Asia Pacific Viewpoint, Vol. 51, No. 1, April 2010
ISSN 1360-7456, pp1–16

Alienation and obligation: Religion and social change in Samoa

Alec Thornton,† Maria T. Kerslake‡ and Tony Binns§*

*School of PEMS, University of New South Wales-ADFA, Canberra, ACT 2600, Australia.
Email: a.thornton@unsw.edu.au
†School of GAES, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg 2050, South Africa.
Email: a.thornton@unsw.edu.au
‡Faculty of Arts, National University of Samoa, PO Box 1622, Apia, Samoa. Email: m.kerslake@nus.edu.ws
§Department of Geography, University of Otago, Dunedin 9001, New Zealand.
Email: jab@geography.otago.ac.nz

Abstract: *This paper will explore social change in contemporary Samoan society with respect to the traditional expectations of the church and kinship conflicting with the modern needs of an urbanising population. In the Samoan way of life – the fa'aSamoa – religion, matai (chiefly system) and reciprocal 'gift-giving' kinship arrangements among the aiga (extended family) are fundamental and closely related elements. However, pressures from continued integration into the global economy, the importance of remittance income and related migration of well-educated and highly skilled Samoans overseas are presenting several challenges to the strongly held traditions of kinship and church obligations. Among these challenges, low-income households are increasingly placing the material well-being of the immediate household first, thus 'opting out' of the culturally defined primary obligation to the church and risk alienation from beneficial familial ties. As a result, settlement patterns are shifting towards leaseholds in urbanising Apia, with consequences, we will speculate, that may have deeper cultural implications. Our research revealed that the church has been slow to accept that, increasingly, Samoans are seeking relief from hardships that spirituality alone cannot address. However, given its influence, strengths and resources, the church is well positioned to take a lead role in facilitating opportunities for 'bottom-up', alternative development in Samoa, as well as providing lessons for church-led participatory approaches in the Pacific Island Region.*

Keywords: *alternative development*, *kinship*, *landless*, *Pacific Island Countries*, *religion*, *Samoa*

Introduction

The importance of kinship and social networks to cultural stability, and as an economic lifeline among households and individuals in small Pacific Island countries (PICs), is well documented (Ward, 1959, 2005; Oliver, 1961; Holmes, 1980; Macpherson, 1999). Traditionally, kinship and Christianity form the foundation for all political, economic and social organisation, and are inextricably linked. Kinship and social networks involve a reciprocal system of gift-giving, where material and financial support are exchanged, shared and re-distributed among the *aiga* (extended family). This support also extends to meeting the material and financial needs of the pastor and his residence (Samoa National Human Development Report, 2006: 41). The *matai* (titled person or chief) ensures equitable collection and distribution of material and financial support. In return for this support, village pastors ensure the spiritual well-being of their church members. This form of reciprocation among the *aiga* and the church continue to shape Samoan society in the twenty-first century.

Samoa is unique, however, in that its experience with colonisation has been relatively brief, compared with other PICs, and religion initially struggled to attain an ideological foothold and subvert the authority of the *matai* (chiefs). Although Christian missionaries were present in

© 2010 The Authors
Journal compilation © 2010 Victoria University of Wellington
doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8373.2010.01410.x

Samoa from the 1830s, it was not until the twentieth century that the missionaries realised that the future of the church in Samoa depended on a close alliance with traditional leaders. In a sense, the establishment of a permanent congregation depended upon the willingness of the church to adapt to traditional Samoan culture. With the approval of the *matai*, Christianity expanded quickly, and Western religion progressively became a fundamental part of Samoan cultural identity.

Upon achieving their constitutional independence in 1962, Samoans ensured that the role of kinship and the authority of the *matai* in local and national government were retained in the constitution (Macpherson, 1999). At the village level, the *matai* make decisions regarding the collection, allocation and division of resources for the *aiga* (extended family), which includes land allocation. In addition, this often includes choosing the religious denomination that will receive financial support from the village. Some academics have suggested that village *matai* compete with neighbouring villages in the costly construction of large churches, as a symbol of the wealth and status of the village (Muliaina, 2006; M. Kerslake, pers. comm., 2007). Resources for the expansion of the church and livelihoods of pastors are heavily dependent on remittances from Samoan family members who are working abroad. Approximately 63% of Samoan households use remittance income for 'social uses', with 41% typically directed to support churches (Brown and Ahlburg, 1999: 334). A church in the host country (e.g. Australia or New Zealand) of a Samoan migrant worker will hold donations in a local bank account on behalf of the church in the country of origin (Samoa) (Brown and Ahlburg, 1999). This type of kinship obligation carries a significant financial burden, which can represent more than 30% of family income (International Religious Freedom Report, 2006).

The issue of landless families and individuals, although not a new issue (Johnston, 1953; Ward and Kingdon, 1995), has recently been raised as a growing concern in the Samoa National Human Development Report (SNHDR) (Muagututi'a, 2006: 30, 58, 63) and the Report of the Census of Population and Housing 2001 (Government of Samoa, 2001). Presently, the extent of landlessness in urban Samoa and its relationship to financial obligations of kinship are not clear. Although the notion of landless Samoans appears contradictory, given the nature of customary land ownership in the country, nevertheless, interview respondents raised the issue in connection with a severing of ties between urbanised Samoans and their rural kin. Closely linked to the responses of fraying of kinship ties is a shift among low-income groups in Samoa to the 'new' or non-mainline churches. Respondents, in addition to the SNHDR and 2001 Census documents, claim that among the most vulnerable households are urban villagers without land. Increasing landless individuals and households have been identified as those most affected by hardship, which is a 'new public concern' and 'less recognised than before' (Muagututi'a, 2006: 58). Academics familiar with Samoan society, however, have noted significant changes in settlement patterns and village organisation. In his contextual analysis of these changes, Ward (2005) has suggested that a detailed understanding of changes in settlement as signals, or markers, of changes within Samoan society itself is overdue. As Ward recognises, the last examination of changes in the socioeconomic and political organisation of Samoan society was conducted in the mid-1950s (Ward, 2005: 117). A study of this kind would therefore be timely. As the recently published SNHDR (Muagututi'a, 2006: 62) suggests, households are experiencing a 'financial burden from increasing costs of living', during a period of systemic economic change and the government's pursuit of World Trade Organisation (WTO) status. In addition, the SNHDR finds households have paid, on average, up to 52 million *tala*[1] annually to both cultural (e.g. weddings, funerals, title bestowals) and church obligations. However, linking the financial burden of these obligations to relatively recent increases in the urban poor population among indigenous Samoans has not yet been investigated in any systematic way. These issues are important, as any discussion about change in church and kinship relationships is essentially a discussion of the *fa'aSamoa* (the Samoan 'way of life'). Familial reciprocal exchanges among the *aiga* and the church form the foundation of Samoan society; the two are inseparable. External change or influences

© 2010 The Authors
Journal compilation © 2010 Victoria University of Wellington

precipitated by economic openness, and/or deeper integration with the global economy, can arguably have some impact on important decisions at the household level, in terms of financial resource allocation.

