Copyright Statement

The digital copy of this thesis is protected by the Copyright Act 1994 (New Zealand).

This thesis may be consulted by you, provided you comply with the provisions of the Act and the following conditions of use:

- Any use you make of these documents or images must be for research or private study purposes only, and you may not make them available to any other person.
- Authors control the copyright of their thesis. You will recognise the author's right to be identified as the author of this thesis, and due acknowledgement will be made to the author where appropriate.
- You will obtain the author's permission before publishing any material from their thesis.

To request permissions please use the Feedback form on our webpage.
[http://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz/feedback](http://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz/feedback)

General copyright and disclaimer

In addition to the above conditions, authors give their consent for the digital copy of their work to be used subject to the conditions specified on the Library Thesis Consent Form.
O le A'oa'oina o le Gagana, Faitautusi ma le Tusitusi i le A’oga a le Faifeau: Ekalesia Fuapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa (EFKS)

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

Lonise Sera Tanielu (nee Sapolu)

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education University of Auckland. 2004
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.
Acknowledgements

E maualuga pea le viiga ma le faafetai i le Atua aua o lona alofa, o lona poto ma lona mataisau ua manuia ai lenei faamoemoe. Ia tumaufi le viiga ia te ia e faavavau. E le gafatautumaina e sa'u upu vaivai, e le lalamu foi i se faafetai faaleauan le maualuga o le alofa, faanoa ia Keriso, faausoaga, faaiga ma faa le ekalesia.

Faafetai tele i lau Afioga i le Taitaifono a le Au Toeaina o le Ekaesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa (EFKS), Lau Susuga Hini Tofilau Stanley, tua na e utu i faamamua mai mo lenei faamoemoe, ma tuina mai le faatagaga ina ia fai la'u susesuega i A'oga a Faifeau a la tatou Ekaesia i Samoa ma Niu Sila. E faafetai tele i susuga i toainai, faaegaiga ma faletua ona o a outou fesoasoani tua, o a outou galuhega, o finagalo faalaia i talanoaga ma tusitusiga. E faatauva a ma vaivai le tagata ae na outou italia lelei la'u savali. Ia faamamua ate la Atua.

O la'u faafetai faapitoa mo le ekaesia pele, EFKS i Grey Lynn i ona tulaga faaahupe, Susuga i aoao, le afoa i le tiakono toainai ma le faletua, o tiakono, faletua ma tausi, o tama ma tina. Faafetai mo la outou tatalo ma lo outou alofa faatinio i auala eseese sa maua ai le malosi e taumafai ai pea. Faafetai tele i faaiga o le A'oga a le Faifeau, le A'oga Aso sa, le A'oga Faataitai, aemaise o le aulavou laiti ma tamaiti, o le fafu o le galuhega faaigaiga. O le faafetai faapitoa i le Mafutaga a Tina i la outou tatalo ma le pa'i mai faauso. Malo tapuia. E le mafai ona tuga uma o outou sua fa a na silafia e le Atua lo outou alofa le faatuaoaia. Ia faamamua ate la Atua.

I have benefited in this study from the support, help and cooperation of many people, too many to acknowledge by name but I thank you most sincerely.

I acknowledge with sincere gratitude the great assistance and instructional obligation of my supervisors and mentors, Professor Stuart McNaughton and Associate Professor Alison Jones. I am much indebted to them for their academic wisdom and expertise, patience, encouragement and support which made it possible for me to complete this study. Your generous support cannot be acknowledged adequately. Your untiring and genuine interest in my study extended to visiting the ‘contextual locations’ of my research. I am most grateful for Alison’s visit to Samoa during the initial stages of my research there especially as I had problems with respect to focus and perspectives then, and I thank Stuart for visiting our Aoga a le Faifeau at Grey Lynn CCCS. Faafetai tele lava. Ia faamamua ate la Atua!

