

Laying the Foundations The Wesleyan Pioneers

1797-1865

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PREFACE

... *Laying the foundations* is a study of the pioneers who worked to establish the early Wesleyan Church, which ultimately became today's Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga - Ko e Siasi Uesiliana Tau'ataina 'o Tonga. The period of this study begins in 1797, the year the first London Missionary Society Christian missionaries landed in Tonga and ends in 1865 with the arrival of James Egan and Emma Moulton.

... The first missionaries of 1797 were not teachers or preachers; they were mechanics and tradespeople, hoping to show Tongans some of the skills and benefits of European Christian civilization. They were preparing the way for the Missionary preachers and teachers who followed. Among this first group was a tailor, a cabinet maker, a shoemaker, a bricklayer and a carpenter. They built a European style wooden house with windows and doors, tailored trousers from canvas, made bricks for a forge and built a European style boat during this first short-lived experiment. In 1822 Wesleyan missionary Walter Lawry and his family Lawry's arrived with the carpenter George Lilly and blacksmith Charles Tindall, leaving the two young men behind in 1823 when the Lawrys returned to Sydney. Lilly's notes on the language (now lost) and Tindall's interpreting skills were vital for the Thomas's arrival in 1826.

... In this volume, the success of the pioneering partnership between Tongans, missionaries and occasional help of castaways friendly to the mission is explored. Castaways who had made Tonga their home included William Brown and William Singleton, survivors of the *Port au Prince* massacre of 1805.

... The missionaries, in view of the attitudes of their day, have been given almost exclusive credit for the successes of the pioneering years. Typical of this attitude was on show at the Friendly Islands District Meeting and repeated at the Annual Meeting of the Australasian Wesleyan-Methodist Missionary Society in Sydney in 1860. Motions of appreciation honouring John Thomas as he and Sarah retired to England were generous. Thomas's years of missionary service in Tonga were described as "apostolic" and his approach as "apostolic in zeal and spirit". He did "the work of an evangelist" and his life was characterised by "firmness, courage, and endurance". The tribute ended with words designed to motivate and inspire. As appropriate recognition of almost thirty years devoted to Tonga and the Wesleyan mission, Thomas had left us, the motion said, "a bright example truly worthy of our imitation", while in keeping with the atti-

tudes of the time there was only a single passing reference to Mrs Thomas. (*SYDNEY MORNING HERALD* 07/05/1860).

... Thomas was certainly a key figure during the foundation years but some other significant participants have been largely ignored, referred to simply as a *native assistant* or *my teacher*, or *a native* or one of *the boys*. Un-named, they have been left in the shadows at best or remain completely in the dark at worst. Yet these people had names. They gave essential translating and interpreting services to the mission. This study attempts, where possible, to discover those names and weave their contributions into the story of the pioneering years of the church. Of those Tongan ‘assistants’, however, some were singled out and given the recognition they deserved at the time. Their contributions during the years under consideration appeared in print in the pages of the *Missionary Notices* as obituaries following their deaths, including John Lolohea, Timote Katoa, Heamasi Laupo and Setaleki Ve’ehala. Pita Vi and Joel Bulu wrote their own biographies. Pita Vi’s narrative appeared in Thomas West’s book *Ten years in South Central Polynesia* in 1865 and Joel Bulu’s autobiography was published by the Wesleyan Mission House London in 1871. Much needed recognition to the many Tongan missionaries who took the *lotu* to other islands of the Pacific and to North Australia and Papua New Guinea appear in ‘Aioema ‘Atiola’s book *Koe Tala Fungani* 2006. An English translation of this significant work appears as Volume 3 of the Bi-Centennial series of publications.

... The pages of *Laying the Foundations* that follow identify and give a voice to some of the co-workers and assistants to the missionaries who have never been given space in published material about Tonga. Fragments of information, often contained in a single short sentence in a missionary’s diary or a published work, have been gathered up and form part of the story of the beginnings of the church.

... In researching and writing *The Foundations*, a good deal of weight has been given to the journals of John Thomas. His lengthy stay in the islands, his commitment over many years to detailed writing up of daily work and experiences, and his dedication to recording Tongan historical and cultural material are some of the reasons that his work has been drawn upon freely. No other missionary to the Friendly Islands wrote so extensively about Tonga, and the fact that this material has survived makes his work a particularly valuable resource.

... Extensive quotes from diaries, letters, reports and minutes have been used in telling the story. This style has been used in order that the reader is able to ‘hear’ individuals own voices. Paraphrasing can often rob a source of its unique or vivid colour and power, distorting an original writer’s meanings or intentions. The lengthy quotes allow the reader to get a feel of the times and of events being described, even though some of the language of two centuries ago may appear archaic.

... By relying almost entirely on documentary sources both manuscript and published, and by telling something of individuals whose contributions have not

been previously told, it is hoped that family stories and other oral traditions are brought forward to add additional richness and colour to the story of early pioneering work.

... This study of the foundations ends in 1865, as a new era began with the arrival of James Egan and Emma Moulton. The reader can explore that time further in volume 2 of this series, *James Egan Moulton, the Tongan Years, 1866-1909*. This second volume includes the establishment of the Wesleyan College, the expansion of Tongan language literature, annotated music, hymn writing and the fresh approach to Bible translation. Further follow up study can be found in the previously published *Tupou College Sesquicentenary History 1866-2016*.

... The Bi-Centenary celebrations invite us to look back and reflect on the long journey that brings us to the present, to take stock of where we are today, and to dream about possibilities for the future. The tribute to Mr Thomas in 1860 gave a “bright example” to be imitated. Among other things, the pages of *Laying the Foundations* encourage imitation of those who have gone before and whose lives can also provide bright examples.

... Some New Testament words from the book of Hebrews encourage believers to consider the faithful lives of a long list of well-known biblical persons, noting that time did not permit to tell the stories of a number of others. The biblical writer then encourages the reader to consider their own faith journey:

KOIA, koe mea i he kabu'i akitaotolu c
he ao oe kau fakamooni toko lahi behe,
ke tau jiaiki foki ae mea mamafaa kotoabe,
moe agahala oku tau mouagofaa ki ai, bea
tau felce'i i he fakakukafi ae fakabuehue kuo
tofi i ho tau ao.
2 O jio be kia Jisu koe kāmataga moe
gataaga oe tui; aia ne ne kataki ae bekia i
he akau, mo ne taetokaga ki he fakama, koe
mea i he fiefa nac tuku i hono ao, bea kuo
nofo eni i he nima toomatau oe afiosaga oe
Otua.

Koe Tohi Tabu Katoa 1862.

Hebelu XII: 1-2

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

(*HOLY BIBLE. NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION. HEBREWS 12:1-2*)

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February 2026

CHAPTER I

In the Beginning: The London Missionary Society's Friendly Islands Experiment

1797-1799

The Wesleyan Methodist Missionaries who came to Tonga in 1822 and 1826 were following in the footsteps of the earlier London Missionary Society [LMS] pioneers. There were ten in the LMS team that landed in Tonga in April 1797.

The Directors of the Society chose these ten individuals because of their skills in various trades, in the hope that they would demonstrate to Tongans some of the advantages of European culture and civilisation. They were to prepare the way for later missionaries who would evangelise the people.

Their residence in Tonga was short lived. Within a little more than two and a half years, three of them had been killed, and the remainder had left, the mission abandoned.

Some LMS historians have called the experiment a failure. Others have wanted that harsh view modified so that the LMS missionaries can be seen as paving the way for later missionary successes. This latter view ensures that the LMS missionaries can be seen as important in the history of the lotu in Tonga.

A Mission to the South Seas

On the 12th April 1797 ten Englishmen from the London Missionary Society (LMS), landed in Tongatapu to establish a Christian mission. (Wilson, 1799, p.95). With high hopes, the Directors of the LMS had sent the mission ship Duff, with Captain James Wilson in command, to settle missionaries in Tahiti and Tongatapu. Twenty of the thirty missionaries chose Tahiti and ten preferred Tongatapu. The ten missionaries for Tonga appear to be an unusual group of individuals. All but one of them were young men in their twenties and thirties. The exception was Seth Kelso who was forty-nine. By occupation they were a mixture of handicraftsmen and tradesmen: Daniel Bowell, (Shopkeeper), John Buchanan, (Tailor), James Cooper, (Shoemaker), Samuel Harper, (Cotton Manufacturer), Isaac Nobbs, (Hatter), William Shelley, (Cabinet Maker), George Veeson, (Bricklayer), James Wilkinson, (Carpenter and Joiner), Samuel Gaulton (Assistant ship's cook) and Seth Kelso (Weaver). Kelso, perhaps because of his age, had been ordained in Tahiti immediately before the mission party sailed for Tongatapu. It was thought important to have one ordained man among the Tongan contingent. Gaulton was also in a different category. He was a member of the mission party 'on trial' as it were:

Samuel Gaulton was taken on board the Duff at the last minute, without proper interviewing by the Directors. He was, however, allowed to travel with the other missionaries to the South Seas. He was to work on board, "on probation", as an assistant to the ship's cook. (JAMES SIBREE, REGISTER OF MISSIONARIES).

The ten pioneers were not coming to Tonga as ministers or teachers but craftsmen and tradesmen. They had been deliberately chosen by the LMS Directors from hundreds of applicants who had volunteered for the South Seas mission. The Directors were interested in a particular kind of missionary for the experiment. The pioneers all needed to be devout Christians of course, and willing to volunteer for mission work some 20,000 kilometres from their native England. However, the Directors were looking for other qualities as well. They wanted men who were skilled in such useful arts and occupations as would make us most acceptable to the heathen. (Wilson, 1799, p.4). As the LMS historian Richard Lovett points out, the reason the Directors chose craftsmen and trades-

men was the belief that the people would *speedily see the value of European civilization and be glad to learn trades.* (*Lovett, Vol I, p.127*).

The missionaries to Tonga were to teach by example. They were to live in Tonga and demonstrate European customs and practices, arts and trades. The hope was, that as they lived out their lives among the people, the value and blessings of Christian culture would be seen, valued and accepted. Their instructions from the Directors expressed the hope that they may form models of civilised society, small indeed, but ... complete'. The tradesmen and handicraftsmen would be necessary for the success of the mission because of *the skilfulness of their hands and their knowledge of the useful arts.* (*Wilson p.xciv; Wilson p.5; Lovett p.127*). Wilkinson and Shelley, who had building and woodworking abilities, would be able to put these skills to good use. Buchanan, the tailor, made clothes and used his trade in other useful ways. Cooper made shoes for mission members. Presumably the hatter, shopkeeper, weaver, bricklayer and cotton worker would be able to adapt their European trades and crafts to the needs of tropical South Sea islanders!

The Tahitian enterprise was successful, but the Tongan venture was seen by many as a failure. It was given up after a little more than two and a half years. During that time the Christian pioneers had become caught up in the chiefly rivalry that was plaguing Tongatapu at the time. Three of them were killed during the unrest. One, because of illness, had left only months after arriving in 1797. Another, George Vason, had deserted his fellow missionaries and began living with a Tongan wife. Of the ten pioneers who had arrived in April 1797, George Vason stayed for a time with his Tongan family, while the remaining five were able to escape to Port Jackson (Sydney). January 1800 saw their departure and with that, the bold experiment was over. The London Missionary Society Mission was abandoned. (*WILSON, 1819, MEMOIRS, p.217*).

Failure or laying the foundations?

The LMS historians' language about the experiment has often been negative. *Failed, abandoned, and unsuccessful* are the words they use. The missionaries' departure in 1800 was also described in LMS literature as *an escape, and a deliverance* highlighting their negative view of the Tongan experiment. (*King, 1895, p.205; Lovett, 1899, p.173; Statistics 1872, pp.109-110*). Lovett, writing about the departure, sums up the venture in these terms:

*Looking at all the circumstances we are inclined to think
that the secret of failure was the absence of any one man
[who could give leadership] Thus ended the first attempt to
evangelise Tonga.*

And in a rather sad kind of postscript, he concluded:

Only one member of the Tongatapu mission was ever afterwards of the slightest use to mission work, and he only for a brief period. The rest disappear from history. (LOVETT P.173).

The ‘one’ he referred to was probably William Shelley who, after ‘escaping’ to Sydney, later went back to the Tahitian mission for a time. However, when he returned to New South Wales he settled at Parramatta and lived at Parramatta and:

conducted Congregational services in his house and commenced work among Aboriginal people. He attempted to learn Aboriginal language, took some children into his own family and addressed Governor Lachlan Macquarie on ‘the practicability of civilizing’ them. He was invited to draw up plans and in December was appointed superintendent and principal instructor of the Native Institution at Parramatta, the first of its kind in the colony. (ADB, SHELLEY ENTRY).

After his death in 1815 his widow Elizabeth *continued the work of the institution, but despite Macquarie’s interest, it met with little success and was closed in 1826.*

Interestingly, when Walter Lawry was appointed as a Wesleyan minister to New South Wales in 1817 he formed friendships with the former LMS missionaries living at Parramatta and Elizabeth encouraged Lawry to think of resuming the Tonga mission. (IBID.)

Lovett’s comment that the other Tongatapu survivors disappear from history needs some modification’. Seth Kelso spent several years in Christian work after leaving Tonga. It is true that he did not return to mission work in the Pacific, but did eventually serve as a parish minister in his homeland. After reaching Sydney in 1800, he then made his way back to England. After a series of incidents when he used a Tahitian (who had found his way to England) as a money-making exhibit, he finally returned to church work. He served as minister of Congregational churches in the villages at Dent, Cumbria, and South Cave, Yorkshire, during the years 1809-1826. (*CONGREGATIONAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY PERIODICAL 1927-1929, P.183*).

Another of the “escapees”, once he was safely back in England, penned an anonymous pamphlet called *A Short Narrative of the Sufferings of the Missionaries to Tongataboo*. (Buchanan, Wilkinson and Kelso were back in England at the time so it was obviously one of them who wrote the brief pamphlet.) It sold for sixpence a copy and, although pessimistic, contained a glimmer of hope:

our expedition has not been attended with the smallest degree of success, so far as we know [but] I am not, however, amidst all my disappointment, entirely destitute of hope, that our labours will yet, some way or other (though I cannot tell how) prove conducive to the hastening of those happy days, when the Isles shall wait for the redeemer's law, and trust upon his saving arm. (Short Narrative).

The LMS Tonga mission, nevertheless, has been largely and perhaps unfairly, written off as a failure. However, there are some positive statements that give support to what the writer of the Short Narrative called our labours. A writer of an early history of the LMS refers to the missionaries who were killed during the civil war in positive language. Daniel Bowell, Samuel Gaulton and Samuel Harper should have reserved for them, he says, *the glory of being the first martyrs of the London Missionary Society*, and martyrs' blood has always been "*the seed of the church*". The five survivors, he suggests, should be regarded as heroic. (*Horne, The Story of the LMS, 1894 pp.27, 29; LMS Directors Report 1828–1830*).

Tonga and Samoa (1975), expresses a similar view:

insufficient honour has been paid to the LMS pioneers in Tonga ... their failure to win a convert among the people does not detract from the credit they deserve.
(*Wood, 1975, Vol 1, p.8*).

As the journals of the missionaries are read and analysed, there would seem to be good grounds for giving the pioneers more honour and more credit than what has been previously given. They could be seen, in fact is beginning to lay the foundations for the later success of the lotu, martyrs whose blood has been *the seed of the church*. (*LMS REPORT, 1826–1830*).

Credit and honour

Rather than writing off the mission as a failure, the LMS missionaries could be seen as pioneers who paved the way for later missionary successes. They introduced into Tongan civilisation, aspects of English Christian culture that others who followed later could build upon. They were not preachers, so they did not build churches. They were not teachers, so they did not set up schools. They were Christian handicraftsmen and tradesmen, and they worked with their hands to show the Tongans some of the benefits of Christianity and European civilisation. The Directors of the LMS wanted them to form models of civilised society. (Wilson, *A Missionary Voyage, 1799, xciv*). The missionaries Journals, in small but significant ways, demonstrate the ways in which they introduced aspects of what they called *civilized society* and acted as interpreters of European culture. Some of their contributions would have far reaching effects. It could be

said that they were beginning to clear a path for others to follow, beginning to lay foundations, planting the *seeds of the Church*.

The LMS pioneers did attempt to *form a model* when they brought the miracle of written communication. Letters and notes sent messages from one end of Tongatapu to the other, without a word being spoken. They brought books, and Tongans were fascinated by what they saw and what they heard from those books. Trade goods brought by the missionaries introduced an iron age revolution. Knives, axes, planes and scissors changed forever the way that Tongans lived their daily lives. The missionaries demonstrated European house and boat-building skills and finally, and importantly, they conducted daily “family” worship, and divine service on Sundays, the “sacred day”. It was book-based worship: reading and preaching from the Bible and singing hymns. In all these things, although they were not preachers or teachers, they were preparing for what was to come. In that sense they were the ones who showed the way for later Wesleyan achievements which saw the successful establishment of the lotu.

Devotions, Divine Service and The Lord’s Supper

The LMS missionaries can be given honour and credit for holding the first services of Christian worship in Tonga. As soon as the Duff came to anchor, various chiefs came on board. The honour of being part of the first Christian devotional exercise, belongs to Fatafehi, the Tu’i Tonga and Mataele. These *two great chiefs*:

came down between decks, [of the Duff] joined with us in our devotions, and followed all our attitudes in the profoundest silence. (WILSON, 1799, P.105).

That experience of “devotions” on board the mission ship was a first. In addition, the LMS missionaries also deserve credit for conducting the first service of worship in Tonga where Tongans were present. A Journal entry for Sunday the 16 April 1797 tells of the occasion that is worthy of celebration:

About seven o’clock we had a prayer meeting, when brothers Kelso and Shelley engaged ... In the forenoon brother Buchanan preached from Jer. xxxii:27. Several of the natives were present, and behaved very quietly; in the afternoon brother Kelso preached from 2 Thess. ii: (WILSON, 1799, P.227).

Buchanan’s sermon would not have been understood by the Tongan “congregation”, but they would surely have been included in his sermon. Buchanan was preaching on the text from Jeremiah which has the message of Jehovah: *I am the Lord, the God of all people. Nothing is too difficult for me.* Kelso’s text from Thessa-

lonians was the concluding prayer of Saint Paul: *Finally, our friends, pray for us that the Lord's message may continue to spread rapidly and be received with honour, just as it was among you.*

Sunday May 7, 1797 was also an historic day: the Sacrament of Holy Communion was celebrated for the first time in Tonga. Several Tongans were present to witness the event:

About ten a.m. Brother Buchanan preached from Heb.xi:1. In the afternoon brother Kelso from Cant. 1 and afterwards administered the Lord's Supper. As few of the natives were permitted within the enclosure, we were enabled to wait on the God of our salvation without distraction. (WILSON, 1799, P.241).

Buchanan's sermon was expressing their basic belief:

To have faith is to be sure of the things we hope for, to be certain of the things we cannot see.

A month or so later, on another sabbath day, after Kelso had preached on Isaiah 53:5, he celebrated the Lord's Supper and later meditated on the solemn occasion. No Tongans were present that day, but Kelso hoped for the time when they would share in the Holy Communion:

It is surely an unspeakable favour that the Lord thus allows us to hold our solemn feasts in this land ... if we could but once see them [the Tongan people] compelled to come in and partake of our privileges, our joy would be full; however, it becomes us not to despise the day of small things, but patiently to wait for the salvation of the Lord; he has spoken good concerning us, and hath done for us great things, which confirm our hope that the day is not far distant when He will make bare his holy arm in the sight of the nations, and these ends of the earth shall see his salvation. (WILSON, 1799, P.26).

Kelso and his brothers would not see their hopes fulfilled. That would be the privilege and the honour of other missionaries who followed some twenty-five years later.

There was one celebration of the church that could have found a place in the history of the lotu in Tonga, but it did not. A service to celebrate marriage was planned but was abandoned mid-way through the ceremony. Missionary George Vason was to be the bridegroom, and a young Tongan woman, a relative of Mu-

likihā'amea, the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua, was to be the bride. Some five months after the missionaries had arrived in Tonga, Vason had accepted the protection of Mulikiha'amea and joined his household and was given a Tongan wife by his protector. Vason's brother missionaries, filled with *the utmost pain and anxiety*, questioned him about the arrangement. Initially he denied any connection with the young woman. However, when he finally acknowledged the relationship, with *very little shame or regret*, his brother missionaries took the only course open to them: they arranged a Christian marriage. (*Transactions*, 1804, p.257, 258, 266). Vason had already been married in the Tongan way. Mulikiha'amea had held a *plenteous feast*, and they had *danced and sung till a late hour*. (Vason, 1840, p.133). On the appointed day Kelso began conducting the service:

But after having gone some length in the business, the poor woman burst into tears, and refused to come under the obligations she was made to understand were necessary to become his [Vason's] wife.

She gave as a reason that they did not love each other:

there was no due affection between them and that she had agreed to the marriage only out of fear of Mulikiha'amea and her parents. (TRANSACTIONS, 1804, PP 161-162).

She returned to her parents but later went back to Vason and became one of the number of my wives. (VASON, 1840, P.147.)

Singing a new song.

Tongans were no strangers to music, song and dance. When Mumui, the Tu'i Kanokupolu, died in May 1797 it gave the missionaries an opportunity to see the various ways in which singing played a part in funeral ceremonies. Four of the missionaries visited the fai'toka (cemetery) of Mumui and saw:

A party of about one hundred and forty women, marching in single file, bearing each a basket of sand; eighty men followed in the same manner, with each two baskets of coral sand, and sung as they marched ... "This is a blessing to the dead"; and were answered in responses by the women. Another company of women brought a large quantity of cloth and answered in their turn to the above responses.

And when the grave had been prepared *with fine mats and cloth, seven men blew conch shells, while others sang in a doleful strain, expressive of their heartfelt grief*. As the body was placed in the grave, women and children wept aloud or sung ... "my father, my father! The best of chiefs!" (WILSON, 1799, PP.238, 239).

The ceremonies associated with Mumui's death continued for some weeks and the missionaries had another opportunity to experience the way in which music, singing and dancing were central to Tongan culture:

A great heiva [hiva] or mai [me'e?] was performed at the faitoka [cemetery] of Moomoe [Mumui]; first by women in their best garments and finest mats ...; the perfumed coconut oil dropping from their hair. Two drums, and a vocal concert of men sitting round, accompanied the women, who also sang and danced, performing different evolutions in a most graceful manner. An old chief at intervals called out; Fyfogee [Fai foki?] or Encore; and sometimes marea [malie] or well done. (WILSON, 1799, p.244).

The final ceremonies associated with Mumui's death and burial again illustrate the part played by song and dance in traditional Tongan culture:

The great tomai [tome'e?] was performed by the men dressed in their finest robes, and mats ornamented with feathers, beads, shells etc; the drums called tarraffe [ta nafa?] sounding, accompanied by a chorus of persons singing, and holding in their hands an instrument like a paddle, called doboche [?] about two feet long, with a short handle; making curious flourishes, with corresponding motions, and different attitudes; those around them singing in chorus. (WILSON, 1799, p.246).

So the LMS missionaries could see how music, song and dance were basic to Tongan life. They were definitely not strangers to singing. However, the arrival of the LMS missionaries introduced them to Christian hymn singing. Crowds of onlookers would gather outside the missionaries' houses and listen when daily family worship was being held, or on Sundays when divine service was in progress. Sometimes a few would be permitted to come inside the fence of the house and witness Christian worship up close. (Wilson, 1799, p.237). As Vason was later to say:

we availed ourselves of every opportunity to perform our daily worship, to sing and pray, when they were present. (VASON, 1840, p.134).

The hymn singing would have sounded strange to Tongan ears, but it obviously made an impression on some of the leading chiefs. When Tuku'aho, at Hihifo,

was about to visit Nuku'alofa, he asked the missionaries to come and entertain him:

[He] sent a messenger, requesting us to go and sing to him before he set off for Noogollifua [Nuku'alofa]. (WILSON, 1799, P.228).

The missionaries on this occasion felt they could not accept Tuku'aho's invitation because, they said, the occasion was not appropriate:

As he was at this time surrounded by some hundreds who were drinking their morning kava, we declined going, and returned answer, that singing was part of our worship, and we did not make a practice of doing it at other times; which answer satisfied him. (WILSON, 1799, P.228).

Sometime later, however, when Mumui was nearing death, *incapable of turning himself* he desired a few of our number to sing psalms for him. (Wilson, 1799. p.234) According to Vason, Christian hymns were the only part of worship that the people were interested in. (VASON 1840, P.134).

The LMS missionaries were demonstrating a new way of singing, and at least some of the high chiefs were becoming interested in it. In this the LMS missionaries were pioneers. One of the first aspects of Christianity that the Wesleyans Thomas and Hutchison, and later, Turner and Cross introduced, was hymn singing and Tongans embraced it readily. It is a central feature of Christian worship and Tongan culture generally to this day.

Remembering the Sabbath day.

The LMS Missionaries also deserve the credit for introducing the idea of a Christian sacred day, something that has become one of Tonga's strongly held Christian traditions to the present time. One of the first references to the "special day" was when Ata visited the missionaries house on a Sunday morning in April 1797. While brother Buchanan was preaching a sermon from the first chapter of John's gospel, and before he concluded:

an old chief, named Arttar [Ata], came with some kava and a bunch of bananas; he and his attendants sat quietly till the service was over; after which, being told the day was sacred, he apologised for disturbing us, and took leave. (WILSON, 1799, P.230).

On a Sunday in early June 1797, after noting that they had spent the Lord's Day *in our usual manner*, the missionary Journal then records the following interesting encounter:

Futtafaihe [Fatafehi, the Tui Tonga] visited us and wished we would shave him: We excused ourselves from doing it, as we never did any manual labour on the odooa [‘Otua] day. Our gracious Father has given us great acceptance in the sight of this people. they express much surprise at observing how different our manners are from those of our countrymen, [the beachcombers and castaway sailors] whose time is spent in idleness and profligacy. (WILSON, 1799, P.250).

A month later a leading chief playfully mocked the missionaries about their observance of the Sabbath:

On the Lord's Day having told Tooboocovaloo [Tubou Valu] that we did no work, and spent the whole in the worship of God; he asked with much humour, whether we might eat on that day; and having informed him, he very kindly sent us a baked hog, on which we dined together. (WILSON, 1799, P.256).

Vason, originally, had joined his brothers in stressing that Sunday was:

“taboo” or sacred, during which time we were “tabooed”, or prohibited from all kinds of business (VASON, 1840, P.134).

The missionaries had taken particular care, to show the people on a number of occasions that the Sabbath was one of their important days. So, when Vason deserted the mission to live with a Tongan wife, his brother missionaries *ex-communicated him* and pressed him, never-the-less, to observe the Lord's Day. Kelso told him to keep a record of the days so that he would know when it was Sunday. He was asked to make:

a memorandum of his time, as that he might know the Sabbath when it returned. [and] to withdraw from his daily companions and spend the day in reading his Bible and other books which he had.

Vason was not impressed and said he would not be following this brother's advice. (*TRANSACTIONS, 1804, P.266-267*).

The LMS missionaries reverence for the Lord's Day made a lasting impression on at least some of the people. Twenty-five years later, when Thomas and Hutchison arrived, the captain of the ship that brought the new missionaries went on shore on Sunday and traded for some pigs and wood. Thomas was distressed by this breaking of the Lord's Day and noted in his Journal that the people:

knew that it was our Sabbath, and the Chief had given orders that no canoes should come off [to the ship] but that the day should be tabooed, or kept sacred. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 2/7/1826).

Fears about praying

Praying and singing, and presumably the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, caused suspicion, conflict and fear among some of the chiefs and people and resident Europeans were at the centre of it. The beachcombers, Connelly, Morgan and Ambler, had originally been helpful to the missionaries as translators and interpreters of some aspects of Tongan culture and history. (Wilson, 1799, pp 97, 99, 103, 105). However, they and the missionaries soon began to quarrel. Missionaries were critical of the lifestyle of their fellow countrymen and Morgan, Connelly and Ambler abused the missionaries. In an argument over tools, (the missionaries would not give them the iron tools they asked for), the beachcombers used some strong language that much hurt our minds. (WILSON, 1799, p.242).

Conflict, at times, led to physical fights. In a dispute over pigs:

Ambler and Morgan, having heard that we suspected them of having driven off our hogs, came to our house, and began to abuse us; and Morgan even kicked one of our number. Seeing them determined to proceed further, a scuffle ensued; Morgan again struck with his club the person he had kicked; but the blow did no great injury. They then desisted, finding themselves overpowered, but not from uttering the most horrid execrations [curses]. (WILSON, 1799, PP.250-251).

The two groups of Europeans, missionaries and beachcombers, became *bitter enemies*. The beachcombers threatened to murder the missionaries and began a campaign to frighten the chiefs and people about the missionaries singing and praying. An entry in a missionary journal foreshadowed what was to come. Ambler and Morgan:

endeavored to propagate false and scandalous reports concerning us, and our designs in coming amongst them.
(TRANSACTIONS, 1804, P.280).

The most damaging false reports linked missionary prayers to the death of an important chief. Ambler, Connelly and Morgan were telling the people that:

Our God, in answer to our prayers, kills them. This being the fourth chief that has died since our arrival, makes them say they never died so fast before; and imputing all to the same cause, they say, that if we continue praying and singing, there will not be a chief left alive ... the same idea was mentioned to us by different persons; it seems to gain ground with them very fast, and our endeavors to persuade them to the contrary are fruitless at present...at the celebration of the annual natche [inasi] ... [Bowell] found the minds of the people had received the same dangerous impression, and that our countrymen were the sole authors and propagators of it.
(WILSON, 1799, P.257).

After the death of Jimaffaeuta [Siumafua'uta?] *an old female chief of the first rank, being aunt to Duatonga* [Tu'i Tonga] and nearly connected with most of the principal families in the island ... Duatonga, in particular, was so concerned about it, that he had:

sent for brother Gaulton, and seriously advised that we should desist from the pernicious practice of praying, as he feared, if we did not, it would be attended with bad consequences both to him and us; (Transactions, 1804) p.267).

Almost twenty-five years later, in early Wesleyan days, there were still those who were afraid that the missionaries prayed them all sick. (*Letters and Journals, Beveridge**, November 1824).

Not all leading chiefs shared the Tu'i Tonga's fears. It seems that there were two opposing views of praying, arising from chiefly rivalries and based on the two main centres of power, Hahake and Hihifo. The false and scandalous reports, talked about at Mu'a during the inasi, annoyed Veasi'i at Ha'ateiho and the Tu'i Kanokupolu at Hihifo. Both rejected the rumors about praying. Veasi'i was much displeased, when it was reported to him. And when Ambler *endeavored to poison the mind of Dugonagaboola* [Tu'i Kanokupolu], the chief:

heard it with great indignation and hissed him [Ambler] out of his presence. A few days after, this fellow quarreled

*with the chief's carpenters ... [he, the Tu'i Kanokupolu]
ordered him from his presence, threatening his life if he ever
showed his face there more; (WILSON, 1799, p.257-258).*

Praying and Christian worship and rituals (Holy Communion) led to support by some and opposition by others during the short history of the LMS mission. The missionaries departure, however, ended on a positive note. As Shelley, Kelso, Wilkinson, Buchanan and Cooper were leaving Tonga in January 1800, supporters of the mission said their farewells. When writing later about the sad occasion, the missionaries noted that:

several of our old friends were there and they took a most affectionate leave of us all – Ata shed many tears. (TRANSACTIONS, 1804, pp.314-315).

Fascination with the printed word.

In the 1820's when the Wesleyans first entered the Tongan mission field, some of the people already had a knowledge of books and writing. Early explorers probably provided the first experiences of the written and printed word, but it was the LMS missionaries who really demonstrated what books and writing could do. They prepared the way so that when Lawry (1822) and later Thomas and Hutchison (1826) arrived, there were Tongans who knew about books. Lolohea at Hihifo, when asking Thomas to teach him, said, *Me love book*. Another young man, wanting to be taught, said, *Me love book. You teach me book*. (*THOMAS, JOURNAL, 15/7/1826; 23/7/1826*).

