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The Samoan parsonage family: The concepts of *feagaiga* and *tagata'ese*

ABSTRACT

Contact between the indigenous peoples of the Pacific and the western world has had immense sociocultural and linguistic impacts on indigenous communities. Perhaps the major source of sociocultural and linguistic impact in the Pacific can be attributed to the arrival of Christianity. This is certainly the case for Samoa. The fusion between fa'asamoa *(Samoan culture) and the* lotu *(church) is evidence of Christianity's profound impact. The fusion is also evidence of the Samoan people's unequivocal stance for cultural safeguarding. As missionaries sought to eradicate much of the Samoan beliefs system, the Samoan leaders at the time were content to construct the new doctrine around the* fa'asamoa.

The highest class in the church is the faife'au *(church pastor). A decade after continued missionary work in Samoa, the* faife'au *and his family were introduced by the missionaries, once they had deemed that the Samoan church was fit for self-governance. Today, both in Samoa and overseas, the church is structured around the Samoan indigenous political order. To some degree, the* faife'au *was also bestowed the highest of honorific status in Samoa. Yet the Samoan parsonage family is unique in the Samoan class structure. The aim of this article is to discuss this uniqueness by examining the* feagaiga *(covenant) and* tagata'ese *(stranger) experiences of the Samoan parsonage family. Both the* feagaiga *and* tagata'ese *concepts are fused entities that have been constructed by both the* fa'asamoa *and* lotu. *The Samoan parsonage family has been neglected in both the Pacific mainstream and theological literatures until now.*

KEYWORDS

fa'asamoa (Samoan culture)
Christianity
lotu (religion)
faife'au (church pastor)
feagaiga (covenant)
osiga feagaiga (ceremony of sealing of the covenant)
tagata'ese (stranger)
tuagane (brother)
tuafafine (sister)

FEAGAIGA

The *feagaiga* is a traditional concept signifying the culturally idealized covenant between a *tuagane* (brother) and his oldest *tuafafine* (sister). The concept of the *feagaiga* originated from, according to Tapua'i (1972), a couple named Fatu and 'Ele'ele who were created by Samoa's progenitor Tagaloalagi and who had ten sons and a daughter. Before death, Fatu enforced gender boundaries, advising his sons that their *tuafafine* would be made *tama sa* (sacred child) and that they should 'burn their faces' in fear of being cursed. This initial belief, however, has since shifted to be inclusive of all of a brother's *tuafafine.* The concept of *feagaiga*, one may argue, extends further to encompass a brother's female *tausoga* (cousins). In this article, however, *feagaiga* is focused on a brother's *tuafafine*.

Feagaiga dictates the *va tapuia* (sacred space) relationship between a *tuagane* and his *tuafafine*. The status of the *tuafafine* is also defined as a *feagaiga*. The *tuafafine–tuagane* relationship is reciprocal and at times one of unequal proportion. The *tuagane* protects and serves his *tuafafine* even with his life and underpinning this service is a fear of her divine ability to curse and punish. Conversely, the *tuafafine*'s behaviour is restricted by the need to maintain good moral behaviour since any immorality would inflict shame on her family, especially her *tuagane*. The *tuafafine*'s responsibilities in the family are primarily administrative and mediatory, undertaking household chores and acting as an intervening medium in family decision-making. A very important understanding of the *feagaiga* status is that she does not aspire to obtain a *matai* (chief or orator) title although she is a fundamental figure in its appropriation. Essentially, the *tuafafine* is accorded a 'sacred' status whilst the *tuagane* has a 'secular' one (see Meleisea 1987). Malama Meleisea historicizes the sacred power of the *feagaiga* as follows:

> The feagaiga between brother and sister was enforced by the belief that if a brother made his sister angry … [she] …would cause misfortune to befall him or his children. It was for this reason that when a chief was seriously ill, his sister would be sent for to rinse out her mouth with coconut water (pupu) in case she had spoken against him or felt anger towards him, causing his illness.
>
> (Meleisea 1987: 37)

The *feagaiga* relationship is a focal exemplar of Samoan social boundaries and duties and despite its existence within the confines of both the immediate and extended *'aiga* (family) its symbolic significance permeates the whole of Samoan society. Clearly, the *tuafafine* as sacred party is exalted above the secular status of her *tuagane*. The *tuafafine* also demands more respect and may at times take for granted the service of her *tuagane*. The *tuagane* is always conscious of this space and that good service to his *feagaiga* is of paramount importance.