During the course of this research, the notion that all Samoans benefit from a tradition of financial and material reciprocity, which includes customary land use privileges, emerged as a contentious issue. Previous research (unpublished, M. Kerslake, pers. comm., 2007) in the study area indicated that poor households,[2] and individuals are becoming increasingly disconnected from traditional kinship arrangements. These kinship arrangements include land security and remittances from overseas family members, which are vital to household social and financial life in Samoa (M. Kerslake, pers. comm., 2007). In investigating the potential origins and impacts of increasingly disconnected kinship arrangements and its effect on changing attitudes towards the church, the following issues emerged:

- Are economic 'push factors' resulting in households 'opting-out' of cultural obligations to provide financial support to the church?
- Has this opting-out coincided with the relatively recent growth of non-mainstream religious denominations in Samoan communities?
- Do Samoans feel that they give too much and receive too little from the church?
- Does the church provide for social or community development, beyond spiritual needs?
- Key documents refer to 'landless' Samoans, but offer no decisive explanations of what it means to be 'landless' in Samoa (Government of Samoa, 2001: 31; Samoa National Human Development report, 2006: 30, 58, 62)

The basic hypothesis of this research is that households and/or individuals might consider 'opting-out' of kinship and church obligations when either the financial strain becomes too severe, or, alternatively, for purely ideological reasons, or possibly some combination of the two. In so doing, people might risk alienation from reciprocal familial or social networks, customary safety nets, such as land security and remittances and, ultimately, may experience economic hardship and social exclusion. In testing this core supposition of alienation and obligation, two key questions were addressed: first, are the expectations of church and kinship at the village level out of sync with the economic realities and material needs of an urbanising Samoa? Second, with increasing poverty and inequality in Samoa, to what extent is the church committed to community and social development and supporting individual and household needs beyond spiritual development?

Methodology

This research combines qualitative and quantitative data collection with spatial analyses of low-income and 'landless' households in and around Apia, Samoa's capital. Whereas the research is ongoing, this paper will consider results from the qualitative stage, which included semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. For the purposes of the qualitative study, it was imperative to understand how the church 'works' in Samoa, in terms of, for example, its organisational structure and community-level interaction. It was also important to understand how issues of social development are interpreted by the church, as well as its views on increasing poverty, and attitudes and perceptions of the role of the church in modern Samoa. As a point of clarification, community and social development in this paper involves tangible intervention by institutions, such as the church, for poverty alleviation. While it is true that the church, in Samoa and elsewhere, typically offers primary education and elderly care, this research is primarily concerned with the response of the church to the changing socioeconomic conditions of households and individuals. Although Samoa enjoys high levels of literacy and life expectancy compared with other so-called developing countries, poverty is increasing, and urban problems due to population growth and low-income settlements in and around Apia are not receiving the level of attention that they deserve. It is suggested here that this observation is a key factor in people leaving the 'mainline' churches for 'new' or non-traditional churches.

Given the sensitive nature of the study, the anonymity of the key informants will be

© 2010 The Authors
Journal compilation © 2010 Victoria University of Wellington

Table 1. Qualitative survey schedule

Respondent	Interview /focus group	Code
The Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (CCCS)	Focus group	KI:1
CCCS	Interviews	KI:2, 3
Catholic Church	Focus group	KI: 4
Methodist Church	Interview	KI: 5
CCCS, Catholic, Methodist	Focus group	KI: 6
Mormons or Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints (LDS)	Interview	KI: 7
Assemblies of God (AOG)	Interviews	KI: 8, 9, 10
Samoa Council of Churches*	Interviews	KI: 11,12
Government of Samoa Statistics Department	Interview	KI: 13
National University of Samoa (NUS)	Interviews	KI: 14, 15, 16
Mother and Sisters of the Little Sisters of the Poor†	Interview	KI: 17
Mother and Sisters of the Little Sisters of the Poor	Focus group	KI: 18
Paramount High Chief , rural based on Savai'i island	Interview	KI: 19
'Cecil', an urban based *matai*, on Upolu island	Interview	KI: 20

*The Samoan Council of Churches (SCC) is a member of the World Council of Churches (US), and is an ecumenical network concerned with the problems and emerging issues facing the church and Samoan society. Of note, the 'new' denominations in Samoa are not at present members of the SCC. †The Little Sisters of the Poor, founded in 1839 in France, is an international public charity that provides care for the sick and elderly. They established a branch in Samoa in 1988.

respected in this paper. The survey schedule of key informants included multi-denominational religious leaders, pastors, government and civil society organisations, and *matai* from rural and urban areas (Table 1). These interviews provided invaluable insight into the dynamics of traditional kinship relationships in contemporary Samoa, as these affect household decision making, rural-urban drift and village governance.

The Samoan context

On 1 January 1962, Samoa became the first PIC to gain independence. In 1997, the country, which was formerly known as Western Samoa, became the Independent State of Samoa. It has a population over 182 000 (2008 estimate), and in the 2001 Census, 99% of the total population identified themselves as Samoan (Muagututi'a, 2006). Apart from very small numbers on other islands, Samoa's population is unequally divided between the two largest islands of Upolu (76%) and Savai'i (24%).

Upolu Island is Samoa's main island, where the nation's capital, Apia, is located, with an estimated population of over 40 000 in 2008. From 1991 to 2001, there has been a 35% population increase in the area known as North-West Upolu (NWU), which has been attributed largely to rural–urban migration. These rural population flows stem from Savai'i, the larger of the two islands, which is characterised by its more traditional, subsistence-based rural economy. On Upolu, 52% of the population live in the Apia Urban Area (AUA) and NWU, in what will be referred to here as 'greater Apia'. Population increase has led to the growth of new settlements along a significant corridor, which now extends from the Faleolo International Airport in NWU to Apia town. This corridor includes many new settlements that are located on previously state-owned land, overseen by a statutory corporation – at the time known as the Western Samoa Trust Estate Corporation (WSTEC). In the 1990s, designated WSTEC lands (post-1996, STEC, or Samoa Trusts Estate Corporation) were the target of a government-initiated land grab, which included former coconut plantations that were a legacy of the German colonial experience in Samoa. The government initially sought to encourage commercial farming on these lands. However, a lack of interest in commercial farming led to the decision to subdivide the STEC lands into one-fourth acre housing plots. These subdivisions became very popular, particularly for non-titled Samoans seeking freehold land ownership, which is independent from the influence of the *matai*, in terms of land resource allocation.

The flow of rural migrants to greater Apia reflects certain push-pull factors that are also

© 2010 The Authors
Journal compilation © 2010 Victoria University of Wellington

symptomatic of urbanisation elsewhere in the developing world – generally the hope for a better life with improved employment opportunities, education and health care. For the youth, pull factors might include the lure of a more so-called modern urban lifestyle. Where church-run schools are located in the urban area, some households have relocated to greater Apia to be closer to their children. However, concerns about increasing pockets of poverty and income inequality in Apia are visible in the spread of sub-standard housing and homeless persons, some of whom may be in need of mental health care. Increasing suburban dystopia is evident, with a growing frequency of reports about youth crime and domestic violence, which are generally attributed to restlessness, fragmentation of kinship and decline in membership of Samoa's mainline or traditional church denominations.

