le Faifeau for the years 2000 and 2001 are indicated. These statistics were acquired by personal communication with each of the pastors. The ages of the children range from 2 to 18 years.

³⁸⁵ Ioka, (Ibid), p. 201

³⁸⁶ Weir, (Ibid), pp. 276-277

³⁸⁷ Every year in November every CCCS parish (In Samoa and outside Samoa) makes an offering (taulaga) to the church to finance its operations. A copy of this data was acquired from the head office.

Table 10: Number of Children Enrolled at the A'oga a le Faifeau of the North Auckland District (Aukilani i Matu) for the years 2000 and 2001³⁸⁸

Pulega Waitakere	Year started	2000	2001
1. Blockhouse Bay	29.1.1966	121	130
2. Te Atatu	6.8.1977	138	154
3. New Lynn	10.7.1977	72	80
4. Massey	7.7.1985	25	31
5. Henderson	2.3.1974	25	19
6. Ranui	6.4.1992	11	15
7. Pt Chevalier	2000	*	27
8. Glen Eden	1999	16	17
Pulega Maunga Kiekie			
9. Sandringham	1970	75	80
10. Onehunga	11.7.1965	120	150
11. Panmure	15.8.1981	102	120
12. Owairaka	25.8.1990	30	40
13. Hillsborough	4.4.1992	32	30
14. Avondale	28.8.1988	11	20
15. Green Lane	2000	35	43
16. Mt Roskill	4.11.1984	67	78
Pulega Waitemata			
17. Grey Lynn +	29.12.1962	126	135
18. Westmere	24.10.1976	109	120
19. Kingsland	17.8.1969	96	112
20. North Shore	31.5.1975	41	48
21. Glenfield	13.9.1981	21	25
Total		1273	1474

* New church started in 2000

+ First CCCS church in New Zealand

The totals for all the parishes in the North Auckland District show an increase of 201 children from 2000 to 2001.

³⁸⁸ Source: Personal communication with the pastors.

Table 11: Children Enrolled at the A'oga a le Faifeau of the South Auckland District (Aukilani i Saute) for the years 200 and 2001³⁸⁹

Pulega Manukau Sisifo	Year Started	2000	2001
1. Magele Sasa'e	8.8.1968	123	140
2. Magele Sisifo	22.11.1981	173	182
3. Otahuhu	9.7.1967	120	143
4. Otara	1.3.1964	185	206
5. East Tamaki	29.6.1985	152	194
6. Pakuranga	13.12.1987	70	74
Pulega Manukau Sasa'e			
7. Papakura	10.12.1972	85	90
8. Papatoetoe	22.9.1973	110	125
9. Manurewa	18.4.1970	115	120
10. Weymouth	13.7.1980	113	118
11. Hamilton	1.2.1976	93	96
12. Takanini	1982	77	88
13. Tokoroa	20.2.1982	14	15
Total		1430	1591

Table 12: Children Enrolled at the A'oga a le Faifeau of the New Zealand South District (Niu Sila i Saute) for 2000 and 2001³⁹⁰

Pulega Motu i Saute	Year Started	2000	2001
1. Invercargill	29.3.1970	10	10
2. Christchurch	17.4.1966	50	52
3. Dunedin	4.3.1973	35	30
4. St Albans	26.12.1988	25	22
Pulega Ueligitone Matu			
5. Ketesemane	5.1.1980	60	64
6. Porirua	18.2.1968	150	160
7. Cannons Creek	4.4.1986	65	65
8. Palmerston North	31.8.1968	50	55
9. Napier	4.4.1976	50	50
10. Hastings	31.9.1992	15	17
11. Wanganui	23.11.1985	16	15
12. Masterton	9.9.1992	11	10
13. Levin	1999	20	25
Pulega Ueligitone Saute			
14. Ueligitone	27.6.1965	120	125
15. Petone	20.9.1970	60	64
16. Wainuiomata	1972	35	46
17. Lower Hutt	4.12.1990	50	58
18. Upper Hutt	NA	25	27
19. Hutt Valley	17.6.1989	26	29
Total		873	924

³⁸⁹ Tapaleao, Rev Talia, October 2001, Personal Communication.

³⁹⁰ Vailaau, Rev Nove, August 2002, Personal Communication.

Table 13: Summary: Total number of A'oga a le Faifeau students in each district and total for New Zealand

District (Matagaluega)	Total for District	Total for District
	2000	2001
Aukilani i Matu (North Auckland)	1273	1474
Aukilani i Saute (South Auckland)	1430	1591
Niu Sila i Saute (New Zealand South)	873	924
Total for New Zealand	3576	3989

In total, there were 53 CCCS parishes in New Zealand in 2001. There were 21 in the North Auckland district, 13 in the South Auckland district and 19 in the South New Zealand district, which includes the Wellington and Wairarapa regions, and the South Island. Since 1990, nine new parishes have been established. The CCCS has a growing population in New Zealand. All district totals show increases in the number of **A'oga a le Faifeau** children from 2000 to 2001. For the CCCS in New Zealand, the total number of children enrolled in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** increased by 413, from 3576 in 2000 to 3989 in 2001.

In Summary

Without children there would be no **A'oga a le Faifeau**. A significant number of children attend **A'oga a le Faifeau**, as shown by the tables of numbers of children enrolled in each CCCS parish in Samoa and in New Zealand. Over 20,000 are enrolled in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** in Samoa and almost 4000 in New Zealand. The figures demonstrate the importance of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** to many Samoan people, by the numbers of children that attend it and by the fact that every CCCS parish has an **A'oga a le Faifeau**. They demonstrate the pervasive presence of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** in the communities of New Zealand too. It shows the **A'oga a le Faifeau** as a robust educational institution with robust pedagogies in the sense of transcending country boundaries.

The goal of the founders of the CCCS in New Zealand was the preservation of the Christian heritage of modern Samoa. I reiterate here that **Ioka**³⁹¹ claimed this heritage could only be preserved and perpetuated in a truly 'Samoan' worship. Many Samoans have made the church their way of life. In New Zealand the church presents a village like setting where the church adherents could also practise their **Fa'a Samoa**.

³⁹¹ *Ioka, (Ibid)*

Chapter Eight

The Pastors' Narratives and A'oga a le Faifeau Syllabuses

Introduction

One of the major reasons behind my choice of topic was to disseminate information about a relatively unknown educational system that 'held the fort' and 'kept the flame glowing' especially through Samoa's troubled colonial history, and which still plays an important role in Samoan education. It is the evidence that supports the study's arguments.

The present chapter documents the pastors' narratives, past and current syllabuses, and information that pertains directly to the work of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. The chapter also includes some of the children's work from the schools in the study. It is also the most 'conclusive' evidence of the study because it is 'testimony' to the 'lived' and 'living' literacy experiences, skills and knowledge of children in the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. We can write and speak about those experiences and skills but the samples of children's actual printing, writing and arithmetic work, provide proof of those skills.

I have stated the reasons for the inclusion of the pastors' narratives in the text in Chapter Five on methodology. The syllabuses and other information about the **A'oga a le Faifeau** are written into the text also for similar reasons. I reiterate that in their relatively 'untouched' forms, they are of theoretical interest and their 'originality' is intact. This chapter is essentially a long one because it documents the evidence of the 'lived and living' experiences of those involved in the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. The chapter begins with the pastors' narratives.

The Pastors' Narratives

Narrative One: Puna A'oga a le Faifeau

The development and an improved standard of education in the country puts a question mark and many queries are placed upon the use of the pastors' schools. Considering and comparing the high standard of education and the low level of the pastors' schools, as some well educated people think, causes the under-estimation of the pastors schools. This is always the way that the people of the world look into the value of things but not the quality. The pastor's school and its philosophical ground are very important. The church leaders (missionaries especially) realised in the beginning of the 20th century³⁹² that the government schools could not cater for the majority of the Samoan children in the schools they established at that time. So to help those children in far away (rural) communities from the schools the pastors had to carry on their schools by teaching the children how to read and write. According to some verbal reports, a boy or girl could not attend the government school until he/she was 10 to 12 years of age. So the boys and girls were well prepared in mind, by the pastors and wives for any subject they learned when they started at government school.

Discipline is one of the most important subjects carried out by the pastors.³⁹³ Students of the school are brought into the pastor's house also in the evenings everyday. They continued in prayers and Bible readings. Students were free to sleep in the pastor's house. The families of the congregation supplied food. While doing these and other activities, the students lived as one family under the leadership of the Pastor for the boys and the wife for the girls.

In our pastors school we start teaching from Monday till Saturday, that is we do the teaching for six days of the week. We start our sessions at two o'clock p.m. That is when all the children return from Government and church Schools. We finish our daily sessions at six o'clock p.m., the children go home and then we continue with evening prayers and Bible reading. That is we spend five to six hours everyday. On Saturday the children attend from 9.00 in the morning to 12.00 in the afternoon.

Pastors' schools used to start in the month of January and end up with the exams in September. However our sub-district (**pulega**) is now operating our schools from January until April. Exams are conducted in the last week of April and the first week of May, during the first government schools' break. This change of time was based on the thought that at this time of the year, students are not heavy laden with their subjects in the formal schools.³⁹⁴ The **Vasega Faitau Pi** is still held in the morning by the pastor's wife and also the evening classes for bible reading until the end of the month of August when Children's Sunday classes begin.