A library of books was part of the cargo carried by the Duff when the LMS party set out from England. After settling twenty of the missionaries in Tahiti, and in preparation for the voyage to Tongatapu, a *large crate of books* was opened and the contents divided into two piles – one for the use of the Tahitian Mission and the other for Tonga. (*Wilson, 1799, p.71*). It is not clear what the Tonga share included. Apart from bibles and hymn books, there was at least, an *Encyclopaedia*, Rev Richard Hervey's *Dialogues*, and a *History of Greenland*. (*Wilson, 1799, p.279*).

The History of Greenland may appear to be a very strange choice, Greenland being a country *covered in most places with everlasting ice and snow*. However, the book detailed, among other things, reports about pioneer mission work among 'heathens' that had already taken place since 1733. The history was written so that English readers (including the LMS Missionaries to Tonga), *could minutely and circumstantially know, how their brethren or predecessors fared in the work of the Lord* in pioneering situations. (*Crantz, History of Greenland, Vol. ii London 1767, p. x*). Hervey's Dialogues was also an obvious choice for evangelical Christians. The Dialogues were a defence of Christian theology and Christian morals and was popular amongst Wesleyans and Congregationalists. John Wesley had recom-

mended that Methodists should read it, although he did publish a critique in which he supported what he regarded as “right” and highlighted what he saw was “wrong” in the Dialogues. (*SANDERS, WESLEY ON THE CHRISTIAN LIFE*, 2013, p.147).

Tongans could see that books were treasured by the missionaries. When the civil unrest was creating a dangerous situation, the missionaries decided to separate into several groups and put themselves under the protection of the greatest chiefs and *place our property also under their care*. That way, they thought, their personal safety would be secured, and it *would at least save our books*. (*Wilson* 1799, p.243). They clearly valued their books and when George Vason deserted his brother missionaries, they asked him to return any property belonging to the Mission. So he handed over ‘*a few nails, books and some paper*’. (*WILSON* 1799, p.266).

Tongans close to the missionaries would also have seen their distress, during one phase of the war, when they *lost a bible and some of the great number and variety of their other books*. (*Transactions*, 1804, p.291) On one occasion in June 1797 the Chief of Ha’ateiho (Vaarjee – Veasi’i) saw Bowell and Harper reading a book. Intrigued, he *inquired what it meant*. The brothers:

endeavoured to make him comprehend the sacred subject of which it treated, which he seemed to understand, and [which he] mentioned to his mother [the Tu’i Tonga Fefine] who was sitting by. (*Wilson*, 1799, p.253).

The resident LMS missionaries of the 1790s, it could be said, prepared the way for a ‘book culture’ that began in the 1830s, following the work of the Wesleyans and the arrival of their printing press. The church printing office, in those days, was not able to keep up with the demand for books. (*THOMAS, JOURNAL**.3/5/1831).

The coming of the iron age

The LMS could also be given credit for ushering in a new dimension of the iron age to Tonga. Tongans had known about iron for more than 150 years before the arrival of the LMS. Iron was not new to them. Tasman during his visit in 1643 left some nails, a gimlet and other small iron objects. A hundred or more years later, Cook left a few iron objects. So iron was not new, but what was new, however, was that the LMS missionaries brought crates of iron goods with them which led to the iron age beginning in earnest. The Directors in London had made sure that the Tonga mission would be supplied with a good amount of ironware for trade and for gift giving. The supply consisted of:

such an immense quantity of useful and necessary iron tools of all sorts, as far as exceeded our greatest expectation, and filled the natives with astonishment ... [it was a] bountiful supply of everything that could be devised for our comfort,

*and the furtherance of the work in which we are engaged
(WILSON, 1799, p.266-267).*

It is this immense quantity of tools and other metal goods that introduced the iron age into Tongan culture. A reading of the missionaries' journals makes this very clear. On almost every page there is reference to property. Property usually meant "trade goods": axes, hatchets, knives, scissors, plates. The goods were used by the missionaries mainly to 'purchase' food, and other necessities. Tongans would give anything, the missionaries said, in bartering, so long as they received iron goods in return. (Wilson, 1799, p.245). However, another very important aspect of property was that it provided very attractive gifts for chiefs. Iron goods, therefore, featured prominently in gift giving when the missionaries were trying to establish good relationships with those in power. An incident in the early days of the mission, highlights this point:

Three roasted hogs were sent us this morning, one from Fefene Duatonga [Tui Tonga Fefine] one from Toogahowe [Tukuaho], and the other from Feenow Lucalullo [Finau Ulukalala]. In return we sent a present to Toogahowe only; it consisted of a cooper's adze, an auger, a gouge, three gimlets, a plane, two chisels etc. (WILSON, 1799, P.237).

The sudden influx of iron goods led to demands for blacksmithing services. Tools had to be sharpened, repaired or modified to meet Tongan requirements. However, there was no blacksmith among the LMS handicraftsmen and tradesmen, although they had brought blacksmith tools and a bellows with them. One wonders how a hatter, a shopkeeper, a weaver, a cotton worker or a woodworker would be able to build a forge and work with tools and other iron goods. The carpenter (Wilkinson) and the cabinetmaker (Shelley) would be the closest they could get to working with metal.

The lack of blacksmith skills was initially made up for from an unlikely source – a European castaway by the name of William Beak. A blacksmith by trade, he was left in Tonga around the same time that the missionaries arrived and a friendship between the castaway and the missionaries began. The Directors of the LMS had included some advice about castaways and beachcombers that the missionaries were likely to meet when arriving in Tonga. Some may be helpful, others troublesome and perhaps treacherous. So the advice was to be careful and only link up with those who were *best suited to become your instruments*. (Wilson, 1799, p.xcvii).

Beak proved to be one of the best suited ones. He was a *very sober, industrious man* who would be very helpful to the mission (*Colton, 1830, p.48; Transactions 1804, p.259*) He was most useful at a time when the Tongans were embracing the iron age with enthusiasm. The missionaries had the tools but not the skills. Beak, then, could be seen as a divine gift to the mission! He quickly got to work and:

erected a forge and began to work which soon brought vast numbers of natives, who, finding they could get the smallest pieces of iron they had worked into serviceable tools, flocked from every quarter to avail themselves of his labour.
(COLTON, 1830, P.48. TRANSACTIONS P.260).

The people, although they greatly valued the missionaries iron goods, often wanted tools to be modified to meet the needs of their own culture and their own needs. An example of re-working a tool to suit individual needs was when Tukuaho:

attended by a numerous retinue, brought us two pieces of cloth, [ngatu] and a spade which we had given him the week before; he now wanted it [iron goods] cut in pieces, to make small iron tools; and as the grindstone had been fitted up, they were all sharpened for him: having some yava [kava] root by us, we gave it to him, so that while the business of the spade was going on, they regaled themselves over a bowl, and afterwards departed much pleased.
(WILSON, 1799, P.261).

Numerous Journal entries illustrate the role that a plentiful supply of iron was beginning to play in the day-to-day activities of the mission and in the lives of the people:

Every tool we make use of attracts the notice of the spectators, with which we are constantly surrounded. [They express interest in] the ingenious arts with which we are acquainted.
(WILSON, 1799, P. 229).

Several chiefs came to see us this morning and brought tools to be sharpened.
(WILSON, 1799, P.242).

Tukuaho came to the missionaries' house seeking a share of the property if we separated and lived with other chiefs ... [we] opened every box to his view, from every one of which he took something, by way of a tithe, and departed satisfied.
(WILSON, 1799, P.243).

At the request [of the brethren at Hihifo], Beak ... made twenty knives which they intended as a present for the Tu'i Kanokupolu (TRANSACTIONS, 1804, P.269).

[Beak on a visit to Hihifo] took with him twelve pairs of scissors he had made for the brethren. (TRANSACTIONS, 1804, p.269).

Iron goods also served a very important cultural function in gift giving that was an essential part of Tongan festivals and other gatherings. During funeral ceremonies at Mu'a in early 1799, Mafile'o sent a message to Buchanan:

requesting of him some tools, to distribute among his friends, who were come to the funeral. Upon which, getting some ready, he immediately set forward; at Ardeo [Ha'ateiho] he was joined by Brother Bowell, and in the evening arrived safe at Mooa [Mu'a], where Buchanan divided his tools between Maffee [Mafi] and his brother Dugonaboola [Tu'i Kanokupolu], who both treated them with the greatest kindness. (TRANSACTIONS, 1804, p.280).

Beachcomber Beak was also useful to the missionaries as an instructor in his craft. Shelley, the cabinet maker, wished to learn something of the blacksmith's art and Beak was willing to help. Shelley had tried his hand at blacksmithing but with little success. In his own words he describes an early attempt, for example, to build a forge:

desiring to prepare a forge, we endeavoured to form moulds for brick and to produce lime, we attempted to burn shells, which abound; but found no convenient mode; we were able however, to obtain some from the natives, to change the colour of their hair, and dive for the stone in deep water, which they afterwards burn. (WILSON, 1799, p. 229).

Shelley's inexperience led him to seek Beak's help:

Brother Shelley having attempted to do a little smith's work and finding himself at a great loss for want of instruction, begged the favour of Beak to assist him in that way, which ... he consented with the greatest readiness. (TRANSACTIONS, 1804, p.264).

The LMS Mission's introduction of such a large supply of iron certainly played an essential part in mission and community life. Some twenty for so years after the "failed" LMS mission, Wesleyans Walter Lawry would take a considerable amount of trade with him and when John Thomas and John Hutchison arrived in Tonga in 1826, they brought one hundred tons of cargo, mostly iron goods.

John Thomas's regular orders to Sydney for axes, hatchets, planes, spades, knives and scissors emphasised the importance, in fact the necessity, of a plentiful supply of "trade goods". The Wesleyan church had learned that iron was a basic ingredient in the day-to-day work of the mission. (*THOMAS JOURNAL I/II/1826*).

A European style house.

Wilkinson was a carpenter before he became a missionary. He deserves the credit, together with cabinet maker Shelley, for constructing the first European style house in Tonga. The LMS Directors, as we have seen, chose handicraftsmen and tradesmen, not preachers and teachers, for the South Seas mission. Wilkinson was one of the few who could actually ply his trade. This would demonstrate to the Tongans some of the advantages of European civilization. Bowell, the shopkeeper, began the project when he came *to consult Wilkinson, in planning a house which they proposed building at Ardeo [Ha'ateiho]* (*Transactions, 1800*, p. 271-272).

The house at Ha'ateiho would have been an amazing sight. It was a 'mansion', *stark white with its lime plastered walls*. Presumably, any timber required for the framing could be 'milled' on site, as Wilkinson and Shelley had the necessary tools for construction work. As Wilson's narrative tells us, there was some building materials among the cargo on board the Duff, and when transporting the goods to shore:

The Canoe was completely loaded with the last of the things which they had laid together as sufficient for their purposes till our return; but they afterwards thought a few boards might be of service in building a house more suitable than that which they occupied ... however, as they had saws of every kind, there was no absolute necessity for the boards (*WILSON, 1799*, p.109).

Vason, the bricklayer, although he had deserted the mission, gave a few day's work when the house had to be plastered. He had available to him an amount of lime that was required for the job. The missionaries had already burnt a considerable quantity of coral, which produced excellent lime. (*TRANSACTIONS, 1804*, P.274-275).

The finished house would have become a focus of interest and attention because nothing like it had been seen in Tonga before. Vason thought *it looked very neat!* (Vason, 1840, p.143). It was a building:

which in Tonga might truly be reckoned a commodious, stately and secure mansion, being about thirty two feet in length consisting of one storey about 10 feet high, fifteen feet in breadth, three rooms on the floor, with a passage to the left which was floored with a kind of rods wherewith the country abounds, and roofed with a thatch of the sugar cane leaf; the windows were composed of the same kind of rods, nailed across, so as to admit both light and air ...

The walls were plastered with a strong and very white lime, and the doors were hung with iron hinges, made specially for the house by Beak. (Transactions, 1804, p. 277).

Amazing means of communication.

The importance and value of written letters and notes became obvious quite quickly in the LMS mission's short history. And those Tongans who grasped the value of written communication, began to teach others its significance. It was when the Mission ship Duff returned to Tonga after settling John Harris at St Christina (Marquesas) in 1797 that the 'miracle' of written communication amazed the Tongans. Buchanan and Gaulton were making their way to meet up with Captain Wilson, on the *Duff*'s return, when a very significant event occurred. On their way, the missionaries were met by some men from Hihifo carrying a note from Bowell about the arrival of the Duff in the waters off Hihifo. As their Journal records, one of the men was carrying a note addressed to Bowell. The messenger:

had brought us several messages of the same kind on other occasions; and understanding the nature of it better than any of his countrymen, he had endeavoured to explain the use of it to those who were with him; this excited their curiosity to a degree which induced them to bear him company, in order to see it delivered, and know thereby whether or not what he said was true. When they saw the joy which the opening of it gave the brethren, they seemed struck with amazement, and were perplexed in no small degree, when they perceived that by means of it they knew as well as themselves that the ship had arrived, and where she lay. (WILSON, 1799, PP 253, 264).

Ata certainly understood the value of written communications. When the missionaries were leaving in January 1800, he asked them to leave a letter with him to show to visiting captains of vessels that might call at Tonga. And so, at Ata's request:

Shelley wrote a letter, directed to the Duff, or any other ship that might put in, assuring them of his friendly disposition towards us, and clearing him from all blame in our disasters, which was left with him. (TRANSACTIONS, 1804, P.314).

Some years later, when Wesleyan missionaries arrived and the lotu became established permanently, letter writing would become one of the most useful tools for the mission when communicating across the scattered Islands of the Tonga group and also with their teachers in Fiji, Samoa and Uvea. And once Tau-

fa'ahau had learned to read and write, he used those skills to great advantage in both church and state matters and in international relations.

Healing the Sick.

The LMS missionaries brought a supply of medicines with them and the people soon learned that they could get help in time of sickness. A few quotes from the missionaries journals show that, even though they were not medically trained, they could bring relief in some cases of sickness. When a woman and her friends were seriously ill after eating poisonous fish, they were able to get help from the missionaries:

On the 26th July 1797 Brother Shelley, who has had the care of our few medicines ... went to see a woman who, with others, had eaten some fish of a poisonous nature, which was likely to be, to her in particular, attended with bad consequences; an emetic was administered, which removed the cause of that disorder, and restored the poor woman to health
...

Following that experience the missionary commented:

It would be a valuable acquisition to this country, and might be a means of facilitating our work, to have a good stock of medicines, and a skilful person to apply them (WILSON, 1799, P.258-259).

On another occasion a woman with tropical ulcers was treated by them over many weeks with a very pleasing result. The woman:

with ulcers round her wrists of long standing, applied to us; and in about two months we happily were able to cure her (WILSON, 1799, P.229).

Some requests were probably beyond the missionaries' skills and abilities. A challenging appeal came from a chief who asked Bowell *if we had any who could assist women in difficult labours*. The Missionary Journal does not show us Bowell's response! (Wilson, 1799, p.249). What the Journal does show, however, is that although requests for medical help were frequent, they could not always be met. One entry illustrates their frustration. The people, they said:

have often applied to us for assistance, which could we afford them, would certainly raise us still higher in their esteem; but at present we have neither proper medicines, nor skill to effect anything this way. In some cases, we have seen old

women apply the juice of the breadfruit, tied up in leaves, and made hot, with which they rubbed the wound. (WILSON, 1799, p.259).

Interestingly, modern research has shown that the juice of the breadfruit has very useful healing properties!

The LMS missionaries were convinced that medical help would greatly assist the mission. That certainly was true as Wesleyan Missionaries later discovered. John and Sarah Thomas, for example, were often on medical duties several mornings a week! (*Thomas, Journal, 14/1/1831; 2/4/1831; 4/6/1831*). The LMS party deserve some credit because, in simple practical ways, they had taught the people that missionaries could often be a source of effective medical help.

Suits of calico jackets and trousers

Two tailors, John Buchanan and Edward March, were among the thirty LMS missionaries chosen for the South Seas mission. When preferences about actual mission stations were being discussed, Buchanan chose Tonga rather than Tahiti. Once settled in Tonga, there were times when he could demonstrate his skills with cloth.

European clothes were not new to Tongans. The succession of 17th and 18th century navigators and explorers, all dressed in European clothes, showed Tongans a very different way of dressing. Tongans had used their native cloth for clothes for hundreds of years. Now they were seeing quantities of a new cloth among the cargo of trade goods supplied for the Tonga mission, and Buchanan, the tailor, a European ‘clothes maker’, would be living among them.

One of the first gifts from the missionaries, presented by Captain Wilson of the Duff to the Tu'i Tonga Fefine, was *an elegant English Dress. The noble lady*, who had been entertained on board the Duff, left the ship and returned to shore *highly delighted with her gift. (Wilson, 1799, p.266)*. Iron, as we have seen, was greatly valued by the Tongans, but European cloth ranked a close second. Foreign cloth quickly made its way into traditional festivities. During the funeral activities following Mumui's death, the missionaries noticed a group of women singing and dancing in a most graceful manner:

dressed in their best garments and finest mats: pieces of our cloth or silk were added as ornaments (Wilson, 1799, p.244).

Buchanan drew some criticism as the people saw him at his tailoring work making suits of clothes. Cutting out a pattern for a suit inevitably led to some waste. Numerous scraps of material were left over from the tailoring. Cutting up cloth seemed to Buchanan's Tongan neighbours to be *unnecessary and a destruction of valuable property*:

Brother Buchanan having already made several suits of calico jackets and trousers for himself and companions ... and [the people] finding him cutting that kind of stuff, exposed him to a good deal of ill will among his neighbours, who thought he ought rather to give it away, than destroy it in such a manner (TRANSACTIONS, 1804, P. 363).

Some actions during the civil war seem to illustrate the way Tongans valued European clothes. There were several occasions when missionaries, and the castaway William Beak who lived and worked with them, were robbed of their possessions, including the clothes they stood up in. Once, when Wilkinson and Beak were making their way to Hihifo from Ma'ufanga, a war party met them and they:

stripped Beak and left him naked; Wilkinson having a piece of country cloth round him, [obviously he had already been relieved of his clothes] divided it between them, and thus equipped, they reached Aheefo [Hihifo]. (TRANSACTIONS, 1804, P.308).

This was not the only time that a gang had stripped Beak, leaving him *without a covering of any kind, except a piece of coconut leaf tied about his loins.* (*Transactions, 1804, p.295*). Similarly, when Cooper was attacked in his home one night, he had his shirt stripped off him and his attackers *gave him a piece of country cloth to wrap around him.* In the morning, in the clear light of day he discovered that his invaders had left him *an old coat which had escaped them in the dark.* (*Transactions, 1804, p.271*). Stolen European clothes found their way, then, into village life. The castaways, Morgan and Ambler also stole some of the missionaries' possessions, and when Bowell and Harper, on a visit to the chief Veasi'i in Ha'ateiho:

met some women there, they were dressed in the stolen things. (Wilson, 1799, p.249). And during the civil war, one of the chiefs asked the missionaries for something to dress some chiefs of his party; we sent him a quantity of blue cloth. (TRANSACTIONS, 1804, P.288).

The missionaries were seen as a source of European cloth, and the people's desire for it led to an interesting request to Captain Wilson of the Duff. If he was intending to return to Tonga, *some of them even desired us to bring such [supplies of cloth] on our next visit.* (*WILSON, 1799, P.278*).

Gardens and agriculture

From the first contacts with the Tongan people, the LMS missionaries could see that they were good gardeners and agriculturalists. The number of boats that met them on arrival were laden with produce for barter. These boats were so numerous that only about twenty were allowed to trade at any one time. Their offerings were diverse, and they were *scrupulous dealers*, demanding a good price for their goods:

The commodities they offered for barter consisted of hogs, breadfruit, coconuts, yams, spears, clubs ... and various articles ingeniously manufactured; but their demands were so high that but little was purchased ... [they were] demanding for half a dozen coconuts what would purchase a hundred at Otaheite [Tahiti]. (WILSON, 1799, P.96, 99).

The early navigators were impressed with Tongan agricultural skills. Tasman (1643) and Cook (1774) recorded glowing reports in their journals. Tasman found:

Plots or gardens in which the beds were made neatly in squares, and planted with all sorts of earth fruits, the bananas and other fruit trees in many places and almost all standing so straight in line that it was a pleasure to behold. (TASMAN, SHARP. 1968, P.170).

Cook was similarly fascinated by *the high state of cultivation*. I thought, he said:

that I was transported into one of the most fertile plains in Europe, here was not an inch of waste ground ... Nature assisted by a little art, nowhere appears in a more flourishing state than in this isle [Tongatapu] (COOK'S JOURNAL, BEAGLEHOLE, VOL II, PP 252, 272).

As the missionaries settled into their new home, they could get a clear understanding of the way the people approached gardening and agriculture, and their opinions mirrored those of Tasman and Cook. During an excursion on one occasion they:

Observed the country, and the manner of fencing and cultivating their lands. It is in general level, laid out in fields or smaller enclosures, called abbeys [apis], and some still less, which surround their houses ... Their fences are reed, set in a trench, plaited close, and fastened to stakes on the inside, which strike root and grow; they contain banana

trees, or yams, set in rows three feet asunder, ... between the rows the yava [Kava] root was cultivated, or the taloo [taro]. (Wilson, 1799, p.240-241).

Tongans cultivated their plantations, large or small, with wooden tools:

Their mode of working is to squat down on their hams, and hoe the ground with an instrument of hard wood, about five feet long, narrow, with sharp edges, and pointed; with this also they dig it up. (WILSON, 1799, P.241).

The missionaries, as expected, developed European style gardens around their houses and used European tools in the process. The people who observed them at work, saw them using spades to dig the ground and plant their crops and *every employment we engage in excites the attention of the natives. (WILSON, 1799, P.230).*

In keeping with their instructions, the missionaries demonstrated skills and technology that they brought with them from the other side of the world. At Ha'ateiho, for example, Harper:

Laid out the grass plot before our house, with brother Wilkinson's help, in the European style, with the garden, which we began to cultivate. Taught Vaarjee's (Veasi'i's) men the method of digging the ground with spades and planted some pineapples. (WILSON, 1799, P.255).

The LMS missionaries could not teach Tongans much about cultivating fruits and vegetables. What they could do was to introduce them to new iron tools to replace their wooden ones. Not everyone, however, valued European gardening tools, as we have seen, when a leading chief asked the missionaries to cut up an English spade and make it into more useful *small tools*.

When Thomas came to Hihifo in 1826 and traded various agricultural tools for food and other needs, the people asked that a better kind of spade be made, based on their ancient hardwood implement. So Thomas gave orders to his iron-monger suppliers in Sydney/London to modify typical European spades, and the unique Tongan version, used to this day, came into being! (LETTERS AND JOURNALS, 1822-1875*, THOMAS I/II/1626).

Building Boats

Wilkinson, the carpenter, and Shelley, the cabinet maker, combined their wood working skills to build a European style boat. Tongans had sailed the vast pacific for centuries in large double canoes and smaller craft, and their boat building skills were legendary. Nevertheless, the missionaries, who had been using small Tongan canoes when they travelled back and forth from Hihifo to Nuku'alofa

and to Mu'a, depending on local chiefs and people to provide suitable craft. Sometimes it was difficult to get access to a canoe, so they decided to make a boat for mission work:

thinking it would be a considerable advantage to have a boat of their own, and having procured from Duoangaboola [Tu'i Kanokupolu] a quantity of timber they began to build one. (TRANSACTIONS, 1804, P.266 7/2/1798).

When they first arrived in Tonga, they had asked Tuku'aho for access to timber and so, when almost 12 months later, when they wanted to build a boat, the Chief was true to his word. With the necessary tools, including saws of every kind, they set to work to build a European style craft. (*Transactions, 1804, p.266: Wilson, 1799, p.109, 227*). Within six weeks the job was done. The boat, made of timber provided by the Tu'i Kanokupolu:

measured twenty-one feet in the keel, and six in the beam, it was covered all over with a deck, and convenient hatches left for four rowers to sit. (Transactions, 1804, pp.266, 280).

Wilkinson and Shelley had also called on the skills of Buchanan, the tailor. When the boat was finished, Buchanan's contribution had provided *a suit of sails* consisting of a jib, fore-stay sail, and mizzen ... made of mats. (*Transactions, 1804, p. 280.*) William Beak also had a hand in the construction. He had made *the iron braces, and some other iron work* for the boat (*TRANSACTIONS, 1804, P.304*).

The boat was for general mission work and moving the missionaries and their personal belongings and foodstuffs between the several mission houses that were established when they decided to split up and live with different chiefs in various location on Tongatapu. (*Transactions, 1840, p.307*). But at the height of the civil war when the missionaries were destitute, short of food and clothing and fearing for their lives, they considered a much more adventurous use for their little craft:

With these discouraging views, some had entertained serious thoughts of quitting the island in our small boat and attempting a voyage to the coast of New Holland.

Others of the mission party thought such a voyage would be disastrous. It would be no better than:

flying from one death to a worse; for it was very unlikely we could ever have made Port Jackson, being destitute of every material for navigation, and having no way to procure a

sufficient supply of food and water for our support. (Transactions, 1804, p.313)8

At that point, in the midst of all their difficulties and dangers, *the Lord appeared for our deliverance in a very unexpected way*. Captain Clark of the Betsy called at Tongatapu and offered them a passage to Port Jackson. (*Transactions, 1804, p.314-5*). January 1800 saw the mission abandoned.

Success or Failure?

The London Missionary Society historians, and other writers of mission history, have spoken of the Tongatapu mission as a failure. They have concentrated on the civil war, the killing of three of the ten missionaries, the lack of any converts, and the abandonment of the mission.

However, when we keep in mind that the missionaries were all ‘mechanics’ (tradesmen and handicraftsmen), sent to Tonga to demonstrate some of the advantages of European civilisation, then a very different and positive view of their work is possible.

George Vason, who deserted the mission, was the only member of the Tongan LMS group to write a book about his experiences. In some of his comments he gives credit to his fellow workers, believing that they could be seen as laying some of the foundations on which others would be able to build:

It is probable, had not these disturbances [civil unrest and warfare] taken place, the missionaries, when they had attained a knowledge of the language, and an intimacy with the people, might have met with considerable success ... It may also be found to have cleared away many obstacles, yea, may be regarded as the first stone of a foundation, on which the edifice of evangelical truth and righteousness may be erected in these regions in future years. (VASON, 1840, p.121, 124).

And when *Koe Ta'u e Teau*, (One Hundred Years) was written in 1926, the authors also wanted to give the LMS pioneers appropriate recognition:

*Koia kuo tuku 'a e feinga ni ke omi 'a e lotu ki Tonga ni.
'Oku kelekele'aki 'a Tonga ni ha ni'ihi he kau tama na'e
omai; pe 'oku 'alu hono toe ta'e ha'anau sio ki ha fua 'o enau
ngaeue. io, 'oku 'ikai ke nau 'ilo pe kuo nau to ha tengae pe
'ikai. Ka 'oku te tui kuo nau to ha tengae e mo'oui mo fua.*

It is to the LMS missionaries that credit be given in their attempt to bring the lotus to Tonga. Others may find Tonga fertile soil from what the young men brought. The remnant of them left Tonga without seeing the fruit of their labour. It was not possible for them

to know if they had planted the seed or not. But we believe they planted the seed of life and fruitfulness. (KOE TA'U 'E TEAU, P. 42).

CHAPTER 2

Wesleyan Beginnings in Tonga

1822-1823

Tonga's first contact with the Wesleyan Church came in August 1822. In that year, Wesleyan minister, the Reverend Walter Lawry and his Mission team, arrived in Tongatapu and came to anchor in the harbour off Ma'ufanga.

Lawry had been originally appointed as a minister to the colony of New South Wales in 1818. There he began a successful, yet controversial ministry with colleagues Samuel Leigh, Ralph Mansfield and Benjamin Carvooso. Within four years he was appointed to establish a Wesleyan mission in Tonga.

The Wesleyan Mission party consisted of seven people and hopes were high for a successful Mission. Walter and Mary Lawry and infant son Henry were accompanied by a servant, Thomas Wight, two young men, George Lilly, a carpenter and Charles Tindall, a blacksmith, a schoolteacher James Carlisle, and a Marquesan youth, Macanoe.

The Lawry's residence in Tonga was short lived, lasting only 14 months. The serious concerns about the state of Mary's health, and difficulties associated with establishing a mission in Tonga, Mary Lawry's health, and conflicts with the Mission Committee in London, led to the family to returning to Sydney, and then to England.

Not all the mission party departed with the Lawrys. Lilly and Tindall were left in charge of Mission property. Lilly return to Sydney soon after the Lawrys left but Tindall stayed on. He was able to assist Thomas and Hutchison when they arrived in 1826 to resume the Mission.

Lawry's evaluation of his short stay in Tonga was that he was "preparing the way", and "keeping the door open" for future Wesleyan mission work. (Letters & Journals Lawry to Committee, 18/08/1823*

NOTE: References in the text that are marked with an asterisk* indicate that the citation is from Records of Methodist Missionary Society, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London AJCP ref. <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-742488699/findingaid>

Tonga's first contact with the Wesleyan Church

On board the mission ship *St Michael*, moored in the 'harbour' off Ma'ufanga, a small meeting of just three people marked the beginning of Tonga's connection with the Wesleyan Methodist Church. The date of the meeting was Friday the 16 August 1822. The people involved were the Tongan Chief Palau [Fatu], the castaway William Singleton, and Wesleyan minister Reverend Walter Lawry. Fatu was the son of Mulikiha'amea, the late Tu'i Ha'atakalaua who was killed in 1799 during the London Missionary Society (LMS) era and William Singleton was a survivor of the *Port au Prince* incident of 1806. Obviously, the rest of the Mission party on board the *St Michael* would have been there as spectators: Mary Lawry and her toddler son, Henry Lawry, Thomas Wright, George Lilly, Charles Tindall, William Carlisle, and the Marquesan lad, Macanoe.

William Singleton played a crucial role in that first meeting, acting as interpreter. He had settled in Tonga after the *Port au Prince* was taken by the Tongans in 1806 and many of the crew massacred. He had 'married' Tongan women and had a number of children. He had been in Tonga sixteen years by the time the Wesleyans arrived, and was, according to Lawry, *a thorough Tonga man*. He had the honour of being the first person to come on board the *St Michael* that day in August 1822, when the Wesleyan Mission party came to anchor off Pangaimotu.

Soon after Singleton's arrival on board the *St Michael*, Palau [Fatu] was also welcomed, and Lawry was able to record some details about that first friendly ship-board meeting with one of the most important Tongatapu individuals:

Palau [Fatu], one of the principal chiefs of the Island ... is the stoutest man I ever saw and is a regular bred Egee ['Eiki] or Chief... He appears very mild in his manners, and commands great respect among the Tonguese. (MN 1823, LAWRY, JOURNAL, 16/08/1822).

In the first few days while the *St Michael* was at anchor, a number of significant people also came on board including Futukava and Finau. (LETTERS & JOURNALS 1822-1832*, LILLY, JOURNAL, 17TH-19TH AUGUST 1822)

During the initial conversation with Palau, Lawry explained why he and his party had come to Tonga:

We informed Palau [Fatu] that we intended to live at Tonga, and teach the people true religion, whereby they would become wiser and better, but that we intended to proceed to Wavow [Vava'u] and Amoa [Samoa], before we finally fixed upon the island on which we should reside. Singleton interpreted. (IBID).

This piece of information led to an interesting, somewhat concerned response, from Fatu, who, in order to persuade the newly arrived missionaries to locate to his part of the island, elevated his own position and undervalued Ata:

Palau [Fatu] appeared very anxious for us to establish ourselves with him, and not to think of going to any other island or place. He said that Hata [Ata], the Chief of Aheefo [Hihifo], was next to him in point of power on the Tonga Island; but, though he was a very good man, and would no doubt be glad if we would come and live with him, yet he had not many people, nor any land to give us, nor should we be so safe in time of war. (IBID).

For the present, Palau [Fatu] and Singleton were entertained as guests and slept the night on board the *St Michael*. (IBID).

On the beach at Ma'ufanga

The next day, Lawry went on shore and accompanied by Singleton and Palau met with a large crowd of people on the beach. Palau's people *formed themselves into a ring*, at Palau's command. Kava was prepared, and Lawry was given a seat in the ring between Palau and the chief Taoofa. [Taufa]. He was deeply impressed by this novel gathering and noted in his journal:

This was a most interesting scene to me. I thought of my friends, and the Societies in England, and New South Wales, and wished they could have beheld the sight. (IBID).

As he returned to the ship that evening Lawry was pleased with the way things were progressing. He believed that *in this day's occurrences I have evidently seen the hand of the Lord.* (IBID).