The traditional ideology of the *feagaiga* between a *tuagane* and his *tuafafine* has been subsequently applied to the relationship between the *faife'au* (Samoan church minister) and the *'aulotu* (church congregation). Like Fatu's verbal bequest to his sons, the conceptual adoption of the *feagaiga* to contractually bind the *faife'au* and *'aulotu* relationship was also believed to be a verbal bestowal. Aiono Fanaafi Le Tagaloa states that:

> *Malietoa Vainu'upo* declared John William [sic] and Charles Barff his *fa'afeagaiga taulagi* [to be like a *feagaiga* with connections to heaven]:

> in other words, the missionaries would have the status of the *tama'ita'i* [lady/unmarried] and the sacredness of the *feagaiga* … although they did not come from the same womb.
>
> (Le Tagaloa 1996: 36)

John Williams writes that Vainu'upo added 'in future I shall consider ourselves *ainga* [sic] *tasi*, one family, and hope you will do the same' (Williams 1837: 90). The motivation behind Vainu'upo's designation of the *feagaiga* status to the missionaries was based on the *matai* group being:

> cognisant of potential for good or for ill inherent in the programme and immediately moved to protect the unity of the ideal social organisation of Samoan society. This was done by allowing the missionary a place in the *tama'ita'i* group and by designating the missionary a *fa'afeagaiga* or like a *feagaiga,* the covenant, the sister.
>
> (Le Tagaloa 1996: 36)

Like the *tuafafine*, the *faife'au* is obliged to be the embodiment of morality in the *faife'au-'aulotu* relationship. Such standards were initiated and functionalized by missionary and Samoan interpretations of Christianity. To illustrate, the missionaries prescribed 'special church dress of shirts, ties, and often coats … in addition to ankle-length wrap-arounds of cotton trade cloth' (Le Tagaloa 1996: 62). The prescription of attire and behavioural appropriateness by the missionaries has been the norm to this day.

TAGATA'ESE

Contrasting with the *feagaiga*, is the concept of *tagata'ese*. The term *tagata'ese* is defined as a 'stranger', or 'to be a stranger' (Pratt 1977: 55). *Tagata'ese* refers to a person who is different or from the outside. The term *tagata'ese* was decided as a direct translation of the word 'stranger' used by the missionaries in reference to the requirements of *faife'au* and their posting. The term *tagata'ese* can also have a negative connotation meaning that a person is ostracized. *Faife'au* as *tagata'ese* simply means he is not of the village which has called him and has been sent by church decree. Once the *feagaiga* is signed, he is no longer regarded a *tagata'ese*, but a member of that village/church and, like any other member, is bound by the terms of the relationship.

Tagata'ese are met with the utmost hospitality and entertainment. Hospitality in Samoan society is a fundamental characteristic of its people and culture (Grattan 1948). For instance, on arrival in Samoa, Williams scribed how the missionaries' children were given 'a thorough good "feeding"' by the Sapapali'i village people (Williams 1837: 89). The notion of strangerhood has various interpretations in different contexts. The Biblical stranger 'is frequently used to denote a man of non-Israelite birth, resident in the promised land with the permission of the Israelite authorities' (Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints). The common Biblical phrase in reference to the stranger is the person 'that resides with you'. Simmel in his article *The Stranger* defines a stranger as:

> an individual who is a member of a system but is not strongly attached to that system … the stranger is … not … the wanderer who comes today and goes tomorrow, but rather is the person who comes today