When the schools are about to start in January, an announcement is made in the church so that the parents are aware of the time. The admittance of the new children especially the beginners (3-4 years) is always the first class to be set up. No new students can be admitted because all the boys and girls must come back to school for the next year. The only new students that we are looking at in the following year are the ones from other denominations. Parents of

³⁹² This pastor is talking here about the formal colonisation period when Western Samoa was under New Zealand rule. The younger classes were left to the pastors in the villages, and were called Grade One schools. I refer to this in Chapter Three.

³⁹³ Discipline, according to them, was to teach the children to behave well, to respect the older people, having the ability to understand the bible and the church faith, be good at schoolwork and know how to speak Samoan well especially the language of respect.

³⁹⁴ This thinking is influenced by the national exams that children have to prepare for. There is a Form 2 national exam (students are often coached for these exams from Standard Three) to select students for secondary school, a Form Five National exam for those students in Junior Secondary Schools, a Western Samoa School Certificate Exam for the College and High School Form Five students and a Sixth Form Pacific Senior Exam. Afternoon classes are often held 2 or 3 months before the actual exams.

those children do realize the difference of their children and ours academically in the formal schools.³⁹⁵ We do not have Entrance Exams. Classes are sorted out according to the age of the children in the first time. We also use our examinations marks. In the course of the sessions, especially in the first week, the children are resorted according to their academic effort. Sometimes the age would not matter at all. Some children are brought to the school so late. That is, they may have missed the beginners (**Faitau Pi**) or even the class one or two (**Vasega 1, 2**). In such cases, the pastor suffers a lot in training such kids to be in line with others of the same age. We give these latecomers a lot of individual help, especially by going back to the start to teach them how to read and write. We suffer in that way because more time is given for these kids. There are just the two of us running the school. But we enjoy our work and hope that parents will listen and send their children to the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. Because the pastor's school is not compulsory we sometimes get two or three children who are six or seven who cannot read and who have not attended primary school either. This is also a chance to put pressure on parents to send their kids to the Palagi School. We can tell who go and who do not go to the Palagi School. We do not really care about age but we care that they know at least how to read and write, add and subtract.

We have a syllabus for each class from the beginners to class seven (**Faitau Pi e o'o i le Vasega 7**). As you see (referring to the syllabus), the beginners have four subjects, reading the Alphabet with Pictures, a verse from the Bible to memorize, learning to memorize the Lord's Prayer, and few questions from the Old and New Testaments with answers to memorize. Classes One up to seven have the same kinds subjects of seven but they are different in level.

A committee of three pastors of our own sub-district (**Pulega**) prepares the annual syllabus. When the syllabus is ready, a copy is presented before a meeting of the elder minister and the pastors of the sub-district. After a discussion of the syllabus, there may be some matters either to be deleted or added so that the syllabus is a fair one for the New Year's session of the pastor's schools. My wife and I are the main teachers. She takes the beginners and Class 1 and 2. I take the older classes from 3 to 7. We help each other when one has finished his or her classes. Sometimes we ask the Palagi schoolteachers from our church to help especially during revising time for the examinations.

Starting from the beginners (**Faitau Pi**), we teach the children how to read and pronounce the Samoan alphabet by using the "**Pi Tautau**". (Alphabet Chart) The Missionaries and the elders of the church for the pastor's schools prepared this. It was printed and reprinted by the **Malua** Printing Press and copies are heaping up in the Church's bookshop. We are also using the Samoan Bible for reading and writing. Certain paragraphs are selected for each class to read and dictations are read from the Bible. For the Biblical studies, we use the Book – "**OLD TESTAMENT & NEW TESTAMENT HISTORY**" – BY Rev J. Marriott. Other books are the Samoan Primer and "**O LE TUSI PI MUAMUA**" BY Rev JW Hills. We also use the Old Arithmetic Text Book.

The Pastor's School has no set up styles of teaching. We pastors of nowadays are still following the styles we know from the past generations of pastors. That is, we spend much time in the beginning of the annual sessions to explain to each class (1-7) the biblical stories, both the old and New Testament. They must understand part of the history either of Israel in the Old Testament or the life of Jesus and the history of the early church in the New Testament. After spending two or three weeks in the explanations and oral questions, then we turn to write questions on the blackboard and let the children answer by writing in their books.

We write several mathematical problems, additions, multiplications, subtractions and divisions on the board for them to solve. In the case of Maths, we are not using the new Maths system or else the children may face some problems in formal schools. We think the new Maths is best left to be taught by the trained teachers at the **Palagi School**. We do a lot of arithmetic and

³⁹⁵ When asked what this means, they said they have Catholic and Mormon students whose parents want their children to attend the **CCCS A'oga a le Faifeau** where they will get a good education in reading, Samoan and maths like in the **A'oga Palagi**.

encourage the children to learn their times tables up to the 12 times, and the problems from the old Arithmetic book. It is still useful. We all learned how to do maths using this old book.

The assessment and evaluation is based on the examinations. After the school and the teaching period of more than three months, the elder (**Toeaina**) and the pastors of the subdistrict set up the days of the examinations, which are always on Saturdays. There are eight congregations in our subdistrict, which are divided into 3 sets of exams. Two in the east, three in the middle and three in the West. Usually four pastors are allocated to carry out the examination in each of the three sections. Four from the other two operate the exam for the other. After the exams, copies of the results are issued to each pastor of each section. These results are usually kept in files in my office. We do not have roll calls. Children are free to come to school, because sometimes they are engaged in family matters or even in some activities of the formal schools. The only records I keep in my office are the Class lists for the year and the exam results. We use these in the beginning of our school for promotions and to allocate classes. We usually know from these children that should go up or stay for another year.

Although the pastor's school is a burden to the ministry of any pastor, it must not be laid aside or completely dropped from the pastor's shoulders. It is a necessary burden for any pastor, but a burden that must be shouldered because the school prepares the child from early childhood for his or her future life in the education field. When people say that if it were not for the pastor's school, they would not have learned to read and write, it brings a lot of satisfaction to my heart and is rewarding for any pastor.

The pastor's school is one of the heavy responsibilities of the pastor and his wife, because it is an important task, teaching the children of the church. Much preparation goes into this and it is a time also when we get to know the children better. As I have stated in the first question, the pastor's school prepares the early childhood of the Samoan child for her/his future life in the education field. Pre-schools are now established in the country for the same purpose. However the two are different from each other. They have more activities and play things for the children and that is good, but they also use our **Pi Tautau** (Alphabet Chart) and that is good. So you see the pastor's school helps those children too. Some of the pastors in the country have established and developed pre-schools³⁹⁶, so the beginners class (**Vasega Faitau Pi**) are not only learning the alphabet but also other activities.

Some of the pastors to whom I have talked say that is the best idea to introduce into the minds of the beginners in school both languages (Samoan and English). That is their opinion. They say other subjects can be introduced too such as other ways of learning numbers. They use pictures and blocks. Our school is a very small one. We have less than ten in our **Vasega Pi** (Beginners) now. Maybe in future when we have more children we will start a **Palagi** preschool like other pastors. I think we are also giving our children good education. They learn to count with their fingers and toes and apply this to other things they see. The pastor's school teaches the children with the simplest way and always communicate in the mother language (Samoan) but the pre-schools mix the Samoan language with the English language. The children may become confused. The simplest way was to speak in Samoan to the beginners. The children will learn the English language when they enter primary school.

The parents must be the first persons in families to teach their children to know how to live obediently. Then the pastor and his wife are looked upon by the parents as the father and mother of all the children in the congregation. With that thought in mind, the pastor and wife must commit their lives into caring physically, mentally and spiritually for the children. This fellowship must be warmer and more interesting than that of the parents and the children because the parents look up to the pastor and his wife as their **matua Fa'aleagaga** (spiritual parents) also.

³⁹⁶ Many pre-schools in Samoa are run by churches not only the CCCS but also other denominations in the various villages. The **Malua** Theological College runs a preschool, and has done so since the late 1970s when my husband was a lecturer at the College. The students' wives were encouraged to attend classes run by the University of the South Pacific branch in Apia. It is still the practice today, so the beginners' class (the **vasega faitau pi**) in those villages where the pastor's wives run pre-schools, are incorporated into the pre-school.

Pastors have the knowledge to counsel the children when they do not behave well.³⁹⁷ The pastor must look into the environment and the background of the family of any child whose behaviour is tough. When this happens, the parents must be contacted and they are the only people who can settle the matter. This opens the way for the child to enter into higher levels of Education. Pastors School was/is a gateway for the Samoan children to proceed to a better life in the future. The pastor's school still exists and is still important to the Samoans. It is the best chance for the children to revise their reading, writing and mathematical problems.

There is also a sad thing about the work that was carried out with a lot of commitments by any Samoan pastor. As it was the first priorities of the pastor's school to teach the children how to read and write, both are now in danger. For example, the removal of signs (**Fa'aailoga**)³⁹⁸ in the written form of the Samoan language corrupts the reading of a Samoan story or book. If I refer you to the textbook used by the pastor's school, "*O LE TUSI A TAMAITI*" by Rev J W Hills page 9, you may realise what I have in mind. The first short verse reads – **UE! O LE 'OTI**. (Behold! The goat) If the apostrophe is omitted then the verse reads – "**UE! O LE OTI**". (Behold the death). The corruption then affects the reading in the Samoan language. The danger involved is being told by the Government education department that one way of teaching the language was not good and five or ten years later they tell us to go back to revive the old method. We stopped teaching "**Fa'aailoga**" (macrons) before and now they tell us to use them again. The children become confused and sometimes we do not know what to do. It is just like with the times tables. They told us to stop because the children were just memorising them but did not understand. At our school we kept on teaching the times tables. We thought that without the times tables the children couldn't do maths properly.