The outcome of those first meetings was an agreement to meet again in a few day's time. Lawry's party would probably have had some uneasiness, even fear, about these first meetings because they were arriving in Tonga against the background of the LMS venture which saw three missionaries lose their lives in the civil unrest of the late 1790s. Added to that, the Tongans had gained an unfortunate reputation for seizing visiting ships. Significant loss of life of the European crews was often the result. Famous among the seized ships was the *Port Au Prince* (1806), of which Singleton was a survivor. But there were several other captured vessels: *Duke of Portland* (1802), *Union* (1804), and *Mercury* (1809) to name a few. Peaceful and friendly first contacts would have been sought by the Mission party, and that appeared to have been achieved.

The next meeting on the beach at Ma'ufanga was an equally important 'first contact' experience because it involved a significantly larger group of people.

Seven chiefs attended with *a vast crowd, the number of which I [Lawry] could not guess*. Mary Lawry was with her husband Walter, and the chiefs met them on the beach and then took them to a *hoofanga* [hufanga – refuge] which consisted of a roof standing upon pillars and floored with mats. The Chiefs sat with the Lawrys in the house of refuge and *the people formed themselves into a circle outside*. Lawry began the proceedings by making a present to the chiefs of twenty chisels, and two axes. Lawry obviously made some reference to the gifts having come from England and the British people, for, when gifts were received happily by the chiefs, they said it was:

the greatest favour ever done them. The King of Britain was sending them presents and there never was such a thing before. (IBID 27/08/1822).

Then Lawry, with Singleton's help, addressed the chiefs and the crowd of people and told them why they wanted to establish a Wesleyan Mission in Tonga:

I fully explained my object to them, and the good will which my brethren in England bore towards them; and then proposed many questions. Their answers were very satisfactory. The substance of them was, that they would be very kind to us, and send thousands of their children to school; and added "We will come ourselves and learn something from the white people". (IBID).

When the meeting concluded, Lawry was happy with the day's proceedings:

they detained us to partake of two large hogs, and a basket of yams, expressing great sorrow that they had nothing better to give us. if they had known it a few days sooner they would have killed fifty hogs for us. The old chiefs stripped off their tappas and gave us: these were their best garments. And on their way to the boat they said to Singleton, with tears in their eyes, 'We had almost died before we had seen anything'. (IBID).

The Lawry's stay in Tonga, as it turned out, was brief, but the consequences of it were far reaching. Soon after their departure from Tonga, other missionaries would come, some from Tahiti and others from England. Thus, the personal longings expressed by Lawry some ten days after arriving in the Friendly Islands, would be fulfilled by others:

*I hope our way is beginning to open, by Divine Providence,
for the erection of the standard of the Cross in this beautiful
place. (IBID).*

Bringing the Tongan people and the English Wesleyans together on that historic August day in 1822, had been some years in the making. The train of events began in Cornwall in 1817 with Lawry being accepted as a candidate for the ministry, then appointed as an Assistant Missionary to New South Wales, travelling the 20,000 kms (13,000 miles) to Sydney aboard the Convict Ship "*Lady Castlereagh*" as Chaplain to the convicts, arriving in Sydney on May 1818. All this, and Lawry was only 25 years of age! Eventually, after ministering in Sydney for almost four years, he was appointed to Tonga and finally arrived in the Friendly Islands in August 1822. (*THE METHODIST* 11/05/1918; *AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN COMMONWEALTH*, 31/05/1929).

Walter Lawry's Ministry in Sydney and Parramatta

Taking a step back, it is perhaps useful to take a look at Lawry's background in New South Wales before he came to Tonga. Once in Sydney, Lawry enthusiastically began his colonial ministry. Quite early he became involved with two former missionary families who had been part of the LMS ventures in the Pacific in 1797. Those missionary families bore the names of two of the original LMS pioneers, Hassell (Tahiti) and Shelley, (Tonga). Shelley had died a year or so before Lawry arrived in New South Wales, but his widow, Elizabeth, and the Shelley children, were still living in Parramatta. The two former missionary families, especially the Shelleys, introduced Lawry to stories about the South Sea Islands, including we could expect, of Tonga. William Shelley never forgot his days with the LMS in Tonga and worked for some years to try and re-establish the Mission there. Nothing eventuated, however, as the LMS directors in London were not in favour of a second attempt at a Tonga Mission. (ADB, Shelley entry). Regardless of his relationships with the Shelleys and Hassells, and hearing first-hand accounts of the South Seas, Lawry saw his own future ministry, not in the Pacific, but in the growing British/Australian penal colony:

New South Wales [he said] is my field of labour, and, by the Divine blessing, I shall spend my best days establishing true religion among the people. (The Methodist, 25/02/1910).

Independence, innovation and censure

In New South Wales Lawry created quite a reputation for independent and innovative thinking and action which, unfortunately, often brought him into conflict with the Committee in London. Within a year of his arrival, he was telling the Committee in London that by the time they received his letter, he would be married to the colonial born Mary Cover Hassell. He was also telling the Committee that, with colleague Samuel Leigh, they modified the Committee's Missionary Instructions, giving themselves a pay increase.

Lawry was making other decisions as well. From his own resources he built a Wesleyan chapel at Parramatta and established a Sunday School there, in opposition to the one run by the established Church. (Church of England). With his Wesleyan colleagues he borrowe £2,000 to build a Wesleyan chapel in cen-

tral Sydney. He and his colleagues also created and published The Australian Magazine, Australia's first literary Journal. This action, and some of his other actions brought strong censure from the London (Committee Minutes 1819-1822* ; Minutes & Reports 1819-1822 NSW 05/07/1821). The Australian Magazine was just part of his enthusiasm for books and printing. The Wesleyans in New South Wales needed a printing press, he believed, not just for the colony, but for future missions that may be established in the Pacific. He wanted a printing press so keenly that he and Samuel Leigh told the Committee that they would give up one meal a day to help pay for a press. (*Life of the Rev Samuel Leigh*, p.83; *The Methodist*, 6/02/1910; 20/05/1899). Later, while in Tonga, Lawry urged the Committee, unsuccessfully, to send out a printer and a press for the Friendly Islands! Less than a decade after Lawry and others had been advocating the need for a press to serve the future needs of the church in the Islands, a printing press was in full production in Nuku'alofa. (*Turner, Pioneer Missionary*, p.104). Literally thousands of books (booklets) would flow from Tonga's Printing Office as the press became a major instrument of education and evangelism for generations to come.

Advocating Wesleyan Missions for the South Seas

One of Lawry's other keen interests was the possibility of Wesleyan missions in the Pacific, and at times he specifically referred to the Friendly Islands. The Christian world was very aware of the South Seas after the London Missionary Society's Voyage of the Duff. Publication of Transactions during the years 1799-1804 told the story of the LMS missionary adventures in the South Seas. These publications brought news of success and failure: success in planting the faith in Tahiti and failure of their brief Tonga experiment. Publication of Captain Cook's Voyages, 1770-1777, also brought information about the Pacific to English readers, especially when Cook spent several months in Tonga and prepared extensive literature about the Friendly Islands including the first vocabulary of the Tongan language. A much more enlarged vocabulary, and grammar was prepared by Toki Ukamea (William Mariner) and Dr John Martin, published in 1817. It became a best seller and has remained a standard first-hand account of middle nineteenth century Tonga. It remains a valuable work on Tonga to the present day!

The South Seas as presented in these and some other early publications gave English readers a great deal of information about the South Seas. Lawry believed the many islands there were waiting for the evangelizing, educating and civilizing attention of missionaries. He wrote several letters to the Committee (17th June 1819, 5th July 1819) promoting the idea of South Seas missions and naming Tongatapu specifically. Six months after his June and July letters he was again urging Pacific islands as worthy of consideration:

I think in the South there opened to you a great door of usefulness, particularly at the Friendly Islands. (LETTERS & JOURNALS, 1812-1826, LAWRY TO COMMITTEE, 3/12/1819).*

In earlier letters to the Committee, he had also written about interviews with *some of the Natives* of New South Wales, and some New Zealanders. (LETTERS AND JOURNALS 1822-1832*, LAWRY TO SECRETARIES, 29TH OCTOBER, 1918 AND 13TH FEBRUARY 1819).

Lawry's letters could well have played a part in the Committees decision making. Within twelve months of his first approach to the Committee they passed a resolution to appoint missionaries, *as circumstances may appear*, to *New Zealand, Tongataboo, Marqueses and the Blacks of New South Wales*. When news of that decision reached Sydney, Lawry decided to act. He informed the Committee that in consequence of their resolution, he had:

taken a native of the Marqueses Islands to reside with me – the boy is remarkably prepossessing in his manners, and I have no doubt, but he will be able to read and speak English by the time the missionaries arrive here and will proceed with them to the land of his birth. (MINUTE BOOK 1819-1822, 28/06/1820; INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE 1822-1865. LETTERS & JOURNALS 1822-1832*, LAWRY TO COMMITTEE 09/02/1821).*

Lawry had *procured the boy* Macaone, from Captain Beveridge, a South Seas trader, and member of the Sydney Wesleyan Methodist Society. As it turned out, Macaone never returned to his homeland. He had accompanied the Lawrys to Tonga, and a short time later, back in Sydney, he died a premature death!

For the Committee, the infant New South Wales colony, with Sydney as its 'capital,' began to take on an important role in their thinking. Reporting in 1821 they said:

How cheering is the prospect in that part of the world [South Seas] ... If now New South Wales is sending forth rays of sacred light upon the ... islands of the Pacific ... Perhaps it is not too much to hope, that by the wonderful dispensations of Providence, this colony, once literally "a den of thieves", may become the Great Britain of the Southern Ocean, and spread Christianity, Science and Commerce, throughout its numerous and populous islands. (MINUTE BOOK 1819-1822).

As time went by the Committee increased their support for NSW and the Pacific, including the Friendly Islands. This held great promise for the future. Sydney could become a home base for Christian missionary activity, a blessing to others throughout the Pacific. The Mission Report quoted a letter from Lawry in which he said that this *cluster of islands*, would be:

of great importance as a Mission station, both as to their population, and their relation to other islands in the same part of the world, still more populous. ... The Station [New South Wales] is certainly one of the most important under your direction. From us, in a few years, I expect to see missionaries sally forth to those numerous islands which spot the sea on every side of us. The Friendly Islands, the Feejees, New Hebrides, New Caledonia, New Zealand, New Georgia; and then to the north again, very contiguous to us, are the fine islands of New Guinea, New Ireland, Celebes, Timor, Borneo, Gilolo, [province of Indonesia] and a great cluster of thickly inhabited Missionary posts ... (WMM 1820 LAWRY TO COMMITTEE, 29/10/1818; COMMITTEE MINUTES 29/10/1819).*

And so it proved to be. Once the Wesleyan mission became established in the Friendly Islands, Tongan missionaries found their way with the Gospel into Samoa, Fiji, Uvea, Rotumah, and ultimately, over the years, to the Solomon Islands, and the Highlands of Papua New Guinea and Northern Australia. The Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society's words in 1822, and Lawry's hopes, proved to be prophetic. (SEE A. ATIOLA, KOE TALA FUNGANI, 2006 FOR A DETAILED ACCOUNT OF TONGAN MISSIONARY ACTIVITY IN THE PACIFIC).

Lawry's promotion of South Seas missions had brought his name, and his interests, to the attention of the Committee. When the time was right, they appointed him to Tonga.

Reactions to Lawry's appointment to the Friendly Islands

The Sydney press had encouraging comments to make when they learned of Lawry's appointment. The announcement that he would be going to the Friendly Islands was accompanied by the comment that the Tongans had already *made some progress in civilization.* (SG 26/5/1821). This was obviously a reference to the pioneer work of the London Missionary Society. And before he left for Tonga, Lawry also heard reassuring news from a whaling captain who said that:

the island of Tonga was now entirely under the Government of the chief who formerly showed such special kindness to the brethren of the London Missionary Society, and that he is not only still well disposed towards missionaries but is

very anxious to receive any who may come to him under that character. (MN 1823, P.263, LAWRY TO COMMITTEE, 15/07/1822).

The London Committee also had something to say about the Lawrys going to Tonga. They had wanted the New Zealand Mission to be firmly established before any attempt was made to start a Tonga Mission. However, the Sydney Wesleyan Committee had other plans: Leigh would go to New Zealand and the Lawry-family would go to Tonga. This was somewhat embarrassing to London, leaving them to announce to the Christian community in England and New South Wales, and throughout other Wesleyan mission fields:

It was not intended by the Committee that the mission to the Friendly Islands should be commenced until that in New Zealand had acquired some maturity. Various circumstances, however, occurred to interfere with the enterprise proposed ... In consequence of these changes, the mission at Tongatapu has already commenced by Mr Lawry. (NSW: MINUTES AND REPORTS 1822-1838, CARVOSSO TO COMMITTEE 15/07/1822; WMM 1823, P.262).*

In the Missionary Notices, the Committee repeated their criticism but needed to say that the mission in Tongatapu, nevertheless, seemed to be progressing well:

We lately announced that Mr Lawry had sailed from New South Wales to Tonga, taking with him two or three serious young men, mechanics, for the purpose of establishing a mission there. This was done sooner than the Committee intended ... but it may be hoped that the hand of Divine Providence has guided the measure; and it is satisfactory to find from communications lately received from Mr. Lawry that he has been received with confidence by the Chiefs; and that, notwithstanding the peculiar difficulties and hazards of a residence among such a people, there is a prospect of a Mission being established. (MN 1823, P.479).

Reflecting, later, on his short stay in Tonga, Lawry said he believed that the hand of God had indeed been upon his efforts in Tonga:

he was guided by Providence, [he said], in visiting Tonga for the purpose of opening a Mission there and preparing the way for subsequent labours, (NSW MINUTES AND REPORTS 1822-1838, NSW PROVISIONAL DISTRICT MEETING, 30/12/1823).*

Preparing for the Tonga Mission.

Once the decision was made that Lawry should go to Tonga, a range of practical arrangements had to be made. Because the Committee had not expected the mission to be established so soon, they had not made adequate provision for it. In effect Lawry had to finance his own appointment, organise transport, recruit a team, and in the process using his own 'private purse' and some of Mary's financial resources. Admittedly the Committee had agreed to provide a very extensive list of largely iron goods to be used at barter material. The minutes of the missionary Outfit Committee in 1821 listed a range of trade goods that would be their 'money' to purchase food and labour. Among the dozens of knives, chisels, axes, spades, rasps, hinges, crosscut saws, and a ton of bar iron, there were also some more domestic items: frying pans, saucepans, hair combs, (1000 of them!), shaving boxes, printed cotton, candle moulds, vegetable seeds, kettles and pots and common blankets. Some was to be sent with the missionaries and some to be forwarded later. (*Minute Book of Committee 1819-1822**, *Outfit Committee**, 3/01/1821). In addition, some goods were donated by Wesleyan supporters of mission in England and were set aside for Tonga and sent to Sydney. These presents were the result of a tour that Leigh made through many of the English Counties. He had gone home to England, for health reasons, and when recovered, promoted the proposed Missions in New Zealand and Tongatapu. Donations included axes, kettles, pins, print, knives, copper and brass. One lady donated 100 wedding rings! (*LIFE OF SAMUEL LEIGH*, p. 100).

As the Committee noted in their Minutes:

presents of a great number of various articles to a large amount had been sent to the Mission Office for the use of the Mission in New Zealand and Tongataboo, and other parts of the South Sea...to give effect and to the establishment of our proposed new and important Missions. (MINUTE BOOK OF COMMITTEE 1819-1822, 14/02/1821).*

Lawry's most difficult challenge was to find a ship to transport the Mission party from Sydney to the Friendly Islands. Because Tonga had developed an unfortunate reputation as a dangerous port for trading and whaling ships to visit. Various disastrous incidents had been written up in the Sydney Gazette for the world to see. Lawry's several attempts to encourage sea captains to take the charter trip to Tonga came to nothing. So, he formed a partnership with a Captain Beveridge, and a Sydney based commercial agent, to buy a ship for mission work. They purchased the ship St Michael, 170-ton vessel, on the 9 April 1822 and fitted it out to convey the diverse cargo to Tonga: passengers, personal effects, trade goods, and livestock. Samuel Hassell, Mary Lawry's brother had a third share and the Lawry's made up the balance which amounted to £600. (*Hames, Wesleyan Missions*, 1967, pp.24-25).

Practical support for the Tongan Mission also came from Sir Thomas Brisbane, Governor of New South Wales. When Leigh, Carvooso, Walker and Lawry visited him at Parramatta in late 1821, they received an enthusiastic welcome. They enjoyed a *free and interesting conversation* with the Governor and came away convinced that the *sacred cause of missions has in him an enlightened and zealous friend*. (*Minutes and Reports*, Report, December 1823*). This certainly proved to be true, for when Lawry sailed for Tongataboo a short time later, the St Michael had a valuable cargo, an important part of which was the Governor's gift of cattle, sheep, and *other articles*. (*MN, 1823 p.262, Carvooso to Committee, 15/07/1822*). It is interesting to note that Rowland Hassell, (Mary Lawry's father) was Superintendent of Government Stock for many years and after his death in 1820, his son Samuel (Mary Lawry's brother) took over that role and held it until his death. It is perhaps reasonable to suggest that this close relationship between the Governor and Mary Lawry's family, was a factor in the Governor's generous gift of livestock to the Tonga Mission. (*ADB, ROWLAND HASSELL ENTRY*)

Lawry and the New South Wales Wesleyans put together a most impressive party for Tongataboo. As he later explained to the Committee:

I have brought with me five persons besides Mrs Lawry and child. One of them is an old English Methodist who lived with me all the time I was in New South Wales – another is Macanoe, a boy from Marquesas, which I hoped would have been of service by way of interpreting – but he knows nothing of the Tonga language so much do the South Sea dialects differ ... I know not what I would have done without two useful persons who came with me George Lilly a carpenter, a very pious young man from the colony. He is preparing timber for the Mission Houses. Charles Tindall is also a pious young man from New South Wales, a blacksmith; he makes togies, a sort of hatchet and axes of iron which I procure from the ship, with these we trade and make presents ... The fifth person is Mr Carlisle who is very desirous of coming to set up as a school master. I consulted my brethren who thought he should come and accordingly I got him a passage ... He has a wife and four children, who subsist in his absence on their property. He would be useful if allowed to remain, I have no doubt ... there is yet another young man and his wife, who resolve in coming by the Ship's next voyage, – the young man, William Chapman, is a shipwright, a lively zealous youth, of ardent piety ... we have need of boats here and cannot dispense with them.
(INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE LETTERS & JOURNALS 1822–1832. LAWRY TO COMMITTEE, 16/10/1822).*

As the Lawrys prepared to leave for Tonga, Walter preached an interesting sermon in the Macquarie Street Chapel. He chose Isaiah 6:1-8, the story of Isiah's call to mission. The prophet was at first unwilling to receive a call from God but when the Lord's question came to him: *Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?* Isiah responded: *Here am I. Send me!* (SG, 07/07/1821). Lawry, it seems, had chosen this text as having a particularly personal and relevant application to himself. We do not know what he said in the sermon, but we do know that, like Isiah, he was reluctant to answer the call to mission and although he enthusiastically supported the idea of mission work in the Pacific, including Tonga, he did not see himself as a worker in that field. He did not have a particular *Call to any foreign mission*, he later told the Committee. And when he died in 1859 a friend who wrote his obituary said that Lawry:

repeatedly declared ... this appointment [to Tonga] had been made under some misapprehension as to Mr Lawry's personal wishes. (NEW ZEALANDER, 04/05/1859).

Nevertheless, despite his own wishes, feelings and preferences, the Wesleyan Conference had appointed him to *Togataboo* [Tongatapu], so he was ready to obey.

The enthusiastic farewell by the Wesleyans of NSW prior to their departure for the Friendly Islands comprised an *exceedingly large and respectable congregation*, gathered on the 6th of June at the Macquarie Street Chapel. During the evening, Lawry, his colleague Mansfield said:

gave a history of his call to ministry, and a succinct narrative of his Missionary labours in the colony Brother Lawry is much beloved in the colony, many regarding him as their spiritual father. His ministry has been very useful. (MN 1823 p.832).

With the preparations complete, the Lawry team set sail for Tongatapu, arriving off Pangaimotu on Friday 16 August 1822 where the meetings, discussions and agreements, already noted, were entered into with Fatu and other leading chiefs.

Setting up the Mission's Home Base at Mu'a.

Establishing a mission headquarters in Tonga was no easy task. There were a complex set of requirements, foremost being maintaining a friendly contact with the Chiefs in power on Tongatapu. Other matters were important: finding accommodation, organising domestic arrangements, negotiating 'prices' when purchasing food and services, working with a translator, and, most importantly of all for Christian missionaries, discovering ways to preach the gospel in word and actions.

Temporary accommodation was an urgent need until a Mission House could be built. Lawry obtained six acres of land and a house at Mu'a from Fatu, which cost the Mission *one axe, one plane, and three large chisels*. The building, from a European point of view, was basic. It consisted of *a roof upon pillars and a mat floor without partitions*. (*Incoming Correspondence Letters & Journals, 1822-1832** Lawry, *Journal*, 30 August 1822). Mary Lawry described how they:

divided the house so the young men slept at one end, the Lawry family at the other, while Singleton and his native wife had a 'cabin of leaves' in the middle of the general living quarters.

This was the arrangement for the Mission 'family' until the Mission House was ready to be occupied. (*MARSHALL, WALTER LAWRY, P.15*).

Landing the livestock, equipment and provisions was also an immediate task. All this cargo had to be brought ashore from the St Michael. No detail is given by Lawry about how the sheep and cattle were taken off the ship. Presumably the ship's crane and lifting devices were used. Lawry simply says:

*I landed seven sheep, seven cows, and a bull, at Mooa, [Mu'a] the place of Palau's residence. The poor natives were much amazed to see them. (MN 1823, p.618; Lawry, *Journal*, 22/08/1822).*

Establishing a garden was also an early priority. Lawry employed seven men to clear some ground around the Mission House site. For their labour he paid them *two chisels, two pieces of calico, one Togie, three Fishhooks, and [one] small Hatchet*. A garden was then planted down with seeds that they had brought

from Sydney: wheat, maize, peas, beans, turnips, cabbages, melons, and pumpkins. (*MN, JANUARY 1824. QUOTING SG, 31/01/1823*).

Ensuring a regular supply of goods from Sydney had been one of the reasons for purchasing the St Michael, and it was expected that the vessel would make regular trading visits. However, there was also a need to place orders on London, so that an adequate supply of European type goods would be available for the Mission. Quite soon after arriving, Lawry wrote to London with an order for clothing, shoes, books and stationery, including:

2 dozen Black Trousers, 3 Coats and Waistcoats, 2 dozen Shirts, 2 dozen coloured socks, two pieces of dark spotted Print (gown pieces), one dozen ladies' white stockings, half a dozen silk pocket handkerchiefs, one dozen coloured cotton handkerchiefs, two hats 23 inch round, one dozen children's shoes, half a pound black sewing silk, two dozen towels. A ream of foolscap, some wax, Methodist Magazine vol 30, a Tract on the conversion of the world by Bombay Missionaries. (INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE LETTERS AND JOURNALS, 1822-1832 LAWRY TO COMMITTEE, 26 OCTOBER 1822).*

Lawry also told the Committee that the allowance they had been given to purchase supplies from Sydney was inadequate:

The £40 per annum which the Committee have allowed for articles of food from Port Jackson is by no means adequate. It is impossible to avoid having many to feed ... the hogs we kill must be immediately eaten or salted or they will become offensive. We shall need a ton of salt per annum – this will cost £10. Nothing is said in the Instructions of flour, which we shall need to the amount of £20 per annum. (ibid) Lawry to Committee, 16 Oct 1822.

When their supplies were almost exhausted in late March 1823, Lawry noted with some concern:

The arrival of the 'St Michael' would now be very acceptable to us, several articles of our household necessities being expended, and we have neither sugar nor soap. I have scarcely a hat or a shoe to put on. (MN 1824, P.557. LAWRY TO COMMITTEE, 27/03/1823).

Reflecting on the need for regular and adequate supplies to support the missionaries and the work of the Mission, Lawry suggested to the Committee that

an adequate supply of trade goods for barter was necessary, and that the Tonga Mission would need to be:

*annually visited by their relatives, as the natives term it,
and replenished with such property as most effectively secures
the natives in our favour. (INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE
LETTERS AND JOURNALS 1822-1832*, LAWRY TO COMMITTEE,
18 AUGUST 1823).*

Building the Mission House

Building the Mission House, which Lawry called *Cokevernal*, was a major project for the new missionaries. Lawry had brought a plan for a house with him when he arrived from Sydney. It had been drawn up by the Missionary Committee in London and was similar to the two storey one that Thomas and Hutchinson built later at Hihifo when they arrived there in 1826. The Wesleyan Papers of June 1825 informed the readers of mission literature that:

*the Mission Dwelling House: which was erected, by Mr
Lawry, and the assistants he took with him from New
South Wales ... is named COKEVERNAL, in honour of
the late Reverend Dr Coke. (MISSION PAPERS, JUNE 1825).*

It was built near a large spreading tree which became a place:

*where the congregation usually assembled, the people collect-
ing in a circle round the preacher. (IBID).*

The site chosen, according to the Wesleyan Papers, and Lawry's letter in the Sydney Gazette was one of the three *sacred places* in the district. (SG 11/12/1823.)

Lawry himself did not build the house. That was accomplished, as he later said, by his *little heroic retinue*. (SG, 11/12/1823; 03/01/1825). The heroic ones were the young men he had brought with him from Sydney. Lilly and Tindall certainly deserved praise for the part they played in helping to establish the Mission. As Lawry informed the Committee:

*without them I should never have attempted the erection of
a Mission House, and even with them, it will be long before
we shall get one; there are no stones fit for building, and the
timber which the natives will allow us to cut down is
difficult to be procured. (INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE
LETTERS & JOURNALS, 1822-1832*, LAWRY TO COMMITTEE,
COKEVERNAL, 16 OCTOBER 1822).*

Again, in writing about the building of Cokevernal, he stressed the problem of finding suitable timber, and the difficulty of following the plan that had been provided by the Committee in London.

*I do not expect to have anything of a house these two years, and then it cannot be on the plan which Mr. Leigh brought from London. (Incoming Correspondence Letters & Journals 1822-1832)**

Once the House was finished, the Lawry 'family' moved into Cokevernal. (*Minutes & Reports**, 01/01/1822-31/12/1838, *Lawry Journal* 27/03/1823). Although described at one time as a little rough, on the whole it was a home *with almost every convenience for a Mission. (ibid)*. From its location on sloping ground near the water's edge, the mission family could look across the lagoon to where the present-day Royal residence, Kauvai, now stands.

Progress with the mission

Establishing a Wesleyan presence in Tonga was, as Latukefu has remarked, a mix of *encouragement and disappointment*. There was some success, which was encouraging, after the first friendly contacts with Fatu and Lawry was optimistic about his relationship with important chiefs:

I am much pleased with the conduct of Palau [Fatu], and two other Chiefs his relations. I hope our way is beginning to open. (MN 1823, Lawry Journal, 24/08/1822).

Some credit should be given to William Singleton, who, as a translator, was especially useful to Lawry in establishing relationships with the chiefs. He played a crucial role in the early months of the Mission's history. His long-time residence in Tonga by the time the Wesleyan party arrived, meant that he had become, as Lawry had put it when they first met, *a perfect Tonga man. (ibid)*. He was able to give Lawry and the Mission party basic information about political conditions, the chiefly system of government and other cultural matters. And when Lawry made the initial excursion from Ma'ufanga to find the best place to establish the Mission headquarters, Singleton was his guide when they chose Mu'a. When Lawry began to speak with Fatu about some of the essentials of the faith, Singleton was the translator. Lawry's attempt to share the faith with Fatu included the missionary explaining to the Chief that:

Jehovah made all men ... that the thunder was his voice, and the sky was his footstool, that his eye was upon him and upon all men, in all places and at all times, and that Jehovah would in a short time send bad men down to the lake of

fire and take good men up to the sky where they would be very happy. (IBID).

Lawry told Fatu that:

when I can speak more of your language, I will tell you greater things than these, at which he [Fatu] seemed pleased. (IBID).

Obviously, Singleton had some problems translating much of what the missionary was actually saying about the faith. As Lawry later explained, he could see that the castaway had difficulty explaining biblical and theological terms and concepts. Nevertheless, he could still be the *providential means* [by which] the Gospel:

will be explained, even though he betrays no small confusion in instrumentally unfolding the precepts of Christianity. (MN, 1824, p.274).

One of the precepts of Christianity that Lawry felt keenly about was observing the Sabbath. After preaching a sermon in early December 1822 on the text *We walk by Faith and not by sight* he noted in this Journal his disappointment that the people '*abuse the sabbath*' and they *dislike* our observing it. (*MN 1823, p.480. LAWRY JOURNAL, 01/12/1822*).

Unfortunately, perhaps, for the Mission's progress, Lawry and Singleton soon parted company. Lawry could not reconcile Singleton's lifestyle with the teachings of the Gospel. In an intense session with Singleton, which lasted over an hour, Lawry reminded his countryman of his baptism and early life:

I endeavoured to bring to his recollection the solemn ordinance and the vows of his baptism, and his assent to the truths of divine revelation. (MN 1824, p.556; LAWRY, JOURNAL, 01/02/1823).

He insisted that Singleton decide which side he was on, whether he would be *a civilised Christian or a barbarous pagan ... It was useless*, Lawry said, *for him to think of trimming between the heathens and us.* Lawry gave Singleton some of Wesley's sermons to read, in the hope that he would choose *civilised Christianity.* Singleton did not, so Lawry declared that that *we have abandoned him as incorrigible.* Sometime later, while explaining the session with Singleton to his superiors in London, Lawry said that he could not allow the castaway to live at the Mission House compound:

having left one wife and taken another, whenever his inclinations prompted him to it – leaving his children entirely uninstructed to run wild upon another island while he lived with Christian people and held the Bible in his hand. (IBID).

Faced with an ultimation, ‘civilization or paganism’ Singleton chose his Tongan lifestyle, and Lawry and the Tongan Mission lost their valuable interpreter.

Old fears re-emerge among the people.

The beachcomber Bryan Morgan in LMS days of the 1790s had frequently stirred up opposition to the lotu (See chapter 1). Morgan’s lies soon re-emerged when Lawry’s Wesleyan Mission party arrived. At Mu’a during a Kava circle, Lawry said that speeches were made *prejudicial to our peace*. An old matapule disturbed the people with his claim that:

the White people came as spies and would soon be followed by others from England who would take away the island from them. See, [he said], these people are always praying to their Atoos [otua’s] as the other missionaries were [LMS] and what was the consequence of their praying? Why, the wars broke out, and all the old chiefs were killed. (MN 1823, P.479. LAWRY JOURNAL, 29/II/1822).

Another matapule spoke of a dream in which one of the old Chiefs came back from Boolotoo [Pulotu] and warned them that the Papalangee [papalangi] *will pray you all dead*. The result of this inflammatory language was that *the multitude believed it all and are therefore much dissatisfied with us*. Fatu was away from Mu’a at the time, and when he returned, he was angry with those who had promoted fear and opposition to the Mission. Afraid of the chief, the *offenders took shelter in the Hoofaga* [hufanga – house of refuge] *to beg pardon of their gods*. (IBID).

Lawry found himself in difficult situations on other fronts as well, sometimes not theological but political. Although he was getting on well with Fatu and regarded the chief as an individual of considerable mental endowments ... a shrewd, discerning, generous, and prudent man, there were times when the two men clashed. One such occasion was a quarrel over the mission boat. Lawry had purchased the boat from the St Michael, (probably a lifeboat) for the work of the Mission. He had paid £20 for it. It was a valuable and essential piece of equipment. (*Incoming Correspondence Letters and Journals 1822-1832**, 26/10/1822). Fatu wanted to borrow the boat for what turned out to be a bloody expedition to ‘Eua. Lawry said that it was not available because it was in use every day *to procure timber and fuel*, and furthermore, it was unclear how long Fatu would be away in ‘Eua. The Chief was angry and went away *in great wrath*. Although he

had previously agreed to provide timber for the Mission House, he changed his mind when he was denied the use of the Mission boat:

[He] ordered his men to desist from barking some coconut trees, which we had agreed with him to prepare as beams for the Mission House, and for which according to Tongan fashion, he had received payment beforehand. (MN, 1824 P.556, LAWRY JOURNAL, 27/1/1823).