> and stays tomorrow. Spatial relations for the stranger is described as one of distance, yet as his strangeness indicates, make the individual near.
>
> (Simmel 1971: 43)

Social boundaries for the stranger are intense and, as a result, the stranger can deviate from the norms of the system. The system described by Georg Simmel is an existing 'spatial circle – or group whose social boundaries are analogous to spatial boundaries – but his position within it is fundamentally affected by the fact that he does not belong in the social circle' (Simmel 1971: 143). As the stranger, he is no 'landowner' and is a 'mobile person' because:

> he is not bound by roots to the particular constituents and partisan dispositions of the group, he confronts all of these with a distinctly objective attitude, an attitude that does not signify mere detachment and nonparticipation, but is a distinct structure composed of remoteness and nearness, indifference and involvement.
>
> (Simmel 1971: 143)

The stranger, regardless of ethnicity, points to an individual who is not here, nor there, but in the midst. The stranger's opinion is objective, due to his non-rootedness in genealogy. This is strengthened by the theory that the stranger is no 'landowner'. Like the Biblical stranger, he is a person with no sense of connectedness to the existing systems of the new environment. He is an immigrant who instead of leaving, stays, and whose actions are restricted by the social boundaries of the existing system.

Colonial impacts, among many others, resulted in Samoans experiencing inter-racial hybridity. Before the arrival of whalers, traders, beachcombers, missionaries and explorers, inter-ethnic kinship was established with Tongans and Fijians (Tanielu 2004). Before these events, Samoa was sociopolitically institutionalized by its myths of creation that became the foundation for its 'genealogical calculation' (So'o 2008). It was a time when politicization was indigenously institutionalized (minus inter-ethnic intermarriages and alliances), accepted, orally communicated, and lived.

In Samoa's indigenous sociopolitical institutions, Asofou So'o states that the village 'is an independent political entity comprising a number of *'aiga* and their houses and lands; most of these *'aiga* will have genealogical connections to *'aiga* in other villages and to the large overarching *'aiga* or maximal lineages associated with paramount titles' (So'o 2008: 17). Samoans could be strangers in another village as each village is politically independent, however, it is a fact that members of one village are connected through marriage, war and bestowments through paramount *'aiga* of another village, sub-district and national districts. As evidence, village chief and orator titles/groups, chief *'ava* cup (ceremonial cup for drinking *kava*) titles, fine mat names, chiefs' residence names, village *malaefono* (meeting place) names, district *'augafa'apae* (ceremonial maiden) and *manaia* (ceremonial male) titles are all evidence of genealogical and bestowal connections. As examples, in the district of A'ana, the orator group *Falea'ana* (the house of A'ana) can be found in the villages of Nofoaali'i, Samatau, Faleatiu and Falease'ela in Upolu. The orator group can also be found in the village of Faga in the larger island of Savaii. The orator chief title *Tuimuaiava* of *Safa'ato'a*, an orator of the Satuala family line, is the highest orator chief title of the Lefaga sub-district. As a result, the *Tuimuaiava* title is a representative of the orator group Leulumoega, the political capital

of A'ana. Furthermore, the chief title Tupuola can be found in the districts of Siumu and Lotofaga. The caretaker of the title, regardless of being in either of the districts, drinks his *'ava* cup by the name *Fa'aifomailagi* (to come from the skies/heaven).

There are, however, categories that may imply a sense of Samoan strangerhood. Expanding on the notion of marriage mentioned earlier, the terms *faiava* (husband) and *nofotane* (wife) refer to people married into a family. Both terms refer to a person from 'outside' the family/village. As *faiava* and *nofotane*, they are prescribed limited rights. This means that their duties are constructed around service to the family. Service, in this context, refers to cooking, cleaning, fishing, plantation and other such daily tasks. Village meetings may also present reminders to *faiava* and *nofotane* of their 'outsider' status. The designation of a *faiava* or *nofotane*'s village in daily discussions is one example. Village *fa'alupega* (honorifics) also define the titles and families who have rights in the village; by logical extension, those who are outsiders – strangers – do not. The *'ava* ceremony, which is fundamental to Samoan culture, is one which also identifies the nature of 'strangerhood' in a series of ritual acts and extends their rights to be involved, for a time at least, in activities.