On the other hand, the pastors school during the past twenty to thirty years spent much time to teach and let children memorize all kinds of mathematical measures, like the weight measures, length measures and liquid measures. But the introduction of the metric system lately, causes troubles in teaching mathematics in the pastor's school. Our generation of pastors, we learned the old way, with inches and miles, ounces and tons and gallons. We do not teach the new measures at our **A'oga a le Faifeau** because we might confuse the children.

In Samoa, the pastor and his wife in every congregation operate the pastor's school. Most pastors did not have time to learn the new maths. So I think either to forget about maths, or let the government teachers volunteer to teach the subject and let them be members of the committee who set up the annual syllabus. We work together with the **A'oga Palagi** teachers from our parish. They give us some maths books they use at school so we use some of the problems in our Pastor's School. They help us by providing information on what the children are doing in the **A'oga Palagi** especially for maths. They gave us copies of the standard 3 and standard 4 maths textbooks. We select problems from these textbooks and translate them into Samoan for our pupils. This is good to help the children and also we study the other ways of doing sums. The children revise their **A'oga Palagi** work in the pastor's school. Our **A'oga Palagi** teachers also tell us what they are doing in Samoan. We (teachers of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**) learn at the same time with the pupils about the new maths.

The pastor's school always tries to develop in the mind of the child several methods of learning the subjects. Any child who does not attend a pastor's school ends up his/her educating life nowhere. When a child finishes with level seven (**Vasega 7**), he/she will proceed to the youth and the church choir. By that time the child may have reached the year 11, 12 or 13 in a college.

³⁹⁷ The pastors' theological training includes 'pastoral care'. This equips them with counselling skills that they use during their work in the parishes. The pastor is often the counsellor for problem people, not only the children. He is referred to as **the auauna a le Atua** (Servant of God), or the **sui vaaia o le Atua** (God's 'observable' representative). This gives him, in the eyes of many Samoans, the status of a 'holy' person, and people venerate him as sort of next to God. Sometimes the mere mention of taking a child to the **faifeau** is enough to make him behave.

³⁹⁸ These are macrons, which facilitated the learning of the language. I refer to the use of these in my analysis of the stories in Chapter Three.

If a child does any bad behaviour or shows bad manners in the school, the Principal of the school will inform the parents and the pastor.

The emphasis in the Palagi School of today is building good academic students in science, commerce and technology. The building of a child's moral and spiritual character is given a low profile and rating. The pastor's school prioritises this. Parents are supposed to be the children's first teachers but some parents are caught up with other activities and lifestyles and rarely have time to teach their children anything. The pastor's school is for these children. The pastor and his wife become the parents. The Samoans refer to the minister and his wife as 'matua Fa'aleagaga' (Soul or spiritual parents). The pastor and his wife are looked upon by the parents as the father and mother of all the children in the congregation. We must then commit our lives into caring physically, mentally and spiritually for the children. The fellowship must be warmer and interesting. The pastors are sometimes blamed for the children's behaviour. I faced one case like that in the first year of our mission here. One boy from our congregation had a fight with his former teacher in Maluafou College. He was sent to me with a letter from the Principal. I found out when he came and we talked, he did not attend the pastor's school in his whole life. A Samoan child who is brought up and well cared mentally and spiritually within the pastor's school will always be like a "Tree Planted by the Waters" as the Psalmist says (Psalm 1: 3). He or she yields much fruits in due season.

Narrative Two: Tolo A'oga a le Faifeau

The pastor's school has a special place in the education of children. It is a most important part of the total ministry of a pastor. It aims for the wider education of the child, not only in developing the good values of a Christian or spiritual upbringing but also the social, intellectual and physical skills needed by a child to cope with the wider world. The pastor's school aims to build and develop a good and appropriate foundation for the children in their search for wisdom and general knowledge for everyday living. These teachings will help to encourage and reinforce their Christian life, in learning how to pray, read and write and understand the bible. The whole purpose of the pastor's school is to enrich and strengthen the education and the understanding by the children of their God and the world. This will lead to a better, blessed and prosperous future for them. The child will eventually become a useful and reliable member of their society as a result of their pastor's school education.

Our pastor's school is one of the largest schools and usually at the time of the exams, there are over 200 children. Our school is held four times a week from Monday to Thursday. Closer to exam time (about three to four weeks before) the children come every day from Monday to Friday. In the first four months we usually alternate classes that attend. On Mondays and Wednesdays we have Classes 1 to 4. On Tuesday and Thursdays Classes 4 to 8 come. We feel that because of the large classes usually more than 20 in each class, and just the two of us taking them most of the time, we could attend to them better if only a few classes come each day. We usually employ helpers when the exams are about three or four weeks away. Our beginners class, from 2-4 years, is held in the morning usually from 8.30 am until 10.00 am. In the afternoon our bell rings at 2.30 pm., and as the children come they go straight to doing work we already put up on the board. We finish around 5.30 pm. We usually start in the first week of February and our exams are in July.

Traditionally pastors' schools used to run from January to August when exams were held during the Palagi school holidays. Today each subdistrict structures their own syllabus and decides on how long their pastor's school year will be and when to hold exams. We have shortened our pastor's school year to start after the A'oga Palagi has started, and our exams are in July so that the children will be released to study for the national exams. The pastor's school is for children of the CCCS, but we accept children from other denominations also. We often have Catholic children attending our school. We usually go by exam results. If children pass that is over 50 % in their subjects then they are promoted to the next class. Because we take the classes ourselves most of the time, we also promote those that we feel should go up according to how

they progressed throughout the school year. We have nine classes from Class 1 to Class 8, plus the beginners' class.

The six ministers of our sub-district decide upon our syllabus. We usually look at the previous year's syllabus and improve on it before it is typed up and distributed to each pastor. The pastor and his wife are the main teachers but as said before we usually ask for helpers especially during exam preparations. Our textbooks and resources are given in the syllabus. The chalk and board are our main tools apart from the textbooks in the syllabus. All children sit on the mats and bend over their books while doing their work, as of old. It would be a good thing to have desks but we would probably have problems with space to store them after school. Our youth, choir and Sunday school teachers also use the hall three nights every week. It is something that we should look into. The desks and chairs may make it more formal as you know the children can lie down and talk to each other while waiting for their turns to see the teacher. We are strict with them but nothing like the old days when we ourselves were students.

The beginners' class is taught from the **Pi Tautau**, the Samoan Alphabet chart. The children are given a simple verse from the bible to memorise as well as simple questions and answers to learn. Repetition and memorizing, telling and explaining from the textbooks are used a lot. Except for questions and arithmetic problems children do not copy any notes into their books. They have their textbooks but we tell them the stories also and then write the questions on the board for them to answer during our sessions. Times tables are rote learned, and maths problems are worked out on the boards. Dictation is given for every class from 1 to 8. We have two **Vasega Muamua** (Classes 1 A and E). Class 1E children are the new entrants class and they do printing³⁹⁹ of the Alphabet. We feel they are too young to go straight on to cursive writing. Class 1A children practise writing the alphabet, (cursive writing), and later go on to writing words and then sentences. Class 2 children learn to practise writing words and sentences from the Samoan Primer. Class 3 children learn to write paragraphs dictated from the Samoan Primer, which they also read from. Classes 4 to 8 have their dictation from the bible and for Samoan they also write essays on topics given.

The ministers of the subdistrict agree upon the time of the exam. Our exams are held in July and each pastor (and wife and helpers) is allocated to examine another pastor's school. He devises the exam based on the syllabus. Usually the syllabus is completed by the time of exams. We keep records of names of children for each class as they come. Our exam results are kept for the following year's promotions. Although it is not compulsory for students to attend, we encourage parents to send their children. Announcements are made in the church for starting and exam times. Some years we tell them that unless the children come to the A'oga a le Faifeau they will not take part in Children's or White Sunday the second Sunday in October. This is an incentive for parents, as all parents in the church want to see their children performing on Children's Sunday. It is an annual event that all parents look forward to. It is not hard to find out who does not come to the A'oga a le Faifeau. All children live in the village and they tell us who is not there. If we know that some children are not attending, we usually visit their homes and speak to the parents. Members of our congregation also look out for those children. As kids walk to the pastor's house children would call on others and might say we will tell the faifeau or his wife. That is often enough to get them to come.