Preaching the Gospel; helpful and unhelpful forces

Ministering with the people required language skills or a translator. Ignorance of the language was the greatest barrier to Lawry when he wanted to present any of the great truths of the Bible. He had to depend on a translator and William Singleton was very useful to begin with. Helpful, also, were the two Tongans, Futukava and Tata, who Lawry had sent to Sydney, soon after his arrival. When they returned, the glowing reports of their reception by Sydneysiders and their experiences in a big 'city', were of great significance for the future reception of missionaries. Lawry, at least, believed the two young Tongan men would be important in preparing the way for the reception of the gospel.

Futukava and Tata's reports of their experiences in Sydney did, in fact, greatly advance the Mission cause. They had been sent by Lawry to New South Wales essentially as hostages with the understanding that they would return to Tonga when the St Michael made its next visit. (Lawry personally paid their fares, £10 each). The idea of 'hostages' had been promoted by the Established Church clergyman Samuel Marsden, who had written to the Wesleyan Committee in London suggesting that when missions were established in the South Seas:

some of the chiefs or their sons [should be] brought back to Port Jackson and remain for a time as hostages for the safety of the missionaries. (INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE LETTERS FROM MISSIONARIES 1822-26, MARSDEN TO COMMITTEE 2 JULY 1821).*

Lawry took up this suggestion, and in writing to the Committee soon after arriving in Tonga, he said:

We have judged it proper to send two young men of respectability to the colony as hostages ... they are to return on the next ship. One of them is a Priest of the first rank. The god who comes with him, he says, is a great admirer of the papalangee. [papalangi] (INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE LETTERS AND JOURNALS 1822-1832. LAWRY TO COMMITTEE, 26/10/1822).*

Futukava and Tata were received with honour and respect in Sydney. The local press reported on their visit, and they were officially welcomed by the Governor, His Excellency, Sir Thomas Brisbane and Lady Brisbane at Government House, in a most *generous manner*. (*SG 16/01/1823; 13/02/1823*). The Governor:

through the medium of an interpreter, freely conversed, and kindly offered to furnish them on their return to their own country, with any articles that would be useful. (MN, 1824, p.337, MANSFIELD TO COMMITTEE, 26/03/1823).

The Tongan visitors witnessed a parade of soldiers in Hyde Park and visited places of interest. They showed a keen interest in *acquiring knowledge*, were *very communicative*, spoke simple broken English and were learning to read. They saw and heard amazing new things, and Sydneysiders also saw and heard amazing new things: the two young chiefs *exhibited to us some serious specimens of their singing and dancing*. (*Incoming Correspondence Letters & Journals, 1822-1832**; Mansfield, 9 August 1824). After several months in Sydney the travellers returned home *laden with presents from some of the most distinguished personages in the Colony*. (*SG 16/01/1823*).

Back home in Tonga, Futukava's speech about his reception in Sydney, what he saw, and the way he was honoured, had a significant effect on clearing the way for Tongans to accept the Wesleyan missionaries and the gospel they preached. This, at least, was Lawry's view. The visit to Sydney, he believed, had:

promoted the best interests of our Mission... They [the people of Tonga] seemed to have a much better notion of the object of our Mission among them than might be imagined. (SG, 27/11/1823).

There were certainly many things in Sydney that impressed Futukava. Lawry's summary of his speech at Mu'a on his return from his overseas visit, gives some clues. Futukava:

related, in a most orderly and impressive manner, the particulars of his voyage from Tonga to New Zealand, and from New Zealand to Sydney ... his remarks upon the stone walls, large houses, articles for barter in the shops, number of ships in the harbour, exercising of the soldiers, variety of fruits, enormous size of the horses and horned cattle, extent of the country; and, above all, the unbounded liberality and kindness of our friends, produced an electrifying effect upon the chiefs, who sat amazed and overwhelmed to hear such reports from their own relatives, whose veracity they never questioned. (IBID)

Futukava went on to suggest that Tonga would do well to accept the ways of the *good people of Sydney* who he was describing. He commented on:

schools, and of the sacred attention which the better sort of Port Jackson pay to the Sabbath day, while the “mea varle” (foolish people) concerned themselves but little about it. He said that the men of Tonga would never be wise till they adopted the same measures as the “anga lele”, good minded people of New South Wales. (IBID).

To this suggestion from Futukava, Lawry said, the Chiefs unanimously replied that they thought so too!

Yet there were some opposing voices as well. Because of the fear among some of the people about why the missionaries had come and the possibility that soldiers would be sent from Sydney to punish Tongans if the missionaries were harmed, Fatu intervened. As Lawry said, the Chief calmed the people who were hearing this alarming suggestion. Lawry's summing up of the visit to Sydney was that the infant Tongan church would benefit greatly from the reports given by the two young chiefs. Their reports:

secured to us from the Tongan chiefs what could not have been purchased with gold. They said that before the return of these hostages, they had considered us as so many Atooas (Spirits); but now they saw the truth of the case, they resolved upon doing everything to secure our confidence, and to increase our pleasure. (SG 27/II/1823).

All the same, Lawry debated with himself, trying to keep in perspective the loss of mission property that had been stolen, on the one hand, and the good effect of the reports by the hostages, on the other. It was annoying that garments had been taken from the Mission House clothesline *where they had been hung out to dry*, and spades, saws and various carpenter's tools had also been stolen. But on balance he felt that the loss of a few tools was nothing in comparison to *having the Chiefs on our side*. Futukava's influence, and Fatu's help, convinced Lawry that the future of the Wesleyan Church in Tonga would depend on support from the Chiefs.

Lawry, for his part, also tried his best to promote a good impression of the faith, the lotu, despite his inadequate grasp of the language. And he can be credited with preaching the first sermon to a Tongan ‘congregation’. There was an informal occasion, many years previously when the LMS missionisers were reading a book and some interested bystanders wanted to know what it was about. In Lawry's case, however, it was a deliberate attempt to preach the gospel to the people. He had walked from Tatakamatonga to the site where the Mis-

sion House was to be built. In speaking with several men at the place, where a God House had once stood, he attempted what could be called a brief sermon. And although he was restricted by a limited grasp of the language, he said:

I began to tell them of the one true God, and his wonderful works in days of old ... that he loved men of every land, even the people of Tonga ... they appeared much interested in the great truths delivered to them. I proceeded to explain as many of the great truths of divine revelation as I could find language to express. (MN 1824, p.706 LAWRY JOURNAL, 23/05/1823).

Thinking about his sermon later, Lawry was unsure if the listeners understood him or not, or why they appeared so interested. He wondered about his speech:

I found it very difficult to utter the ideas which occurred to me, so as to be understood. Nevertheless, [they] seemed deeply impressed and somewhat pleased also with what I had said; but whether on account of its novelty, or from conception of its importance I know not. (IBID).

London's view, when they received Lawry's letters and Journal extracts was that the Tonga Mission had made a promising start. Then Mission, they said:

has been but recently commenced, and although attended by considerable difficulties, is, in many respects, very hopeful. Certainly, the bringing of so numerous a body of people, of great natural capabilities, and inhabiting a cluster of fine and fruitful islands ... under the influence of Christianity is an object interesting in every view to the Christian and Philanthropist. (MISSIONARY PAPERS, JUNE 1825).

A visit to Ata at Hihifo was an attempt by Lawry to expand the Mission's influence. He was aware that there was a large population of people in the western part of Tongatapu and that there was a powerful chief there. So, with other members of the Mission party, he took a journey in June 1823 which was probably motivated by his strongly held view that the Church needed '*the Chiefs on our side*'. He set out by boat and spent two days with Ata and his people.

On arrival in the west, they were welcomed by Ata, and a place to rest was provided for them. In the evening Ata sent Lawry and his friends three baskets of cooked yams and fowls, with a huge turtle, and two hogs. Some fish, fresh from the net, was also part of the presentation. Lawry then endeavoured to explain the object

of our Mission to these islands. But, he said, the people, generally, appeared unimpressed. They seemed:

neither to understand, nor to care anything about the matter, however we encourage a hope that our visit to Ata will tend to reconcile to each other the angry chiefs of Ahagee [Hahake] and Heeheefo [Hihifo]; they are now interchange visits, whereas before they stood aloof. (MN 1823, Lawry Journal, 06/06/1823; SG 11/12/1823).

It is interesting that, at Hihifo, Lawry heard a good deal about Morgan Bryan, the escaped convict from Sydney who had caused so much trouble for the LMS pioneers. His claim that the missionaries were:

sent from the King of England to destroy all the people and take possession of the islands, was still believed by many to this day ... they remember Morgan's lies, and believe them, and consequently they detest our acts of religious worship more than anything we say or do, notwithstanding our efforts to convince them of their mistake. (IBID).

An extract from Lawry's journal showed the way that some of the people linked disease, sickness, and death with the missionaries, and what they saw as a solution:

A cough persists among the people which they attribute to our coming among them and it has recently been proposed, as a remedy for the complaint, to murder us and share out our property. (IBID).

It is quite ironical that a few years later, when Sarah and John Thomas arrived, they were called upon to give medical assistance when people at Hihifo were ill. And in just a few years Sarah was spending several hours *twice a day*, caring for the sick and dispensing medicines. (*THOMAS, TONGATAPU**, P 696).

Tonga's first Wesleyan Volunteers

The modern Church's policy of 'employing' volunteers can be traced to Lawry's days at Mu'a. He was not only the First Wesleyan Minister to the Friendly Islands, but he was the first missionary to employ volunteers in the Wesleyan Mission. The volunteers were recruited, without Committee approval, which was typical of Lawry's independent way of working. The first thing the Committee knew about them was when they received a letter from Lawry (Cokevernal dated 16/10/1822) in which he told his superiors in London what he had done, and sought some financial support for his workers if the Committee would agree.

Charles Tindall, William Carlisle and George Lilly were those first volunteers. They were followed, almost 150 years later, by volunteers from America, New Zealand, Australia, and Great Britain who served the Wesleyan Church, especially in education. Lawry felt that if he was to establish a Wesleyan Mission in the Friendly Islands, he would need the help of some workers with trades and skills. In Sydney there were a number of young people who were influenced by Lawry's preaching and when it became known that he was going to Tonga to establish a Mission, several volunteered to be part of an exciting, challenging expedition. Out of those who applied, Lilly, a carpenter, Tindall, a blacksmith, and Carlisle a teacher, were accepted. Carlisle went back to Sydney after a very short time and Lilly also left the Islands soon after the Lawry's departed in 1823, whereas Tindall stayed for almost four years. William Chapman, with a wife and family also volunteered but they never made it to Tonga. Chapman was a shipwright by trade, and, as Lawry said, would be a most useful member of the Mission party as *we shall need boats here and cannot dispense with them.* (*INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE LETTERS AND JOURNALS 1822-1832**, LAWRY TO COMMITTEE, 16/10/1822).

Little is known about the background of Lilly and Tindall, except that they volunteered because of Lawry, and that both had trades: Lilly a carpenter and Tindall a blacksmith: Lilly and Tindall would become essential to the Mission. A blacksmith's shop for Tindall was built on the Church's ground at Mu'a where he was in great demand, making axes and other tools that were used in bartering and for presents. A sawpit was also built where Lilly could prepare beams and planks for building the Mission House. Theirs was important work. As Lawry informed the Committee, they were impressive, not only because of their trade skills but also for their Christian character and manners:

The two pious and improvising young Mechanics ... have gained the confidence of the Chiefs, partly by the practice of their mechanical arts ... but more especially their steady and consistent uniformity of deportment. (FRIENDLY ISLANDS 1822-1875 LETTERS AND JOURNALS AUGUST 1823).*

The carpenter and blacksmith were certainly appreciated by Lawry as an essential part of establishing the mission in the early days. As he was to tell the Committee, in a long letter explaining the many decisions he had made without authority, Lilly and Tindall, brought to Tonga without the Committee's permission, were in fact indispensable members of the Mission team:

I know not what I would have done without two useful persons who came with me. George Lilly is a carpenter ... and is preparing timbers for the Mission House. Charles Tindall ... a blacksmith; he makes togies [axes] a sort of hatchet and axes of iron ... these we trade and make presents. Had not this young man been with me I could not have remained on the island. (INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE LETTERS AND JOURNALS 1822-1832, LAWRY TO SECRETARIES, COKEVERNAL, 16/10/1822).

Lawry explained to the Committee that these young men were well and truly volunteers. They did not receive a stipend, and they knew what they were committing themselves to when they joined the mission team. And further, he would personally bear the costs associated with their personal needs:

When these young men proposed accompanying me on the Tonga Mission, which they were desirous of doing upon any terms, I told them that I could not put them on the Missionary Society [for a stipend]. None could do that, save the [Wesleyan] Conference or the General Committee in London; but if they thought proper to go to Tongataboo upon a risk of their temporal property, I would supply them with food and clothes until I could learn the mind of the Committee concerning them, upon which they cheerfully came. I can only say that until the language is acquired, they are likely to be as useful as I am, and perhaps afterwards too. Without them I should never have attempted the erection of a Mission House ... (IBID).

Although they were volunteers, Lawry sought some financial assistance for them from the Committee. His appeal was that:

If the Committee think it proper to allow anything [i.e. payment] for these persons, well, I would certainly recommend it. But if not, no evil is done. Their passage and maintenance in the interim I have become responsible for.
(IBID).

The committee did recognize the importance of these young mission workers and provided financial support.

Carlisle, the volunteer teacher, proved to be a controversial member of the mission team. On the one hand he appeared to be a good choice. He had been a CMS (Anglican) lay missionary teacher in New Zealand for three years, (1815-1819), teaching the children of missionaries and Maori adults and children. A dispute with the Rev Samuel Marsden, Superintendent of the CMS Mission in New Zealand led to his resignation. When he heard of the Wesleyan's Tongataboo mission he offered his services. However, there were conditions with his offer. He said he wanted to join the Wesleyan mission in a *single state*, indicating that his wife and family would not be going with him. (His marriage to Elizabeth Blackman, after his first wife died in 1813, was a very unhappy one. He spoke of *personal and domestic suffering, of family trials*). Lawry discussed Carlisle's offer with his Wesleyan colleagues in Sydney and it was agreed he should form part of the mission party for Tonga. Explaining his actions to the Committee in London, Lawry said that Carlisle would not be a financial burden on the mission. He said that he:

gave him passage [paid his fare] but promised him nothing further ... I think he is pious, and his conduct is very upright, but very little can be said as to his abilitieshe would be useful if allowed to remain, I have no doubt...
(IBID).

Carlisle was comparatively wealthy. He owned a valuable 100-acre farm in Windsor, New South Wales and in preparation for Tonga, he had sold 50 acres of it for £200 sterling. He also owned a new building on two acres at Richmond complete with barns, stables and gardens, and when offered for sale, was advertised as a good opportunity for a shop or public house (Hotel). So, Carlisle's financial position allowed him to offer his services as a volunteer. Nevertheless, Lawry asked the Committee to consider some material and financial support for:

A few clothes from London for his family, a small portion of the Mission property, to procure subsistence with, and about 20 or 30 pounds per annum would be all he requires. (IBID).

The Committee strongly disapproved of Lawry including Carlisle in the Mission party, especially as he would be leaving his family in New South Wales. They refused Lawry's request for help, stressing that they:

cannot give employment to any man in a state of separation from his wife. (MINUTE BOOK OF COMMITTEE 1822-1829, 05/II/1823).*

The result of the Committee's displeasure was that Carlisle returned to Sydney. The Wesleyan's attempt to establish a school, the first in Tonga it would have been, came to a sudden end. (*Incoming Correspondence Letters and Journals, 1822-1832**, *Lawry to Secretaries Cokevernal, 16/10/1822; SG 02/01/1823*).

Despite losing his teacher, the other volunteers were doing excellent work. They were just as important for the mission Lawry said, as he was:

as everything that I could do, the young men, [can do] with or without me. (INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE LETTERS AND JOURNALS, 1822-1832, LAWRY TO COMMITTEE, COKEVERNAL, 18/08/1823).*

The ones to be left behind.

When Lawry left Tonga in 1823, he believed that the door for the Wesleyan Church's mission in Tonga had been opened. The responsibility for keeping it open fell on those he left behind: George Lilly and Charles Tindall. Lilly went back to Sydney soon after the Lawrys departed, and became, at various times a teacher, shopkeeper, newspaper man and auctioneer. Tindall stayed on and acted as an interpreter for Thomas and Hutchinson when they arrived in 1826. Tindall, it could be said, was the one who kept the door open so that the mission could be resumed when new missionaries arrived.

Lawry had faith in the abilities and the devotion of Lilly and Tindall. He believed that the young volunteers could accomplish everything that he could have done. He said that the work of the Mission:

will be just as well accomplished by the two young men he has left behind. These young men possess genuine piety, are strongly attached to the mission and discover commendable readiness in acquiring the language, and a fervent zeal for the salvation of the natives. (NSW MINUTES, REPORTS AND DISPATCHES, PROVISIONAL DISTRICT MEETING, NSW, 30/12/1823).

Not only were the young men committed to the mission, but, according to Lawry:

*the chiefs, tho' extremely sorry to part with us, are much attached to these individuals, and promise every attention and kindness to them, hoping by the return of the St Michael, to receive other missionaries. (INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE LETTERS AND JOURNALS FRIENDLY ISLANDS 1822-1832, * LAWRY TO COMMITTEE, 8/01/1823).*

After George Lilly left Tonga and returned to Sydney, Tindall had the sole responsibility of caring for the Wesleyan Mission property: the Mission House, the Blacksmiths shop and saw pit, the Mission boat, and the Mission Store with its trade goods for bartering, (axes and chisels and plane irons, fishhooks, and calico etc.). He felt it was a very heavy burden indeed. He told Captain Beveridge of the St Michael, that he wanted to stay in Tonga and await the arrival of

missionaries, but he did not want the Mission property to be *under his charge*. Such valuable and much sought-after property meant that he feared for his own personal safety. Nevertheless, he had come to Tonga to be part of *the great work of evangelizing* the people, and he was:

not willing to abandon the ground while there was hopes of the return of a Missionary (SG, 10/02/1825).

In the end, however, two things finally led him to leave Mu'a and move to Hi-hifo and live under Ata's protection: the persistent stories among some of the people that the missionaries were *praying people dead*, and the anxiety of protecting the mission's property. So he wrote to Beveridge about these matters and also mentioned a request from Tubou ['Aleamotu] that the young men [Lilly and Tindall]:

should go to Port Jackson and return again with Mr. L, or other missionaries. (LETTERS AND JOURNALS, FRIENDLY ISLANDS 1822-1832, CAPTAIN BEVERIDGE, SHIP ST MICHAEL, NOVEMBER 1824).*

Charles Tindall was to remain with Ata who was chief when the first attempt was made to establish Christianity by the LMS. He believed that he would be safe with Ata. Captain Beveridge supported this belief because he felt that Ata was *considerate, clever and influential.* (*ibid, Beveridge 4/01/1825*). Tindall, the volunteer, by remaining in Tonga, was fulfilling his commitment to Tonga. As an article in the Sydney Gazette emphasized (after speaking of Tindall's devotion to the Wesleyan Mission), expressed the opinion that:

The day is rapidly advancing when these 188 islands [Friendly Islands] shall also be enumerated among the Christian nations of the earth. (SG 10/02/1825).

Tindall's hopes, and the *Sydney Gazette's* prediction, would soon be realized. In the not-too-distant future other Missionaries would come and the Mission would continue and grow.

Lawry's reasons for leaving Tonga.

On October 3rd 1823 the Lawrys left Tonga. Their departure had a lot to do with serious concerns about Mary's health. She had lost their first-born daughter, Elizabeth, in Sydney, before she came to Tonga. (*SMH 17/11/1934; de Reyland, p.115*) She had suffered a miscarriage in Tonga, and now, aged only 24, she was well advanced in her latest pregnancy. And her condition, Lawry said, was *most painful*. Explaining the situation at the NSW Provisional District Meeting, he said that it was a matter of life or death:

Mrs Lawry was approaching near her confinement, which on former occasions had always been attended with great danger, and having no medical gentleman, nor even a white female to assist her, he considered it necessary for the preservation of her life, to repair to the colony. (NSW MINUTES, REPORTS AND DISTRICT DESPATCHES, 1822-1838. PROVISIONAL DISTRICT MEETING 30/12/1823).

Lawry further explained that he had *written several months before for a nurse to be sent to Tonga, but none could be procured.* (*Incoming Correspondence Letters & Journals 1822-1832**; *Lawry to Committee, Cokevernal, 08/01/1823*). The Sydney press noted that Mary Lawry, *one of Australia's daughters* (Mary had been born in Parramatta), had returned from Tonga:

for the sake of medical aid, and she had scarcely been on shore one day before she was delivered of a fine girl. (SG, 26/07/1826).

For Mary, pregnancy was certainly a matter of life and death. She died, just two years after leaving Tonga, when giving birth to her second daughter Mary Australia Lawry.

Another recurring issue that helped Lawry decide to leave the Tonga Mission was the continuing belief of some of the people that the missionaries caused sickness, disease and war by their praying and singing, or as Morgan Bryan had said, by their *witchcraft and incantations*. Lawry had heard these views at Mu'a, and at Hihifo when he visited Ata, which was clearly a carryover from LMS times. Even after Lawry had left Tonga, Lilly and Tindall were still afraid of those people who believed that *the young men prayed them all sick.* (*LETTERS AND*

JOURNALS, FRIENDLY ISLANDS, 1822-1832. CAPTAIN BEVERIDGE, SHIP ST MICHAEL, NOVEMBER 1824; WMM, 1824, P.706)*

There was also a very personal reason why Lawry was leaving Tonga: the Missionary Committee's series of censuring letters. In those letters, he said:

my conduct for the last three years is reviewed in a very unfavourable light. All the Colonial ministers, indeed, are charged with improper conduct, but I am considered on all occasions, as foremost in irregularity and disobedience to our rules. (LETTERS AND JOURNALS 1822-1875, COKEVERNAL, 18/08/1823).*

Lawry spent an *anxious month*, deliberating on how to respond to what he regarded as harsh, unfounded, criticisms. (Incoming Correspondence Letters and Journals, 1822-1832* Lawry letters dated December 1821, April 1822, and July 1823). One of the Committee's letters was extremely upsetting and lead a colleague to call it *that awful July letter*. (*Incoming Correspondence Letters & Journals, 1822-1832*, Carvooso to Committee, 30/01/1823*). The awfulness of the letter, which caused him *distressful anxiety* was that the London Committee no longer had confidence in him. In fact, he had *entirely forfeited their confidence*. This was a deeply humiliating and shameful thing for any Wesleyan missionary. Furthermore, the Committee said that their confidence could not be restored:

until he makes special acknowledgment of his error and expresses his determination to act under the direction of the committee in future. (FRIENDLY ISLANDS: MINUTES & REPORTS 1827-1843, 30/12/1823).*

The Committee had a number of grounds for their harsh criticism and censure. His unauthorised actions in Sydney – changing and modifying Missionary Instructions, taking out a huge loan for the Macquarie Street Chapel, commencing a Sunday School in competition with the Established Church, (Church of England), proceeding to Tonga without first spending some time with the Mission in New Zealand – all these matters had followed him to Tonga, and were taken up by the Mission secretaries and spelled out in critical detail. The serious London letters had a crucial impact on the future of the Tonga Mission and Lawry's part in it. If he had not been rebuked and censured so strongly, he could well have returned to Tonga after the birth of their fourth child in Sydney in late 1823. Fatu, at Mu'a, certainly wanted Lawry to return. Interestingly, one of Lawry's final acts of irregularity and disobedience was his decision to leave the Tonga Mission without the Committee's permission. And this decision was confounded by a further unapproved decision: he and Mary took a Tongan boy, Tammy Nau, with them when they returned to Sydney and then to England.

He had to answer for his disobedience when he got back to Sydney, and again, later, in London. He was exonerated by the Sydney Committee. They believed that he had given a '*satisfactorily justification*' for leaving Tonga. Further, they recorded in the minutes that the Friendly Islands:

*afford a very promising field for Missionary exertion.
Indeed, a very beneficial commencement was already effected
by the labours of Mr Lawry. (NSW MINUTES AND RE-
PORTS, 01/01/1822-1838, 30/12/1823).*

And the Committee in London also *agreed to*:

*overlook this violation of rule [leaving an appointment
without permission] ... and recorded a general good opinion
of him. (MINUTE BOOK OF THE COMMITTEE FRIENDLY IS
1827-1843*, 19/01/1825).*

The presence of Tammy Nau, in England, however, caused the Committee problems and expense: his upkeep, food and clothing, accommodation, education, and how he would be sent back to Tonga. He was accommodated by *friends of the Mission*, enrolled in a school in England, and prepared for baptism. He was baptised with the name Watson Nau and later accompanied John and Sarah Thomas on their journey to Sydney in 1825 on their way to their appointment in Tonga. (*THOMAS, JOURNAL** 27/04/1825; SEE ALSO CHAPTER 7).

One, perhaps surprising, reason for leaving, was that he did not feel a call to island mission work. As he said:

Although he was appointed to that Station [Friendly Islands, Tongatapu], by the Committee, he never experienced any inward call from God to labour among the heathen and therefore believes he should neither be happy nor very useful in such a mission. (NSW MINUTES AND REPORTS, 1822-1838. PROVISIONAL DISTRICT MEETING 30/12/1823; MN 1823, P.832).*

Nevertheless, he went on to declare that, despite his own personal feelings, his coming to the islands to establish the Tongan Mission, was, it seems, in God's overall plan:

He trusts ... that he was guided by Providence in visiting Tonga for the purpose of opening a Mission there and preparing the way for subsequent labours.

A final unsettling blow to Lawry, and the fate of the Mission, was news from London that the Wesleyan Conference had decided to take him out of Tonga. In the list of Missionary appointments his name appeared on the list for Hobart, Van Diemen's Land [Tasmania], a Conference direction that he chose not to obey. (*MINUTES AND REPORTS*, FRIENDLY ISLANDS, 1822-1838*, 30/12/1823).

In the face of all the problems and difficulties, criticisms and censures, Lawry had made the decision to leave Tonga. By going back to England, he believed, he could defend his reputation and also fulfil an important function: promoting Wesleyan Missions in the South Seas. As he explained it, he could still support Tonga from afar:

By returning to England, I hope to undertake important service to Missions in these seas, small initiatives have arisen, respecting a Colonial Mission which by the blessing of God, I may be the means of commending. (*FRIENDLY ISLANDS, 1822-1832*, LETTERS AND JOURNALS LAWRY TO COMMITTEE, COKEVERNAL*, 18/08/1823).

Lawry did have the opportunity to have a face-to-face meeting with the Committee and was able to give in detail, his reasons for leaving Tonga, including *without waiting for the Committee's permission*. And, when concluding his defence, he made an '*offer of further service in the South Seas*' at some time in the future. As a result, the Committee passed two positive resolutions in his favour. The first undertook to '*overlook his violation*' of leaving Tonga without permission. The second, in the light of his many conflicts with the Committee, is rather surprising. The resolution reads:

That the general conduct of Mr Lawry and his sacrifices in the work of the Mission and especially at Tonga, entitle him to the general good opinion and regard of the Committee. (*MINUTE BOOK OF COMMITTEE, 1822-1829**, 19/01/1826).

Farewell to Tonga and the return to Sydney and London.

There was some suggestion that Lawry's leaving would simply be a *temporary absence*. The people, he felt, *wanted them to return*. They were:

very much affected at our projected departure; they crowd around our premises from morning to night and beg us not to go away; or if we do, they say they hope we shall soon return from the foreign countries and bring some of our relatives with us (MN 1824, P 707).

The scene when Walter and Mary Lawry finally embarked for Sydney on the 3rd October 1823, *was truly moving*. Fatu was:

scarcely able to open his mouth for weeping and vast crowds collected round our house and carried almost all our luggage to the ship. (MN, 1824 p.707).

Just as the Lawrys were about to step into the boat to ferry them out to the St Michael, a kava ring was formed, and the departing missionary was asked *to stand in the middle*. Speeches were made including one by the Chief who begged Lawry to ask his friends overseas to:

send us many teachers. Our hearts are sore, because you are all going from us. Here, [said Lawry], they burst into tears, and I could bear the scene no longer. (IBID).

The Lawry legacy

In Sydney the Missionary Committee was well aware that there were needs and opportunities in the Pacific, especially following Lawry's report on his return from Tonga. They expressed their confidence in future missionary activities in a lengthy comment in their minutes. They believed that Lawry had begun to lay the foundation for future success. The Tonga islands, they said:

*afford a very promising field for Missionary exertion.
Indeed, a very hopeful commencement has already been
affected by the labours of Mr Lawry. He has succeeded in
erecting spacious and commodious Mission Premises and in
establishing a friendly intercourse with the Natives. On
these grounds we confidently recommend the continuance
and, as prudence may hereafter dictate, the enlargement of
our Mission among these interesting Islands. (NSW MIN-
UTES & REPORTS 1822-1838*, NSW PROVISIONAL DISTRICT
MEETING. 30/12/1823).*

In England, having returned to his homeland, Lawry spent the next 18 years ministering in various circuits in his home county, Cornwall. The years of circuit work there restored his reputation and in 1843, he was appointed General Superintendent of the Wesleyan Missions in New Zealand, Tonga and Fiji. His undertaking to the Committee twenty-five years previously, of further service in the South Seas, had come to pass.

In Tonga in 1847 and 1850 Lawry visited Tonga as General Superintendent of Wesleyan Missions in New Zealand, Tonga and Fiji. Those visits produced two valuable books, reproducing extracts from his journals which provide contain many valuable insights into the history of the Wesleyan Church and Tongan society of the late forties and early fifties. There is one priceless record of his correspondence with Tupou I, where the King put in writing his unbending assurance that Tonga should always remain an independent nation. In the letter to Lawry the King wrote:

*I verily wish to be the friend of Britain; In friendly alliance,
with all fellowship; but it is not my mind, nor the mind of
my people, that we should be subject to any other people or
kingdom in this world. But it is our mind to sit down (that
is to remain) an independent Nation. (LAWRY, A SECOND*

*MISSIONARY VISIT TO THE FRIENDLY AND FEEJEE ISLANDS,
P.72).*

The fierce independence that Tupou I expressed to Lawry wove its way through the life of the Church and the Nation until the end of his days.

For his part, Lawry too could be seen as making a lasting contribution to the lotu in Tonga. Before he left the islands, in 1823, he wrote a lengthy entry in his Private and Personal Journal. It was dated Cokevernal, 18th August, 1823, and in it he defended himself, at length, against the criticisms of the Mission Committee in London. But he also put forward his view that he had achieved much of value, beginning to lay the foundations for future builders. Other would be destined to come to Tonga in the future, and they would secure a permanent Mission. (*NSW Minutes & Reports 1822-1838**, *NSW Provisional District Meeting 30/12/1823*). For the present, he described his role in the history of the Wesleyan Church in Tonga in Biblical terms:

Providence has heretofore employed me in the work of John the Baptist, "crying in the wilderness and preparing the way of the Lord". This done, I came to give way, like an inferior ... to the coming forth of a brighter luminary. (FRIENDLY ISLANDS LETTERS AND JOURNALS 1822-1832, 18/08/1823).*

A brighter luminary did in fact appear. Three years after Lawry left, John and Mary Hutchinson and John and Sarah Thomas arrived. The Hutchinsons were not able to stay long because of ill health and other reasons, but John and Sarah Thomas stayed and ministered in Tonga for the next 30 years!

=====CHAPTER 3=====

Tonga's Tahitian Missionary Teachers:1822-1828

In the early and mid-1820s the London Missionary Society [LMS] made two attempts to start a mission in Tonga, employing Tahitian teacher/missionaries. The first, in 1822-23, saw three missionaries landed in Vava'u at about the time Walter Lawry was leaving Tongatapu. A 'chapel' was built but the LMS Vava'u 'trial' has been seen as largely a failure.

The second attempt, in 1826, involved the Tongan man Langi, and his Tahitian wife, Langi's Fijian friend Takai and two Tahitian missionary teachers. Their arrival had a significant impact on the history of the lotu in Tonga. Based in Nuku'alofa and supported by Tupou Aleamotu'a, a chapel was built, worship services commenced, and a school established.