CHRISTIANITY IN SAMOA

As polytheistic people, worship of the gods was largely conducted by family *matai*, although the *taupou* (daughter of a high chief) would also do so (Le Tagaloa, 1996). Samoan folklore narrates that the gods were accessible in human form and that humans themselves would traverse between the heavens and earth under the aegis of the supreme god Tagaloaalagi (Tuu'u 2002). The arrival in 1830 of Christianity on the shores of Sapapali'i, Savai'i, is believed to be the fulfilment of a prophecy by the war goddess Nafanua. According to Samoa's oral history, when Malietoa Fitisemanu (the 22nd Malietoa) asked Nafanua for a share of Samoa's political government, the latter replied that all jurisdictions and the power had been appropriated, and he would have to await his share from the heavens.[1] This share, according to Meleisea, was fulfilled with the arrival of the London Missionary Society (LMS), not in time for Malietoa Fitisemanu, but for his son Malietoa Vainu'upo (the 23rd Malietoa) residing in Sapapali'i.

The LMS missionary John Williams, on the ship *Messenger of Peace*, arrived in Samoa accompanied by Charles Barff, eight Tahitian teachers, and a Samoan couple named Fauea and Puaseisei, whom they had picked up in Tonga (Williams 1840). This was with the objective to establish a native agency in Samoa, which was different in many ways from other Pacific countries where the LMS had missions (Lange 2005). The Cook Islands, for instance, was a disparate grouping of islands, whilst in Samoa, *lotu* (religion) and *fa'asamoa* (culture) were fused realities. *Fa'asamoa*, therefore, became a key ingredient in the structure and organization of Samoan Congregationalism. In other words, Congregationalism in Samoa was channelled into the *fa'asamoa* and became Samoan Congregationalism. *Fa'asamoa* literally means the ways of the Samoans, an aggregation of mother tongue, points of reference, socialization, *tapu* (sacredness) and time. It was 'aesthetically and ethically' fed by its oral traditions (Le Tagaloa 1996), enforced by the authoritarian administration of *matai* (Fa'afouina 1980) and authorized by the structure of Samoan society (Tuimaleali'ifano 2000). *Fa'asamoa*, put simply, is the way Samoans behave (Tuimaleali'ifano 2000).

1. Malietoa is one of Samoa's royal lineage titles known as *Tama 'aiga* (a paramount title, literally meaning a son of a royal family).

2. Malua Theological College is located on the island of Upolu, Samoa.

The early development of missionary work was hugely dictated by the authoritarian and communal life of the Samoan people (often over-riding missionary motives). Samoans were bound to their *'aiga* and headed by the family *matai*. Therefore, the conversion of *matai* was key to the success of the mission. The administration of church affairs was solely the responsibility of the missionaries, although Samoans 'aspire [sic] for greater involvement in mission decision-making' (Lange 2005: 94). Progression towards a native agency further developed when, in 1875, the missionaries decided that *faife'au* should be groomed to lead the church. It was in this same year that the first ever Fono Tele (General Assembly) took place at Malua Theological College (MTC).[2] It was not until 1922, however, that the Fono Tele deemed the Samoan Church ready for independence (Tanielu 1968). Formerly known as the Samoan Church, the name was changed in 1961 to Ekalesia Fa'apotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa (EFKS; Congregational Christian Church of Samoa). After more than a century of faithful service to EFKS, in 1983 American Samoa and the island group of Manu'a to the east defected and founded a separate, yet doctrinal equivalent church named Ekalesia Fa'apotopotoga Kerisiano Amerika Samoa (EFKAS).