The pastor's school is most valuable in that it is the first formal school for the children of the church. It teaches the child not only about the bible, but also reading and writing and maths. The girls learn how to sew right from threading a needle to sewing pillowcases. These skills are useful in their every day life. The pastor's school is taught in Samoan. There is a common belief amongst the Samoans that the best teachers of Samoan language are the pastors. (**O le talitonuga o le toatele o tagata Samoa, o faiA'oga pito sili ona lelei o le gagana Samoa o faifeau**). One reason is because pastors teach from the bible, which is considered to be written in the best Samoan, as a lot of work goes into it before it is printed and it goes through major revisions every now and then. Also the pastors prepare and preach in Samoan every Sunday and like Samoan

³⁹⁹ This is not normally done in the A'oga a le Faifeau. New entrants children usually start straight with 'cursive' writing.

orators they have to know what they teach and preach in the best Samoan. Although some people refute this notion, the pastor's school tries its best to deliver its syllabus. We get really good reports from **Palagi** school teachers. One school principal told me that it is not difficult to tell students that go to the pastor's school because they learn fast, they listen and obey, and they will go far in their education. They will get good jobs. (*Fai mai le isi pule A'oga ia te a'u, e iloa gofie lava tamaiti e o i le A'oga a le Faifeau, e le gata ina faigofie ona a'oa'o, ae Fa'alogo foi ma usita'i. E tele ina o latou foi na e au i a'oga maualuga ma maua galuega lelei.*)

The pastor's school reinforces what the children learn in the **A'oga Palagi**, especially in their maths and times tables, reading and writing in Samoan and good discipline. The Pastor's School and **Palagi** School should work together especially in the teaching of Samoan. The **Palagi** School is only now starting to go back to using macrons in Samoan writing. We have always emphasised the teaching of writing using macrons in our school. The pastor's school is a model school for Samoan children for these reasons. It teaches Samoan language. It teaches the appropriate language that children should use everyday. It builds the foundation of a child's character and education for the future. It prepares the child for life.

The children attend the **A'oga a le Faifeau** before they start primary school. This means that problems of familiarising with the new school are virtually solved because the **A'oga a le Faifeau** has prepared the children to fit in to the school setting. The atmosphere of learning and teaching would be similar to that of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. They would find the **Palagi** School a less daunting experience, as they would start school together with children they know and have made friends with. They would start school with skills in reading and writing and speaking as they were introduced to those in the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. We believe that if the child is well grounded in their early years in their own language this would facilitate the learning of a new language and other subjects.

There is no question about the **A'oga a le Faifeau** as a significant part of children's education because it develops them in all-important spheres of their life, (spiritual, mental, social, emotional and physical). Some children cannot afford to pay **Palagi** School school fees and it is not uncommon for parents to stop their children from going to school altogether because of this. The government has made Primary School compulsory only on paper. The **A'oga a le Faifeau** will give these children skills in reading and writing and arithmetic by which they can relate to other people and the wider world. The pastor's school caters for all children from early childhood to secondary school students. We do not ask for children's ages unless necessary especially when they first come to school in the beginners' class. We know them and their abilities as they go through the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. We also know who does not go to the **Palagi** School and we advise the parents about importance of paying school fees.

Narrative Three: Aisa Sisifo Ao'ga a le Faifeau

The priority goal of the pastor's school is to teach children to read and write so they can understand the bible and the faith of the church as well as to apply the skills learned in reading writing, arithmetic and Samoan to life, to respect others and grow in the Christian faith.

The **A'oga a le Faifeau** calendar varies from one subdistrict (**pulega**) to the other. Even within our own **pulega**, although the pastor's school year is the same, the days of the week and times vary from one pastor's school to the other. Our school runs from Monday to Friday after the **Palagi** School, from 3.30 pm to 5.30 pm. This year (1999), our **A'oga a le Faifeau** year starts in February and finishes in September after our exams, during the **Palagi** school holidays. We have tried to fit in our **A'oga a le Faifeau** exams to the **A'oga Palagi** holidays.

Our **A'oga a le Faifeau** is not compulsory but we strongly encourage parents to send their children. Announcements are made in the church services on Sundays concerning **A'oga a le Faifeau** matters. We have a beginners' class (**Vasega Faitau Pi**) and Classes 1 to 7. We enrol children for the beginners' class at 3 years of age. When children in this class know how to read the alphabet chart with competence then they are promoted to Class 1 where they begin to learn

to write the Alphabet, simple words and sentences. We use the previous year's exam results in our enrolments for Class 1 to Class 7 (the usual pass mark of 50 and over). We also use our own knowledge of the children's abilities and we do not necessarily promote children if we know they are not competent enough especially in reading and writing and maths skills. We may have children repeating in classes even though they are over the 'normal' ages for those respective classes.

Concerning the syllabus, I remember when we first started in this parish, the secretary of the **pulega** used to do the syllabus. Then we decided that it would be better if we shared and thus each class was given to a different **faifeau** (pastor) to prepare its syllabus after which we met to put the syllabus together and make final changes before the whole syllabus was printed. We have also done the syllabus in groups of two or three ministers. Each group would be given a class or classes to prepare syllabuses for. We usually meet in January to put together our syllabus, have it printed and copies distributed to each **faifeau**, before we start classes in February. This meeting is important because we look at the previous year's work and make important decisions on the content of the syllabus in relation to its suitability and relevance and the time given for it to be taught. We also share on other aspects of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** such as teaching and resources.

Resources are mainly the blackboard and chalk, the minister and his wife, the bible and the textbooks in the syllabus. In the beginners' class, the alphabet is read in a 'chanting' way after the children take turns. Questions from the bible are given with answers for the children to learn. A bible verse is given to be memorised and a selected bible story is told, legend-telling style, for the children. For the older classes, all work is written on the board. Each class is given verses from the bible to memorise. Dictation and reading for Class 1 uses the **Tusi Pi** (Alphabet Reader) and Classes 2 and 3 use the **Tusi a Tamaiti** (Samoan Primer), and the older classes use the Samoan Bible. For the other subjects like the **Tala Tusi Paia** (Summary of Bible Stories) and the **So'o** (The Disciple) we tell the stories to the children and give them the pages in those textbooks for them to read and study. During the oral sessions we discuss the stories before we put questions on the board for them to answer. We mark the children's work everyday and explain the answers for the day's work before the children go home. Homework consists of learning their verses and times tables and studying their **Tala Tusi Paia**. My wife and I are the only teachers. I take the older classes and she takes classes from Class 3 down to the beginners. There are also times when one of us will do all classes when the other is away. Our **A'oga a le Faifeau** exams are held at the end of the school year in September. A different pastor in the **pulega** examines each **A'oga a le Faifeau**. The examiner bases his exam questions on the syllabus that is given out before school starts. Each exam is done similar to how the subjects are taught. For example, in the beginners' class, each child is asked to read the alphabet chart, which is each letter with the accompanying name of the picture, the numbers 1 to 10 and the jumbled letters. Then the child is asked to recite the bible verse and answer the questions based on the bible stories. For the older classes the oral exams include the recitation of bible verses, reading selected verses from the bible and saying the times tables selected by the examiner. The written exams include dictation from the bible, (selected verses read out); questions based on **Tala Tusi Paia**, Samoan language and maths problems. The questions are all typed out and given to students. When we were **A'oga a le Faifeau** students all exam questions were written on the board but we answered them on paper. In our days, we had to wait outside the church while the examiner wrote our next exam on the board. Tradition though is changing.⁴⁰⁰ A lot of time is saved nowadays especially with the use of

⁴⁰⁰ It has certainly changed. We used slates during our times (50 years ago). We sat exams together with children from other parishes in our **pulega**. This is not the case now as children in each parish sit their own exams but the examiners are from other parishes. I remember during our own exams when we had to wait while the examiners marked our slates, rubbed off our answers, wrote the next exam up on the board and only then were we called back for the next exam. There was a lot more pressure then on students because we had to fit everything on our slates. There were not many questions but one or two questions required long answers. Most questions were **Fa'amatala** (explanatory) **mafuaaga poo uiga** (causes or meanings) of events. While oral questions were more recall ones, the written questions were more inferential and evaluative. Today children are less pressured and exams are much less formal.

typewriters and computers. The examiners mark the exams while the children wait. Afterwards the results for each class are read out and each child is given a prize. For a small school like ours, we do not have roll calls but we record names of students in their classes in a book. We also keep records of the exam results from the examiner. We know when a child is absent as our classes are small.

The **A'oga a le Faifeau** will never lose its essence as the instigator of good behaviour and discipline, values of fa'aSamoa, respect for other people, good Christian values, and especially faith in God. It seems that today the **A'oga Palagi** is concentrating on the English language and general knowledge at the expense of teaching moral and respectful behaviour, Christian behaviour and values. The pastor prioritises these as integral and most important responsibilities of his work. (*O lo'u taofi e leai se taimi ou te Fa'apea ane ai, ua uma le A'oga ma le toe talafeagai le A'oga a le Faifeau. Afai e Fa'asaga le A'oga papalagi e a'oa'o le gagana peretania ma le poto salalau. Ae laititi i le amio pulea Fa'aaloalo ma le amio Fa'a-Kerisiano aemaise le poto i le Fa'ale-Atua. O le mea lea e le mafai ona 'alo ese ai le galuega a le faifeau*).