Three months after Langi and the Tahitians arrived, the Wesleyans, John and Sarah Thomas and John and Mary Hutchison settled in Hihifo at Kolovai. They met with some support but considerable opposition, and, at times, death threats from the ruling Chief, Ata. They were aware of the successful LMS mission at Nuku'alofa and would have preferred to move there. However, they could not make a move because, as they said, the place was occupied by the London Missionary Society.

The members of the two missionary societies related well with each other, and when the Wesleyans Cross and Turner with their families arrived in 1827, they soon joined the Tahitians at Nuku'alofa. This effectively saw the end of the LMS mission at Nuku'alofa.

Tahitian Missionaries for Vava'u 1822-1823

Three Tahitian Missionary Teachers, Taute, Zorobabella and Borabora arrived in Vava'u from Tahiti in November 1822 to teach the people the principles of Christianity (*SG, 22/11/1822; Davies, History of Tahiti, p.172*). They came from a thriving Christian community on the Tahitian island of Borabora. At the time they left for Vava'u their church had a congregation of a thousand people – five hundred and forty-three baptized adults, four hundred and forty baptized children, and thirty-six communicants. There were three hundred children in the school and this flourishing church was described by the Sydney-based Pacific Island trader, Captain Hunter of the Governor Macquarie, as a Mission where:

all the missionaries were prospering in their labours ... very active in raising up and properly instructing some of the best informed natives, who, the moment the door was opened, applied with eagerness to proclaim the 'Good News' to their [Pacific Island] brethren. (S G, 22/11/1822).

Borabora (he bore the same name as the island where he was born) and his wife were members of this successful missionary minded church and had been some of the earliest converts to Christianity in Tahiti. They were an adventurous couple, having travelled beyond their island home and spent some time in Sydney. When the call came for teachers for a new mission at Vava'u, they, with Taute and Zorobabella, were among the large number of church members to volunteer. The Rev John Orsmond, missionary on Borabora, described the ones selected for Vava'u as steady and well informed (*T&B Deputation, p.151; Orsmond, Journal # 28/09/1822*). They were to commence a 'trial' on Vava'u to see if other missionaries would be able to follow.

Preparation for the Vava'u Mission.

The church at Borabora gave the three missionaries a special farewell commissioning service on the Sunday before they departed. Their minister, the Rev John Orsmond, preached the sermon on Matthew 10:16, which contained the words of Jesus to his disciples as they were sent out on mission:

I send you forth as sheep among wolves; be therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves. (ORSMOND, JOURNAL # 28/09/1822).

Orsmond described the historic occasion:

The three persons appointed yesterday were solemnly set apart and seriously and suitably admonished. They were furnished with forty little reading books and ten Gospels of John. All of them can write. One has a son about twelve years of age who reads well, repeating accurately the old and new Catechism. I feel delight in this as I taught him myself ... (IBID # 29/091822).

Orsmond's journal contained the blessing offered to the outgoing missionaries: *May God by his Providence send the word of life to the remotest shores.*

Two days later, on the 1 October 1822, the new missionaries sailed for Vava'u aboard the *Governor Macquarie*. The Sydney Gazette recorded the event, noting that Captain Hunter, Master of the Governor Macquarie:

conveyed to the Friendly Islands, at the direction of the missionaries [in Tahiti], three missionaries who were left there accordingly. (SG 22/II/1822).

The report did not mention that one of the teachers was married and his wife and son accompanied him.

Establishing a mission station in Vava'u.

It is difficult to get a clear picture of how the missionary teachers set about *communicating the principles of Christianity*. Their kit of resources was meagre, consisting only a few school books and Gospels, all in Tahitian: forty little reading books and ten Gospels of John. Unlike European missionaries, sent out by the LMS Directors in London, who provided missionaries with a generous supply of stores and equipment, the Tahitian missionaries were only issued with a handful of books. They had been sent out, not by the LMS Directors, but by their own local congregation and its minister and no arrangement was made to visit and support them. They were going to be very much on their own.

Detailed records of their ministry in Vava'u, from the missionaries themselves, do not seem to exist. Missionaries sent out from London, were obliged to keep Journals, write reports, and send letters to their missionary Societies, but the Tahitian teachers had none of these requirements. They did, however, write from time to time to the missionary who sent them. Such letters would have been in Tahitian and be among personal papers of missionaries. They do not appear to form part of the London Missionary Society archival records. So, historians have to depend on third parties to get an understanding of how the missionary teachers operated, and whether or not they achieved any success. The Rev John Williams of the LMS certainly thought they were a failure. They do

deserve credit, however, for being the missionaries who saw the building of the first Christian chapel in Tonga. According to Thomas, when he met the Fijian Chief Vuki in Lifuka in May 1831 he said that Vuki was *well thought of by the Chiefs and people of Tonga*, and that it was he who had *builded the chapel at Vava'u* [presumably in 1822] *for the Tahitian teachers sent from Borabora.* (*THOMAS JOURNAL, *31/05/1831*).

Language would have been a barrier to communication but may not have been an insoluble difficulty. There were similarities between Tahitian and Tongan. Tyerman and Bennett, who, in the 1820s, came on a LMS Deputation to mission stations around the world, listed some Tahitian words in their report which appear to be closely related to Tongan, and in some cases are identical.

Tahitian	Tongan
Po-night	Po-night
Ao-day	'Aho-day
Buaa-pig	puaka-pig
Fenua-land	fonua-land
Moo-lizard	moko-lizard
Uri-dog	kuli-dog
Atoru-three	tolu-three
Ahitu-seven	fitu-seven
Avaru-eight	valu-eight
Aiva-nine	hiva-nine

(TYERMAN AND BENNET, #)

Finau and The Tahitian Missionaries.

Finau 'Ulukalala was the King of Vava'u, and the Tahitian missionaries had to live and work under his rule. William Brown, the Port au Prince survivor who was Finau's European adviser, is credited with introducing his Chief to the Christian idea of a 'Supreme Being'. (*Orlebar, Journal, p.70*). So, when the Tahitians arrived, Finau would know at least something about the new religion that was being offered to him and his people. The LMS missionary John Williams visited Tonga in 1830 and, among other things, wanted to find out why the Vava'u mission had been a failure. If possible, Williams wanted to leave a highly regarded Tahitian teacher and his wife at Vava'u as replacements for the original three who had been sent some six years previously. Williams was concerned that they had acted immorally and that their mission was a failure.

During the visit, Williams sailed to Ha'apai to meet Thomas, and with Finau who was in Ha'apai at the time. Williams wanted to have discussions:

*about a native teacher we had brought from Porapora
[Borabora] to be left at Vava'u, in case Finau should receive
him. (WILLIAMS, SAMOAN JOURNALS, PP. 59-60).*

Thomas and Cross, as interpreters, went with Williams to see Finau. Williams began the discussion by offering Finau an unconditional apology for the behavior of the three missionaries previously sent to Vava'u:

we began by telling him how sorry we were that the native teachers first sent to his island had acted so improperly, and that we were directed to tell him from the church at Porapora [Borabora] how much we lamented the improper conduct of their brethren and in order as much as possible to make amends for the injury done, they had sent another of their number in whom they could confide, and begged he would accept him and his family, and take them under his protection and suffer his people to be taught the Word of God (IBID)

Finau's response, and his general attitude, quickly convinced Williams not to press the matter, but to take the missionary, Tahaere and his family, to Samoa instead. As Williams record of the meeting shows, Finau was opposed to the lotu, saying that:

the former teachers had not acted so bad – that he would not listen to them nor suffer any of his people, and further that he and his people were still of the mind, and would have nothing to do with the lotu for a long time to come. We might leave the man and his family if we pleased. He would not kill them, but he would not regard the lotu or new religion or allow any of his people on pain of death. (IBID, P.59–60)

The conversation ended with Williams saying that he [Finau] *might soon die and then he would have to lament that he had chosen darkness rather than light*. Finau's response was *it would perhaps be best to die dark.* (IBID, P.59).

Finau's comment to Williams, in 1830, that *he would have nothing to do with the lotu for a long time to come*, may have stemmed from a disappointment some two or three years earlier. At that time, 1828, Finau had written to Tupou and Nathaniel Turner, seeking a missionary teacher, but none were available, so none were appointed!

The Vava'u Missionaries legacy.

The general opinion has been that the 1822 LMS 'trial' mission to Vava'u was a complete failure. Thomas certainly gave a pessimistic evaluation when Williams asked about the fate of the three teachers saying that:

all of them either by example or force had apparently abandoned Christianity. He had been informed that Finau threatened them with death if they continued praying or reading the word of God and any of his people if they listened to them. Two of them mixed with the idolators in their practices and one of the two [Zorobabel] died in that state. (IBID, p.62).

Thomas's evaluation was accurate enough in 1830. By that time they had become part of the Tongan community and lived a Tongan way of life. They spent the rest of their days in their adopted country, even though, in Tute's case, he had the opportunity to return to Tahiti, but he did not take it. (*Williams, Memoirs, Prout*, p.82). Nevertheless, there were some positive achievements that should not be overlooked.

Zorobabel remains something of a mystery. He does not appear to have left a contribution to the advancement of the lotu. Davies could only remark that :

what became of him doth not appearhe joined the heathen, and his body was marked with their tatau [tattoo]. (Davies, History, p.317).

Thomas had a similar opinion saying that he *mixed with idolators*, and Sarah Farmer noted that he *clung to heathenism during life and died an awful death.* (*Farmer*, p.161) He had not lived up to the reputation of his Biblical namesake who was an influential religious and political leader in the history of the Hebrews, especially after their return from exile. The biblical Zorobabel has a significant place in the history of Christianity, being named in several books of the Old Testament (Ezra, Nehemiah, Zechariah) and in the Gospel of Mathew as an ancestor of Joseph and of Jesus. (*KING JAMES BIBLE DICTIONARY, MATTHEW 1:12-13*)

Taute is a different case. Williams had the opportunity to speak to him during his 1830 visit. He saw him at Lifuka with Finau's men and:

he told us with much shame that he had acted very wickedly and despaired of mercy at the hands of God. We exhorted him to repentance before it was too late. (WILLIAMS, SAMOAN JOURNALS, P. 62.)

Williams later recorded a further meeting with Taute:

We sent for Taute the only survivor of the three teachers ... the poor unhappy creature came to us, pale and trembling, dressed like the heathen among whom he has been living. His appearance excited our deepest sympathy and for a time

he was too overcome ... We then referred to his awful condition, which he acknowledged, and said that he was truly miserable, that he knew he was lost, and would not entertain a hope of salvation. Wishing to reclaim this wanderer, we offered to take him home and urged him to accompany us; to which he replied: that he had a wife and child, whom he could not leave, and he knew that the Chief would not let him go. (WILLIAMS MEMOIRS, PROUST p.82).

That was not the end of Taute's story. Thomas tells about the funeral of Finau's sister at Neiafu in October 1831 where Taute was present. A huge crowd attended the ceremonies – Thomas estimated it at 4,000 people and some thousands, he says, 'got good' that day. Thomas had preached several times during the ceremonies including texts from Matthew 4:17 *Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand*, Acts 17:22–31, *Paul at Athens declaring the True God*, and Matthew 6:33, *Seek first the kingdom of God*. Taute, one of the fallen Tahitian teachers known by the Tongans as Tangikina, was among those who got good and began to seek the Lord again. (*Thomas, Tongatapu and the Friendly Islands**, p. 789). His recovery of the faith seems to have been complete as Thomas made a point of mentioning him when a new chapel was opened at Tu'anekevale in July 1834. Thomas said the building was by far the neatest and best chapel I had yet seen and then he added:

Matthew Taute, once one of the fallen teachers sent from Borabora but now graciously restored, is the head teacher at this place. (IBID p.1011).

Sarah Farmer adds an additional piece to the story. In her book published in 1855 she noted that:

It is satisfactory to know that in after years, two of these men [Tautē and Borabora] became truly penitent and were again united to the church. One died happily [Borabora] and the other [Tautē] is still a consistent member of the Wesleyan Society. (Farmer, p.161).

Borabora was also remembered for his faith. He bore the name of his Tahitian island home [Borabora] and, initially, he had kept the faith. But with no support from the Church on Borabora that had sent him as a missionary teacher, he:

stood firm for some time but finding no prospects of success and thinking they were abandoned by the persons who sent them, no ship visiting them from thence for many years he also relapsed, but not to such an extent as the others. (WILLIAMS, SAMOAN JOURNALS, p.62.)

However, when Hape and Tafeta arrived in Nuku'alofa in 1826, and he heard that a great *number of the Tonga people had embraced the gospel*, he joined his countrymen there. Taute told Williams that:

Borabora, grieved with his [Tute's] conduct and that of Zorobabela, had removed to Tongataboo, where his labours had been exceedingly useful, and his death very happy
(Proust, Williams Memoirs p.8; (WILLIAMS, SAMOAN JOURNALS, P.62-63).

Those *useful labours* at Nuku'alofa included assisting Hape in *teaching the people*. (*Davies, History, p.317*). Williams in 1830, meet Borabora's son at Lifuka. He was the boy, now a 20-year-old, who was a lad of 12 in 1822 when he accompanied his parents to Vava'u. Williams presented him with a *small present out of respect to the memory of his father*. (*Williams, Samoan Journals, p.63*). Part of that memory had to do with Borabora's final witness to the faith, not in Vava'u, but in Nuku'alofa, where he spent his last days. As Williams was told:

the Tongatabooans say to this day that the words of Borabora greatly affected their hearts and made them tremble particularly his deathbed exhortations. Mr Thomas believes his repentance was sincere and that he died in peace. (*WILLIAMS, SAMOAN JOURNALS, P.62-63*).

Borabora's son

There is an interesting possibility, about *what could have been*, relating to the 1822-1823 Vava'u missionary adventure. The Rev Orsmond, who initiated sending the three missionaries to Vava'u, was seriously thinking of going there himself. On more than one occasion he agonized in his Journal about it. (*Orsmond, Journal # 29/9/1822; 27/10/1822*). He was a successful missionary on Borabora, superintending a very large congregation and a thriving school. He planned to visit Vava'u and booked a passage to *where he thought of going to reside*. He would have considerable Polynesian missionary experience to offer to a mission there. However, his brother missionaries had other ideas. He was appointed, instead, to the Tahitian Institution for educating missionaries children! Had the Reverend John Orsmond been appointed to Vava'u in 1822, the history of the lotu in Tonga could well have been quite different.

Tahitian Missionaries at Tongatapu 1826-1828

A miracle in the making

Walter Lawry, as he left Tonga in 1823, reflected on the future of the Wesleyan mission. Without what he called a miracle; it would take perhaps five to seven years before a Mission Station could be established, and a missionary would be able to:

*see the fruit of his labour in the conversion of the natives
(LETTERS AND JOURNALS* 1822-1875. LAWRY TO COMMITTEE
AUGUST 1823).*

It could be said that a miracle in fact did take place, for within months of the arrival, from Tahiti, of Langi, Takai, Hape and Tafeta, Aleamotu'a had *embraced Christianity and was encouraging the establishment of the faith.* (*ibid*). That miracle had at its heart the work of the much-travelled Tongan, Langi.

Langi's foundational role in the success of the Tahitian missionary teachers in 1826 is perhaps not well known or celebrated in Tonga today. And yet any telling of the Wesleyan story needs to bring him out of the shadows and give him proper recognition. He has been neglected, perhaps, because there are only snippets of information about him in documents and published works. But when gathered together, these casual references help to create a fascinating picture. He is often simply referred to as Langi or Tupou's man, or the Tongan man. His story, however, reveals a man of courage, ability, adventure, and vision.

Langi, had arrived in Nuku'alofa from Tahiti in March 1826 with Hape and Tafeta the Polynesian LMS missionary teachers, who were on their way to Fiji. They were appointed to Fiji to open a mission there. Langi and Takai had urged the LMS Tahitian missionary, Reverend John Davies, stationed on Papara, to send teachers to Lakemba. As circumstances were to dictate, however, the teachers did not end up in Fiji but settled in Tonga instead.

Langi, before he accompanied Hape and Tafeta to Tongatapu in March 1826, had been employed as an interpreter for Captain Peter Dillon, a Pacific adventurer, ship owner-trader, resident of the Island of Borabora, Tahiti [1810-1812] and, was, at various times, friend of missions and missionaries. Dillon had years of experience in the Pacific and developed a keen interest in Polynesian history and culture. He had useful knowledge of several Pacific Island languages, and his writings, it has been said, ranked *with the best of his times.* (*ADB entry for Dillon*).

Some of his comments, about Langi, and about Tupou and the Tahitian missionaries Hape and Tafeta, are especially valuable, as this kind of information does not appear to have been recorded by anyone else.

Langi, and his friend Takai had called in at Nuku'alofa in November 1824 with Dillon, during a cruise around the islands (Tonga, Fiji, New Hebrides, New Zealand). Langi was a useful interpreter for Dillon in his travels for, as well as his native Tongan and his adopted Fijian, Langi spoke, in varying degrees of correctness, English and Tahitian. Dillon eventually ended his Pacific cruising at Port Jackson where Langi and Takai decided to stay, to *take the opportunity to see and experience European ways*. They remained some months in Sydney, but the food and the climate did not suit them. As Dillon explains it:

I left Langhi [Langi] and Thaki [Takai] at a friend's house, to await my return from South America, whither I was then bound ... on the way [home] I put in at Otaheite in November, where I found Langhi and Thakai, who informed me that Port Jackson was too cold for them and afforded neither cocoa-nuts nor yams; they therefore came to Otaheite with Captain Henry, who resided there. (DILLON, NARRATIVE P.270).

The decision to leave Sydney and go to Tahiti had a very significant effect on the history of the Tongan church. It was while he was living in Tahiti that he and Takai *embraced the Christian faith*. Langi married a Tahitian woman and decided that with the aid of some Tahitian missionaries and schoolmasters, he and Takai would return to Fiji (where he had been living), *to instruct their countrymen.* [Fijians and Tongans living in Fiji]

Davies provides valuable information about the time that Langi and Takai lived in Tahiti:

In the year 1825 two strangers came to Tahiti from N.S.Wales, one of them a Fijian named Takai, a native of Lageba [Lakemba]he had gone in a ship to Port Jackson, that he might see other countries, and was accompanied by a native of Tongatapu, named Langi, who also had been a resident in the Fijis, they knew both the Tonga and Fiji languages, and had learned a little English during their residence in the Colony and having come to reside at Papara (Tahiti), till they should find an opportunity of returning home. (DAVIES, HISTORY, P.289).

While waiting in Tahiti for a passage to Tonga and Fiji, Divine Providence intervened. Davies tells how he:

persuaded them [Langi and Takai] to come and attend school and worship, which they did, books were given them, and they made some progress in learning Tahitian.

Their host was the Chief of Papara, Tati, and they lived for a time in Davies own home. (*DAVIES, JOURNAL #, 1825-26; DAVIES, HISTORY, PP 289-290*).

Interestingly there were a number of immigrant agricultural workers (Tongans) on the Island of Papeurri where a Tahitian teacher and catechist, Taharaa ran *a little school*. He took an interest in the plantation workers and:

lately devoted much of his time in teaching about ten Tongan men who worked for Samuel Henry on his plantation.
(*IBID*)

Henry, son of pioneer LMS Tahitian missionaries had been born in Tahiti, grown up there. and was bi-lingual and bi-cultural. (*DAVIES, HISTORY P.291-292; ADB, HENRY ENTRY; RICHARDS, THE PIRATES AT TAHTTI*).

Langi and Takai's stay in Tahiti was important, as far as Tonga was concerned, because they could see that Christianity had brought important and valuable changes to the Tahitians, and they wanted some of those benefits for their own people. They raised the matter with Davies on a number of occasions. Davies responded, and as it was later remarked:

The desire expressed by these two men [Langi and Takai] was taken into consideration by Mr. Davies and the Church at Papara, and several members offered their services to accompany these men on their return home and make a trial. Two of the Church members, named Hape and Tafeta were appointed to go with them and make a trial in preparing the way for others. (DAVIES, JOURNAL #, 1825-1836).

As Davies explained, the result of Langi and Takai's experiences in school, church and society in Tahiti, led them to see the value of the Christian religion.

having understood something of the nature of the religious change which had taken place at Tahiti, they expressed a strong desire that Teachers should be sent to Lageba [Lakemba] in the Fijis They were acquainted with the circumstance of a missionary being sent to Tonga [Mr Lawry the Wesleyan Missionary]. (DAVIES, HISTORY, P.289).

Langi and Takai prepared to return to Fiji, accompanied by Hape and Tafeta, and the church in Papara gave them an enthusiastic farewell. A service of dedication was held, presents were given for Tupou at Nuku'alofa and Tuineau at Lakemba. Singing, prayer and a sermon sent them on their way. Rev Davies preached on the text from Luke 10; 1-2, offering the words of Jesus as an inspiration for Hape and Tafeta, and Langi and Takai:

The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into the harvest field. (DAVIES, JOURNAL #, 1825-1826).

To the passage from Luke, Davies added the sobering words from Matthew 10:16-19, a kind of warning that the missionaries may face opposition and persecution, the same text that was used when Taute, Zorobabella, and Borabora were sent out four years earlier:

[Jesus said] I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as wise as serpents and harmless as dovesbut when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time, you will be given what to say.
(IBID)

Like the three missionaries who went to Vava'u previously, this later group were sent out with a minimum of equipment and supplies. Langi had the present for Tupou at Tonga and Takai a similar present for Tu'ineau at Lakemba. Samuel Henry and the Tahitian Chief Tati also gave suitable presents for Langi, Takai, Hape and Tafeta, and for the Chief Tu'ineau and his friend Tupou of Tonga. Other than that, Hape and Tafeta, went with the prayers and love of the people of their congregation at Papara, but the church made no contribution at present to them. (Davies, Journal #, 1/3/1825).

Establishing a mission at Nuku'alofa.

Langi, Takai, Hape and Tafeta were successful in establishing a mission, not in Fiji, but in Tongatapu, in Nuku'alofa. They had sailed for Fiji in the ship Minerva, and during their call at Nuku'alofa, a dangerous leak in the vessel was repaired. While this work was being done, Langi and Takai told Tupou that the Tahitians had found the true god and the word of life, and that they were going to Lakemba to share that message with the Fijians. Tupou decided to detain them at Tonga because for him it was a matter priority:

If the word of life was a good word, [he said] it must not go to the tail first [Fiji] but must begin at the head. [Tonga]
(WILLIAMS SAMOAN JOURNALS, P.55).

And then with what was to become a prophetic word, Tupou said to Takai and Langi and the Tahitians:

Stop here with me and teach me and my people that good word and when we know it perhaps we may embrace it too and when I and my people have embraced the word you speak of let it be taken to the Fejees (WILLIAMS SAMOAN JOURNALS, P.55).

Once Davies learned of what had happened at Tonga, he sent a letter of advice and instruction to Hape and Tafeta. He urged them to take whatever action was necessary to go on to Lakemba and fulfill the original intentions of the Church in Papara. He was also concerned about another matter. He knew that the Wesleyans had appointed missionaries to Tonga, (Thomas and Hutchison), and he did not want to create tensions between the LMS and the Wesleyans. As he explains it:

I wrote to Hape and Tafeta to use all their endeavors to proceed to Lageba [Lakemba] according to the original destination and see how the Chiefs and people there [in Fiji] are disposed (DAVIES, HISTORY, P.290).

If they were not well received in Fiji, they were to return to Tahiti. They were not to go back to Tonga:

otherwise their residence was likely to give umbrage to the Wesleyan Missionaries with whose labours we did not wish to interfere(ibid).

Davies letter did not achieve what he had hoped. Tupou kept the Tahitians at Nuku'alofa and Takai returned to Davies at Papara, to seek new teachers for Lakemba. Davies was not willing to help him, *until we hear more about those detained at Tonga. (DAVIES, HISTORY, P.290)*

Once Tupou had kept Langi and the Tahitians at Nuku'alofa, the lotu was established rapidly. Many, according to Williams:

embraced the gospel by the time that Turner and Cross took up their abode with Hape on their arrival from the Colony. (Williams, Journal, p.55; Thomas, Journal 2/II/1827)*

Tupou, at the request of the Tahitians, had:

built a chapel ... after the manner of the Tahitian chapels, that is, the building was plastered with lime made from coral. (WILLIAMS, SAMOAN JOURNALS, PP.45,56).

This was the first Christian chapel built on Tongatapu. (The first chapel in Tonga had been built several years previously in Vava'u by the Fijian Chief Vuki. (*Thomas Journal*, *3/05/1831).

The Tongatapu chapel's origin can be traced directly to Tahiti and Tupou's man, Langi. He was the one, with Takai the Fijian, who had urged Davies to send out missionaries! Ironically, the Chapel in Nuku'alofa had been built about the same time that Thomas and Hutchison at Hihifo were being denied permission by Ata to build a chapel and school. (*WMM p.632, 1828, Thomas, letter 11/4/1827*). At Nuku'alofa, Tupou's chapel was used as a church and a school for some four years, until a new chapel was built. Williams visited the Tahitians old chapel in 1830 and found it being used as a school. As he describes the building, although it was similar to the Tahitian style:

much of it has been broken away to make the place larger to admit the increasing numbers who wish to attend religious instructions. (Williams, Samoan Journals, p.45).

Once a new Wesleyan chapel was built, Tupou's original LMS chapel was used as a schoolhouse. The new chapel was built on *the summit of the great fortifications at Nuku'alofa of which Mariner gives an account*. The first post for the new building had been put into the ground on 5 May, 1830 and four months later, on 3 September, the church was opened and dedicated before a crowd of some 2000 people. In the reports of that significant event, the resident Wesleyan missionary, Nathaniel Turner, made no reference to the original church that had paved the way for the new, larger building. Nevertheless, during the sermons and speeches on that day, history, surely, would have been recalled, and credit given to the pioneers, Tupou, who built the first church in Tongatabu, Langi, Tupou's man, and the Tahitian teachers Hape and Tafeta. (*MN 1831, TURNER JOURNAL SEPTEMBER 1830*.)

Langi was a pioneer in another sense as well. He deserves some credit for pioneering the establishment of the lotu in Samoa. Just before Christmas 1827, Tupou visited Thomas at Hihifo and brought with him some of his relatives who were on a visit from Samoa. Like Tupou, the Samoan Chief was a lotu man, and Langi had been involved in his accepting the new religion. As Thomas has said:

Tupou came to see us [at Hihifo], he had with him the Samoan Prince Tuioneula, who with his wife and family embraced the lotu with Tupou, after hearing it from Langi the Tongan man, who had been at Tahiti. (THOMAS, TONGATAPU P.377).*

Some months later, Tuioneula returned to his homeland and is acknowledged as the first Samoan to begin converting his countrymen to the lotu. (*Gunson*, 1993). Langi, then, *the Tonga man*, played a key role in the history of the lotu, not only in Tonga but of Samoa as well.

Overcoming the language barrier

Nathaniel Turner and William Cross said that language differences meant that the Tongans could not understand the Tahitians, and the Tahitians could not understand the Tongans. However, if language was such a barrier, it certainly was a miracle that the Tahitians ministry led to a church being built, a school commenced and Tupou and some two hundred people were regularly worshiping!

It could be that the language difficulties were overcome by a number of inter-related circumstances. Although some European missionaries, and other observers have rightly said that the Tongan and Tahitian languages were different from each other, there were many words that were the same or very similar. As well as those Tahitian words already noted, there is a list that Davies prepared, which included the following:

Tongan	Tahitian	English
Fale	fone	house
matangi	matai	wind
mohe	moe	sleep
ngutu	utu	lips
uha	ua	rain
one [<i>oneone</i>]	one	sand
vai	vai toetoe	fresh water.

(DAVIES, JOURNAL #).

Langi obviously played a crucial role in helping overcome language barriers. As Davies and Dillon have said, he was multi-lingual, well equipped to bridge some of the language barriers. Furthermore, in 1826, Thomas recorded the interesting fact that, as well as Hape and Tafeta, Hape and Tafeta, *has many Tahitian people there* [Nuku'alofa]. (*Thomas, Small Journal**, 6/9/1827). Presumably, these Tahitians would be bi-lingual and would also have a role to play in helping Hape and Tafeta communicate the Gospel. And Borabora, one of the 1822 Va-va'u missionaries, had married a Tahitian woman who he found living in Tonga and he had joined Hape and Tafeta at Nuku'alofa. He would have surely learned a good deal of Tongan during his almost four years residence and been a useful interpreter for his fellow countrymen. (Davies, History, p.317) . And his Tahitian wife, longtime resident in Tonga, would surely have been helpful in explaining, interpreting and translating.

All these circumstances point to significant Tonga-Tahitian relationships. It suggests that the two Polynesian 'cousins', Tongans and Tahitians, were able to achieve some communication with each other, and that the language barrier

would not have been as significant as some have imagined. Williams, in fact, believed that having native teachers involved in commencing a mission was important:

So great are advantages on the side of the native teacher, he said, at the commencement of a mission over a European, one colour, almost one language and a oneness of habit gives them these superior advantages.
(WILLIAMS, SAMOAN JOURNALS, P.56.)

All these considerations, it could be argued, help to explain how the Tahitians, within such a short space of time, were able to teach Tupou and his people about the true God and the Gospel and why the chapel was built and worship and schooling begun. A miracle, indeed!

Living the Miracle

The Polynesian missionary teacher, Hape, wrote a very significant letter to the Rev Robert Bourne on the 1st of July 1827. Hape said that significant progress was being made and then announced some news that would have a decisive impact on Tongan church history for many years to come. The letter is a valuable document because it provides a Tahitian, Polynesian perspective, about the beginnings of the lotu in Nuku'alofa, and a record of the first Tongans to become Christians. Hape's valuable letter to Bourne began with a recognition of his Dear Friend, and continued:

Peace be to you from Jesus Christ our Lord. I have received the letter you sent me. I have read it. The questions you put to me, in the letter, concerning what we are doing here, is right and proper. Four, belonging to the royal family of Tonga, have embraced the Gospel. They reside with us. You know the word of God will not be in haste to grow. It is with himself to make his own word to prosper. You exhorted us not to be idle, but active and diligent. We hope we are so; we are continuing instant in prayer in the very mouth of the savage serpent, with patience. Be kind to us, and come and see us, that we may talk with each other. Peace be with you. (HAPE TO BOURNE, JULY 1, 1827; BOURNE TO LMS SECRETARIES, 20/10/1827, EM & MC, 1828, PP. 46-47).

Hape's reference to *four of the Royal family of Tonga have embraced the gospel*, was obviously a reference to Aleamotu'a and members of his family.

Langi played an important part in Tupou's historic decision to support the Christian faith. Captain Peter Dillon knew Langi well, and believed that his former interpreter and pilot was a central figure in what was a remarkable occurrence. As Dillon tells it:

Langhi]Langi] accompanied by one of his wives, a Tahitian woman, and two missionary natives. [Hape and Tafeta] set off and arrived here [Nuku'alofa] and with their assistance he succeeded in converting the Chief Tubou, and all his subjects in the district of Nuku'alofa. (DILLON, NARRATIVE, P. 273.)

Thomas supports Dillon's comment. Tupou, he said, had heard about the religion of Christ, especially from one of his own men, named Langi, (MN October 1846 p.154). And, according to Thomas West who spent 10 years in Tonga, Tupou became a Christian under the instruction of one of his own men, named Langi. (West, Ten Years, p.57). Langi's time in school in Papara had not been wasted. A student in Tahiti, he became a teacher at Nuku'alofa, and as a result, Tupou, his Chief, became a Christian. (DAVIES, JOURNAL #, 1825-182).

Dillon also provides a unique insight into some aspects of Tupou's early religious experience. Tupou had come on board Dillon's ship at Nuku'alofa and spent the night there. In the early evening Dillon tells us that:

after tea he [Tupou] repaired to the Poop [Poop deck] and joined his Christian Brethren Langhi and the Tahitian missionaries in prayer. (DILLON, NARRATIVE, P.274).