Poverty trends in the PICs and the Samoan situation

There is a vast amount of published literature on urbanisation in PICs and related problems such as unemployment, crime, and the growth of squatter (illegal) and slum (informal) settlements, most notably in Fiji and Papua New Guinea (Walsh, 1982; Bryant-Tokelau, 1995; Thaman, 1995; Jones and Cocks, 2003; Hassall, 2004, 2005; Storey, 2005; FAO, 2006; World Bank, 2006; Asian Development Bank, 2007; Thornton, 2009). The urban population in small developing PICs has reached 40 percent, and the growth trend is expected to continue (World Bank, 2006). Urban poverty and growth in squatter and slum settlements has emerged and poses a significant challenge for local governments and urban planners, in terms of the provision of basic services and low cost housing. For civil society groups and NGOs, these challenges include increasing social problems (e.g. alcoholism, domestic violence, suicide and theft), malnutrition and street culture among the youth, which includes childhood prostitution (for more on the problem of suicide in Samoa, see Stewart-Withers and O'Brian, 2006). For many households, the scale of remittance flows from family members working overseas often determines the economic and social stability of the family back home. The importance of remittances as a source of household income and contributor to the GDP of many small island developing states (SIDS) is widely acknowledged in the literature (Brown and Ahlburg, 1999).

Poverty in the Samoan context includes relative, absolute and also poverty of opportunity (Muagututi'a, 2006: 63). Relative poverty affects people who are disadvantaged compared with other people in their community or country, while absolute poverty includes those who are completely destitute or lacking material assets. Poverty of opportunity can be assessed as a denial of education, health, employment, access to markets, as well as social freedoms and other conditions that are difficult to quantify (Muagututi'a, 2006: 63).

The external view of Samoan society is typically one of harmonious and self-supporting kinship structures and stable governance at the village and national levels. Compared with many small island developing states, both inside and outside the region, the persistence of this view is understandable, albeit debatable. However, the reality of urban poverty and urbanisation in modern Samoan society reflects the general trend experienced in other PICs. On the main island of Upolu, 35% of the population is based in Apia, Samoa's capital (World Bank, 2006). Although comparatively small in scale, issues of urban poverty in Samoa are increasing (Jones and Cocks, 2003; FAO, 2006). Remittance income accounts for 20% of Samoa's GDP, and is a major source of external income and a key driver of economic growth. Informal employment activities in Samoa are largely located in sectors such as subsistence agriculture and fisheries. However, weak formal employment growth and diminishing investment in the agricultural sector have been linked to increasing inequality and poverty rates among both rural and urban households. Results from the 2002 Household, Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) (Government of Samoa, 2002) indicated that 20% of Samoan households are living below the basic needs poverty line, defined as the ability of households to meet the following requirements: food, housing, clothing, schooling, church contributions and cultural obligations (Muagututi'a, 2006: 62). These households are 'experiencing some degree of financial

© 2010 The Authors
Journal compilation © 2010 Victoria University of Wellington

hardship on a daily or weekly basis' (Muagututi'a, 2006: 110). For households earning less than the basic needs line (less than 1US$ per day), ongoing cultural and church obligations are a growing concern, as major contributors to hardship and a destabilising strain on household budgets.

Both the 1997 and 2002 HIES indicated that church contributions have become particularly competitive, and the failure of households to meet material expectations has been met with 'punishments meted out by Village Councils' that were 'often harsh and financially expensive' (Muagututi'a, 2006: 62), and which can result in expulsion from a village. According to the 1997 HIES, over the course of one year, households contributed over 109 000 *tala* per week, or 5.7 million *tala* per year in church contributions, and 34.8 million *tala* per annum on *fa'alavelave*, or cultural obligations (e.g. weddings, funerals and title bestowals). As noted earlier, these contributions increased to nearly 1 million tala per week (52 million p/a), according to the 2002 HIES (Government of Samoa, 2002).

Poverty reduction policies do not currently exist in Samoa. However, the government has recognised that economic hardship is increasing for many households, particularly for the most vulnerable groups, notably the youth and elderly living in rural areas. In the urban areas, food security problems have been identified as a growing issue. Over one-half of all reported cases of childhood malnutrition at the National Hospital are from within greater Apia (Muagututi'a, 2006: 62). Population expansion in NWU and AUA has brought other pressures, including health and environmental problems, as well as sub-standard living conditions. Moreover, urban households live without the traditional support structures typically provided for by the village community.

Some academics find that Samoan government-led efforts to reduce poverty through macroeconomic reforms and 'top-down' anti-poverty programmes have faltered, due to a lack of community involvement and ignorance of social and cultural values (Tuilaepa and Nartea, 2002). Notably absent from research on Samoan poverty is a focus on the emergence of sub-standard and slum settlement growth in Apia.

The church in contemporary Samoa

Since achieving independence in 1962, the *matai*, church and state have been the three enduring pillars of Samoan society. The close relationship between church and state is reflected in the practice of government leaders, who are exclusively *matai*, performing dual roles as church leaders (Samoa National Human Development Report, 2006: 137). Hence, the church is embedded in the *matai* system, and, in this regard, the church is well positioned to influence all aspects of village life and broader public policy-making. Although freedom of religion is enshrined in the constitution, the one village, one church policy has led to criticisms of the close relationship between the church and state. However, this relationship is a fundamental aspect of Samoan society and is reinforced by the village *fono* (*matai* council), a traditional form of village governance that makes all decisions in the village. These decisions include whether only one or multiple denominations may be practised, which tend to be mainline faiths. The increasing popularity of new church denominations has challenged this traditional mainline policy and will be considered later.

Within each extended family (*aiga*), the *matai* make decisions regarding the collection, allocation and division of resources. In modern Samoa, this primarily concerns sources of wage and remittance income, as opposed to the pre-Christian tradition of giving and receiving material goods and food. The value of a *matai* title is now, to a certain extent, bound to his or her ability to influence the *aiga* to contribute as much to the church as possible. For *matai* living overseas, a title (or titles) can be maintained through securing remittances for the church, pastor and his family. Approximately 63% of Samoan households use remittance income for 'social uses', with 41% typically directed to support churches (Brown and Ahlburg, 1999: 334). These donations will often bypass the household and provide direct financial support for church leaders and church-building projects (Hooper, 1998; International Religious Freedom Report, 2006; Muagututi'a, 2006). This type of kinship obligation carries a significant financial burden, which can account for more than 30% of

© 2010 The Authors
Journal compilation © 2010 Victoria University of Wellington

family income in some mainline denominations (International Religious Freedom Report, 2006). With the increasing cost of living and worsening hardship, respondents from civil society groups and some government officials urge the need for households to prioritise the use and distribution of family resources:

> I read an article [in the newspaper] where [a senior government official] said that there are parents with expelled [school] children, due to non-payment of school fees, who still find there is money in pockets to give to the Church. If I am that parent, I'll pay my school fees. People must start prioritising: first, take care of the family and extended family, next priority is village responsibilities and then the Church (KI: 13).
>
> Giving is strong in Samoa. When pastors impose giving to the Church, this is wrong. People should only give what is necessary, but must care for their families (KI: 11).