The **A'oga a le Faifeau** balances this out by teaching those values that are most necessary to make a whole person. Samoan children can be really smart in school, but if they do not know how to respect other people in every way, then they are missing out on a lot of the essential values that are taught in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** that would build their character. The **A'oga a le Faifeau** nurtures in children these values. Many children today do not have much faith in anything not even in their own parents. The pastor's school at least gives them a stronghold in God and 'Godly' values are good moral and spiritual values, even though this has come under fire from parents, the highly educated people and non-believers. There are so many teaching methodologies these days that children are confused and cannot choose. This is the methodology from a long time ago that has made Samoan children clever in reading, writing arithmetic and thinking. This is also why a lot of the writing by children today are like 'hen scratchings' all over the place. They cannot 'write' properly any more. We are still using the examples in the **Tusi Pi** (Alphabet Reader). These days the children speak English more fluently but they cannot spell and write properly. Some children cannot even read and write but it was not like that in the old days. There is too much modern *poto* (smartness/cleverness/intelligence) but the children lack discipline. (*Ua tele naua le mau ituaiga metotia e fai ai A'oga i nei aso ua le iloa e tamaiti filifili. O le metotia lava lenei mai anamua lea ua popoto ai tamaiti Samoa e faitau ma tusitusi fai numera ma mafaufau. O le mea lea ua pei ai o ni saveuga moa le tusilima a le toatele o tamaiti. Ua le iloa lava tusitusi Fa'alelei. O loo matou tausisi lava i le tusilima o loo i le Tusi Pi. (Alphabet Reader). O aso nei ua televave le nanu ao le leaga ia o le sipela. O nisi foi tamaiti ua le iloa lava faitau pe tusitusi ae sa le Fa'apena i aso ia. Ua tele foi le poto fa'a nei ona po ua le usita'i tamaiti*).

Overall the aims of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** are being achieved because the children that attend the pastor's school do become competent in reading, writing and mathematics. We experience in our children changes in their behaviour. They learn to read the bible and write well in Samoan. Their **Fa'a Samoa** is practised in the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, as they learn to speak the language of respect and carry out respectful behaviour. We are proud of our **A'oga a le Faifeau** work. In our parish we have half-caste children who may not be so **Fa'a Samoa** inclined but they learn about their Samoan heritage in the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. The children become supporters of the church and carry on in the footsteps of their parents to become active members of the church. There are parents who think that the **A'oga Palagi** caters for all their children's educational needs so do not send their kids to the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. On the other hand some parents think the ministers are not doing their jobs as well as they should. The Education Department and school teachers though believe that the brightest children in school in arithmetic and Samoan especially are those who have gone through the pastor's school because the pastors make sure the children learn to read and write and get their times tables right up to 12 times. (*E iai le talitonuga o le Ofisa o A'oga a le Malo ma le vasega o faiA'oga, i le agai mai o tausaga o tamaiti na ui mai i A'oga a faifeau. O tamaiti aupito popoto ia ma le atamamai, aemaise i le mataupu o le Numera ma le GaganaSamoa aua sa Fa'asaga a'ia'i faifeau i ai. Ou te manatua, o le a'oina*

o le Fa'atele o le isi lea mea e matua saua ai le faifeau pe a le oo le iloa o le tamaitiiti i le Fa'a-12).

The **A'oga a le Faifeau** prepares the children for the **A'oga Palagi**. They already know seventeen letters of the alphabet and how to count from 1 to 10 when they first start in the new entrants class. The **A'oga Palagi** faces relatively less problems in familiarising these children. They talk without being forced or bribed to. The **Vasega Faitau Pi** in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** has given this education to Samoan children for over a hundred and fifty years and still does. It is the equivalent of the **A'oga Amata** (preschool) of today.

This does not mean though that we are the ideal school. We need to improve on our teaching materials. We need to have more variety in our resources such as reading material that supplement and complement our books. Also there should be a closer relationship between the church and the education department especially in the syllabus and resource aspects of the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. We feel that the Government should help the **A'oga a le Faifeau** with teaching resources and not confine their assistance to government schools only. We do need desks and chairs. Even though the children do not seem to mind sitting on the floor it may not be healthy for them. Our children still sit on the floor and do all their work bending over their books. It is one tradition that must change.

Narrative Four: Lape A'oga a le Faifeau

The **A'oga a le Faifeau** aims to teach children right from the early age to build a sound foundation in the values of Christian life and principles, good behaviour, obedience, respect their elders and the **Fa'a Samoa** and good discipline. The **A'oga a le Faifeau** also teaches them to become competent in reading, writing and arithmetic. We know that every child that finishes **A'oga a le Faifeau** can read and write and do arithmetic at least. If the child was attending from the beginners' class, we make sure that when he or she leaves with the skills in addition, subtraction and division.

We start our school year from the first week of February until early September when we have our exams. The children come to school for two days during the week on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3.30 to 5.30 pm. Any child in our parish can attend our **A'oga a le Faifeau** and we accept children starting from 2 years upwards. We have a beginners' class (**Vasega Faitau Pi**), and Class 1 to Class 7. We usually announce on Sundays during services when the **A'oga a le Faifeau** would start and all other matters to do with the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. We also have children from other denominations attending our school such as Mormon and Catholic children. These children are enrolled directly through us by their parents. The main reasons for this is because parents want their children (being urban reared) to learn good Samoan and to stop them from 'loathing' in town after school.

Our classes are sorted according to age and their progress throughout the year. Exam results are also used for this purpose. Promotions to the next class depend largely on how well children have mastered the work in their present class. In the **Vasega Faitau Pi** (preschool) children have to be able to read the Samoan alphabet with pictures, read the numbers 1 to 10, and read the jumbled up letters of the alphabet at the bottom of the chart before they are promoted to Class 1. Likewise a child in Class 1 has to show competence in the writing of the alphabet without copying off the board, read without making too many mistakes from the Alphabet Reader, write simple words and sentences that are called out by the teacher and be able to do simple additions and subtractions using their fingers and toes as counters. Unless children can do these they are not promoted.

There are children of mixed ages in each class. Most children would spend two years in each class except for the few that get promoted every year. We are not too keen on promoting children if they are not ready for the next class. What is the use of promoting a student in Class 1 for example that cannot add or subtract? What is the purpose of promoting a child to Class 3 (where they start writing answers to questions on the bible) if they cannot read the bible? That has

always been the **A'oga a le Faifeau** tradition. Although the exams are quite competitive and children vie for top placing's, most of the time during lessons the children learn at their own pace. If you see the syllabus given, most of the syllabus is foundation work not only to start the children off but also to ground them in the values for their daily living and also in the development of their faith in God. The syllabus is discussed and agreed upon by the ministers of our nine parish sub-district. Two or three ministers are usually given a section of the syllabus to prepare then the ministers all come together to approve after any changes have been attended to. The syllabus is revised after every two years. The minister and his wife run and teach their own school.

We employ the usual **A'oga a le Faifeau** styles of teaching. The blackboard and chalk are the main tools, apart from the textbooks and the teacher. For the younger children, my wife takes the beginners class, and Classes 1 to 3. I take the older classes from 4 to 7. The alphabet for Class 1 is put on the board for children to practise their writing. Dictation for Classes 1 to 3 is taken from the Alphabet Reader and Samoan Primer respectively. Class 3 children are also introduced to reading the Bible and depending on their progress their exam dictation may be taken from the Bible. Dictation and reading for the older classes are taken from the Bible. Children answer questions, maths problems and Samoan language. Every class has a verse or verses to memorise.

We are also emphasising to our students the idea of self-study. This is partly why we have two days when they come for **A'oga a le Faifeau**. We give them especially the older classes, the pages from the texts for them to read and study at home, to write down any questions on what they cannot understand. On Sunday we meet with them to find out their progress. I explain and assist them but I don't want to spoon-feed them. We also use more practical activities such as making models of boats or physical features of places we study from bible stories. We also show videos based on the bible stories. At the end of each month we give tests on part of syllabus already studied. The big exams are held in September.

There is one roll book for the whole school. Every class is recorded in this book and the roll is marked every time the pupils come to school. The results of monthly tests are also recorded in this roll book. We also keep records of exam results that we use for our promotions. The pastor's school is a model school for Samoan children as it prepares children for life and the **Fa'a Samoa**. It builds a foundation on which the Samoan child will grow spiritually, culturally and mentally. The child's participation in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** activities develops him or her as a whole person. Good solid foundations in children's own language will prepare them to face difficulties of learning new languages and subjects. The Samoan child's faith in God is built up in this school, which will stand him in good stead when he/she goes out to face the world's many temptations.

The aims of our **A'oga a le Faifeau** generally are fulfilled. What we set out to do depends on us the pastors and our wives. If we teach the syllabus well, then the children will learn. The responsibility is on the pastor and his wife to carry out their roles in building educational foundations on which children will grow in all the important aspects of life. It is our calling. If children do not get to read the bible when they should then we have not taught them well. We do actually see results. It is satisfying seeing children starting to read or write when they could not before and progressing from reading or writing letters to words, to sentences to paragraphs as well as becoming competent in the times tables and answering arithmetic problems. It is most satisfying. (*E Fa'amalie loto aua e leaga le mea e manaia o le vaai ma Fa'alogo atu ua iloa e le tamaitiiti tusi ma faitau mai amata mai mataitusi taitasi, Fa'asolo atu i upu, fauiupu ma palakalafa. Aemaise foi o le iloa ona fai le Fa'atele ma Fa'atino le faiga o numera. E ese le Fa'amalieloto*).

There should be a closer relationship between the Palagi School, the education department and the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. While the Palagi School always supports what the ministers are doing in their **A'oga a le Faifeau**, at the same time, the ministers should also be familiar with the syllabus of the Palagi School so that the **A'oga a le Faifeau** can give better assistance. In the **A'oga Palagi** the children are taught a different way especially in writing. Cursive writing is introduced much later than we do in the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. This is one of the

areas in which the two can work together. The **A'oga a le Faifeau** also concentrates on the teaching of arithmetic. Other maths areas like algebra and geometry perhaps could also be introduced. The relatively new developments in preschool education in Samoa have not taken away the importance of the **A'oga a le Faifeau Vasega Faitau Pi** (Beginners class) though.