SAMOAN FAIFE'AU

The ordination of Samoan teachers, who were named *faife'au Samoa*, occurred in 1875. The term *faife'au* is defined as a 'pastor, minister' (Milner 1992: 53). The term *a'oa'o*, meaning to teach, was used by missionaries to refer to the village workers. The term has since been assigned to Congregational lay preachers. The *faife'au* is afforded a highly dignified position in Samoan society. Uili Feterika Nokise, for example, believes that 'the status, prestige, and power of the pastors' office has resulted in the ministry being regarded as the most honourable of all vocations, and consequently one to aspire to' (Nokise 1978: 21–22). To historicize, *faife'au* were accorded *ao o fa'alupega* (head of honorifics) by the then king of Samoa to the West, Malietoa, and also by King Tuimanu'a, who reigned in Samoa to the East. Verbal bestowals were, and still are, taken very seriously by Samoans, especially when such bestowals were approved by Samoa's paramount chiefs (*Tafa'ifa*, *Papa* or *Tama 'aiga* holder). Hitherto, the Samoan *taulaitu* – the high priest of the village – had been perhaps the closest equivalent of the Christian *faife'au.* With no traditional rank, *faife'au* were soon conferred the respect, service and material tributes traditionally afforded to *matai*. The Samoans perceived a *faife'au* as a 'man of knowledge', one who has learnt the wisdom of the *Papalagi* (Europeans). Today, *faife'au* are, to their congregation, the 'point of contact with God' (Lange 2005: 97).

Faife'au were not just guardians of the esteemed office, their roles were appropriated by the Church. For instance, as the missionaries had set out, the requirements for *faife'au* were such that they would not possess *matai* titles and were to serve away from their own villages (Meleisea 1987). Lange states:

> Early in the history of the mission it was established that teachers would not be appointed to their home villages: they came to their new stations as strangers, and were given the hospitality that Samoan custom prescribed for that status. The mission's desire to keep the teachers free from customary requirements for involvement in their own community

> similarly lay behind the early recommendation, made compulsory after Malua [Theological College] training began, that *faife'au* should not hold *matai* titles. Without land, kin, a chiefly title or even the rights of an ordinary villager, the *faife'au* nevertheless acquired high status in his adoptive village.
>
> (2005: 98)

To enhance the notion of sociopolitical detachment, Meleisea adds:

> most missionaries … sought a peacemaking role when possible. This often placed chiefs in a terrible dilemma, because their traditional obligation was to go to war, and their Christian duty was to promote peace. This was one reason why pastors and catechists were asked not to take matai titles; they had to remain neutral in political and military conflicts.
>
> (1987: 69)

As *faife'au*, not only were they to be *tagata'ese* but they were excluded from having *matai* titles. This meant that obligations to their genealogical *'aiga* had to be from a distance. By contrast, their sense of obligation was to be given to their new extended family, the *'aulotu*. The stated reason for this was to separate *faife'au* from involvement and, possibly, a lack of objectivity in the sociopolitical affairs of their genealogical villages, but had more to do with Western ideas of conflicts of interest such that the pastor would not display favouritism. These requirements, along with others, apply to Congregations under the auspices of Samoan Congregationalism in Samoa, American Samoa and overseas.

THE CALLING

Graduating after four years of theological studies, the *faife'au* awaits a calling to the ministry. The opportunity to serve a congregation is not guaranteed since it is the privilege of a congregation to elect a *faife'au* whom they deem will best serve their spiritual needs. The shared belief about servanthood, especially for many Samoans, is that it is a divine call; accordingly, the Congregational denomination in Samoa adopted the 'call system' which had been introduced in 1860 (Crawford, 1977).