Arguably, the monetisation (cash-infused conditions) of church membership in Samoa is creating a material as well as spiritual dilemma for those who are struggling to cope with increasing hardship while meeting church and kinship obligations. A strong indicator of how such hardship can lead to social change appears to be a noticeable exodus from the so-called 'mainline' churches, accompanied by a simultaneous membership growth in 'new' or non-traditional Christian denominations (listed Table 1). A thorough analysis of this phenomenon will be presented in the following sections, which will discuss how the mainline and new faiths compare, in terms of membership numbers, their approach to collections and donations, and their views on spiritual and social and community development.

Mainline churches

During our interviews with church respondents, administrators were asked for membership figures updated from the 2001 Census. However, these figures appeared to resemble the 1991 Census, albeit in some cases inflated, as follows in Table 2.

Table 2. Comparing church membership

Denomination	1991 Census	2001 Census	Church officials
Congregational	68 651	61 413	70 000
Catholic	33 548	34 714	30 000
Methodist	27 190	26 446	35 000

Table 3. 'Mainline' Christian church membership decline

Denomination	1991 HIES Census (%)	2001 HIES Census (%)
Congregational	42.6	34.8
Catholic	20	19.6
Methodist	16.9	15

Sources: Government of Samoa (1991, 2001).

When comparing the 1991 and 2001 Census data, membership in these mainline groups has been declining steadily for many years (Table 3) (Government of Samoa, 1991, 2002). This decline has been attributed to the misuse of the church's 'colossal resources', stating that some church members 'will opt to detach themselves from the Church completely' (Muagututi'a, 2006: 140).

The current research revealed several further 'push-factors' that help to explain mainline church membership decline. Interviewees most commonly cited:

- The pressure to give, with little regard for the financial circumstances of the household
- The failure to adapt to changing circumstances of members and the wider community
- The church's fixation with maintaining religious capital, e.g. tithes, collections, donations, new buildings
- The lack of reciprocation, for example in the form of welfare provisions (getting nothing 'in return')
- The practice of *folafola*, or the reading out during the service of names and amounts contributed by specific individuals and families, which causes much public embarrassment. It can also increase the urge of members and families to compete in giving larger donations.

© 2010 The Authors
Journal compilation © 2010 Victoria University of Wellington

Financing faith or faithful financing?

Pressure to give

Many respondents cited problems associated with the culture and practice of 'giving' as reasons for declining mainline church membership. Church practices originally became acculturated with Samoan traditional beliefs and the kinship-based economy in a manner viewed acceptable to Samoan high chiefs. Among these traditional customs, the pre-Christian traditions of gift-giving and *folafola* (announcing of gifts and the giver) were at an early stage adopted by the church and involved non-monetary, material goods typical of the traditional kinship economy. With increasing European presence and the growing importance of the cash economy, however, the innate practice of giving in Samoa evolved into a complex system of annual monetary collections (*taulaga*), weekly donations, tithes and offerings, as a means of financing pastors' residences (rural and urban), new church buildings and expansion. Attributable to labour migration and other factors (discussed elsewhere in this paper), fewer and fewer members of the three mainline churches are now contributing ever larger donations. Some focus group respondents (KI: 4) claimed that those households with access to steady remittance flows are better positioned to provide resources for the church, and the village pastor will more frequently call upon such households, often assisted by the *matai*, whose role it is to ensure the welfare of the village pastor and the pastor's family.

Acculturation of the tithe: voluntary 'gift-giving' or spirituality tax?

The practice of tithing is particularly contested in the Samoan context, though it is important to recognise that not all mainline churches interpret and 'enforce' it in exactly the same way. It is probably not appropriate here to consider in detail the nature and importance of tithing in modern Christianity, and more specifically in Samoa, other than to say that tithing is mentioned in the Old Testament as giving a 'one-tenth part of something', and that such giving is 'voluntary' (The New Revised Standard Version (Anglicized Edition), 1995). In modern Samoa, the practice of tithing is generally interpreted as donating 10% of a household's income to the church. However, the significance and actual percentage criteria used by mainline churches among their congregations are not static. For example, it is not uncommon for a household to part with 30–50% (and sometimes, more) of its income as a contribution to the church. Respondents highlighted their concerns over the raising and allocation of 'religious capital', and questioned the utility of excessive giving in the context of spiritual development:

> With the massive revenue from its members, the church could easily turn into a business venture. There are several members below the poverty line, but the Church is too busy building huge churches in villages [where people] live in a near poverty line situation (KI: 11).
>
> The Church hierarchy treat giving as quotas, not whether you are able to give. Spiritual growth is thwarted by giving and more giving – there is a non-spiritual element to it (KI: 14)
>
> People are giving to the mainline churches, but getting nothing back (KI: 10).
>
> Nothing comes from the Church to help poor people. The Church does not step in to help. But, even though you are poor, you do not go to the Church and say this; it is the tradition of the family to help and a non-spiritual thing to complain about giving (KI: 14).

Respondents frequently mentioned that 'giving' is linked to the depth of their faith. Poverty, through intentional deprivation of material wealth, goods or resources seems to be viewed as elevating the self and village perception of the 'giver' as a strong devotee to their faith. Excessive giving, typically through a tithe, can also elevate the status of a household, their *aiga* and their *matai*.

Folafola: a source of public embarrassment

For many households, including the very poor, it is a 'source of pride to give more . . . [believing that] God will give more' (KI: 6). A member's pride is often satiated during a church service, when a pastor will announce the collections, or *folafola*. In the mainline churches, the practice of *folafola* involves revealing the name of the giver of the donation, a practice

© 2010 The Authors
Journal compilation © 2010 Victoria University of Wellington

frequently mentioned by respondents as a key push-factor that is leading to membership decline:

> Folafola is declared publicly and was adopted by the Church. It has negative implications; those giving a lot feel good, but those giving less and announced [as such] feel embarrassed; mainline churches are losing members; mostly the Congregational (CCCS) and Methodist members are picked up by the Assemblies of God and Seventh Day Adventists (KI: 15).