SAMPLES OF CHILDREN'S WORK

The following 14 pages are samples of the children's work from three of the Pastors' Schools in the study, **Tolo**, **Puna** and **Lape**, in that order. They follow on from the pastors' narratives for the reason that they inform those narratives. I mention in Chapter Five the fact that the narratives are 'extremely similar', as was also pointed out to me by one of my supervisors. The children's work for the three schools displayed is also very similar, especially for the younger classes' writing, dictation and arithmetic for the older classes. The reason for this is because the pastors in the study (and all CCCS pastors) use the same texts for reading, writing and dictation as well as a similar pedagogy. The main texts are the **Pi Tautau**, the Alphabet Chart for the preschoolers or the Alphabet Reading Class, (**Vasega Faitau Pi**), the **Tusi Pi Muamua**, First Alphabet Reader for Class 1, the **Tusi a Tamaiti**, the Samoan Primer for Class 2 and the Bible for older classes, 3 to 7. The important difference between the first and the other two schools is that the first school teaches printing to its new entrants while in the other two schools, children go straight on to practising cursive writing. The **Pi Muamua**, the First Alphabet Reader, has letters of the alphabet in printing and cursive writing. The teachers of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** generally follow these. Copies of these texts are also included in the present chapter.

The children's work shows the significance of the Pastor's School pedagogy. They are the proof of the 'lived' educational experiences of the children in the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. They also testify in support of the study's argument that the **A'oga a le Faifeau** has profoundly significant educational content and impacts.

13/4/99

Tua Sione

A E I O U F G L

M N P S T V H K R

a e i o u f g l m

h i p s t v h k r

I II III IV V VI VII VIII IX X

5 yrs) Class 1E Printing
(Tolo)

13/4/99

A E I O U F ^{Tina} G L M
N P S T V H K R.
a e i o u f g l m
n p s t v h k r
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I II III IV V VI VII VIII IX
X

(5 years) Class I E - Printing
(Tolo)

3/4/99

A B C D E F G
a b c d e f g
H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V

a b c d e f g h i
m n o p q r s t u v
k l m n o p q r s t u v

$\frac{1}{I}$ $\frac{2}{II}$ $\frac{3}{III}$ $\frac{4}{IV}$ $\frac{5}{V}$ $\frac{6}{VI}$ $\frac{7}{VII}$ $\frac{8}{VIII}$ $\frac{9}{IX}$ $\frac{10}{X}$

(5 years)

Tolo Class I A Writing

13/4/99

La.

1 Hrota

2 Kauru

3 Roman

4 gata

5 Moxe

6 Ptarmu

7 Jata

8 Ania

9 Eha

10 Luka

(Folo) Class 2 - (7 years)
Spelling

13/4/99

Pose J. Vasega 5.

Tusilima

O lenei, se a sa tatou
upu i nei mea? A fai ua
au ma i tatou le Atua, o
se fagasatau mai i ai
tatou? O Keriso o ia na
maluu, a na toetu mai
lava o ia o loo i le
itu taumatau foi le Atua,
o loo fautua foi o ia
mo i tatou. O ai se na
te faatia ai i tatou
i le alofa o Keriso? O
le puapuga ia, poo le
atuatuale ia, poo le
lavalava, poo le pagatia,
poo le pelu? Ke na tatou
mamalo ai i nei mea
uma lava, ona o ia na
alofa mai ia tei tatou.

Class 5

9 years (Tolo)

Dictation

7/4/99

Solomona - Tini.

A E G O N P Q R M
N O S J V H L R
a e i o u q g l m n p
x t v h k y
Gapa Kaito Pama
Lamia Lura Setu Iitu
Vili Iuma
Mose Noo Elia Atamu
Olonega

5 yrs Class I Writing

(Pana)

7/4/99

Vasega IV Numera

Lilia i Foo-Roma

1.
$$\begin{array}{r} 998 \\ \times 8 \\ \hline 7984 \end{array} \checkmark$$

2.
$$\begin{array}{r} 561 \\ \times 5 \\ \hline 298 \\ 317 \end{array} \checkmark$$

3.
$$\begin{array}{r} 809 \\ 8 \overline{) 6472} \\ \underline{64} \\ 72 \\ \underline{72} \\ 0 \end{array} \checkmark$$

4.
$$\begin{array}{r} 108 \\ + 295 \\ \hline 632 \\ 9 \\ \hline 1044 \end{array} \checkmark$$

5.
$$\begin{array}{r} 687 \\ \times 67 \\ \hline 4809 \\ + 4122 \\ \hline 46029 \end{array} \checkmark$$

(10 yrs)

1. 185
CLXXXV ✓

2. 263
CCLXIII ✓

3. 99
XCIX ✓

4. 259
CCLIX ✓

5. 48
XLVIII ✓

6. 66
LXVI ✓

7. 38
XXXVIII ✓

8. 87
LXXXVII ✓

9. 88
LXXXVIII ✓

10. 74
LXXIV ✓

Class IV Arithmetic & Roman numerals.
(Puna)

Vaaga II
va'ai tautau logs mata uosa

Tusilima

7/4/99

Ua mavae aso e tele lava? ua galo i tama ma
teine le tala i le uosa. Ua matutua foi tama ma
teine sa i le aoga i na ona po. Na o le tosi aao
ona telei ai lea o tama ma teine ina ua sau
le uosa i le fakasaga. Na logs atu i nisi o le
aai i le sau o le uosa.

Tusilima

faauta. faau. etami. sasa. toso

faauta i nei no'i e tele! Ua tasi Biso lua i
latou uma i le amo ua tui i luga o latou
ua. Ua aoga i latou nei e aami mea e aisma
mea e fai ai isi faau.

(7 yrs)

Class 2 - Dictation - (Words & paragraph)
Puna.

JANUARY 1982									
S	31	3	10	17	24				
M		4	11	18	25				
T		5	12	19	26				
W		6	13	20	27				
T		7	14	21	28				
F	1	8	15	22	29				
S	2	9	16	23	30				

December 1981

Thursday 3

WEEK 49 : 337-28

Vasega IV F Iuri

7/4/99

1. O le pia o tausaga talu ona faatauina atu Josefa i Aikupito na o ai ona uso e faatau saito?

6. Luasefulu tausaga talu ona faatauina Josefa i Aikupito lea na o ai ona uso e faatau saito.

2. O a ni foliga o Josefa na faaali i ona uso ina ua ia vaaia i latou? Oa faaali ona foliga faasiasia ona ua ia vaaia o latou.

3. Faamatala manino mai le maniraga tonu lava na mamo ai Josefa i noamootia se tonu o ona uso i Aikupito. Ona seiloga ua o mai ma lo latou uso laitiiti lea o Peniamina.

6/2

Friday 4

WEEK 49 : 338-27

4. O lea se mea na faia i le pama a Jakopo na latou manatu i le tui na tau atu ai lena manao o Josefa?

Na latou tuua dimona i noamootia seiloga ua latou o mai ma Peniamina.

5. Ailele na tagi ai le toaia o Jakopo? Ona ua tau atu o le a noamootia se tasi o latou seiloga ua latou o atu ma lo latou uso o Peniamina.

10 yrs Old Testament - Questions / Answers
Class IV (Puna)
(10 yrs)

Aso Lu 6 1999

Vasega I

ā e r e u g l m n p s t v h k r.
 Zusi Paia Mataupu Lilisil
 Noa nati eona mianua iite s
 sasa O fitapita ua sasaina
 Lesu Ua faasatauroina le Al
 ona
 e agasala a tatoru uma.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 20 30 40 I II III IV V VI VII
VIII IX X XX XXX XL

afk
RH

20/04/2022

~~Handwritten signature~~ H H H H H H

Class I

(6 yrs.) - (Lape)

A E g o u f L M N
 Q S j V H K R a e i
 u g g h m n p s t
 h k r

9 fitabita na sasaina Jesu ✓

Ka paasatauroina le Ali ona
agasala a tatou uma.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	20	30	40
I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XX	XXX	XL

7 years
(Lape)

9/3/99

4-6

Tusiluma

Dictation

① O Paulo, o le aprosetolo a p
 Iesu Keriso, i le finagalo
 o le Atua, ma Timoteo,
 o le uso, lea; i le au A
 Paia i Kolose, o le au uso f f
 faamaoni foi oia Keriso;
 ia ia te outou le alofa J J
 tunoa ma le manuia mai o ia
 le Atua, lo tatou Iamā.
 Mate faafetai atu i le Atua,
 o le kama o lo tatou Alēi
 o Iesu Keriso i ā ma talo-
 saga e le aumoa mo outou,
 aiā ua falogologo i maua
 i lo outou faatuatua ia
 Keriso Iesu, ma lo outou
 alofa i le au paia
 uma lava; ona ole faa-
 molmolē ua teu mo outou
 i le lagi; ua outou
 faalogologo i ai anamua
 i le upu o le mea moni,
 ua i le talalelei, o loo
 2 yrs) i ai iā te outou, e
 pei na ile lalolagi uma
 lava; o loo fua mai ai
 foi le fua, faapei ona
 faia iā te outou foi talu
 Dictation (hapa)