I thank all the pastors and wives who helped in one way or another by providing the much needed information I was seeking for this study. In particular, Rev Elder Hini and Mrs Alofisa Stanley, the late Rev Elder Faigame and Mrs Iolesina Tagoilelagi, Rev Elder Talalelei and Mrs Maria Poasa, Rev Elder Seuga and Mrs Suitope Pula, the late Rev Elder Setoga and Mrs Fuaifiva Setoga, Rev Talia and Mrs Feiloaiga Tapaleao, Rev Elekosi and Mrs Lila Viliamu, Rev Tafesilafai and Mrs Miriama Lavasii, the late Rev Toma and Mrs Taumua Toma, the late Rev Eti and Mrs Sauileoge Vaelua, Rev Nove and Mrs Penina Vailau, Rev Lucky and Mrs Terri Slade, Rev Professor Otele Perelini, Rev Dr Paulo Koria, Rev Dr Danny Ioka, Rev Dr Peni and Mrs Rosa Vai. I would like to thank Mr Semau Tepa Maiava for making church documents available for my research especially the demographic aspects of the more recent surveys of the Pastors’ Schools in Samoa. Mr Taulapapa Mu Talataina has followed my study very closely, thank you Douglas for your constant words of encouragement and support.
I acknowledge the financial assistance given by the University of Auckland Maori and Pacific Island Graduate Scholarship.

_Faafetai tele_, to the members of the Research Unit for Pasifika Education (RUPE) for your support, in particular Dr Eve Coxon, Tanya Wendt-Samu, Dr Linita Manuatu, Dr Melanie Anae, Sailau Suaii.

I acknowledge the support of colleagues and friends; Professor Tupeni Baba, Yvonne Culbreath, Lita Foliaki, Dr Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop, Maina Field, Barbara Grant, Professor Konai Helu-Thaman, Dr Margie Hohepa, Dr Kuni Jenkins, Dr Mere Kepa, Anastasia Laban, Faasaulala Leota, Professor Aiono Fanaafi Le Tagaloa, Dr Linda Mead, Dr Leonie Pihama, Professor Graham Smith, Dr Elia Taase, Pauline Te Kare, Lavinia Turoa, Professor Albert Wendt, Nuhi Williams, Emma Wolfgram.

I sincerely thank the pastors and wives of our Waitemata Pulega, Rev Maligi and Mrs Faauuga Evile, Rev Fiatepa and Mrs Penina Faafea, Rev Josefa and Mrs Lagi Rimoni and Rev Vagatai and Mrs Lusia Vaaelu. Thank you for your prayers and encouragement. _Faafetai tele mo la outou tatalo ma faamamuiaga_.

My spiritual family, the Grey Lynn CCCS supported me continuously throughout the years of my study. I thank you most sincerely for your prayers, encouragement and love. I owe you a debt of gratitude.

I remember with gratitude my parents, the late Rev Elder Theodore Mila and Mrs Faailoa-le-Talalelei Sapolu. Their passion for teaching phonics and orthography in their _Aoga a le Faifeau_ influenced me in a big way. I would like to thank my brothers and sisters Enesi and Merina, Tapu and the late Moe, Rev Elder Mila and Florita, Paapa and Katie, Simoe and Rev Elder Masalosalo Sopoaga, my aunt Vala Aiaiga, nephews, nieces and all my relatives, many thanks for your prayers and moral support. _Malo le tapua'i. Faafetai mo la outou tatalo_.

I also acknowledge the support of the Tanielu family, my other mother, brothers and sisters. Thank you for your prayers and encouragement. I remember especially with gratitude my father in law, the late Rev Ioata Tanielu who bound and kept _Sulu Samoa (Samoan Torch)_ issues that provided much needed information for my study. _Faafetai tele Tama_.