In pre-Christian Samoa, the *folafola* was essentially a celebratory traditional practice, where the food and material contributions of a particular household or the larger *aiga* received public recognition. Since the combined acculturation of Christianity and a transition to a more western cash economy, the *folafola* seems to have evolved into a competition among wealthy families within a village and between villages within the same congregation. Although this competitive approach to fundraising may have strengthened the Church financially, it has had the unintended effect of militating against a unified and harmonious membership. The role of the Church as a development agent, through charitable social programmes, particularly in terms of poverty alleviation and HIV/AIDS programmes, is a common practice in other developing countries in the global South. In a study of religion and development in African countries, Odumosu *et al.*, (2009) distinguishes health and education services as typical roles for the church, as opposed to a broader welfare-based model of community development, which generally aims to address the material needs of individuals or households. However, in Samoa, the practice of seeking contributions from local members largely serves the organisational purpose of church expansionism, which includes construction of new churches (the most costly for village communities, Kolia, 2006: 138), church halls, building maintenance, housing for the pastor's family, pastor's income, as well as funding for church-run youth group and Sunday school programmes. Ironically, the church may be a victim of its own expansionist agenda, meaning, the 'colossal resources' needed for new church buildings are draining funds away from youth education programmes, deemed to be 'a sacred task, for without it the maintenance and growth of the church are deliberately ignored' (Kolia, 2006: 140–141).

In light of the above, the lack of faith-based community or social welfare programmes that serves the immediate material or physical needs of an individual or a community, which are independent from serving the institutional aims of the church itself, may be entirely unique to the practice of mainline Christianity in Samoa. As stated in the Samoa National Human Development Report (2006: 43), 'huge church buildings constructed from church offerings have always taken precedence over the near-poverty-line situation in which church adherents live,' and 'the church has yet to help the financial situation of individual members of congregations (Samoa National Human Development Report, 2006: 41). The mainline churches, as it stands, offer limited concerted programmes for social or community development, beyond those which serve the direct interests of the church itself. This is a role that the church does not recognise as its responsibility. The mainline churches interpret community development as ensuring that the spiritual needs of the congregation are met, while it is the role of the *aiga* to look after its own family members who are struggling:

> [For the Church], community development is spiritual development. The building of churches also helps the community, [as] it provides them with a place to worship (KI: 3).
>
> Nothing comes from the Church to help the poor people; the Church does not step in to help. Even though you are poor, you do not go to the Church in the village to say this. [It is] traditional that the family helps. The Church has enough money to start a [micro-credit] bank, to help the people to start something. The CCCS floated this idea, but it has not moved forward; it was voted down at the last General Assembly [of Churches]. The Methodist Church owns a lot of prime land in central Apia, where they'd like to build a [shopping] mall (KI: 14).

Spiritual needs vs. social needs

The mainline churches' approach to community-spiritual development for 'weaker

© 2010 The Authors
Journal compilation © 2010 Victoria University of Wellington

parishes' primarily consists of a 'loan scheme', whereby parish members can:

> . . . apply for assistance at a small interest rate of 5 per cent per annum to finance local parish youth halls, pastor's residence and so forth (Muagututi'a, 2006: 139).

The Samoa National Human Development Report shows some concern that these loan schemes have led to a 'slight problem' of repayment difficulties among people in the weaker parishes, thus adding a double burden (Muagututi'a, 2006: 139). Although the Report cites a need for 'improved living conditions', the church, arguably, appears to have interpreted this as spiritual development through the financing of church-related projects. While the mainline churches insist that, in return for monetary contributions, members' spiritual well-being is well-catered for, the availability and costs of providing care for the physically disadvantaged, mentally ill and the elderly are increasing in Samoa, especially as fewer family members in the villages are able to share the burden of care. The Little Sisters of the Poor and, more recently, the Catholic Church, each provide a (non-denominational) home for the elderly. However, the demand is 'so overwhelming that some requests have been denied due to lack of facilities' (Muagututi'a, 2006: 141). Traditionally, care for the sick and elderly is provided by the *aiga*. However, the Little Sisters of the Poor have recently noticed a significant change at the village level in the care of vulnerable family members:

> We now have more invalids than sick people. It is expensive to take care of an invalid. In recent years, some of the mentally ill are wandering around, no home and no place to go [though this is rare]; more homeless types . . . In the old days, people used to take care of their own. Twenty years ago, the villages took better care of people. Today, people are becoming more urban and [as they get older] they do not have villages to go back to, for care (KI: 18).

To conclude, the combined impacts of the pressure to give and the lack of anonymity and public humiliation tied to donations and contributions, are driving members away from the mainline churches. At the same time, social and economic changes and the resulting changing settlement patterns, are creating voids in the care and concern for the most vulnerable and marginalised. Whereas the mainline churches have yet to address these voids, they have, unintentionally, provided opportunities for new faiths to intercede. The following section will discuss the potential pull-factors for the rising popularity of the 'new' churches.

Popularity of new faiths

There has been an increase in membership among certain new denominations (Table 4): Mormons or Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints (LDS), Assemblies of God (AOG) and Seventh Day Adventists.[3] Relying on key informant interviews, this section will discuss the low-cost membership terms, financial sources, anonymity and liberal approach to contributions and community development approaches within the LDS and AOG in Samoa. Unfortunately, it was not possible to secure interviews with representatives of the Seventh Day Adventists.

Mormon-LDS pull-factors: low-cost of membership and organisational pro-activity

The widespread presence of the LDS in Samoa is undeniable, and its expansion over the last 15–20 years has been rapid. In the 1980s, the LDS 'constructed' its strongest statement, in Samoa with the dedication of the 14 560 ft^2 (1352.66 m^2) Apia Samoa Temple, built with granite, on a 2-acre site in central Apia. Destroyed by a fire in 2003, the original temple was subsequently rebuilt, adding another 4000 ft^2 (a total of 18 691 ft^2 or 1736.45 m^2), and was rededicated in 2005.

Table 4. 'New' church membership

Denomination	1991 HIES Census (%)	2001 HIES Census (%)
Mormon/Latter-Day Saints	10*	13
Assemblies of God	3.4	6.6
7th Day Adventists	2.9	3.5

Sources: Government of Samoa (1991, 2001).
*In 1971, Mormon membership comprised 2% of survey respondents.

© 2010 The Authors
Journal compilation © 2010 Victoria University of Wellington

Although the Mormon (LDS) church had established missions in Samoa from the late 1880s, the LDS have experienced a period of rapid expansion, which is immediately visible throughout Samoa in the construction of new churches and other buildings in villages throughout both Savai'i and Upolu. The LDS in Samoa claim to have 38 400 members, excluding American Samoa, with 100–120 new converts each month. Lifestyle change and increasing poverty over the last 15 years, and the Mormon approach to spiritual development and anonymous contributions (no *folafola*), are cited as key reasons for the rise in LDS membership (KI: 7). Unlike the mainline churches, the LDS *does* acknowledge that living costs and food prices have increased in recent years, and new members openly confess economic hardship. The LDS claims that approximately 50% of new members are from low-income families, and it is reasonable to suggest that these families are attracted to the relatively low cost of membership and the educational opportunities afforded to members. With the majority of LDS ministers employed in other occupations (except for the Bishop), their livelihoods are not completely dependent on excessive donations from local members.