The Rev. Bourne, the former Tahitian LMS missionary living in Sydney, had also received another very interesting and important letter from Tonga. The letter, he said, was written by a Tongan man, presumably Langi, on behalf of a Tongan woman who wished to be baptised. Tafeta also had a hand in the preparation of the letter which read:

My friend, Mr. Bourne, this is what I have got to say to you. Write to Tahiti, to Tati [a principal Tahitian Chief], and the Missionaries. This is my desire, that I may be baptized, and become a servant of God: for this reason, I have embraced the Gospel. Write me word, that I may know whether you will agree to what I ask. Send me also some books: my name is Toi Wahine (i. e. the woman Toi) [Toe?] and the name of my land is Nuuaaro, [Nukualofa?] in the island of Tonga. A man, whose name is Tafeta, wrote for me to you. [i.e. wrote this letter for me.] (EM & MC, 1828, pp.46-47, HAPE TO BOURNE, JULY 1, 1827; BOURNE TO LMS SECRETARIES, 20/10/1827).

Toe, it seems, was the first Tongan woman to adopt the Christian faith, presumably as presented to her by Langi and the Tahitian teachers.

Thomas and Hutchison and the Nuku'alofa Tahitians

While the LMS Polynesian mission at Nuku'alofa was beginning to thrive, Thomas and Hutchison arrived at Hihifo to resume the Wesleyan cause begun by Lawry. Although newcomers to Tonga, the Wesleyans Thomas and Hutchison soon learned about the mission at Nuku'alofa. A month after arriving, Thomas was visited by a Chief from Nuku'alofa who he called Hohela [Uhila]. Thomas recalled that while Lawry was in Tonga, Uhila was a friend to the missionary cause, and now he was supporting the Tahitian missionary teachers at Nuku'alofa. (*Thomas Journal**, 28/9/1826). Uhila was hoping to get some help from Thomas for the work there and:

enquired whether we had book in Tonga language he had been told we had one – that Mr Lawry had made one – he was disappointed when we informed him we had none.
(THOMAS JOURNAL, 19 JULY 1826).*

There was frequent communication between the two Mission Stations, Hihifo and Nuku'alofa. Tupou visited from time to time and brought presents of food. On one occasion, Thomas gave presents in return. When Uhila was leaving for Nuku'alofa after a visit to Thomas, he was given a present (a chisel) and one also for Tubo [Tupou], noting that Tupou was doing *a great deal for the Tahitians and yet is not tired.* (*ibid*, 1/8/1826; 28/9/1826 29/9/1826). Hutchison, was also interested in what was happening at Nuku'alofa. He also went on a visit there because he said he :

wanted to see the place and the way in which the Tahitian Teachers conducted their worship ... he returned from Noogoaloffa [Nuku'alofa] much pleased with his visit. (IBID, 14-15/10/1826).

Thomas frequently mentioned the Tahitians and the work that was being done in Nuku'alofa, and in one entry in his journal, when Tupou and Hape visited him at Hihifo, he gives one of the only descriptions, perhaps, of Tupou's Tahitian missionary:

We were visited by the chief of Noogoaloffa [Nuku'alofa] and one of the Tahitian teachers of the name Hape – he is a short deformed man, but I think pious – he has not been here before since we came – I thought his appearance rather singular – they wear Tappa around the loins – a shirt on their body – and the one that came to see us today had a small blue cap on his head – we have given him a lock for the chapel door. (IBID, 9/10/1826).

Thomas believed that he and the Wesleyans would be eagerly received at Nuku'alofa, but his conscience would not let him consider going there. The place was occupied by LMS missionaries. If he went to Nuku'alofa, then Tupou, he believed, would '*require the Tahitians to depart*', because *there would not be room for all.* (*IBID*, 29/10/1828).

We had long ago thought of Noogoaloffa [Nuku'alofa] as a station, Thomas wrote in a very lengthy entry in his Journal, but then our way seemed shut up partly on account of the smallness of the place – its dependence upon other places the danger in war, and the two Tahitians being there, the last thing is the only obstacle now “the place is occupied”, (IBID. 29/10/1827).

Yet it was tempting to keep thinking about Nuku'alofa. Whereas the mission there was flourishing, at Hihifo Thomas and Hutchison were making little progress. They were opposed by Ata, and more than once, their lives were threatened. Hutchison felt that:

In the midst of Life we are in Death. Our circumstances are truly alarming. Our Chief... declares he will burn down our house ... This has been a day of overwhelming trouble and rebuke, having escaped death by the skin of our teeth.
(*MISSIONARY HERALD*, 1829, pp.33-34).

Thomas drew on his blacksmithing background and experience to suggest that missionaries to Tonga, at least to Hihifo where he and his colleague were trying to establish a mission, would need *constitutions of iron*. Even then, he believed:

an improper treatment of iron will destroy its good qualities. It will not do to be kept always in the fire. (THOMAS,
*JOURNAL**, 5/6/1827).

Tupou and 'the True God'.

Tupou had first learned about the 'True God' from shipwrecked sailors. We learn this fascinating piece of information from Thomas's obituary of Tupou when the great chief died in 1845. Thomas's lengthy tribute, that appeared in both the Wesleyan Missionary Notices and the *Methodist Juvenile Offering*. (WJO 1846; MN, 1846), said some remarkably interesting and significant things about Tupou, Aleamotu'a, King Josiah. He said that the chief had, *in the month of May 1826, professedly embraced the religion of Christ, of which he had heard a little, partly by means of foreigners who were here.* Admittedly, in 1826, Tupou would

have had only a basic understanding of the Christian faith. Nevertheless, it seems that what he had done was to accept Jehovah as the True God and commit himself to *the religion of Christ*.

One of the foreigners Thomas referred to could have been James Read, survivor of the wreck of the Ceres in Ha'apai in 1820. Thomas met with Read on a number of occasions and, at times, used him as a translator when he was trying to explain to Ata's people why he had come to Tonga and what he wanted to achieve. Read had been adopted by Fatu at Mu'a and had married one of Fatu's daughters. He was devoted to educating his three daughters and was regarded by the missionaries as being *a useful and rather intelligent young man*. (*ORLEBAR, SERINGAPATAM, pp.65-70; THOMAS, JOURNAL** 29/1/1827; 25/7/1827).

On the other hand, one of the other influential foreigners that Thomas was referring to could have been a young man by the name of Blackmore. He was a survivor of the Rambler massacre of 1824 and Thomas believed that:

he was the first runaway sailor who was ever heard to speak of the True God. He was highly spoken of by the Tongans as a godly man, one who prayed to Jehovah and told some young chiefs about the true God, probably by means of Port au Prince survivor Brown who lived at Vava'u with Finau.
(*Thomas, Tongatapu or the Friendly Islands** p.308-309).

Read and Blackmore, then, could well be the 'secular missionaries' who did some of the work in preparing the way for the later LMS Tahitian teachers and the English Wesleyan-missionaries.

So, by the time Thomas arrived, Tupou had heard of the True God from the shipwrecked sailors, and then from the Tahitians, and most importantly from Langi. Tupou soon wanted to learn to read, and two young chiefs Ulakai and, according to Thomas, Uhila had *turned from the Tongan Spirits*. (*Thomas, Journal**, 20/10/1826; 6/1/1827; 9/1/1827). Tupou was making it a practice to *ask a blessing upon the food before he began to eat*. (*ibid* 23/1/1827) and was joining in Sabbath worship with his people, conducted by the Tahitian teachers. Admittedly his support for the lotu led other chiefs to criticize and ridicule him, but he stood firm in support of the new religion. (*IBID**, 20/10/1826; 23/1/1827).

Tupou's support for the Tahitians and the lotu, in the end, caused unrelenting opposition from many of the Tongatapu chiefs. For a time, he resisted the pressure and Thomas, living with threats and opposition of his own at Hihifo under Ata, applauded Tupou for his actions. In an entry in his journal dated 30 October 1827 Thomas included this high praise of Tupou:

We have noticed the heroic and noble conduct of Toobo [Tupou] from the first. What a stand he has made against all the Tongan customs, and we have heard the threatening against him but we have lived to see it has not taken place

– that a shock is given to the Tonga superstitions, and he continues firm, and he has two respectable chiefs who are on his side ... I believe it is the properist (sic) place on Tonga as to many particulars. (IBID, 30/10/1827).*

Thomas was told that one reason for the opposition to Tupou was that other chiefs on Tongatapu were afraid of threats to Tonga's independence from foreign powers:

The reason the Chiefs wish Toobo [Tupou] to give over praying is (so they say) they fear so many people from England will come and be so fond of their country as that the King will come and bring ships and fight and take their country from them. So it is a political reason that moves them now. (IBID 17/11/1827).*

Despite threats from opposing chiefs, Tupou remained firm. The Rev Robert Bourne had received a letter from the mate of a LMS vessel, in which his friend of many years recorded his observations of Tupou and his commitment to faith as he understood it from Langi and the Tahitian teachers:

The principal chief there [Nuku'alofa] is Tupou, who has embraced Christianity, and who, notwithstanding the jeers, and scoffings, and threats of his countrymen, remains steadfast and unwavering. The other chiefs asked him why he believed what two men of the same colour and likeness as himself should say and that had he been instructed by White men; it would have been more excusable. To which Tupou replied, "that though their skins were dark, their hearts were white; that the word they taught was a good word; that he would not compel his people to do as he was doing; they might do as they pleased; but, as for himself, he was determined, at all hazards, to hold fast the Good Word.
(EM&MC, 1828, p.406-7).

In the end, however, to keep the peace, Tupou agreed to give it up [the lotu], at least for a time, as he could not stand against them all. (*Thomas, Journal** 1/12/1827). There had been meetings of chiefs and some threats which led Tupou to agree to be installed as Tu'i Kanokupolu if he would give up the lotu. He gave in to the pressure, and abandoned the lotu, at least in its public forms. What Tupou intended to do in private, however, was another matter. As Thomas explained:

Poor Toobo [Tupou] purposes Lotooing [lotuing] in the bush and he says he prays in his heart to God now, he seems to say that if he had not given up, the Tonga people would have killed the Papalangi, or Missionaries, poor Toobo cannot attend [worship services] but he goes into the bush to pray.
(IBID, 1/12/1827; 16/12/1827).

Tupou worshipped privately for many months but in late March of 1828, William Cross recorded what he called ‘*a pleasing conversation*’ with Tupou during which the Chief promised to go again to chapel next Sabbath. Explaining Tupou’s absence at public worship Cross added:

He has been kept away nearly six months, by the opposition of those who are unfriendly to our cause. (MN, SEPTEMBER 1829, CROSS, JOURNAL, 27/3/1828).*

True to his word, Tupou attended chapel the next Sabbath, and : *many of his Matapules, or attendants, who absented themselves with him, accompanied him.* (*ibid*)

Tupou the Evangelist

The initial work of the Tahitians should not be passed over lightly. Finau Ulukalala wrote two significant letters in May 1828 that point to Tupou as an evangelist. One was to Rev Nathaniel Turner, written with the assistance of William Brown, in which Finau pleaded for a teacher to be sent to Vava'u. Whether this was because the Vava'u Tahitians had created some interest in what the new religion had to offer, or that missionaries bought important benefits with them, trade goods for example, is not sure. One thing about Finau's request is clear, at least in his letter to Turner, that he wanted missionary teachers, and he wanted them to be English:

I hope sir. he wrote to Turner, you will be so kind as to send to Port Jackson [Sydney] for some missionaries to come to my island to teach me and my people. (SG, 2710/1828).

The second letter was to Tupou. It was quite short, but the reply from Tupou was lengthy. Tupou's acceptance of the new religion in early 1826, his time of private worship in the bush, and his return to public worship, obviously gave him a renewed passion for the faith. So, when he received Finau's letter, in which the ‘King of Vava'u’ asked Tupou to send a missionary to *teach him the word of God [and] to send one quick [and then] he will turn to Jehovah our Great God.* Tupou responded with enthusiasm. He told Finau that he had given up his *spirit-men*, and he urged Finau to do the same: *cast thou away this lying...and let*

us turn towards Jehovah. He is our true God. He then went on to warn Finau that there would be opposition. *They do not understand our way*, he said, but there was hope because the opponents were *leaning towards our different way of worship*. He urged Finau to:

Cease thy talking to men of a different mind who come to talk to thee after the manner of friends but secretly are not so. Reflect on this subject and let the men who are coming to thee [Ulakai with hundreds of men and a fleet of canoes] hear thy voice, respecting my words to thee. Declare to them thy mind towards me. If you love me, let us all turn [to the lotu] (IBID, 2710/1828).

Tupou urged Finau to maintain good relations with our friends, [other chiefs?] and *let us have but one house of worship and one Lord*. He acknowledged, again, that there were those who are *evil disposed toward us, because I only understand, and favour the lotu*. He then concluded his letter with a final heartfelt plea:

And let me entreat thee, because I am fearful thou wilt disregard this. Let us be friendly to the lotu. Let us understand it. I hope I shall live to see this. (IBID, 2710/1828).

Tupou certainly lived to see much of that hope realized. Almost all the county was friendly to the lotu by the time he died in 1845. Finau accepted the lotu some few years after Tupou's appeals, mainly through the urging and encouragement of Taufa'ahau of Ha'apai. And interestingly enough, Finau's first missionary teacher was not an Englishman that he had wished for, but one of his own countrymen, the early Tongan convert, Pita Vi. (*West, p.359*).

The end of the Tahitian mission at Nuku'alofa

In July 1828, the LMS connection with Tonga was severed. There had been verbal invitations from Tupou, and the Tahitian missionary teachers, soon after the Wesleyans Hutchison and Thomas arrived at Hihifo: that Nuku'alofa become the Wesleyan Station. Thomas noted several times in his diary in mid-December 1826 that:

*the chief at Noogoaloffa [Nuku'alofa] would like to have a English Missionary ... [he] prefers English Missionaries as he wants to learn the English language – he would be glad in case Mr H [Hutchison] leaves for us to go to that place, but I think we are in our place at present. (THOMAS JOURNAL, * 16/12/1826; 19/12/1826).*

Tupou had also made a written appeal to Thomas. According to one report, the specific request was offered in these simple words:

I invite you to come and take up your abode here and instruct us. (EM&MC, 1828, p.407.)

Uhila, one of Tupou's supporting chiefs, his nephew in fact, was also *desirous for a Missionary from England to live at Noogoaloffa*. [Nuku'alofa]. (*Thomas Journal*, * 9/1/1827). Furthermore, a letter from Tahiti, from the LMS John Davies, who had originally sent Hape and Tafeta to Fiji, helped to bring the LMS Tahitian Mission at Nuku'alofa to an end. Davies told the Wesleyans, that Hape and Tafeta:

Should not have continued here [Nuku'alofa] – that they must proceed either to the Fejees or to Tahiti, except we thought it desirable for them to remain at Tonga and so all unite in the great work. (IBID, 21/12/1827).

Hape, by that time the sole survivor of the Tahitian missionary teachers, returned to Tahiti. Thomas simply noted in his diary on the twelfth of July 1828: *all the Tahitians are gone (IBID, 21/12/1827; 12/7/1828)*.

The Polynesian Missionary Legacy.

The Tahitian LMS missionary teachers who were sent to Vava'u in 1822, have been viewed as failures. However, as we have seen, Borabora and Taute did make a contribution to the growth of the lotu. Taute, in later years, as a head teacher at a village school in Vava'u, was part of the fast-growing Wesleyan educational system in the mid-1830s, and Borabora was a useful assistant to Hape in Nukualofa in 1826. Unfortunately, a scarcity of documentary sources makes it difficult to give the Vava'u teachers more appropriate recognition.

The Wesleyan missionary, William Cross, who arrived in Tonga in 1827 and almost immediately joined the Tahitians in Nuku'alofa, appreciated the work that had been done in the mission that he was inheriting. He attended worship in the Tahitians Chapel that Tupou had built in 1826 and was deeply impressed by what he experienced. The Sabbath day worship, he said, *was so well attended*, and the people *so keen to be instructed in the knowledge of God*. Of the Polynesian Missionaries, who had begun this work, he noted:

These simple men had been made a blessing ... The Head of the Church will honour those who comply with his last command 'Go ye out into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature'. The London Missionary Society, after scattering the seed, and offering the first fruits, meekly

*retired and left the Wesleyans Society to gather the harvest.
(CROSS, JOURNAL, * II/II/1827).*

Cross was optimistic about the future of the Wesleyan Mission in Nukualofa, because of the foundational work of the Tahitians:

Our prospects on this island are very encouraging; for though the cause of the Lord is still opposed by many powerful men, we have a good hope that the opposition will be overruled for the furtherance of the Gospel. When the Lord speaks, we know their opposition must vanish; and he appears to have opened a door for the preaching of his word in this place as neither men nor devils will be able to shut ... we believe there is commenced in the hearts of many a gracious work.
(MN 1829, p.630; CROSS JOURNAL, 21/09/1828).

The Rev William Cross does not mention by name those who had been made a blessing. However, Langi, Hape and Tafeta, supported by Tupou and the chiefs who had turned from the Tongan Spirits were, surely, the ones being referred to. They were the unnamed ones who deserve credit for the '*good hope*' and the '*opened door*' and the '*gracious work*' that was already under way when Turner and Cross decided to take up residence in Nuku'alofa and make it a Wesleyan Mission Station. Davies, the LMS missionary who sent the Polynesian missionary teachers who settled in Nuku'alofa in 1826 perhaps deserves the last word. He simply says:

The Wesleyan brethren spoke well of the teachers particularly of Hape, it appeared they had been the means of doing good and preparing for the other missionaries. (DAVIES, HISTORY, P.29-291).

=====CHAPTER 4=====

The Wesleyan New Start 1826

'The story of the impact of the Wesleyan mission in Tonga is a record of hope and disillusionment.' This was the view of the late Rev Dr Sione Latukefu when writing about the Wesleyan Mission in Tonga. (Rutherford, 1977, p.114) That was certainly true of the new start for the Mission in June 1826.

The fresh start for the Mission was at Hihifo, rather than at Mu'a where Lawry had settled. After an agreement with Ata was finalized the mission party came ashore and all their property was landed, including the timber for a double story Mission House! The friendly welcome soon gave way to various disagreements. There was conflict over payment for work done for the mission and for the price for food and supplies.

Ata's control of church and school was a constant annoyance. The Chief would often sit near the gates to the Mission compound and drive away people who wanted to attend worship (which was in English!) or school classes at the Mission House. Equally frustrating was that he would not provide land for the mission to build a school/chapel.

Sometimes disagreements led to threats of violence and finally, out of frustration, opposition and discouragement, and at times fear for their safety, the missionaries decided to leave. A message was sent to the Wesleyan Committee in Sydney, requesting a rescue vessel be sent. When a vessel arrived, the Hutchinsons, Charles Tindall and Thomas Wright were able to get a passage to Sydney. Fortunately for the history of the Wesleyan Church in Tonga, an unexpected turn of events meant that the mission was not abandoned. Reinforcement missionaries arrived and the Thomas's stayed on and spent the next thirty years of devoted service to the Church.

A Fresh Start in Hihifo with Ata

In the late afternoon of Tuesday 27 June 1826, a significant conversation took place on the beach at the western most point of Tongatapu. As John Thomas recorded it for history:

Food was brought to us at the Beach. We sat down on the sand [Ata, Thomas, Hutchinson and presumably Charles Tindall and Watson Nau] and partook roast pork and yams which had been got ready and which we found very good.
(THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS P.350).*

As they enjoyed the meal, they discussed some *minor matters* that had not been dealt with in a wide-ranging agreement negotiated at a conference earlier in the day. Ata had prepared the special meal that afternoon to put the seal, it could be said, on the earlier historic meeting inside the Fort at Kolovai. There a large gathering of Hihifo chiefs and people listened to the missionaries' proposals for establishing a Mission among them. Now, on the beach, a few fine details were settled with Ata, and as Thomas said, *we agreed to land our things and live with him* at Hihifo. Thomas noted that the Chief was pleased. The missionaries, too, were happy with the day's outcome. The large conference gathering at the Fort, earlier in the day and the more private meeting on the beach, had created a basis for establishing, or re-establishing, it could be said, the Wesleyan Mission in Tonga. It had been a long and eventful day and it was dark by the time the missionaries made their way back to the Elizabeth. (*ibid** p.351).

Lead up to the conference at the Fort.

The events that led to the conference with Ata and his people at the Fort, followed by the final seal on approval with the simple meal on the beach, were largely determined by the unpredictable forces of nature. When the Elizabeth, carrying the mission party, entered Tongan waters, 'Eua was sighted first, followed by Tongatapu. As the captain steered the vessel towards where Lawry and party had settled in 1822, the wind and the waves took over. As Hutchinson explained, the whole day (23rd June 1826) the captain struggled with gale force winds in an attempt to reach *the Old Mission Station, but such was the state of the weather that we toiled in vain*. The next day the storm was still *very great, with no appearance of favorable weather* and the captain *was obliged to steer away to some place of shelter*. The place of shelter where the Elizabeth came to anchor was

Maria Bay, off Hihifo point, some 15 miles or so from Mu'a. (Hutchinson, Journal, * 24-25/06/1826; Tongatapu or the Friendly Islands* pp.347-8, 351).

On Monday morning, the 26th June, Hutchinson, who had been appointed Superintendent of the Mission by the Missionary Committee in Sydney, went on shore, accompanied by Tammy Now [Watson Nau], and met with Ata. An arrangement was made to have a conference the next day to discuss establishing the Mission in Hihifo under Ata's protection. So, on Tuesday the 27th June, Thomas and Hutchinson went ashore and met Ata who welcomed the newcomers but also expressed his annoyance. He bluntly told the new missionaries that he was not pleased that *he had been waiting at the beach since daylight expecting us to send a boat to bring him.* (*Thomas, Journal**, 27/06/1826). The Chief's disapproving words were perhaps just a passing remark. But as events were to unfold, that rebuke was the forerunner of many occasions when the chief would let Thomas and Hutchinson know that he was in fact the Chief, and that his needs and wishes were to be acknowledged and respected!

The Conference and its decisions

Following the initial somewhat cool meeting with the Chief, Ata showed a clear gesture of friendship to Hutchinson and Thomas: *he took first one and then the other by the hand and walked with us to the place of meeting.* Ata, Thomas later said, *conducted us to the Fort, and into a large house, called Bovalu, where we sat down.* There the Missionaries were presented with traditional offerings, and the guests responded with some gifts in return:

a large root of cava ... laid at our feet ... other food was preparing for us which when ready they partook of after which we gave a few small presents and then began our business. (*THOMAS, JOURNAL**, 27/06/1826).

The business of the meeting was to establish a basis on which the mission at Hihifo could begin. Thomas started the negotiation by saying that he and Hutchinson:

were some of Mr Lawry's friends – that we had come from England – that the good people of England had sent us to them to teach them to praise and fear the Lord...that we had come to do you good. (*IBID*).

Charles Tindall was the translator, and Thomas was happy that *they all seemed pleased and said lillea [lelei] that very good.* Thomas and Hutchinson then put certain questions to the Chief and people, but principally to the Chief: whether he would *let us live at Tonga, worship our God as we liked.* Would he *let us teach your children, protect us, our wives and property?* Will he *let us have some land to*

build upon and to plant? To these questions, Thomas said, *they answered in the affirmative.* (IBID, 27/06/1826).

Earlier, on the way to the Fort, Hutchinson and Thomas had seen a piece of land that Charles Tindall had secured for the mission. It was known by the local people, Thomas said, as Amelica [America]. This was where they were to build the Mission House that they had brought with them from Sydney. The land, some 5 acres, was in a fine situation near the sea and near to Ata. It was situated just outside the Fort at Kolovai, *near the trench.* (*Tongatapu or the Friendly Islands** p1254.) Here, the second Cokevernal was to be built on ground where the Wesleyan minister's house at Kolovai stands to this day. The conference with Ata and his people concluded in a friendly way, and the mission party moved off:

having thanked the chief for his kindness, and having taken our leave of him and many others by shaking hands, we left the fort for the beach in order to go on board the ship ...
(*TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS** P.350).

That day, Tuesday June 27th 1826, had gone well. Ata was happy to commit to all that the missionaries had requested, and more: he would let all his people that chose ... come to join us – that he would not prevent them. If we needed to leave Hihifo in case of sickness, the missionaries would be free to take all their property, even to the mat upon the floor. That was Thomas's understanding of what was agreed, but in the months that followed, working out the arrangements proved to be difficult, resulting in many conflicts. Before he actually arrived in Tonga, on the high seas, Thomas had a hopeful vision of the future, acknowledging that it would not come easily:

We do not go to Tonga [he said] expecting the wilderness to become a fruitful field without labour and care, but we go desiring to become the honoured instruments in the hand of God of beginning a Christian Colony, clearing away the rubbish, breaking up the ground, and casting in the precious seed, which shall spring up, bear fruit, and yield an abundant harvest of immortal souls. (MN, JANUARY 1827, THOMAS, 14/06/1826).

The day after the conference and the sealing of the agreement, *Ata, with Ukakai and Nuku, came on board the Elizabeth and shared breakfast with the new missionaries. We were glad to see him [Ata] and he appeared much pleased with all he saw.* He was impressed, for example, with the ship's guns:

and wished to hear the great gun fired – after he knew it was the Captain's wish to give them a salute two large guns

were loaded and about 12 muskets we drank wine on the deck together and then the guns were fired – and gave much pleasure to all on board & to the natives around. (THOMAS, JOURNAL 27/06/1826).*

On board that morning there was another quiet criticism from Ata which caused the missionaries a little embarrassment:

Some food was placed before them. Charles was with us [Charles Tindall]. They [Ata, Ulakai and Nuku] did not begin to eat and the Captain enquired the cause. One (viz) Ulakai said you have not spake yet, meaning we had not asked a blessing. (IBID).

The chiefly guests certainly made their point about customs and protocol that morning. As Thomas was later to note, *this was a reproof sufficient to us. (ibid* 28/06/1826)* Tongans had learned something of Christian ways, it would appear, from the LMS missionaries and from some castaway sailors or from the Tahitian teachers at Nuku'alofa, or perhaps from Lawry's party at Mu'a in 1822-1823.

Problems with bartering

Iron goods [trade goods, or property the missionaries called it] were the currency for buying food and services. Hutchinson and Thomas and their party had brought with them many tons of trade goods, equipment for the mission, cooking utensils, personal possessions and the timber for the mission house. The trade goods, referred to as property, consisted of axes, chisels, plane irons, scissors, spades, fishhooks, files and the like. This property was the missionaries 'money', their currency for buying food and paying for labour, and a pricing system had to be developed as quickly as possible. Settling on a fair price for goods and services, however, became a cause of misunderstanding and dispute during the first week on shore at Hihifo. A difference of opinion arose when Tongan workers were employed to carry the timber for the Mission house from the ship to Amelica at Kolovai, a distance of some two to three miles. At first, things went smoothly enough, Thomas thought, when he paid the men with property for their day's work. But the next day the laborers did not arrive for work. In fact, they were withdrawing their labour, and Thomas thought he knew why.

The workers did not think that the property they had received was fair payment for the heavy work they had done. As Thomas explained :

No timber brought up today – the Chief who engaged to fetch some up and to receive property according to their work was not satisfied with what I offered which I expect is the cause. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 19/07/1826).*

Ata intervened to settle the matter. What was said during this meeting was not recorded, but after the Chief left, Thomas noted that:

It is clear to us that if we are to derive any assistance from the natives here, in building or carrying up our goods or timber they must be paid for it. (IBID, 20/07/1826).

The timber dispute was the beginning of many other arguments over payment for goods and services and what was a fair price to pay for yams, fowls, coconuts and pigs, and for providing manual labour for the Mission.

Tongan understanding of trading

Tongans had learned the value of their commodities over the years of contact with Europeans, and they knew how to negotiate good prices for their food stuffs and the work that they provided for the mission. Tonga had embraced the Iron Age with enthusiasm from the time the first LMS missionaries brought large amounts of property for barter. Those first missionaries, in the 1790s, discovered to their surprise, and often annoyance, that Tongans had learned how to negotiate a fair price for their goods and services. They would not sell their pigs, for example, for a few scraps of hoop iron. Furthermore, they demanded for half a dozen coconuts *what would purchase one hundred at Tahiti*. They were :

so scrupulous in dealing that they generally stand for full value of everything. They estimated their commodities very high and parted with nothing until an ample equivalent was obtained. (MISSIONARY TRANSACTIONS, 1799, PP. 95, 97, 99, 278; CH P.39).

In Lawry's day, he set the prices as we have seen: six fishhooks for a few yams, a file for a bundle of sugar cane, a chisel for a pig, and so on. (*MN, 1823, Lawry to Committee 16/10/1823*). That was at Mu'a in the early 1820's. At Hihifo, under Ata, things were going to be different, and the timber dispute, from day one, set the pattern for the future. What became clear was that Ata wanted to control the barter system, and, in the end, he actually set the 'prices' for goods and services. This was a major cause of frustration, and annoyance for the mission party, and in some cases led to serious and potentially dangerous confrontations.

The Mission House bartering dispute

The Mission House became an object of wonder when it was erected at Kolovai. Nothing like it had ever been seen in Tonga. The LMS missionaries of 1797 had built a wooden dwelling at Ha'ateiho, but the Kolovai house was something new and amazing. It was a two storey dwelling that would have dominated the village landscape. It certainly became an attraction that encouraged visitors from across Tongatapu and from other islands of the group. Serious confrontation developed, however, when the Mission House was being built.

Erecting the large wooden two storey house took some time, occupying several months of labour by the missionaries and by locally hired labour. When the roof for the main part of the house was to be thatched, Ata was asked to arrange for the work to be done. He did this, but when the job was finished, Thomas and Hutchinson were not happy with the work and asked Ata to make some changes which he refused to do. Thomas withheld the payment. Ata became enraged and ... *threatened to take it [the payment] by force*. The angry dispute continued when it came to payment for thatching the skillions. Payment was to be in two

halves – one half to the Matapule who had been involved in the work and the other half to Ata:

The Chief received his part of the property last when he expressed his dissatisfaction and in a great rage and fury flung it about in every direction with the utmost disdain and at the same time made use of the most violent language towards the brethren and abused them most bitterly.
(FRIENDLY ISLANDS: DISTRICT MINUTES AND REPORTS, 03/II/1827).*

As Hutchinson described the affair:

Ata took forceable possession of ‘Cokevernal’ and drove us out of our own place. (MN 1828; HUTCHINSON, JOURNAL, 26/09/1826).*

Such a dramatic confrontation became widely known, quite quickly, across the island. Charles Tindall, who was reduced to tears over the disagreement, joined Hutchinson in trying to ease the tension by taking additional property to Ata. The Chief scorned their attempt and *claimed he liked them none the better for that*. (*Minutes and Reports FIDM Minutes November 1827*). Thomas did not agree with the additional payment and would not take any, noting in his diary: I did not like it [the additional payment] and on that account did not take it. (*THOMAS, JOURNAL**, 27/09/1826).

Events leading up to the thatching dispute had been difficult. Hutchinson wrote about it in a distressingly pessimistic summary of what had been happening:

In the midst of life, we are in death. Our circumstances are truly alarming. Our chief is so bad to deal with, that we know not when he is pleased, or how to please him. He declares he will burn down our house; and indeed, he has already withdrawn much of his protection for us, as to suffer us to be robbed, and abused by men and boys of all descriptions ... we have serious reasons to be concerned for our personal safety. (MN 1828, HUTCHINSON, JOURNAL, 16/09/1826).

In addition to problem associated with hiring workers, the missionaries had difficulties when buying food. When disputes arose, Ata would forbid the people to trade, and on one occasion the taboo lasted almost a month, and the mission families were in a desperate situation:

The stopping of trade begins to be a more serious thing for us, as we have applied for pork ... but have not obtained any ... no persons came near us – neither does the Chief send us anything though he knows we can buy nothing ... We have no trading now, it is Tabood [Tabooed] how long this is to continue we do not know

When trading was again allowed, Ata showed that he was in control. As Thomas tells it:

This day the people were allowed to trade with us ... the people seem to have received orders how they are to trade with us – they bring us very small quantities and fix on their price. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 15–17/05/1827; 04 06/1827).*

The risks of bartering

Thomas found that it was *very tedious and oppressing* when Ata was setting the rules for trading. On one memorable occasion, Thomas learned the hard way that it was risky, and disappointing, to challenge the chief's control of trading. He tells how the embarrassing incident began:

Early this morning people were desirous of trading with us, but they are very imposing and want a great deal for their goods – they tell us that if they sell their things for too little, the chief will be angry ... we feel ourselves awkwardly situated yet I determined not to be compelled to give away more than I thought to be right – and if I must suffer, I will suffer in doing that which God and conscience approve ... (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 24/05/1827).*

Thomas did in fact suffer. A difference of opinion arose over the price of a large pig. Thomas offered what he regarded as a fair price: *a spade or a broad axe*. The seller did not think that was enough. A disturbance, a *great noise*, broke out, and Ata arrived on the scene. He told the seller of the pig to take the missionary's offer but then went on to force Thomas to part with a good deal more property than he had intended. In what was clearly a threat, Ata advised Thomas to make extra purchases of pigs and yams: *for they did not know when there would be another day for trading*. Annoyed by the encounter, Thomas later noted in his Journal:

we had contrary to our judgment to buy several more pigs – we painfully feel the grasp of the savage. (IBID).