All affairs and decisions of the Church and congregations are settled with the 'majority rules' method (Fa'ata'a 1988). A denomination, notes Lageman (1990), that uses the call system in search of a pastor differs from a hierarchical model. To clarify, unlike their Metotisi (Samoan Methodist) and Katoliko (Samoan Catholic) counterparts who are posted by the church, the Samoan Congregational *faife'au* are elected by the majority voting method involving all members of the congregation who have been *fa'a'ekalesia* (communicants) (Kamu 2008: 125). For a *feagaiga* with a congregation, the call of the *faife'au* is not only the acceptance of the call to ministry, but is also a call to Samoan sociocultural obligations (Setu 1986). With rights to call their own pastor, the autonomous nature of the *'aulotu* members is regarded as the correct procedure (Tanielu 1968). Once selected, an unmarried *faife'au* cannot oversee a congregation, and must therefore seek marriage. This has been a standing resolution initiated since the acceptance and introduction of the Samoan parsonage family by the missionaries.

OSIGA FEAGAIGA: RITUAL OF INITIATION

The *feagaiga* between the *faife'au* and the *'aulotu* is initiated during the *osiga feagaiga* service. Having accepted the call from an *'aulotu*, the date of deliverance is set and, on arrival, the *osiga feagaiga* service is conducted at the place of service. The initiation of the *faife'au* includes the bestowal of the status of *fa'afeagaiga*. Here, the term means, 'to be like' a *feagaiga* (covenant). Essentially, the pastor is now afforded the status of the *tuafafine* and is gifted with *'ie toga* (fine mat) and foodstuff. The *faife'au* and his *'aiga* reciprocate with similar items, thus sealing the relationship. The reciprocation of two very important *'ie toga* symbolizes the *feagaiga* between the *faife'au* (and his family) and the '*aulotu*. The two *'ie toga* are called *'ie o le feagaiga* (covenant fine mat) and are of the finest quality. The *faife'au* and his family take care of this fine mat until the *feagaiga* is voided (Tapuai 1972).

The *osiga feagaiga* is unique to the Congregational denomination. As a Samoan catechist recently clarified, although the Samoan Katoliko church participates in a similar ritual, there is no *'ie o le feagaiga* nor is the ritual called *osiga feagaiga* – it is called *misasa* (mass) (Petelo 2010). The *osiga feagaiga* was once a 'contract for life' with the *'aulotu* (Tuimaualuga 1977). This means that Congregational *faife'au* are contracted for more than the proposed four or seven years assigned for *faife'au* Katoliko or Metotisi respectively. Since the early 1960s, however, and even before the split into two factions, the *feagaiga* lost its lifetime duration and became void once the *faife'au* turned 70 years of age. Other conditions also remained binding. For the EFKAS *faife'au*, for example, at the age of 70, they are constitutionally bound to retire from the ministry. Under the terms of the *feagaiga* the *faife'au* would be instantly dismissed for serious indiscretions such as adultery committed by any member of his household, including himself. The decision, however, for dismissal for lesser violations is at the discretion of the *'aulotu* and the church's Elders Committee.

In sum, only two individuals are accorded the status *feagaiga* amongst Samoa's hierarchical honorifics: that is the *tuafafine* and the *faife'au* (Tapuai 1972). The initiation of *faife'au* to the status of *fa'afeagaiga* brings with it the sacredness of the *feagaiga*, thus emphasizing the importance of the *va tapuia*. Furthermore, the *feagaiga* is only deemed inactive when the ceremony of termination called *tatalaga feagaiga* is conducted. At this ceremony, the two *'ie toga* exchanged during the *osiga feagaiga* are returned to their respective owners.