Assemblies of God pull-factors: low-cost and liberal style are attracting the poor

The Assemblies of God (AOG) established its first congregation in Samoa in 1956 on Upolu. Between 2003 and 2008, the AOG increased its presence from 64 churches to 71 churches; the majority of these (49) are located on Upolu and the remainder on Savai'i (22). In the last two years, AOG membership increased by 2400, with total membership reaching 8700 in 2008. Most of the new members are young (in their 20s), relatively poor and generally converts from the mainline churches. The AOG leadership attribute their more liberal approach to the increasing membership:

> People joined this church and left other churches. We preach the Good News Gospel [and] people get converted. [We are] less traditional, more liberal, more free music, singing, free for all teaching. Others are more traditional (KI: 8).

> Most of our new members are young and seek a different style of worship, expressive style of worship. The mainline [groups] are quiet and formal (KI: 10).

The AOG intends to expand its presence into the more rural and traditional island of Savai'i. As expected, they have found culture and tradition, in terms of a conservative and reserved approach to faith, very strong in the villages. The Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (CCCS) was founded on Savai'i in the 1830s, and was the first Christian denomination to establish a permanent congregation in Samoa. It follows that the CCCS is well represented on the island; hence, the conservative influence. However, the popularity of the 'more liberal' approach of the AOG, and the related increase in membership, can be seen as part of a continuing acculturation of different styles of worship that are penetrating Samoa, and this change is spearheaded by Samoa's Christian youth. The majority of this youth movement are also poor – having little or no access to remittance income, no *matai* title and, consequently, have no land to establish a plantation. Furthermore, and similar to the reasons for Mormon expansion, the issue of roll-call or *folafola,* serves as a catalyst, or a key push-factor, behind the many converts leaving the mainline churches for the AOG:

> Traditional [mainline] churches pressure the people to give. Roll call of families, reading out loud the names and amounts given. This is too much pressure. People with less income feel inadequate and guilty. We have a higher percentage of poorer people in our church, no pressure to give. People feel welcome.' KI: 8

> 'People feel they are missing something from the mainline [groups]. They keep giving and giving, but not getting anything back. So they look to the AOG. [We] use a free-wheel basis, don't put pressure on people to give what they have, but give what they want. We are cheaper for families. We want people to be cheerful givers. The mainline groups [in this regard] have lost focus, perspective [over the years] (KI: 10).

© 2010 The Authors
Journal compilation © 2010 Victoria University of Wellington

Faithful financing? Cost and benefit of the Mormon-LDS and the AOG

Mormon-LDS financial infrastructure: thinking global, acting local

LDS income is derived from three sources; tithes, youth missionary work contribution (150 *tala* per month), and a 'two-week fast', which is enumerated at 20–30 *tala* per meal (members deciding not to fast may pay the equivalent meal costs). However, the LDS claims to apply no pressure on its members to contribute to all three types of donation. It applies a 10% tithe of income on its members, but does not practice *folafola*, and members donate anonymously using an envelope system. The LDS finds this system to be transparent, as the envelopes and contributions are not collected or accounted for by a single person. Envelopes are collected from a depository on a monthly basis, and, typically, the Bishop and two 'counsellors' balance the receipts with cash and report to a 'central office' (KI: 7); these deposits are registered on the following day in an LDS account.

Off-shore religious capital

The institutional centre of the LDS is located in Utah, in southwestern United States. Globally, all tithes are channelled into Utah, which then pays for all construction and other costs associated with the organisation. Although figures are not publically available, the wealth of the LDS is likely to be substantial, considering that the LDS reports a total membership of over 13 million, globally.[4] Essentially, in each country where the LDS is established, 1/10th of all collections are funnelled into Utah (the total amount was not disclosed), with Mormon tithes from within the US constituting the majority of all LDS earnings. In Samoa, Mormons donated 56 000 *tala* in 2007, which translates into only a small central contribution of 5600 tala. At the same time, the US 'Federal Law on Charities' offers exemptions on church and other recognised charitable holdings, such as land, buildings and other sources of net investment income (Internal Revenue Service, 2009a). An 'integrated auxiliary', such as church-supported youth missionary work, is also an acceptable US tax exemption (Internal Revenue Service, 2009b).

Essentially, the LDS uses broad and complex financing and accounting systems that benefit its members around the world. The LDS can afford to attract members from low socioeconomic groups in Samoa, as it can use its growing membership base as a way of enhancing its asset base, while offering, in effect, an inexpensive alternative to the mainline churches.

Financial support for the AOG

The financial apparatus of the AOG is far less complex and more localised than the LDS, as the church solely depends on contributions from local and overseas Samoan members. The AOG does not directly benefit from family remittance income, which reaches its intended household, as opposed to a system used by the mainline groups, where relatives hand-over their earnings to the church in the host country, which are then transferred into the bank account of the parent church in Samoa (Brown and Ahlburg, 1999). Although there is no *taulaga*, or annual collection service in the AOG, there is a tithe of 10%, which is collected anonymously, in a process similar to the LDS, and typically supports the pastor's household. The majority of AOG finances are collected through fundraising, whereby AOG ministers will go abroad, mainly to New Zealand and Australia, to seek contributions from other AOG groups. Samoan AOG groups overseas contribute significantly to the cost of new buildings and renovations for the AOG in Samoa.

Community development programmes

LDS-social and educational assistance

The LDS finances a 'Welfare programme' in Samoa, which is available to all Samoans, for example, in the wake of a natural disaster. It is not surprising that, after witnessing such generosity, many Samoans convert (KI: 7). Further conversions result from an LDS scheme that offers leasehold agreements to Samoans seeking land in Apia (KI: 7). Once converted, Mormons then have access to a 'Perpetual Education Fund' (worldwide, not specific to Samoa). Under this scheme, a Samoan Mormon pays 5 *tala* per month for an interest free loan to attend

© 2010 The Authors
Journal compilation © 2010 Victoria University of Wellington

any university. Finally, as the *Book of Mormon* preaches self-reliance, the LDS maintains an employment centre, teaching computer skills, and a seed bank for emerging farmers (KI: 7).

AOG: poverty-focused and ad hoc relief

Although the AOG do not have any formal poverty relief programmes, they offer a 'breakfast service' for children before Sunday school and a 'Christmas programme' to benefit poor households with children (KI: 8). The AOG claims to be a 'church of the poor', with an emphasis on 'healing the body and the sick' and, for this reason, 'people are drawn into the Pentecostal',[5] and, arguably, this is what new members 'feel they are missing' from mainline membership (KI: 10). The AOG provides financial and material assistance to 'develop people' and help families through donations (KI: 10). The AOG finds that only the Seventh Day Adventists and the Mormons are as pro-active in providing material welfare for their members (KI: 10). To accomplish its welfare work, the AOG draws upon considerably fewer resources than the LDS and must devote much of its time to organising fundraising events for financial support.

Overall, the popularity of the new groups can be attributed to their more liberal and less intimidating approach to membership, in terms of contributions, worship style and affording equal weight to the material and spiritual needs of local members. Drawing on the material presented in this section, the following section will consider mainline and village conservatism in relation to increasing poverty and the tentative claims of landlessness in Samoa.