I am indebted to my children Helen and husband Paulo, Loana, Sosefina, Veraina and Laau, for their constant support, encouragement, patience and love. You taught me computer skills that made it possible for me to ‘think on the screen’, and finish this study much earlier than if I had kept tapping away faithfully on my portable typewriter. Thank you for your confidence in me, allowing your mother to pursue her studies. Thank you Loana for ordering me to stop adding and hand the thing in, Veraina for being my sounding board and for being a good listener, Sosefina for attending to my domestic duties, Laau for teaching me computer tricks and Helen for doing the final close edit of my thesis. I could not ask for a better copy editor. I also acknowledge the support of my other daughter Sinapi who is looking after our mother in Samoa. I thank Paulo Stowers and Seti Talamaivao for their moral support.
Ioritana, the faifeau would dedicate the success of any undertaking to divine Providence, as any man of religion would do. I thank the Lord for my husband, friend, critic, and most ardent supporter. The times we spent in the microfiche rooms of the University of Auckland library, and the Turnbull library in Wellington, searching for data have certainly paid off. Faafetai tele!

This study is dedicated to Rev Elder Laau I Tanielu, our children, and our long awaited mokopuna (grandchild) Larafina.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract........................................................................................................ ii

Acknowledgements................................................................................... iii

Tables........................................................................................................ x

Prologue.................................................................................................... xi

Chapter One: A General Introduction....................................................... 1-42

About my Topic: Its Significance............................................................... 1-2

How the Pastor’s School Started: In Brief............................................... 2-7

What the Study is About: Argument One............................................... 8-20

Argument Two.......................................................................................... 20-35

The Reasons behind my choice of Topic................................................ 36-41

The thesis Outline.................................................................................... 41-42

Chapter Two: Theoretical Considerations of Literacy............................ 43-89

Introduction............................................................................................... 43-44

What should count as proper literacy..................................................... 44-49

Minority Groups and Literacy.................................................................. 49-54

Closer to Home........................................................................................ 54-60

In Summary............................................................................................. 60-64

The historical Patterning of Illiteracy and Underachievement................ 64-77

The situation of Samoan children in New Zealand.................................. 77-89
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter Three: Connecting with the past: Indigenous Education</th>
<th>90-118</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E le falala fua le niu</td>
<td>90-95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making Connections</td>
<td>95-99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Critical reflection</td>
<td>100-102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legend-telling: A Faa Samoa Pedagogy</td>
<td>102-107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Difference in degree not in kind</td>
<td>107-109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoan Oratory: A Faa Samoa Pedagogy</td>
<td>109-110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are what we are Today because of Yesterday</td>
<td>110-116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whose history gets to be told?</td>
<td>116-118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Four: The historical development of the A’oga a le Fa'aeau</strong></td>
<td>119-151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>119-120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malietoa Vainuupo</td>
<td>120-121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>While in Tonga: The Meeting with Fauea</td>
<td>121-124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On arrival in Samoa</td>
<td>124-126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Summary</td>
<td>126-130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa’s Religious Beliefs</td>
<td>130-132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legend-telling and Readiness for Reading</td>
<td>132-134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Origins of the London Missionary Society (LMS)</td>
<td>134-139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The London Missionary Society in Samoa</td>
<td>139-151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Five: The Research Methodology</strong></td>
<td>152-180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>152-155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The “Lived Experience” Approach</td>
<td>155-158</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLES

1. Number of Students attending schools by sector, socio-economic status of school community and Ethnic identification ........................................ 78
2. Number of students leaving secondary schools in 2000 by level of highest attainment and ethnic identification .................................................. 78
3. Trends in percentages of highest attainment of Pacific school leavers for the years 1993 to 2000 .......................................................... 79
4. Summary of 2000 public tertiary graduates by qualification, award and ethnic identification ............................................................. 80
5. Rolls for the A’oga a le Faifeau in the study ........................................ 167
6. Population of Samoa by religious affiliation: 2001 ................................ 228
7. Number of children in each A’oga a le Faifeau (Upolu and Savaii) ....... 230
8. Number of children in each A’oga a le Faifeau (Upolu, Manono, Apolima, Savaii) ................................................................. 231
9. Summary: Total number of students in each district and total for Samoa. 232
10. North Auckland District (Aukilani i Matu) ........................................... 238
11. South Auckland District (Aukilani i Saute) ........................................... 239
12. New Zealand South District (Niu Sila i Saute) ...................................... 239
13. Summary: Total number of Aoga a le Faifeau students in each District and total for New Zealand ......................................................... 240
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 (taeo 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.