Dictation - Class 4-6

(hapa)

8:3199

Vas III

Viliamu.

$$\begin{array}{r} 21 \\ 1 \\ \hline 1 \\ 316 \\ 134 \\ \hline = 182 \checkmark \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 51 \\ 2 \\ \hline 2 \\ 613 \\ 261 \\ \hline = 352 \checkmark \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 3 \\ 893 \\ 642 \\ \hline = 251 \checkmark \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 6121 \\ 731 \\ 142 \\ \hline = 589 \checkmark \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 927 \\ 613 \\ \hline 314 \checkmark \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 61 \\ 376 \\ 217 \\ \hline = 159 \checkmark \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 21 \\ 530 \\ 212 \\ \hline 318 \checkmark \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 51 \\ 634 \\ 142 \\ \hline 492 \checkmark \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 634 \\ 361 \\ 313 \\ \hline \checkmark \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 61 \\ 10 \\ \hline 72 \\ 34 \\ \hline 38 \checkmark \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 9 \\ 10 \end{array}$$

9:3199

Vasega 31

$$\begin{array}{r} 63 \\ \times 5 \\ \hline 315 \checkmark \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 2 \\ 813 \\ \times 6 \\ \hline = 498 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 3 \\ 923 \\ \times 7 \\ \hline = 651 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 4 \\ 612 \\ \times 8 \\ \hline = 496 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 5 \\ 513 \\ \times 6 \\ \hline = 316 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 7 \\ 28 \\ \times 9 \\ \hline 252 \\ 536 \\ \times 12 \\ \hline 072 \\ 36 \\ \hline 1532 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 2 \\ 56 \\ \times 10 \\ \hline + 00 \\ 56 \\ \hline = 560 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 8 \\ 71 \\ \times 11 \\ \hline + 71 \\ 71 \\ \hline = 781 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 9 \\ 312 \\ \times 5 \\ \hline = 1560 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 10 \\ 721 \\ \times 6 \\ \hline = 4326 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 12 \\ 63 \\ \times 10 \\ \hline 00 \\ 63 \\ \hline 630 \end{array}$$

Class 3 (Lapa)
(9 years)

A'OGA A LE FAIFEAU SYLLABUSES

The following pages document the syllabuses, each with its English translation on the following respective page. These syllabuses are for the years 1897, 1898, 1914, 1923, 1930 and 1998-1999. Except for the 1998-1999 syllabus, all the others were published in the **Sulu Samoa**. Those were for all schools in Samoa [Tokelau and the Ellice Islands (Tuvalu) included]. The 1898 information following the 1898 syllabus is a set of instructions for those students sitting various exams. I have included it because it informs of the opportunities in church education that an **A'oga a le Faifeau** graduate could proceed to especially before, and during a good part of formal colonisation, before government schools were established. The 1998-1999 syllabus is for one of the subdistricts (**pulega**) in the study. The practice now is for each subdistrict to plan their own syllabus. As church membership grew, it became more difficult to monitor the schools centrally thus the move to decentralise and localise the planning of the **A'oga a le Faifeau** syllabus.

The Syllabuses show very close similarity. The oldest syllabus in the study is the 1897 one, while the most recent is for the year 1999. It has been 102 years from 1897 to 1999. The basic syllabus has not changed much for over 100 years. The changes have come about in the addition to and dropping of subjects from the syllabus over the years. For example in 1930, the Syllabus included studies of the Geography and the History of the World, the English language, and the different measurements (length, volume, weight, money). The syllabuses of today do not include these.

The introduction of secondary schooling and the concerns of the Government education department that I refer to in Chapter Five could have prevented the church from including those subjects in their respective syllabuses. The education authorities claimed that there was too much rote learning in the **A'oga a le Faifeau**, plus they were concerned about the teaching of maths. It was in the 70s and 80s that the new maths and whole language methods were in vogue. Geography and History and the English language are no longer taught in the **A'oga a le Faifeau** as core subjects. The syllabuses demonstrate the evolutionary nature of the changes within the **A'oga a le Faifeau**. There is consistency shown in the basic content from syllabus to syllabus.

O Mataupu e Su'eina ai a'oga
i le Tausaga, 1897.

VASEGA I.—FAITAU TUSI: Faitau i le Pi I.

VASEGA II.—FAITAU TUSI: Faitau i le Pi II, TUSILIMA: O mata'itusi 'ese'ese; NUMERA: Faitau i fuai numerae oo i le 100.

VASEGA III.—FAITAU; le pi III. TUSILIMA: O upu o i ai i le Pi e tusi ai. NUMERA: Faitau numerua e oo i le 10,000; Faaopoopo e oo i le Itu. e 10 o le Tusi Numerua; o le faatelega e oo i le 4. O LE TUSI PAIA: O Tulafono e sefulu, ma le Tataalo a le Alii.

VASEGA IV.—FAITAU TUSI: O Evagelia e fa, TUSI LIMA: o upu o i ai i Evagelia e fa. NUMERA: le Tusi Numerua e oo i le Itu. e 30, ma le faatele atoa. TALA I TAGATA: O le Tala ia Aperaaamo: Kene. xii.-xxiv. TALA I LE LALOLAGI: I-II.

VASEGA V.—FAITAU TUSI: O le Tusi Paia, TUSILIMA: (tusi i vaiitusi). O se fuaiupu mai le Tusi Paia. NUMERA: O le Tusi Numerua e oo i le Itu. e 40. TALA I LE LALOLAGI: Itu. I-37. TALA I TAGATA: Itu. I-51. I le, ma le Upu Taua ua i le Sulu o le Vaefaga ua tuaoi ma le Su'ega. E faia e le Fai Su'ega o lana faatonuga i le Upu Taua e fai ile Su'ega.

VASEGA VI.—FAITAU TUSI: Faitau Tusi 'ese'ese ma le usita'i i manavaga. TUSILIMA: (tusi i vaiitusi) O se fuaiupu mai tusi 'ese'ese, NUMERA: O le Tusi Numerua; Itu. I-50. TALA I LE LALOLAGI: Itu. I-26; 38-51. TALA I TAGATA: Itu. I-62, i le ma le Upu Taua ma Vaefaga e lua ua tuaoi ma le Su'ega. E faia e le Fai Su'ega lana faatonuga i ai. TALA I LE EKALESIA: Vaega I., I-29.

VASEGA VII.—(O Sui A'oa'o.) (1) O le Tusi lima. (2) O le Numerua. (3) O le TALA I LE LALOLAGI. (4) O le TALA I TAGATA ma le Upu Taua. (4) O le Gagana Samoa. (5) O le Gagana Peritania.

The 1897 Syllabus⁴⁰¹

Class I. - Reading: Read the First Alphabet reader

Class II. - Reading: Read the First Alphabet Reader, Writing: Letters and words
Number: 1-100

Class III. - Reading and Writing: The Samoan Primer Numbers: 1-10,000, Arithmetic:
Up to page 10 of the Textbook, Times tables up to 4X, Bible: The Ten Commandments
and the Lord's Prayer.

Class IV. - Reading and Writing: The four gospels, Arithmetic: Up to page 30 in the
textbook and all the times tables, 2-12. People in the Bible: The story of Abraham,
Genesis xii – xxiv, World History and Geography pp. 1-11

Class V. - Reading and Writing (Use ink) from the Bible. Arithmetic: Up to p. 40 in the
textbook, World History and Geography: pp. 1-37, Stories of People pp. 1-51. The Holy
Word to be advised by the examiner.

Class VI. - Reading and Writing (Use ink): from the Bible, follow punctuation marks,
Arithmetic: Pages 1-50, World History and Geography: pp. 1-26: 38-51, Stories about
People: pp. 1-62, Holy Word to be advised by examiner, Church History: Part 1, pp.1-29.

Class VII. - (Senior students preparing for **Malua**) (1) Dictation (2) Maths (3) World
History and Geography (4) Stories of People and the Holy Word (5) Samoan Language
(6) English Language.

⁴⁰¹ Translated from the syllabus (previous page) published in the Sulu Samoa, 1897 p.347

O Faatonuga eseese, Iuni 1, 1898.

1. O LE SU'EGA O A'OA O UA TE'A MA MALUA :
Ua faasilasila afu i A'oa'o ē na faauma aso i Malua
ia Me, 1897, o le Su'ega o le a fai i le *Evagelia a*
Ioane. O le faamatalaga a Misi Nisapeti i le ma le
Faatomuaga o lea Tusi a Ioane sa tusia ma faia e
Misi Mariota i le "Faatomuaga o Tusi o le Feagaiga
Fou" sa faia i le Su'ega 1897, ma le Suega, 1898.

O le a faia le Suega e Misi Mariota ma Misi
Neueli i le aso e 11 o Oketopa 1898. O Misi Mari-
ota, o le a faia le Suega i le Faatomuaga o le Evage-
lia i le ma le Faamatalaga o le Vaega I ma le II (m.
F. e oo i le XII.) O Misi Neueli o le a faia le Suega
i le Vaega e III. e oo i le V. (m. XIII. e oo i le XXI).