Spiritual and material impasse and land access

Throughout the interview survey, representatives from the mainline church groups emphasised that they have a responsibility only for the spiritual development of the Samoan people, and if people are experiencing hard times, then it is the traditional responsibility of their families to look after them. However, when this need is neither filled by the *aiga* nor the church, people understandably become alienated and seek alternatives. These alternatives include joining a new congregation and seeking independence from the village through adopting an urban lifestyle in Apia:

> People, without the [material] means, just leave the church and move elsewhere (KI: 11).

In either case, the choice involves asserting one's individual rights, and placing one's own needs or priorities above those of the *matai*, the local pastor and *aiga*. However, asserting independence and opting out of traditional structures can stigmatise the 'dissenting' household or individual and sever ties with the kin-based economy, which includes access to *aiga* land. Such declining involvement in village affairs might ultimately result in a denial of customary land rights. As trustees of *aiga* land, the *matai* might be unwilling to allocate land to a family member seeking independence or a more western, non-traditional lifestyle:

> If someone wants to go to the town [Apia] and not give to the church or the family, then they are on their own. People are becoming more western; they move to town, focus on [nuclear] family and forget about commitments to the aiga. People lose their access to family land this way (KI: 20).
>
> You can't expect to get something [benefits of reciprocation, land use] for nothing. Some people are too lazy to grow food on the plantation. If you fall on hard times [when migrating to Apia] it is your own fault. People have to be responsible, self-reliant (KI: 20).

The issue of landless Samoans is not very well understood and the underlying reasons are likely to be multi-faceted. In an early account by Johnston (1953: 36), the issue of landless Samoans primarily involved 'part-Samoans', or 'persons of mixed blood, particularly of European and Samoan [heritage]', explaining further that they were at a disadvantage, 'as they do not have access to native land' except through marriage, or a 'relative of Samoan status' (1953: 36). Alternatively, in contemporary Samoa, a landless person can mean that they *are* Samoan without a title. Traditionally, *matai* titles are entwined with land accumulation, as this increases the influence of the *matai*: typically, the larger the *aiga*, then the more land it has available; more land leads to more titles.

© 2010 The Authors
Journal compilation © 2010 Victoria University of Wellington

However, household size can impact the decisions of a *matai* in the allocation of lands:

> In the old days, families were smaller. In the last 50 years, the population has increased and extended families have grown. The proportion of land available to each family is less and less. The custom is that the chief [matai] is trustee. Untitled people do not have land. All pieces of land [belong to] the extended family; if there are 3 plots and those untitled number 10, then there is not enough plots. The head of the family should allocate extended family members a piece of land to grow food. There are people who come to live in town on a 1/4 acre to grow a plantation. It is becoming a problem that more people will have less if Samoans come back to Samoa [from overseas] (KI: 13).

In the above quote, the one-fourth acre plots refer to the former WSTEC land, which is the location of relatively new settlement areas in greater Apia, further distinguished by an absence of traditional authority, or *fono*. These new settlement areas, such as Vaitele, have a reputation of being high crime areas that are dominated by youth and high unemployment (Muagututi'a, 2006: 161). The Samoan Statistics Department characterises them as having substandard housing and 'many people do not have the minimum requirements to live a decent life' (KI: 13). Such responses invited the following question from the interviewers: 'When the situation becomes too difficult for urban-based kin, do people simply return to their home villages?' The answer to this question was surprisingly direct:

> It is very rare. People do not go back (KI: 20).
>
> Landlessness is linked to migration. Villages do not accept urban-rural returnees – they get suspicious. They could become a liability to the family. If they have not been contributing to the church and family, they are not welcome back (KI: 15).

The issue of being 'untitled' is also a liability for the village 'returnee': 'If they have no title and ask to have land, it is very difficult and [they] must gain full consent from the family. They can't just come back and claim it. They would have to be willing to stay for a long time and build respect. But Samoans have a sense of pride. It is unlikely that an urban family would return to the village seeking help or claiming poverty. Also, the village is very proud. A returning member would have to be able to contribute and be part of village life: socially and financially. It is becoming a problem. We need policies to address landlessness.' KI: 15

When considering spatial patterns and social change in Samoa, a trend that is increasingly apparent is the emergence of a settlement class that is rather untypical of Samoa and more typical of developing countries elsewhere, in terms of urbanity, poverty, social problems and, perhaps the most significant indicator of social change in Samoa, the loss of traditional and customary linkages, which include familial and reciprocal kin-based relationships.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that the mainline church system of contributions and donations in Samoa is enduring and relevant to understanding social change and the increasing popularity of new religious denominations. Alternatives to the conservative and traditional faiths are attractive to those who have become disillusioned by the mainline emphasis on gift-giving (material and financial) and its relationship to spiritual development. Membership of the new churches predominantly comprise of households that are living below the poverty line and having very limited income sources or opportunities for subsistence farming. This is the case for both rural and urban households, with the difference being that the rural poor are untitled and thus side-stepped by the *matai* for land allocation. Meanwhile, interview respondents, particularly *matai* and village pastors, acknowledge steady migration of village residents to Apia's new settlements, with many entering into leaseholds and not maintaining kinship ties. Further results from this research, which involves a quantitative household survey, will hopefully lead to improved understanding of new settlement areas in greater Apia, and the extent to which they constitute a new landless class in Samoan society.

Samoa is not immune to the urban and rural development challenges facing other PICs. The country is experiencing rapid urbanisation,

© 2010 The Authors
Journal compilation © 2010 Victoria University of Wellington

slum settlement expansion and increasing crime and unemployment, which are symptomatic of many developing countries that are seeking deeper integration with the global economy. It may be the case that, given the relatively recent concerns about increasing poverty in Samoa, the church has yet to fully consider that, for many Samoans, the cost of spiritual fulfilment is becoming secondary to the material welfare of the household.

This paper has also revealed the existence of a link between mainline church membership decline and 'fraying' kinship relationships among an urbanising population as indicators of social change. The interview survey revealed a growing trend where individuals and households are effectively rejecting the conservativeness of village life for greater independence in the urban areas. This independence comes in the form of individual, economic, financial, educational and religious freedom. In striving for individuality, there are consequences or trade-offs, such as exclusion from the benefits of the kinship-based economy of reciprocation, which includes material resources, and, perhaps, plantation land. Since the acculturation of Christianity in Samoan society in the nineteenth and twentieth century, the church has exerted its power and authority at various levels in Samoan society, at the household, village government and national government levels, as well as influencing its members who live beyond the borders of Samoa.

The strength of Samoan cultural identity, essentially, dictated the terms by which Christianity would eventually, and thoroughly, merge with the *fa'aSamoa*. This ultimately places the church in a unique position, where it can influence social and economic development goals at the grassroots and governmental levels. In light of alternative development theory, the church in Samoa, as a social trust, has great potential to become a unifying force for bottom-up development, or development from below, where development solutions and the means to implement and carry out locally derived solutions are possible using the organisational strengths and financial resources of the church and the energy and skills of communities. For example, the legions of Samoans working overseas represent an alternative group of potential donors for community-based or social development projects. The church has the ability to efficiently access funding from these migrant workers, free from the general practice of protracted grant application processes with faceless and often self-serving donor groups with their own internal agendas and restrictions placed on the distribution of funds. With its secular clout and resource mobilising attributes, there is significant potential for the church to initiate true participatory development opportunities and to achieve meaningful outcomes at the household, village and national levels.