THE PRESSURES OF FEAGAIGA AND TAGATA'ESE

The conceptual intricacies of both *feagaiga* and *tagata'ese* run deep in Samoan cultural and religious theology. This is a theology that is often silenced by caretakers of the respective institutions. Nonetheless, the collision between the *feagaiga* and *tagata'ese* concepts is obvious. Being called to an *'aulotu* by the majority voting method, the status of *fa'afeagaiga* assigned to the *faife'au* in the *osiga feagaiga* initiation creates a peculiar 'insider–outsider' status. The *feagaiga* deems the *faife'au* as *'aiga* whilst, concurrently, the temporariness of the vocation to ministry deems them *tagata'ese*. They are neither here nor there, but remain unconnected while partly bounded by the *feagaiga.* This is also due in part to the fact that, unlike the birth connectedness of the cultural *feagaiga* between the *tuagane* and his *tuafafine*, the idea is that the *faife'au* is not genealogically bound to village/congregation polity 'calling'. This is why the

faife'au is referred to as *fa'afeagaiga*. Concomitantly, because the *tagata'ese* or stranger in a Samoan village is, or was, a common occurrence through intermarriage, sojourning or sociocultural encounters, the *faife'au* is a *tagata'ese* only by church definitions, as long as he had no conjugal connections to the congregation of his calling.

Additionally, the *'aulotu–faife'au* relationship is an extension of the Samoan *'aiga*. The *'aulotu* is in reality the authoritative power rather than the *faife'au* as commonly thought. There are thus two models for understanding the *'aulotu–faife'au* relationship. Both models function interchangeably yet may be contradictory at times. The first model emphasizes that the *'aulotu–faife'au* relationship is one between an employer and employee. This model is Eurocentric in practice and the employer–employee model came about as a result of missionary influence in Samoa. This is validated by the fact that the parsonage family is designated *tagata'ese* by the *'aulotu*. In this sense, as *tagata'ese* the *'aulotu* has the power to terminate the vocational contract of the *faife'au*.

The second model is indigenous to Samoa but mirrors the first model. That is the relationship between the *'aulotu–faife'au* mirrors the relationship between a *matai* and his *'aiga*. Like any *matai* who is bestowed a titular position, the title belongs to the *'aiga*. What this means is that the *'aiga* has the power and authority to bestow upon potential candidates, or strip from existing candidates, a *matai* title. To explain, the *matai* is restricted and privileged by the family *matai* title. Subsequently, the *matai* is not immune from the wrath of the *'aiga* when obligations, responsibilities and appropriate conduct are not met. In such a case, a *matai* is susceptible to the termination or stripping of his *matai* title.

With both the employer–employee and *matai–'aiga* models, it is possible to see contradictions in each ideology. To further complicate the picture, there is the cultural aspect of the *feagaiga*. The *feagaiga* in a way brings the two models together. What makes this *feagaiga* distinct is that, unlike the genealogical foundations of the cultural *feagaiga*, the *feagaiga* between the *'aulotu–faife'au* is through adoption (*tagata'ese*). Because of the characteristic of being an adopted member through mutual agreement, there are exit clauses in the mutual agreement. The concept of *feagaiga* is deceptive because it makes the relationship, whether viewing it from the model of employer–employee or that between a *matai–'aiga*, seem permanent when, in fact, it is far from it.

The relationship between the *'aulotu–faife'au* presents obvious contradictions. The contradictions arise from the fact that both indigenous and Eurocentric models are brought to bear on their relationship. My argument is not centred on a critique of the use of the two concepts, but rather on the impacts the concepts may have on the Samoan parsonage family. What this presents is the realization that the Samoan parsonage family is caught in two worlds. Both worlds, I might add are dictated, determined and terminated by the *'aulotu*.

CONCLUSION

Contact and eventual interaction between indigenous and Eurocentric ideas is not novel to the Pacific and its people. The prophesying and arrival of Christianity in Samoa has undoubtedly become the meeting point of extreme significance between Samoa and societies from beyond the nation's shores. The acceptance of Christianity, the Church's inauguration, development

and growth has led to the introduction of the *faife'au*/parsonage family. Subsequently, the *faife'au* has inherited through cultural and religious historicization the status of *fa'afeagaiga* and *tagata'ese*. As debate and research about Samoan families' sociocultural, political, economic and religious well-being continue both in and beyond Samoa, there is much to share, learn and debate about Samoan families, *fa'asamoa* and church, both separately and as fused entities.

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