Mission property was also at the centre of conflict in the early days when thefts occurred. Protecting their property led Thomas and Hutchinson to arm themselves and make a show of force:

The last few nights, Thomas wrote in August 1826, we have had to keep a sharp lookout on our premises .I have kept a gun loaded and have walked about with a sword in my hand and slept with it by my side ... they had best keep at some distance however least they should remember it not that I intend to shoot them to hurt them or cut them with the sword, but I should mark them – and alarm them if I could. (IBID 21/08/1826).

Ata advised Thomas to shoot thieves, but the missionary said *that would not do*, and there were no recorded instances where marking with the sword, or alarming thieves with warning shots, was actually necessary.

First Sabbaths at Hihifo

Sunday 2nd July 1826 on board the Elizabeth anchored in Maria Bay, was the new missionaries first Sabbath in Tonga. No formal service was held. There were, however, several Tongans on board and the missionaries were still *awaiting the first opportunity* to get their possessions landed on shore. Ata, and his people at Hihifo already knew that missionaries had a sacred day, presumably since LMS and Lawry's days. Whether the Chief was acknowledging that new arrangements were now in place with the missionaries living among them is not clear. Regardless, he directed his people to honour the day. The captain of the Elizabeth, however, was not so respectful and sent some of his men on shore to barter for pigs and wood. Thomas was offended by the captain's disregard of the Sabbath, comparing his actions with those of Ata and his people:

... this is a painful thing to me the natives knew that it was our Sabbath, and the Chief had given orders that no canoes should come off, but that the day should be tabooed, or kept sacred, but our people [captain and crew] are worse than heathens. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 02/07/1826).*

The next Sunday, 9th July, was the first Sunday on Tongan soil for the re-established Wesleyan mission. Hutchinson preached at 11 am on the text from Psalm 116:12, *What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits to me?* The congregation consisted of *the Mission party and several Tongans*. In the afternoon Thomas preached on Psalm 84:11:

For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

There were hopeful signs during that first Sunday's worship. A Ha'apai chief, residing at Nuku'alofa, attended the service. [Was this Taufa'ahau?] He understood and spoke some English, which was fortunate as the service was wholly in English. He was, Thomas said:

friendly to the Christian Religion – he is very serious and has abandoned some of their vain customs – he enquired my age and said young me old – me foolish me very foolish.

(*IBID*, 09/06/1826; *THOMAS, JOURNAL**, 09/07/1826; *SARAH THOMAS, JOURNAL**, 23/07/1826).

He appeared *very inquisitive and willing to learn*, and after the service Charles gave him a summary of Thomas's sermon. The next Sunday, Ata and some of his people were present at worship *and were very still*, Sarah Thomas said, though *all with the exception of one it is likely could not understand a word and when the service was over went quietly away*.

There were other hopeful signs during the first two weeks of the mission's life at Hihifo. The missionaries were visited by one of the Chief's sons, Lolohea, a young man of about 20 years of age, suffering from a scrofulous condition [a tuberculosis like bacteria of the lymph nodes] – afflicted in his body as Thomas put it. He had a little English and was anxious to learn to read. Me love Book, he said to Thomas but the missionary, busy with building work, had no time for teaching. (*THOMAS, JOURNAL** 15/07/1826; *THOMAS TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS** P.354)

Worship, in those early days, was always in English, and it is amazing that there were any in the congregation apart from the mission party. Nevertheless, two months after their arrival, Thomas could report that:

We had many natives into our worship – they behaved very well and were much pleased with what they saw and heard. It is a matter of regret to us that they cannot as yet understand the Gospel...but we trust and pray that God will through his Spirit convey some good to their souls. (*THOMAS, JOURNAL** 06/08/1826).

Ata's control of Church attendance

It wasn't long, however, before Ata began controlling who could attend worship. A typical entry in Thomas's Journal tells what was to become an all too familiar story:

Had but few natives at our worship yesterday the cause was that the Chief watched about our gates and threatened and drove the poor people away and would not let them come (*THOMAS, JOURNAL**, 12/03/1827).

Disillusionment, understandably, was often reflected in Thomas's writings because of Ata's opposition:

All the people forbid to come to our worship as far as the Chief can prevent them ... it is true there are a few that will come with or without the consent of the Chief ... I suppose it would be worthwhile to remain here and to

persevere in learning the language though the stimulus is not so great as it would be were we surrounded with a throng of the natives. (IBID, 20/03/1827).

A sad comment from Thomas's Journal in late March 1827 sums up the discouraging result of Ata's opposition:

When the bell was rung to announce the time of worship, no person excepting our own families came, the few that are willing are afraid to come because of the Chief. (IBID, 25/03/1827).

Respect for the sabbath day itself was a frequent concern for the Mission party in the early days:

It is rather painful on a Sunday Morning, Thomas wrote in September 1826, to hear the natives at work beating the tappa – it is performed by the women, and they have no regard for the Sabbath as yet (IBID, 27/09/1826).

Despite Ata initial respect for the Sabbath, Ata's attitude, later, caused friction between Thomas and his Chief. One Saturday afternoon Ata sent Thomas a message, asking to borrow two spades, because he wanted to clean up around a faitoka [cemetery] the following morning. Thomas refused the request, telling the Chief's messenger that the work would be done on the Sabbath *the Lord's Day or the aho tabu*. Ata responded, saying *it was not his Sabbath, or sacred day*. Thomas was not moved, telling the Chief he would not lend him the tools *as it would be sanctioning his* [the Chief's] sin. (*Thomas, Tongatapu or the Friendly Islands*, *p.366; 24/02/1827). Some days later Ata said he would be working on *clearing at a faitoka or burying place on the Sabbath, saying that was his worship.* (IBID, 12/03/1827).

Was Hihifo the right choice?

In Sydney, as the mission party prepared to leave for Tonga, Hutchinson and Thomas were in two minds about where to re-establish the Wesleyan Mission: Lawry's old station, at Mu'a with Fatu or Hihifo, at Kolovai, where Charles Tindall was living under Ata's protection. It was an important step they had to take, a decision needing *divine direction*. There were strong cultural connections with both places. Mua, the ancient capital, home of the Tu'i Tonga and the ancient burial mounds, the langi's had ancient religious and political importance. Hihifo, on the other hand, was of great political significance, home of the political leaders, where for centuries the Tu'i Kanokuplu were installed under the Koka tree, at Pangai, Kolovai.

An entry in Thomas's Journal illustrates the dilemma:

Previous to our leaving Sydney from what information I could gather we expected to have gone to Heefoo [Hihifo] to reside with Ata the chief that took Charles ... from what I can gather from Thomas [Wright] and Tammy Now, I think probable that the former Mission Station [Mu'a] will be our place. (THOMAS, JOURNAL 04/06/1826).*

When they arrived in Tongan waters an old chief, Nuku, came on board the Elizabeth and the missionaries learned from him that Charles Tindall was still alive and living with Ata and that Fatu was alive and well, and that the old Mission House at Mu'a was still standing. Furthermore, Fatu was caring for some mission property that Lawry had brought from Sydney in 1822. Thomas and Hutchinson thought that after hearing *what Charles had to say respecting the state of the island and the disposition of the Chiefs*, Hihifo should be the place to settle. That decision had led to the conference with Ata and the sealing of the agreement on the beach. (*IBID** 24/06/1826; 26/06/2026).

Despite the fact that the Elizabeth was heading for Hihifo, Fatu arrived from Mu'a and went on board. Singleton was with him, and they took breakfast with the Mission party. Singleton was carrying out a role he had played some four years previously when he was the translator for Lawry in dealings with Fatu which led to the pioneer Wesleyan mission being established at Mu'a. On this present occasion however, Fatu was not successful. Sarah Thomas explained that her husband asked Charles to tell Fatu why they would be staying at Hihifo, to which Fatu replied:

You stop with Ata at Hihifo very good You come to with me very good. (THOMAS, JOURNAL 29/06/1826; SARAH THOMAS, JOURNAL*, 28/06/1826).*

Understandably, Fatu was disappointed, Thomas said, when he knew that neither of us *were going to live with him*. Nevertheless, he stayed on board a couple of hours and seemed happy enough when he left with a present of *about two yards of print and a pair of scissors*.

Nuku, who had been on the ship for a couple of days, left with Fatu, having been given a similar present. As they were leaving, Fatu *wanted me to pray*, Thomas said, *so I sent for our man [Thomas Wright] to act as an interpreter, and we had evening worship.* (THOMAS, JOURNAL* 29/06/1826; 31/07/1826).

Six days later, Singleton and some of Watson Nau's friends were back at Hihifo with a message from Fatu. The Mu'a Chief wanted to hear about England from a Tongan, Tammy Now, to see if what he had been told about England was true. Fatu's message also contained some other important information. He had asked Singleton to tell Thomas and Hutchinson *that he was sorry that one of us did not come to him*. He had taken care of some Mission property left by Lawry and had recovered property that had been stolen. Many things which they lost, *he said, he had got back he had kept the Farm for us and a part of the cattle.* It was another strong appeal to come and make Mu'a the Wesleyan Station again. Hutchinson and Thomas's response was as before: Fatu was told that *we wished to live at Heefo [Hihifo]* but that when other missionaries may come then perhaps some of them could decide to live with him. (*Thomas, Journal * 04/07/1826*). Fatu responded to this news with a present of food:

Two men from Mu'a brought two baskets full of vegetables ... [and] as Mr Lawry was very fond of these and thought we should, hence they had carried them about 14 miles.
(THOMAS, JOURNAL*, 04/07/1826; 18/07/1826).

Fatu made a final attempt to encourage the missionaries to come to Mu'a. He visited Hihifo again, this time bringing his wife *Funangi* and their five children. They shared food together with the missionaries and Fatu, in what Thomas called 'broken English', spoke about some Tongan customs that were foolish:

Tonga man too much foolish – when Tonga man too much sick – then he cut off finger for him to get better. (THOMAS, JOURNAL 31/07/1826).*

And then with yet another attempt to influence Thomas and Hutchinson he said that he is fond of it [the lotu] now (Thomas, Journal* 31/07/1826). Again, during this visit, he expressed his disappointment that the Mission was estab-

lished at Hihifo with Ata. He was grieved, Thomas said, *that we do not live at the Mooa [Mua].*

During the visit, Thomas entertained Fatu and his family, and Ulakai who had joined the group, by playing a few hymn tunes on the flute. As evening drew on, Ulakai wished to leave, which led to a surprising turn of events:

Fatu expressed his wish to stop for prayers at which we were rather astonished. They both stopped and Fatu asked Thomas to call him in the morning at the time of prayers. (SARAH THOMAS, JOURNAL 31/07/1826).*

Clearly, he was using all the means he could muster to prove his genuine attachment to, or interest in, the lotu. Sarah Thomas was impressed at least. *This, we hope is a pleasing sign*, she said, *and I sincerely hope that he may receive good to his soul. (ibid)*. Whether he received that goodness is not clear. He did, however, continue to visit Hihifo and ask for a missionary. (*THOMAS, JOURNAL* 08/02/1827*).

The contacts with Mu'a were not all one way. Hutchinson visited Mu'a on one occasion, and the Hutchinsons and Thomas's made an interesting trip there in early September 1826. Both visits were made during a time when they were considering leaving Hihifo because of Ata's opposition and threats. During the September visit Sarah described her impressions of the old mission premises:

The house is now standing but is in a very shattered condition – it is a very rough place. It is now inhabited by some families.

They gave Fatu a few simple gifts – some cloth and beads – with which Sarah said he seemed dissatisfied. (*Sarah Thomas* 06/09/1826*.) Hutchinson, on his latter visit, was a little more enthusiastic. Fatu was not home when he called but he was *received gladly* by the Mu'a people. And although the old Mission House was in a ruinous state, it was beautifully situated providing:

an excellent field for mission labour provided any dependence could be placed on the Chief for protection. (MN, 1828, HUTCHINSON TO COMMITTEE, 24/11/1826).

The appeal of Nukualofa.

Hihifo, despite Fatu's attempts to promote Mu'a, was to be the Wesleyan Mission Station. Nevertheless, there were others who were also interested in having the new Wesleyan missionaries live with them. As events will show, Nuku'alofa was one of those places, and Tupou and his chiefs, would, like Fatu, make a

number of attempts to encourage the missionaries to consider coming to live with them.

Quite early on, Uhila came from Nuku'alofa and had discussions with Thomas and Hutchinson, even though the LMS Tahitians who had arrived just three months before the Wesleyans were making good progress. Not long after Uhila's visit, Tupou himself called at the Hihifo Mission. As Thomas says:

We were visited this day [August 1st, 1826] by Tubou the chieff from Nugaloffa [Nuku'alofa] this man has behaved well to the Tahitian Missionaries and I believe has renounced some of the Tongan vanities (THOMAS, JOURNAL 09/07/1826; 01/08/1826).*

Later, when Ata ordered Sarah and John Thomas *out of their new house* because of the dispute over thatching the Mission House, Tupou at Nuku'alofa, heard about it the very next day. He acted immediately, sending the Hihifo missionaries a present of food and an offering of support:

... he sent three or four of his men directly to tell us that he was very sorry at what had happened – he wanted to know whether we wanted anything ... and if Ata would not keep us or let us be here, nor have our house, if we would come to him, he would build us a house and a chapel. (IBID, 28/09/1826).

One other encouraging contact took place during a visit from Uhila and some Nuku'alofa people. While at Hihifo they took the opportunity to join in *family worship and appeared pleased*. Thomas, through an interpreter, apologized that the worship was in English, and said he hoped for the time when he could speak to them in their own language. Nevertheless, he said that God *could see them*, and he prayed that *God would bless them*. Uhila responded in what English he could muster and told Thomas that they, the Nuku'alofa people, liked Jehova – *the people at the Bear [Pea] and Nugaloffa [Nuku'alofa] like to pray but at Hihifo no like prayer*. Before the men from Nuku'alofa left Hihifo, Uhila clarified for Thomas something that had become a misunderstanding. Tupou's offer was that Hutchinson and Thomas, if they came to Nuku'alofa, could use the existing lotu buildings [those being used by the Tahitians]. He did not say he would build us a house and a chapel *but that he would let us teach or preach in those he had builded*. Incidentally, Ata quickly changed his eviction order and allowed the mission families back into the Mission House, with the declaration that he *would take care that nothing of the like should occur again*. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, * 04/07/1826; 29/09/1826).

Frequent contact continued between Hihifo and Nuku'alofa. Over many months Nuku'alofa people came out to Hihifo to join in worship with the missionaries, even though most of what was being said and done was not understandable to them. Uhila came frequently, and Langi on at least one occasion. (*ibid*, 17/12/1826; 16/09/1827). Uhila on a visit in July 1827 told Thomas that Nuku'alofa was friendly towards missionaries. (*ibid* 28/06/1827). Tupou, also, continued to visit Hihifo from time to time, sometimes with some of his people, and on occasion, accompanied by one of the Tahitian teachers:

We were visited by the chief of Nugaloffa [Nuku'alofa] and one of the Tahitian teachers, of the name Hape – he is a short, deformed man, but I think pious ... I thought his appearance rather singular. they wear Tappa around their loins a shirt on their body and the one that came to see us today had a small blue cap on his head we have given him a lock for the Chapel door. (IBID 09/10/1826).

From these visits Thomas was convinced that Tupou, while supporting the Tahitian teachers, would also like to have English missionaries with him at Nuku'alofa. As he was told:

Toobo [Tupou] the Chief at Noogoloffa [Nuku'alofa] prefers English Missionaries as he wants to learn the English language – he would be glad, if Mr Hutchinson leaves for me to go to that place but I think we are in our place at present [at Hihifo] (IBID 19/12/1826).

On a very practical matter, when Thomas was wanting some timber to complete the Mission House, he asked if Ata would allow him to cut down some trees. Ata refused. Later, when Nuku'alofa knew of Thomas's needs, timber from there was offered. Ata heard about it and was annoyed. He said he didn't think Thomas could get any timber from there and he wished to know who the man was that offered to let us have timber ... (*IBID*, 29 01/1827).

As with Mu'a so with Nuku'alofa, the visits and other contacts were not all one way. Hutchinson was interested in the work at Nuku'alofa *and went there to see the place and the way in which the Tahitian teachers conducted their worship...* He returned to Kolovai, much pleased with his visit. (*ibid*, 14-15/10/1826). Thomas too, paid visits to Tupou and the Tahitians. He had obviously been invited to Nuku'alofa, for in early January 1827, he noted in his Journal that he had promised to go there. It was nearly a month before he could keep his promise. He was welcomed by Tupou and his people and was impressed by what he saw and heard. Writing about his experience there he said:

I am pleased to see the steadfastness of Tubo [Tupou] the chief here ... he told me that he knows the Tonga spirits is all lies but as far as he knows of the Lord and of religion, he knows it to be true – that the other chiefs may kill him if they like but he will not give up praying – he is willing to die, but not to give up praying. (THOMAS, JOURNAL 05/01/1827).*

The contrast between the situation at Hihifo and Nuku’alofa could not have been starker: fierce opposition to the lotu at Hihifo, keen support for the lotu in Nuku’alofa. In the light of all the contacts with Tupou and some of his people, and the continuing uncertain future at Hihifo, Thomas began to wonder whether the Wesleyan Mission at Hihifo should be moved to Nuku’alofa. (THOMAS, JOURNAL* 29/10/1827).

A Mission Station in Ha’apai?

In the midst of competing claims, another possibility for a mission station was emerging. Thomas didn’t name a possible location, but he was thinking about the prospect of the Mission being established somewhere else:

I trust that as our way is considerable shut up [at Hihifo] through the opposition of the chief that our way will be opened other ways. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 09/03/1827.)*

Letters to London from Thomas and Hutchinson had led the Missionary Committee to believe that missionaries on Tongatapu were wondering if they could *remove to some Station of brighter prospects.* (MN 1827) Those other ways could well have been Ha’apai. (Thomas, Journal* 07/11/1826). Ata, apparently, was aware of that possibility and warned Hutchinson and Thomas:

*not to let strange chiefs in to see our place ... he seems to think that by and by they may come to fight against him. If strangers come he wishes us to let him know their names and then he will let us know whether or not they may come in.
(IBID 07/11/1826).*

In early December Ata’s fears about strange chiefs seem to have become a reality. He sent Hutchinson and Thomas a message warning them about a Chief who was soon to visit Hihifo. The Chief was staying at Pea, but he was *a chief belonging to Hapies* [Ha’apai], and the missionaries were directed not to let him in – this man is the Tui Hapi [Tu’i Ha’apai] or *King of the Hapis* [Ha’apai]. From what Thomas could gather, the Tu’i Ha’apai was *a powerful man and a great warrior, but the people here do not much like him.* And when the Chief [Tau-

fa'ahau] did not actually come to Hihifo at that time, but returned to Ha'apai, Thomas appeared a little disappointed. (*ibid.* 4-5/12/1826.) It would not be long, however, before Taufa'ahau would make several visits to Thomas at Hihifo. Those contacts would result in major developments in the life of the Wesleyan Church.

Culture Clash

Thomas was well aware that *ignorance of their ways was putting the mission in danger* (*Thomas, Journal, 10/10/1826*). Tongan and European ways of doing things had caused conflicts during the first few days after the missionaries arrived. While some European things found ready acceptance, others caused tension and disputes. European medicine was received readily enough. Sarah, with a little knowledge of medicine, was called upon from the earliest days, when people were sick. An urgent call came from Ata soon after they arrived, asking if Thomas would allow Mission's carpenter, Thomas Bambridge, to make a coffin for his dying son. That request was agreed to and Sarah, with her husband, went to Ata's place to see if some assistance could be given to the sick child. The missionaries found the boy near death, lying in a special small hut *brought for the child to die in*.

Sarah's medical knowledge may have been limited but having learned some first aid while preparing for mission service in Tonga, she was confident enough to offer assistance. Sarah found the chief was giving the child some water, but she *thought that a little wine would be more suitable* so went and brought some. The child *drank a little and seemed quite comfortable and went to sleep*. She visited the sick child several times during the day, but by evening he had died. (*Thomas, Tongatapu or the Friendly Islands**, 31/07/1826, p.358).

Although the child had died, Sarah, and all of the missionaries that were to follow her in later years, were seen as having skills in treating sickness and in dispensing medicines. Sarah could not have known it at the time, but that first attempt at administering medicine was to be the forerunner of some thirty years of dispensing 'prescriptions' and working with sick and needy people. Despite the failure of her first medical intervention, other requests came to the missionaries for medical help in those early days at Hihifo. (*THOMAS, JOURNAL**, 24/10/1826; 08/01/1827).

Food and food preparation did not cause much conflict or friction, although Thomas did complain at one stage that their diet contained too much pork! The mission party adapted, by necessity, to Tongan food from the beginning. Local people came to trade local foods [pigs, coconuts, bananas and yams in particular] and these foods became their staple diet. The missionaries had brought European seeds and trees with them, but the seeds took weeks to grow, and the trees needed a season or so to mature. In the meantime, they had to live on local foods.

Ata often dined with the missionaries, firstly on board the Elizabeth, where he took a meal with the mission party the day after their arrival. At various other

times, at the Mission House, he shared meals, presumably quite happy to have Tongan food prepared in a European way. On one occasion, when he was making a visit to Nuku'alofa, he called at the Mission House and asked for some bread to eat on his journey. (*THOMAS, JOURNAL**, 06/04/1827).

There were other customs, however, that brought the English Missionaries and the Tongan chief and his people into serious conflict. Ironically, it was the missionaries Tongan helper, Tammy Now, who was the cause of an angry reaction from Ata. Tammy had lived in Sydney and in England for a time and had gone to school there. (*Committee Minutes** 15/02/1825). He had learned a little English and some European ways and was a teacher to John and Sarah Thomas on their way out from England to Sydney. In England he had been baptized and given the name Watson, after the Rev Richard Watson, leading Wesleyan Methodist theologian and one of the Secretaries of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society. Tammy was identified with the missionaries and some of their ways, and his manner from time-to-time outraged Ata. Tammy, he said:

*should not walk about like a Chief when he was only a cook
... it is not the custom of the country for a person of his low
order to wear superior Tappa in the presence of a Chief –
this Tammy has done – again that it is one of the greatest
insults which can be offered for a Tonga man to pass by a
Cava ring – this Tammy has done, so that it is partly
through respect to us, that the Chief has let him live and he
says he does not want to see him here at all. (THOMAS,
JOURNAL*, 17/08/1826).*

Thomas, without sufficient appreciation of Tongan customs, took Tammy's side and sympathized with *this poor boy*, judging Ata's anger as evidence of the Chief's *depravity of the human heart*. (*ibid*).

Other issues arose related to clothing and matters of dress. During a particularly difficult time, when both the Thomas and Hutchinson families were discussing the possibility of leaving Tonga, Thomas made some depressing comments about Ata and matters of Tongan customs:

*If we were willing to submit to him, then we must put on
our best clothes and attend at his bidding the Catonga
[Katoanga] and other meetings but this we cannot do ... I
see no possibility of Missionaries doing much good at any of
these islands except, that he conform to the native dress and
way of living ... he must wear [wear] the native Cloth
– and lie on a mat ... and if there are men that will do it,
then possible good might be done, though it is certain that in
so far as we can see that the Gospel will have much to
contend with ... (IBID, 31/07/1827).*

Ata, it seems, was suggesting a policy of integration, a blending of cultures. This Thomas could not accept, although he confessed that he did not understand Tongan customs and that his ignorance of their ways was putting them [the missionaries] and the Mission in danger. (*ibid*, 27 September 1826). During the inasi [presentation of food to the Tu'i Tonga] in October 1826 Thomas was troubled because he believed he needed to oppose some aspects of the ceremonies (he singled out the women's boxing for special mention), but was not equipped to do so:

It was to me a cross to see it rather than a source of gratification. If I was sufficiently acquainted with the language as to show them the evil and folly of their superstitions, I should think it my duty to attend some of their meetings in order to do so but I am not. (IBID, 10/10/1826).

The Chief, for his part, was equally upset by what he saw when European customs were being promoted by the missionaries. He called a great assembly, and rebuked the people for their conduct:

some relating to Tongan customs and some to us ... [he] showed no regard to our manner and practices – he called those fools that came to our worship and spoke in a sneering way of all that prayed to Jehovah and threatened to kill men if they came to our worship. (IBID, 12/10/1826).

There were times when Thomas's attitude would have been seen by Tongans as bad-mannered or disrespectful. Tupou and Uhila visited Hihifo five months after the new missionaries had arrived. They called at the Mission House, and Thomas recorded the visit in his Journal which seems to show a somewhat disrespectful attitude:

Today Toobo [Tupou] and Hohela [Uhila] from Nugualoffa [Nuku'alofa] called to see us but as we were busy teaching and took little notice of them – they soon left us. (IBID. 16/10/1826).

Much earlier in their Hihifo experience, Thomas had offended against Tongan customs by his insensitivity. As he says:

Vahai [Vaha'i] and his men came with several articles of Tonga goods – I went to the gate where they were sitting preparing cava – I told them I would come again when it was over – but when I went, he was offended and had

removed ... we often give offence and feel at times pressed under a load of this kind. (IBID, 31/03/1827).

Some customs allowed a little more compromise. One of the young men who were keen to learn to read and write also wanted to know about acceptable behavior at funerals and in times of mourning. Tupoutoutai came to Thomas, following the death of one of his relatives, and their discussion illustrates the merging of the two cultures and what the missionary saw as acceptable, and that which was not:

He wanted to know if it was wrong to weep and cry – he wanted to know whether papalangis did so when their friends died – I said Yes. He wanted to know whether it was good to cut his hair as the Tonga people did. I said No good ... he wanted to know if he might come to learn to read and write in his mourning dress – I said Yes. (IBID, 26/10/1826).

Other funeral customs also raised questions and caused a clash of cultures, highlighting that new ways were evolving. When a significant chief, related to Tupou, died at Nuku’alofa, a dispute arose over whether he should be buried in the traditional Tongan way or according to some of the new ways of the missionaries. Some men from Nuku’alofa came to the Mission gate at Hihifo and reported that:

People not being agreed what method they should take in burying the old chief, the ceremonies were put off till today as all the chiefs were present ... it was agreed that those who liked to beat themselves &c according to the Tonga fashion may do it and those who did not like it should be exempt – so they formed into two parties. Those who prefer Tonga Worship by themselves and those who lotooed (or prayed) by themselves. (SARAH THOMAS, JOURNAL 20/03/1827).*

These discussions showed that there was, on the one hand, some degree of cultural change under way, and on the other, a desire to retain important long held cultural practices.

Power and Authority in conflict.

Thomas discovered quite early in his time at Hihifo that Ata *seems to have us like slaves or servants to him*. (*Thomas, Journal**, 19/05/1827). The Thomas and Hutchinson families were finding it oppressive to be answerable to Ata in so many aspects of daily life. In a long entry in his journal, in mid-1827, Thomas included an evaluation of the situation as they were experiencing it:

It appears to me that he will not only oppose us in our object at Heehefo [Hihifo] but he wishes us so to be under him as to consult him in everything – we are threatened with being turned out of doors because we have ventured to give advice to another Chief when required without asking leave of our Chief – he has sent us word that he is very angry with us and seems to wish to have us like slaves or servants to him ... but he must bring us into bondage . (IBID, 19/05/1827).

Charles Tindall, at times, was able to let the missionaries know something of Ata's thinking. The Chief had been speaking critically about the attitudes of the new missionaries, and the clash of Tongan and English customs. The missionaries were from England, but they were now living in Tonga, and ought to understand and respect Tongan ways. Ata held the view, as Thomas recorded it, that:

At home we were Chiefs – were strong and could do great things, but here we were few and weak – that they [Ata and others of influence] were Chiefs and could do as they liked at Tonga. (IBID, 15/09/1826).

Sarah Thomas commented on what was clearly an authority issue, noting that Ata had come to the Mission house on one occasion and found the gate of the Mission House compound locked. He was enraged to be locked out and

*had threatened two or three times to burn down our house and said that the land was his and that we were not Chiefs.
(SARAH THOMAS, JOURNAL*, 16/10/1826).*

Thomas, the loyal Englishman and citizen of the powerful British Empire, reflected that a colonial power would perhaps be necessary to ensure the success of the mission. He was obviously encouraged to think this way by the arrival at Tonga of the French Naval Ship *Astrolobe*, Captain D'Urville Commander. The captain brought letters from Sydney, including one from Rev Samuel Marsden introducing D'Urville to Thomas as his friend. (*Thomas, Tongatapu or the Friendly Islands**, pp.369-370). Thomas visited the Ship, anchored at Pangaimotu, and spent Sunday with the Captain. Reflecting, later about his time on board the French ship, and the constant opposition from Ata, he had:

no doubt that if they [Tongans] should be subdued and made to believe that there are others as strong and as wise as them – if they should be subdued to the French or British power and made to fear then they may hear God's Word. (*THOMAS, JOURNAL** 19/05/1827).

Thomas visited the French Ship again, spending two days on board. Following conversations with Captain D'Urville, and members of his crew *who could speak good English*, he was pleased to note that:

we are led to expect that the Captain will go and fetch a power sufficient to conquer and subdue the whole Island, for the honor of his flag and the good of all European vessels may call here – this he said he would do and change the Government here. (*THOMAS, JOURNAL** 20/05/1827).

Setting up school.

While the Thomas's were in Tasmania, on their way to Sydney from England, John took time to plan his priorities for Tonga. High on his list was education: *to get a school and teach as many children as possible to read, endeavoring by all means to secure their attendance and attention.* (*Thomas, Journal, 01/03/1825–30/04/1828*). His plan was understandable and praiseworthy, but as events were to unfold, it was very difficult to put into practice. A series of challenges proved too overwhelming for the plan to succeed. At the first meeting with Ata, as we have seen, Thomas and Hutchinson asked permission to teach the people, especially the children, *to know and fear the Lord, and many other good things*, a goal that they believed Ata agreed to. (*ibid, 27/06/1826*). In addition, they asked for *land to build upon and plant*, which they also understood Ata had agreed to. It became clear quite early, that either Ata had not understood these arrangements, or that he had changed his mind.

Ten days after landing in June 1826, the first lesson was given by John Thomas to a Tongan student. The location was interesting, an open-air classroom. A keen student, Lolohea the son of Ata's wife Papa, came to the site where Thomas and Hutchinson were building the Mission House. He asked to be taught to read and write. He was somewhat disappointed, however, because Thomas said he was too busy, preoccupied with *temporal affairs*, working on the Mission House and Storeroom. Nevertheless, a few minutes were given to teaching. And so it was that Amelica, [Thomas notes that the word is *a corruption of America*] the name that Tongans called the piece of land given to the Mission by Ata, became the first 'classroom'. (*ibid, 27/07/1826*). One can imagine the missionary, sitting on a stack of timber, teaching the young pupil the English alphabet. Reflecting later on that first lesson, Thomas wrote:

I was agreeably surprised at one of the Chief's sons, so anxious to learn to read – and so quick in getting the Alphabet, he is a young man of the name Lolohea about twenty years of age – he is afflicted in his Body – he said pointing to his breast me foolish me love Book. He was much pleased with a board I gave him with the Alphabet on. He waited all afternoon in the yard, expecting me to teach him again, but I had too many other things to do ... he stayed until it was dark and then went away saying he would come again tomorrow to the lotoo to our worship. (IBID, 15/07/1826).

Unable to give time to teaching during these early days weighed heavily on Thomas's mind. He felt guilty about the time he was giving to manual labour, rather than what he regarded as the proper work of Mission:

I am almost always busily employed, and in general much tired at night – yet I seem to have done nothing – I am dissatisfied with myself – I seem to do nothing to my mind compared with the great object we are come here for – all we have done is nothing – we have yet learned only a few words of the language – we have no place for a school as yet – we refuse to let any of the natives come into our house, as we have not time to teach them ... we have no time to teach ... I wish I had never cost them [the Missionary Committee] one farthing and then I would soon return to my Trade again. (IBID, 05/09/1826).