Notes

1 Samoan *tala* (SAT or WST). 1USD = 3.01SAT/WST, based on a 2002 exchange rate average.

2 Poor households in Samoa are defined as earning incomes below an 'overall essential needs line' of 5.36 *tala* p/d.

3 Other non-mainline faiths include: Baha'i Faith, Jehovah's Witness, Worship Centre, Voice of Christ, Full Gospel, Baptist Church and Islam (the last is quite rare). Although referred to in this paper as 'new' churches and faiths, the term is used to draw a distinction with the more traditional 'mainline' churches that have practised in Samoa since Christianity was introduced to the islands by missionaries. It is a fact, however, that some of the so-called 'new' churches have practised in Samoa for many years and are now well-established.

4 According to official LDS statistics for 2007, there are 13 193 999 Mormons, globally. Available at: http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/statistical-information, 6 January 2009.

5 Pentecostal is a term that broadly describes 'renewalist' or evangelical Christian groups or movements.

References

Asian Development Bank (2007) *'The Pacific', regional and country highlights*. Retrieved 23 June 2007, from Website: http://www.adb.org

Brown, R. and D. Ahlburg (1999) Remittances in the South, *International Journal of Social Economics* 26(1/2/3): 325–344.

Bryant-Tokelau, J. (1995) The myth exploded: Urban poverty in the Pacific, *Environment and Urbanization* 7(2): 109–129.

FAO (2006) *Corporate Document Repository Gender database for agriculture and resource management policies in Pacific Island Countries*. Food and Agricultural Organization Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. Retrieved 8 December 2006, from Website: http://www.fao.org

Government of Samoa (1991) *Household Income and Expenditure Survey*. Apia: Department of Statistics.

Government of Samoa (1997) *Household Income and Expenditure Survey*. Apia: Department of Statistics.

© 2010 The Authors
Journal compilation © 2010 Victoria University of Wellington

Government of Samoa (2001) *Report of the Census of Population and Housing 2001*. Apia: Ministry of Finance.

Government of Samoa (2002) *Household Income and Expenditure Survey*. Apia: Department of Statistics.

Hassall, G. (2004) Governance challenges for Pacific Island states, *Fijian Affairs* 2(2): 227–244.

Hassall, G. (2005) Conflict in the Pacific: Challenges for governance, *Pacific Economic Bulletin* 20(1): 192–193.

Holmes, L. (1980) Factors contributing to the cultural stability of Samoa, *Anthropological Quarterly* 53(3): 188–197.

Hooper, A. (1998) *Pacific Islands Stakeholder Participation in Development: Samoa*. Pacific Islands Discussion Paper Series Number 3. East Asia and Pacific Region. Papua New Guinea and Pacific Islands Country Management Unit.

Internal Revenue Service (2009a) *United States Department of the Treasury*. Retrieved 6 January 2009, from Website: http://www.irs.gov/index.html

Internal Revenue Service (2009b) *United States Department of the Treasury. Publication 1828: Tax guide for churches and religious organisations*. Retrieved 5 January 2009, from Website: http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p1828.pdf

International Religious Freedom Report (2006) Released by the Bureau of Democracy Human Rights and Labor. Retrieved 22 June 2007, from Website: http://www.state.gov

Johnston, W.B. (1953) Pacific Island agriculture: The contemporary position in Western Samoa and some wider implications, *Economic Geography* 29(1): 26–38.

Jones, P. and J. Cocks (2003) *Urban development and uncontrolled discharge in Apia, Samoa*. Retrieved 20 June 2007, from Website: http://www.mnre.gov.ws

Kolia, F. (2006) The church and development, in A. So'o, U. Va'a and J. Boon (eds), *Samoa National Human Development Report*, pp. 137–148. Apia: National University of Samoa.

Macpherson, C. (1999) Changing contours of kinship: The impacts of social and economic development on kinship organization in the South Pacific, *Pacific Studies* 22(2): 71–95.

Muagututi'a, S.R. (2006) The human development indices, in A. So'o, U. Va'a and J. Boon (eds), *Samoa National Human Development Report*, Chapter 4, pp. 47–68. Apia: National University of Samoa.

Muliaina, T. (2006) The role of the church in development in Samoa: Does the church do enough at the community level? *Just Change* (6): 8. Retrieved 20 June 2006, from Website: http://www.devnet.org.nz

Odumosu, O., R. Olaniyi and A. Alonge (2009) Mapping the activities of faith-based organisations in development in Nigeria. Religions and Development Working Paper 38. International Development Department, University Of Birmingham: UK.

Oliver, D. (1961) *The Pacific Islands*, Revised edn. Garden City, NY: Double Day.

Samoa National Human Development Report (2006) *Sustainable livelihoods in a changing Samoa*. Apia: Centre of Samoan Studies, National University of Samoa.

Stewart-Withers, R. and M. O'Brian (2006) Suicide prevention and social capital: A Samoan perspective, *Health Sociology Review* 15(2): 209–220.

Storey, D. (2005) *Urban governance in Pacific Island countries: Advancing an overdue agenda*. State Society and Governance in Melanesia Discussion Paper 2005/7. Canberra: The Australian National University Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies.

Thaman, R. (1995) Urban food gardening in the Pacific Islands: A basis for food security in rapidly urbanising small-island states, *Habitat International* 19(2): 209–224.

The New Revised Standard Version (Anglicized Edition) (1995). Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Retrieved 2 March 2010, from Website: http://www.ncccusa.org/welcome/sitemap.html#NRSV

Thornton, A. (2009) Garden of Eden? The impact of resettlement on squatters' 'agri-hoods' in Fiji, *Development in Practice* 19(7): 884–894.

Tuilaepa, F. and G. Nartea (2002) *Poverty alleviation in Samoa: A brief review of the experience from 1970–2000*. Retrieved 20 June 2006, from Website: http://www.devnet.org.nz

Walsh, A.C. (1982) *Migration, urbanization, and development in South Pacific Countries*. New York: United Nations.

Ward, G. (1959) The banana industry in Western Samoa, *Economic Geography* 3(2): 123–137.

Ward, G. (2005) 'Changing settlement patterns in Samoa', *The Journal of Samoan Studies* 1: 111–118.

Ward, R.G. and E. Kingdon (1995) *Land, custom, and practice in the South Pacific*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

World Bank (2006) *World Bank Regional Engagement Framework for the Pacific FY2006-09*. Retrieved 23 June 2007, from Website: http://www.web.worldbank.org

© 2010 The Authors
Journal compilation © 2010 Victoria University of Wellington

Copyright of Asia Pacific Viewpoint is the property of Wiley-Blackwell and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.