O a'oa'o ia o le a sueina i Malua :— Ahapati,
Apineru, Fatu, Elisara (Falevao), Tuatā, Uria, Iapai,
Tiu, Lauina, Taesali, Ve'a, Esera, Lolini, Esekielu.
A e afai e mata e faigata i so latou ona maluu mai
i Malua i le Su'ega, ia tusi mai ma faaali mai lea
mea, a o lei oo i le aso e 30 o Aokuso, ona avatua
lea o a latou fesili i le Faifeau Peritania o le Mata-
galuega ua i ai lea a'oa'o, e su'eina i le nuu e i ai le
F. P. i le aso ua atofaina. O a'oa'o i Tutuila ma
Manua o le a maua a latou pepa ia Misi Kupa.

O Ierupaala (Peru), Peni (Funafuti), Kaisara,
(Nikunau) o le a faato'a maua a latou Fesili pe a alu
atu le Vaa Lotu i le masina o Novema 1898, i sisifo.
E ao ina su'eina uma a'oa'o sa faai'u aso ia Me
1897; e lei tuufaitalia i latou, pe sueina pe leai.

E fiafia tele le Au Faatonu (i le ua faamoemoe
foi i ai) pe afai e ofo mai nisi Faifeau Samoa e toa-
tele i le fia sueina ma tofotofoina foi i lea tusi lelei
ma le aogā, a e 'aua le gata ai i e ua faasino i ai le
Faatonuga. E mata, e aogā tele lea su'ega i faifeau
uma lava i Samoa ma sisifo ma Niu Kini. Ia lau-
silafia e faifeau uma, o lea tusi a Ioane o le a fai ma
tusi e faitau ai i *A'oga a Tama i Aso Sa* i le tausaga
e 1899. O le mea lea e ao ina su'esu'e ai le au fai-
galuega uma lava.

O e ua fia tofotofoina i lea Su'ega ia tusi mai ia
Misi Neueli e faamauina ai o latou igoa a o lei oo i
le aso 30 o Aokuso. Afai ua le maua e i latou le ta-
pula o le a le lomua o latou igoa i le *Sulu*. O le a
tuufaitalia i latou pe faaalua o latou suafa i le *Sulu*
pe leai.

2. O LE SUEGA O AOGA FAAMASANI, 1898. O
le a fai lea suega i nuu uma ua masani ai e amata i
le aso e 7 o Novema e oo i le 9.

O tulafono ia o le Suega : (1) O le a tusi ese i se
vasega ese o igoa o tama uma ua sueina o e sa a'oa-
o'ina i Leulumoeaga ma Malua; o le a ese lava le
vasega o e ua o ane i A'oga Faamasani o e sa a'oa'o-
ina e Faifeau Samoa, a ua le a'oa'o'ina i Leulumoeaga
ma Malua. (Ua fai lenei tulafono ina ia faafiafia i
tama sa le i Malua po o Leulumoeaga; a e 'aua nei
manatu i latou e le aogā ona losilosi faatasi ma e sa
aaoiina e Faifeau Peretania i tausaga e tele. (2) Ia
aofia i lenei suega o tama uma ua aaoiina i le A'oga
Faamasani ia oo i le vaalugalemu o le faitau aofai o

le A'oga atoa. (Ua fai lenei tulafono, auā ua toa
ititi ni tama mai nisi A'oga ona ua faaleto'aga Fai
A'oga atoa ma Tama e sauniuni mo le Suega.) (3)
Ia faamauina igoa o e o le a su'eina a o lei oo i le
aso e 30 o Aokuso. Ia maua e Misi Neueli le T. U.
mo le Su'ega o igoa uma a o lei oo i lea aso.

O MATAUPU O LE SUEGA : (1) O le Tusi lima
e pei ona masani ai. E faia lea mataupu e Misi
Fereni. (O le Tulafono o lea mataupu : O le a lau-
lauina afu le tala atoa; ona laulau atu ai lea e foi
faatolu o fuaiupu po o soāfuaiupu taitasi. O le a
tusi tonu e le tama i lana pepa, ma le le toe siitia i se
tasi pepa, pe tusi faalua i le pepa lava.)

2. O Numera : Itu. 1-62, e i ai foi tulafono i le
faiga o Numera. O Misi Uoki : Fai Su'ega.

3. O le Tala i le Lalolagi : O le tusi mo A'oga
Faamasani, i. 28-43. Tusi tele : 61-77. O Misi Peve-
rise, Fai Suega.

4. O le Tala i Tagata : Itu. 62-222. O le Upu
Tava ua amata ai i le Aso Sa muamua o Iulai e oo i
le Aso Sa mulimuli o Oketopa, 1898. (Misi Mariota :
Fai Su'ega.)

5. O le Gagana Samoa : Tusi mo A'oga Faama-
sani, Itu. 1-27. O le a faamamafaina ai le vaevaeina
o fuaiupu i le ma Vaega o Upu. Misi Neueli : Fai
Suega.

6. O le Gagana Peritania : Tusi mo A'oga
Faamasani, Itu. 44-62. Misi Neueli, Fai Suega.

(a) O e ua maua le 65% i lenei Suega o le a le
toe sueina i latou i ia lava mataupu pe afai ua avea i
latou ma sui i Leulumoeaga po o sui-tama i Malua i
le tausaga 1899.

(c) O e ua maua le 75% i lenei Su'ega o le a le
toe sueina i latou i ia lava mataupu pe afai ua avea
ma sui-A'oa'o i Malua i le tausaga 1899. A e su'e-
ina i latou i Malua i le *Sulu*, o le Upu Tava lea, mo
le Vaefaga muamua o le Tausaga 1899. O le a su'e-
ina foi i latou i le *Evagelia a Mareko*.

(i) O mataupu uma o lenei Suega e fa'i ia Nove-
ma, 1898, o ia lava mataupu e saunia e sui-A'oa'o
ua le sao i lenei Su'ega a ua fia su'eina i Malua, Me
1899. E ui ina lomua nisi Faatonuga fou mo lea
Tausaga pe a aulia, o le a le faasino ia Faatonuga
e ua fia taumafai i lea Suega i Malua Me 1899.

O Tala Faale-Lotu.

Ua maluu i Sini le Alii Tufuga o Misi Uiliamu. Sa
faamavae ma folau atu i Sini i le aso e 14 o Me. Ua
maluu atu foi Misi Moreli F. P. o Falealili; na ma-
laga faatasi i laua ma Misi Uiliamu i Sini. O le sa-
iliga matagi ua maluu ai Misi Moreli. O le a toe foi
mai pe a maua sina malosī lelei e toe faasaga ai i
lana galuega i Falealili.

O le a folau atu i Sini o le fanau a Misi Kupa, o ona
afafine e toalua; atonu e faapea foi Misi Neueli tamai-
tai ma le fanau o Epati ma Mele. O le a latou o
uma i le Vaa Lotu. O le fanau a Misi Kupa o le a
o i le A'oga i Sini; o le fanau a Misi Neueli o le a o
i Egelani.

Instructions for Various Schools, June 1, 1898⁴⁰²

1. Examination for students who have left *Malua*. (Theological College):

For those students who left *Malua* in May 1897, the exam will be based on the Gospel according to St John. *Misi Mariota* (Mariott) and *Misi Neueli* (Newell) will supervise the exam on the 11th of October 1898. (The rest of the information deals with the names of those who are going to sit the exam plus instructions on whom to contact if they were intending to sit the exam and those who might not be able to. Of relevance to the study is the syllabus for the exam printed at the bottom to the right and left side of the page as follows).

2. Examination for the Preparatory Schools, 1898.

This exam will be held on the 7th to the 9th of November.

Instructions for this exam:

A distinction will be made between students who went to *Malua* and *Leulumoeaga* Schools and those who were taught at the preparatory⁴⁰³ schools by Samoan pastors. (This will make those who did not go to either *Malua* or *Leulumoeaga* feel happier as they will not be compared with students who were taught by pastors from Britain for many years.)

Subjects for the Examination:

- (1) Dictation (as usual) *Misi Fereni* is the examiner.

Instructions: The whole passage will be read out first, then each sentence or phrase will be read out three times and each student will write down the dictation once only. It will not be rewritten on the same sheet or copied on to a different sheet.

- (2) Arithmetic: Pages 1-62. There will be instructions concerning these. *Misi Uoki* is the examiner.
- (3) World History and Geography: Text Book used by preparatory schools pages 28-43. Main Text Book, pages 62-77.
- (4) Stories about People: Pages 62-122. *Misi Mariota* is the examiner.
- (5) Samoan Language: Text Book used by preparatory schools pages 1-27. Sentences and parts of speech. *Misi Neueli* is the examiner.
- (6) English Language: Text used by preparatory schools pages 44-62. *Misi Neueli* is the examiner.
 - (a) Students who attain 65% in the exam will not sit the same exam again if they have gone to either *Leulumoeaga* or *Malua* in 1899 as first year students respectively.
 - (b) Students who attain 75% in the exam will not be examined again in those subjects if they have become trainees of the pastoral ministry at *Malua*.

⁴⁰² Translation of previous page, *O Fa'atonuga Eeseese Iuni 1, 1898*. Source: *O le Sulu Samoa*, 1898 p.189

⁴⁰³ Each district (*matagaluega*) had a preparatory school to which the able *A'oga a le Faifeau* graduates went to continue their schooling. In each *A'oga a le Faifeau* also there was a special class, Class VII (See the translation for the 1897 syllabus) for those students who showed a keen interest and had the ability to go on to higher education.