Lolohea, the young man who first came to Thomas, and at least one other, still went regularly to where the missionaries were busy with their building work. Their presence and requests were disturbing the missionaries and so these keen students were banned from the site until the Mission House was completed.

Nevertheless, these first students did not waste their time during what amounted to a three-month suspension. Lolohea and Tupoutoutai, practiced what little they had learned, and began sharing their new knowledge with others. When Thomas was passing their house one day in early August 1826, he heard them getting their lessons as they lay down and was sorry that we have but little time or convenience for teaching as yet. (*Thomas, Journal**, 11/8/1826). Lolohea, in particular played a significant part in the history of education in Tonga, because, in reality, he was the first of as long line of Tongans teaching Tongans. Thomas's obituary for him praises the young man's leadership:

he was guardian and head of a number of youths who lived at his place, in order that they may attend to the worship of God and our school. They were safe under his protection from the displeasure of their friends and fear of opposition of the chief. (MN, 1830; THOMAS, JOURNAL, 01/06/1829).

When the young men, the first students, came back to the missionaries after the three months break, Thomas found that they were still keen and had lost nothing by the suspension. They were very quick learners and attended the Sabbath worship at the Mission House, and their commitment provided some needed encouragement to the missionaries who could see in these first pupils, a glimmer of hope for the future.

Continuing language difficulties

One of the frustrations faced by the mission party, from the beginning, was the language barrier. The Thomas's had spent some time studying Tongan during the voyage from England to the Australian colonies. They used Mariner's Tonga Islands, and with some assistance from Tammy Nau, they had learned a few Tongan words and some simple phrases. They had brought with them, however, English school books, and so when the Chief's sons came to learn to read and write, Thomas had responded in the only way he knew how: he produced an English Alphabet Card and began teaching Lolohea the English Alphabet. Because there were no books in the Tongan language, English became the syllabus for the beginning of teaching at Hihifo.

Making English the basis of teaching may seem surprising, but quite a number of Tongans had gained a little English from the many shipwrecked or castaway Europeans who had made their home in Tonga and from whalers and traders who called at the Friendly Islands. Some of the Port au Prince survivors, in particular, formed close relationships with leading Chiefs and would have introduced their masters to at least some elements of the English language. Brown, at Vava'u, was the interpreter for Finau, and Singleton at Mu'a was part of Fatu's household, having married one of the chief's daughters. The LMS missionaries of the 1790s also made a contribution to the concept of books and the value of reading and communicating in a written language. (SEE CHAPTER 1)

One of the early questions to Thomas, from a Chief who visited Hihifo from Nuku'alofa, was about books. In a quite intriguing conversation between Thomas and Uhila [the Chief *who keeps the Tahitian missionaries*], the visitor asked Thomas:

Whether we had a Book in Tonga Language – he had been told we had – that Mr Lawry had made one – he was disappointed when we informed him we had none. (THOMAS, JOURNAL 19/07/1826).*

Lolohea's first approach to Thomas was a request about books:

Pointing to his heart, in a very humble childlike Spirit, said in broken English ‘Me love book. You teach me book.’ (MN 1830 THOMAS LOLOHEA OBITUARY).

He had learned some English and a little about Jehovah from a sailor who was living at Vava'u. [Brown?]. Thomas responded that he didn't have time to teach him. He did, however, give him some help. He handed him: a spelling book, and he was much pleased – he can both read and write a little. (Thomas Journal*, 23/07/1826) Another eager student came begging Thomas to teach him, asking,

in the English at his command: *What for you no let me come to learn read?* to which Thomas replied:

I am so much out from home – and Mrs Thomas has no servant – she is obliged to do all the work herself, and she has no time to teach. By and by we shall have done the house and we shall make a school to teach you in then we shall have a many of you. (IBID, 09/09/1826).

Against a background of the young men, with a little English wanting to be taught, and the Thomas's lack of Tongan language, it is understandable why the new missionaries were planning to teach English.

The need for a school House.

Once the Mission House was built, Thomas turned his attention to planning his next building project: a school house. He went to Ata and asked for *a very small piece of land joining our place to build a House upon for a chapel and School*. Ata refused, saying he needed that land *to plant it with yams*. Thomas was not pleased, believing that his arrangements with the Chief at first landing had guaranteed them land for a chapel and school. Ata's refusal was, Thomas felt, *another proof... the chief with whom we are is no friend of the cause of Christ.* (IBID, 18/09/1826).

Despite Ata's refusal, getting a school house was constantly on Thomas's mind and it led him to a possible solution: he would build a chapel/school within the Mission House grounds! After all, it was a five-acre plot of land, and an appropriate building could be erected:

within our [Mission House] fence, which may be much the best for us as it will be near and consequently more safe and we can so fence it as to make it a separate place to our house and garden. (IBID, 18/09/1826).

So, they set about choosing a site and drawing up plans, praying that the Lord would *direct in all our ways*. They were soon, however, pointed in a different direction. Instead of a new school house, they began using the *front room* of the Thomas's section of the Mission House for worship and classes. At times they had *a house full of children*, which highlighted the need for *a larger and more convenient place to teach in.* (*ibid, 22/10/26; 28/11/26*). Nevertheless, because Ata continued to refuse them more land, together with *the uncertainty of the children being permitted to attend*, and the expenses already incurred by the Mission, Thomas had to admit that *we have not erected a school or chapel.* (IBID, 28/11/1826).

However, a new possibility began to emerge as it became clear that the Hutchinsons were determined to leave Tonga and return to the colonies as soon

as possible. Hutchinson, according to Sarah Thomas, was *unsettled and dissatisfied*, and his *sickness and feebleness* were reasons for his wanting to leave. (*Sarah Thomas, Diary**; WJO 1854, p.28). The Thomas's could see that if the Hutchinsons left, the want of a school house could be satisfied by using part of the Mission House as a classroom. As Thomas confided to his Journal:

*if Mr H goes soon then we can turn a part of the house into
a school this will do till we get a larger – also as the Chief
has said he will live in it when Mr H leaves will be a
reason why he should not come, we should be sorry to have
him so near us – he is so imposing. (THOMAS, JOURNAL *
30/11/1826.)*

The Hutchinsons did not leave as soon as expected, so using part of the Mission House for a classroom was no longer an option. At this point Ulakai offered his property for worship and school lessons, but this was not accepted, even though he lived quite near the Mission premises. (*ibid*, 04/02/1827.) Instead, Thomas debated with himself about a practical solution, returning again to the possibility of a school within the Mission House grounds:

*We now want a place to answer as a School and a place of
worship but as the Chief continues to oppose, we do not
think it proper to erect a large place and as he refused to give
us more land some time ago saying we had enough – we
think of erecting a small place within our fence – this to
answer until our way is opened. (IBID, 09/02/1827).*

The small place, however, was not built, and Thomas continued to agonize over the question of whether *to build or not to build*. His troubled mind continued well into 1827. *We do not know what to do while we are so much opposed in our object.* (IBID, 17/03/1827).

There was another reason as well: the congregation and class numbers were small. As Thomas said:

*We do not think it proper to erect a place ... we have very
few except our own family at worship. (IBID, 07/05/1827.)*

And then, facing perhaps the inevitable, he concluded with words that seem to suggest that there was no need for a school house at Hihifo at all:

*We shall have room enough at the end of the Skillion Room
[of the Mission House] to convert into a school room and
chapel and it will be much more convenient, and it will be*

large enough for our congregation except something more favorable takes place. (IBID, 17/03/1827; 07/05/1827).

That was Thomas's last word about a school house for quite a long time because, from the middle of the month of May 1827 onwards, the mission party was too preoccupied with a serious crisis. The Hutchinsons, Thomas Wright and Charles Tindall were disillusioned and were wanting to leave Tonga. The Thomas's, although in emotional and spiritual distress, felt duty bound to stay. (*IBID, 07/05/1827; 22/05/1827*).

In the 'classroom'.

When he was preparing to come to Tonga, Thomas believed that encouraging regular attendance would be the focus of his schooling policy. This would prove to be very challenging. Attendance was unpredictable from the beginning. Sometimes there were a few boys at class, twenty or so on occasion, and at least on one day, quite a crowd. (*ibid, 28-29/1/1826*) Attendance depended very much on Ata. On numerous occasions Ata watched around the Mission House gates on Sabbath and school days and drove people away and on other occasions, public gatherings were used to belittle the lotu. At a great assembly of people, he *threatened to kill his men if they came to our worship*. (*ibid, 12/10/1826*).

On other occasions the Chief came into a class where the Thomas's were teaching and make fun of individual students. Once, early in 1827, he came to the Mission House and joined a class. He was in a bad mood because he had to wait a few minutes at the gate – no one heard him call. He singled out one boy for ridicule:

When he came in we had some boys in teaching one whose name is Foonagee [Funaki] and who had part of a mat on – became the object of his [Ata's] sport and through the Chief all the rest laughed at him – the poor boy hung down his head but did not speak (IBID, 09/02/1827).

Ata was annoyed because the boy's father, who had been his friend, *had become a Lotoo Tangata or man of prayer and attends our worship*. Other children, although not personally mocked, were discouraged from coming to school because Ata made it clear that he did not want the missionaries teaching the poor people's children – he calls them tooas (cooks) [*tu'as-commoners, persons without rank*]. (*IBID, 29/11/1826; 09/02/1827*).

The result of Ata's opposition was that attendance continued to be erratic. Typical entries in Thomas's journal highlight the problem: *But few children today at school they are very irregular, and our prospects are gloomy on this subject*. And yet four days later he could write: *We have had more children than usual the last week to school*. But then, just three days later still the comment was: *no trading, or native came near us, except the boys to school*. (*ibid, 01/05/1827; 05/05/1826; 08/05/1826*). As

the first six months in Tonga concluded, Sarah and John Thomas had much to disappoint them. One of Thomas's final comments for the year display their frequent mixed emotions – disillusionment on the one hand and yet hope on the other:

The attendance of the Children is not regular and of course they do not make that progress they would provided they attended, we have need of much patience in managing them, they are very unruly but we labour in hope. (IBID, 20/12/1826).

The reference to *unruly behavior* highlighted another constant problem for the missionary teachers. Thomas had said, when planning educational work for Tonga, that he would attempt by all means to secure the attention of the pupils. Achieving that goal was not always easy. On the one hand there were frequent references, to begin with, to pupils learning very fast and that quite a few children *got on very well*, which would seem to indicate that they were paying attention:

We have been engaged a few hours today in teaching to read, some men, some women, and some children – they all learn very fast and are very anxious to excel. (IBID, 23/10/1826; 02/11/1826).

However, there were a number of times when there was a lack of interest and attention. Children were very unruly, some *seemed tired of learning* (*Thomas Journal** 20/12/1826; 02/03/1827). Added to classroom inattention, there was, it seems, a lack of interest in the lotu generally. An entry in Thomas's Journal, early in 1827, reveals his concern about a seemingly uncertain future:

It is the talk of the people that it is good for us to worship English fashion but it is not good for them but they will worship Tonga fashion our God they say is best for us but their gods are best for them.

Nevertheless, despite the gloom, he felt God's call to mission:

I think we are in our place – and that we only need to exercise Faith and Patience – these dark clouds cramp our plans. We do not know what to do about building a chapel while we are so much opposed in our object and if we only look at things seen we have not much to stimulate us to persevere in acquiring the language. Yet this undoubtedly is our duty a duty we owe to the heathen – to Christian

friends who support us here – and to God who has made of one blood all nations. (IBID, 17/03/1827).

One rather depressing entry in his Journal helps to explain the Thomas's feelings of disillusionment. As with Sunday worship, so with the school:

When the bell rang for the Children to attend school no one came, or but one, viz, the Chief's son. (IBID, 26/03/1827.)

And yet, amid much that was discouraging, they dared to hope for better days:

the children he [Ata] persecutes and derides them so that but few dare to come ... [there is] little humanly speaking to encourage – poor Tonga how gloomy it looks what a valley of dry bones – yet these dry bones can be made to live – we feel encouraged in prayer to hope that we shall live to see good days at Tonga. (IBID, 09/03/1827; 12/03/1827; 26/03/1827; 03/04/1827).

To leave or not to leave.

There were times when Thomas felt that there was *little hope of being useful*. (*Thomas, Journal**, 27/9/1827). Relationships between the missionaries and Ata had reached a crisis point by September 1827: opposition, threats of violence, conflicts and misunderstandings, including Ata preventing people coming to worship. In addition, Ata's mocking of the children who came to school, added up to an impossible, if not dangerous, situation. For the Hutchinsons, returning to the colonies was to be their solution. As Thomas explained the situation:

This morning [27th September 1826] Mr H [Hutchinson] came down and his mind is decidedly made up to abandon the Station by the earliest opportunity – he has begun to pack up – he says he will not risk his life amongst such a set of men and that if the Committee are offended at him for it, then he will go to one of his farms [in Tasmania]. (THOMAS, JOURNAL 27/09/1826).*

Charles Tindall, who had been living in Tonga since arriving with Walter Lawrence in 1822, also decided to leave. He had been instrumental in helping Thomas and Hutchinson make the initial agreement with Ata, but he now believed there was *little hope of being useful to them*. (IBID, 27/09/1826).

In this depressing environment, the Thomas's themselves, were in two minds about staying or leaving. When opposition from Ata was severe, they spoke of leaving. When things quieted down a little, and when their Chief was more cooperative, they believed it was their Christian duty to stay. Even in the early days, when the Hutchinsons were determined to leave, the Thomas's were torn between personal safety and Christian duty. They were living in *very precarious and dangerous times*:

At present [Thomas wrote] our prospects are very gloomy. I am at a loss to know what to do in case we had an opportunity of escaping ... I do not feel willing to leave the Station if there is any probability of our remaining at all in safety and of being useful amongst them. (IBID, 27/09/1826).

To leave or not to leave was, then, a constant theme for the Thomas's during late 1827. They felt it their duty to stay if they could do so *with safety*. By staying on,

they could learn the language, so that when the opportunity arose in the future, they would *have the means* to teach the people. (*IBID*, 14/10/1826).

But there was another more matter-of-fact reason for staying on. If they were to abandon the Mission, they would probably have to give up the large amount of property [trade goods] they had brought with them from Sydney, and for which they were answerable to the Committee in London (*ibid*, 09/03/1827). Thomas was concerned that they might only be able to save little more than *our lives and a few clothes*. (*ibid*, 22/05/1827). This was a constant fear. So, throughout the month of June 1827, the Mission party made plans to save as much Mission property as they could, if they had to leave. Hutchinson and Thomas and Charles Tindall went out *to the end of the Island to make plans for getting away with property when a boat comes*. (*ibid*, 25/05/1827). By mid-year 1827 the mission families were in agreement about leaving. As the first anniversary of their arrival in Tonga was fast approaching, any hope Thomas may have entertained of success was giving way, again, to disillusionment. As his Journal tells us:

With such formidable obstacles in the way, and so little ground to expect to see any alteration, we are not justified in expecting the Lord to work miracles for us, either in opening our way or destroying the opposition. But except something is done in an extraordinary manner we have no reason to expect to be useful here. (*IBID*, 05/06/1827).

Thomas and Hutchinson wrote to the Committee in Sydney and the Mission Committee in London, describing their plight and explaining their reasons for asking for a rescue boat to come and take them away from Tonga. Journal entries are full of desperate comments about the proposed abandonment of the mission. Thomas spoke of *secretly packing a few things*, and in *a private way we are making preparations to leave this place*, and *we have packed our cooking ware in hope the chief will allow us to take it*. (*ibid*, 28/05/1827; 07/06/1827; 16/06/1827). Thoughts of leaving were intensified by Ata's increasingly strong language. As Sarah Thomas noted in early June 1827:

Today he drove some away from our door who were awaiting to come in [to Sunday worship], telling them he would kill them if they did not go away. (*SARAH THOMAS, DIARY** 11/06/1827).

A vessel to the rescue?

In July 1827, in the midst of all the concerns and anxieties about staying in Tonga or giving up the Mission, Thomas and Hutchinson were greatly surprised when John Weiss, a 28-year-old Sydney Wesleyan Local Preacher, arrived in Tonga to

support the struggling Mission. The Sydney Wesleyans decided that what they called *Tongan Affairs* demanded immediate attention and resolved that Mr Weiss should proceed forthwith to Tonga. (*District Minutes**, 02/05/1827, *Dispatch 57**). So on the 4 of July 1827, aboard the small 40-ton Colonial Sloop, Darling, the Weiss family (John, Elizabeth, and three children under four years of age), sailed into Maria Bay Hihifo and were met by Thomas and Hutchinson. (*THOMAS, JOURNAL**, 04/07/1827).

Weiss had an interesting background prior to his acceptance as a *Local Preacher on Trial* in the Sydney circuit in the mid-1820s. Born John Von Mangerhausen Weiss, son of the Prussian Consul in Liverpool, England, he had joined the Royal Navy, aged 13, and had spent seven years at sea, travelling the world with the Royal Navy and the Merchant Navy, before arriving in Sydney, aboard the Convict Transport Ship *John Bull* in 1821 on which he was serving as a Midshipman. He had been troublesome during the voyage, clashing with the captain (*protesting and threatening* his commanding officer) and became involved with nineteen-year-old Mary Ann Ryan, one of the female Irish convicts, sentenced to transportation to New South Wales for seven years. Weiss said that although he had contact with Methodists in England and attended chapels there on occasions, by the time he arrived in Sydney he had almost *shaken off all fear of God and indulged in open sin*.

A year or so after reaching Sydney he married the Irish convict girl, Mary Ann Ryan, and they had three children before her untimely death in 1825. After Mary Ann's passing, Weiss married Elizabeth Wiltshire Hewitt, a young woman: *of pious parentage, her father having laboured many years in the Society Islands [Tahiti] as a London Missionary.* (*Minutes and Dispatches* NSW District Minutes, 02/01/1827*) .

In Sydney Weiss worked at sea for a time on *Government Colonial Vessels*, and then was appointed *Superintendent of the NSW Government's Small Craft.* (*Dispatches* 55, and 57, February and May 1827*). During this time he reflected on the *heinousness* of his *crimes* and decided to get back to his connection with Methodism. He attended chapel and there met up with John Hutchinson who he said was *an angel from Heaven* for him. Hutchinson invited him to join his Class Meeting and he soon sought recognition as a local Preacher and offered himself for mission work. When it became known that Thomas and Hutchinson were experiencing opposition and physical danger in Tonga, and were wanting to leave the Mission, he offered his services. As the District Meeting in Sydney recorded, Weiss was:

*received on trial [as a Local Preacher] by the NSW District
with an express view to his appointment to Tongataboo
[and was] appointed according ... (MINUTES AND DIS-
PATCHES* NSW MINUTES, DISPATCH 57, 08/05/1827; THOM-
AS, JOURNAL, 04/07/1827).*

That decision was taken in February, but it was not until July that all the necessary preparations were completed. A vessel was chartered, a cargo of 12 months supplies for the Tonga Mission put on board, and Weiss, and his family, set sail to fulfil his Mission appointment to Tonga.

For Thomas and Hutchinson, the arrival of Weiss and family was most disappointing and the rescue vessel, the Darling, was far from what was needed or expected. It was small and cramped and Thomas sent Weiss and family back to Sydney with a request for a larger vessel.

They also put on board the returning vessel, a considerable amount of their personal possessions – 6 boxes, 3 for each family, containing books and clothes, followed by several more boxes. When the Darling departed, Ellen Masterfield (the Hutchinson's servant), and Charles Tindall were on board. And most importantly, the vessel carried a letter to the Committee in Sydney asking for a *larger vessel to visit ... as soon as possible.* (*THOMAS, JOURNAL**, 08/07/1827).

Back in Sydney, Weiss reported to the Sydney District Meeting that:

on his arrival at Tonga, he found the Brethren in a state of alarm and was required by them to return immediately to Sydney. (MINUTES AND DISPATCHES, SPECIAL DISTRICT MEETING, 25, 26 AND 27 SEPTEMBER 1827).*

That did not bring Weiss's connection with Tonga to an end. He was again appointed to Tonga a short time later, accompanying Turner and Cross who were sent to reinforce and save the Mission. Nevertheless, Weiss was once more sent back to Sydney after a few months. The London Committee was severely critical of what they called the *Weiss Case*, especially as it had cost the Missionary Society hundreds of pounds. (*ibid, NSW District Minutes, 31/12/1828; Committee Minutes 15/07/1829*). They were, they said, astonished beyond measure at the *irregular, unauthorized, and extravagant proceedings*. There is much we do not know about this case. What we do know is that Weiss holds the doubtful record of having served the shortest term of any Missionary in the history of the Wesleyan Church in Tonga. (*Outgoing Correspondence*, 15/07/1827; Letter Books*, Morley to Erskine, 13/03/1828*).

Living with uncertainty

After the departure of the Darling, a further time of anxious waiting began. At that time Thomas was confiding to his Small Journal, where he recorded his most private thoughts and hopes about future ministry. Future ministry, Thomas thought, could well could well be somewhere in New South Wales:

If he [the Lord] should open my way in the Colony, may I labour with zeal and humility and faithfulness ... (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 09/06/1827; 08/07/1827).*

During the long months of uncertainty and indecision, however, life at the Mission continued. The Hutchinson's first child was born, and Thomas baptized the baby on Sunday 10th June 1827. Several Tongans were present and witnessed the first Christian baptism of a child in Tonga, and they *were surprised to see the child presented and water put upon his face.* (*ibid*, 10/06/1827). A few days later the Chief at Houma offered to lend the Mission a cow that had just calved and which would be producing an abundance of milk. He wanted property in return for the mission's *use of her a little time*. Thomas refused the offer to lease the cow, saying that a deal could be arranged if the Mission bought the cow outright and so *procure her for our own.* (*ibid*, 25/06/1827). An acceptable arrangement, it seems, did not eventuate.

Other everyday matters had to be taken care of. Ata had been asking, *many times*, if the missionaries would make him *a small cedar box*. In the midst of uncertain times, this was done and Ata *was pleased with it.* (*ibid*, 30/06/1827). Ata also came wanting a gun lock mended and later to borrow some cooking utensils. Thomas noted that he:

wanted to borrow our boiler to make some food in tomorrow called Fycaki [Faikakai] – they are going to have a large catonga [katoanga] tomorrow. (IBID, 04/08/1827).

Ata's wife was ill at that time, so the missionaries were asked for medicines, and Ata asked Thomas for *some flooring boards* to make a seat in a canoe that was being built, a request that Thomas refused. (*IBID*, 09/10/1827; 24/09/1827).

Some teaching was still being done, but in the midst of all the uncertainty, the few who did attend class had become very *unsettled and unmanageable*. And it appears that Sarah Thomas was doing most of the teaching during these troubled times as Thomas noted in his Journal that we *have not had any teaching these two or three days through the illness of Mrs Thomas.* (*ibid*, 14/06/1827; 05/07/1827). Sunday worship, in English, continued as usual, although when a number of people came on one occasion, Thomas was annoyed because they seemed to be there *out of curiosity* and *they behaved very bad, very indecent.* (*IBID*, 30/09/1827).

When Ata learned that the missionaries were making plans to leave, he was astonished and as he said very sorry – he seemed much concerned on the subject. The boys who lived with the Mission families at the Mission compound were not astonished. They were heartbroken. They would *look upon us*, Thomas said, and turn away and burst into tears ... and my own heart is pained. (*ibid*, 05/07/1827). Adding to Thomas's pain was the fact that there were significant individuals who were keen for them to stay. When Uhila, for example, who had told Thomas that at Nuku'alofa they were very keen to have English missionaries, learned of their plans to leave, he told Thomas that although they supported the Tahitians, they would prefer English Missionaries. (*ibid*, 28/06/1827). Thomas already knew that. He also knew that the Tahitian teachers belonged to *the*

Society of Tahiti, the London Missionary Society, who were originally appointed to start missionary activity in Fiji. He had often thought about Nuku'alofa, but would not consider moving in on another Missionary Society's territory.

The Thomas's mental and spiritual agony is fully revealed in his long Journal entry of the 30th October 1827:

We have long ago thought of Noogoaloffa [Nuku'alofa] as a Station but then our way seemed shut up partly on account of the smallness of the place-its dependence upon other places-the danger we should be in in war, and the two Tahitians being there, the last thing is the only obstacle now – 'The Place is Occupied' ... I believe it is the properist (sic) place on Tonga as to many particulars, and as to it being occupied, as that is the only objection, I think it very much weakened for Mr H says that the Society at Tahiti does not recognize them as Missionaries. It does not appear that they were appointed anywhere except to the Feejee Islands ... at present it seems to me that we should so enter into the labours of these men, as to cause their removal, for we could not act together, and there is not room for all, at least I think not. (IBID, 30/10/1827).

Thomas concluded his painful reflection with a heartfelt prayer which revealed his dilemma about leaving or staying:

Oh Lord do thou make plain our path before us and lead us up.

Little did he know that within the short space of three days, that prayer would be answered in a most surprising way, and that he and Sarah would not be leaving Tonga after all.

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Despite the disillusionment there was hope for the future of a Wesleyan mission in Tonga. In the obituary for John Lolohea credit is given to Thomas and Hutchinson's pioneering work at Kolovai. Of Lolohea Thomas said:

he became strongly attached to us, and to the worship of God from the time of our taking up residence here.

He suffered a debilitating illness and died at the young age of 23. His devotion to the lotu as he understood it was unwavering. When his illness became severe, he was:

either carried by the boys, or wheeled in a barrow to and from the Chapel, both to the school and to worship.

He was, Thomas said:

a Tongan Christian, and a chief too, this we view as the first fruits, and the harvest we trust will follow". (MN 1830.

THOMAS OI/06/1829).

Something of an extraordinary manner, Thomas had said, was needed if the mission was to survive. Something of that nature did occur. Although Charles Tindall and the Hutchinsons left, Sarah and John Thomas did not leave. New missionaries, the Turner, Cross and Weiss families arrived unexpectedly in November 1827. Their presence raised the Thomas's spirits and they stayed on and spent their next 30 years as devoted members of the Wesleyan Mission in the Friendly Islands.

=====CHAPTER 5 =====

A New Chairman, New Vision, New Stations

1827-1831

In 1834 the Wesleyan Church throughout the world was given an extraordinary statement by the editor of the Wesleyan Missionary Notices, about the success of Missions in the South Seas. Of the Church in Tonga it was said:

A mission of greater promise, or, we may add, extraordinary success, both as to the rapidity and the extent of its progress, does not, we believe, exist on the face of the earth. (MN VOL. 57 1834).

The Missionary Notices statement is remarkable, especially in the light of the fact that just a few years previously, the mission in Tonga was about to be given up!

The rapid progress and extraordinary success began with the arrival of the Turner, Cross and Weiss families, new missionaries sent to support the Thomas's and secure the future of the Wesleyan cause. Nathaniel Turner, who had experience in mission work in New Zealand, was appointed Chairman and he quickly decided to leave the Thomas's at Hibifo while he, Cross and Weiss, would establish a new Wesleyan Station at Nuku'alofa. With the support of Aleamotu'a, Turner and his colleagues began to build on the successful work of Langi and the Tahitians Hape and Tafeta who had established a congregation and school there, and Aleamotu'a had built a chapel.

At the same time, Taufa'ahau urged the church to make a missionary available for him in Ha'apai. No missionary was available, so Pita Vi was sent to Lifuka to start teaching Taufa'ahau and his people, followed

a little later by John and Sarah Thomas. This led to a major extension of the Wesleyan church's influence.

Taufa'ahau also took an initiative on a visit to Vava'u in mid-1831 which led to Finau adopting the lotu and accepting two Ha'apai teachers to lay the groundwork for the appointment of an English missionary for Ha'afuluha.

Niuatoputapu and Niuafo'ou were not neglected, and Tongan teachers were appointed to what was often referred to as 'the outer islands'.

Note: References in the text that are marked with an asterisk* indicate that the citation is from Records of Methodist Missionary Society, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London AJCP ref. <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-742488699/findingaid>

Reinforcements to the rescue.

The changes associated with what the Missionary Committee called the extraordinary success of the mission in Tonga began on Friday morning the 2nd November 1827. On that day the Sydney based vessel the Industry entered Tongan waters on the way to Maria Bay off western Tongatapu carrying a party of new missionaries. As the Industry made its way towards Hihifo, a canoe and a whaleboat came out to meet her. The whale boat brought Palu [Fatu] Chief of Mu'a, accompanied by his friend the Port au Prince survivor William Singleton. Palu, who had urged Thomas and Hutchinson on more than one occasion to come and live with him at Mu'a, immediately asked the new missionaries, Turner, Cross and Weiss, *to come and reside along with him. (Incoming Correspondence: Letters and Journals. Turner, Journal*, 02/11/1827)*. He was most disappointed when Turner would not even agree to allow one of the new missionaries to settle with him at Mu'a!

The whaleboat that approached the Industry that day carried the two Tahitian teachers, Hape and Tafeta. They also made an earnest request to the new missionaries. As Turner records it, the Tahitians were:

*very solicitous for us to go there [Nuku'alofa], assuring us
that no sooner as an opportunity offered, they should leave
for the place of their destination viz the Feejees. (IBID,
02/11/1827).*

This contact with the Tahitians would have far reaching implications for the Wesleyans in Tonga. Within forty-eight hours of stepping ashore at Hihifo, Turner was in Nuku'alofa worshipping in the chapel with Tupou and the Tahitians and their large congregation. Following the service there were discussions with Aleamotu'a about future Wesleyan and LMS missionary work at Nuku'alofa. (ibid, 04/11/1827)

The arrival of the Industry at Hihifo had caused not a little dismay to Thomas and Hutchinson. When they saw the vessel come into view off Hihifo, they were excited at the prospect of rescue. The Industry, they thought, must be the vessel they had asked for to take them away from Tonga and back to Sydney. So they made their way to the landing place, taking with them a few of their domestic possessions and some mission property, in readiness for embarking as soon as possible. When a boat from the Industry came to anchor at the landing place, Thomas and Hutchinson were shocked to find that the Industry was not

a rescue vessel but had brought three new missionary families, headed by Nathaniel Turner, the new Chairman of the Mission, and colleagues Cross, Weiss and their families. They were support missionaries sent from Port Jackson to strengthen the Wesleyan mission that Sydney Wesleyans thought was about to fail for the second time.

The arrival of Turner and party confounded Thomas and Hutchinson, for as Turner said:

they appeared to have entertained no other plan than that a vessel would have been sent to fetch them away. (IBID, 02/11/1827).

It is true that Hutchinson and Thomas wanted *to be fetched away*. In the months leading up to the arrival of the Industry, Sarah and John Thomas were going through intense mental and spiritual anguish, confused and conflicted over whether to leave Tonga or to stay. John's Small Journal indicates the pain of indecision that they were suffering:

I fear lest the cause of Mission should suffer through giving up this Station, as some may think that if proper persons had been sent it might have succeeded. [I] am unwilling to be called a runaway – a turncoat though I believe it is right – and a fear of being censured and blamed by the friends of Mission for giving it up. I am frequently assailed with some of these thoughts, and they give me a little pain, perhaps it would be best to watch against them to go straight forward and in the path of duty leaving the events to God, who will give strength according to the day of trial and temptation. ... I am troubled at times on account of our leaving this place and giving it up and yet when I sit down and examine the reasons for going I am satisfied it is the will of God ... [but] if there was a prospect of being at all useful to Tonga I would stop. (THOMAS, SMALL JOURNAL 02/10/1827; 06/10/1827).*

As the Thomas's struggled with the decision about staying or going, John was reminded of his early years at the forge in his father's blacksmith workshop. From Hihifo in October 1827 he wrote about the days of trial and temptation under Ata's opposition and threats:

I groan being burdened and I am pressed and perplexed. I feel the heat of the furnace ... it would be an agreeable thing if a vessel has to come to remove us from this place yet it may be best to continue here ... (IBID, 06/10/1827).

The Hutchinson's, on the other hand, felt no such conflict. Hutchinson was suffering ill health and Mary had been physically assaulted on at least one occasion. They had made the definite decision to leave the mission and return to the Colonies as soon as possible. (*ibid*, 10/11/1827). Adding to the surprise that Turner and the new Mission party had come to stay, Thomas was shocked to learn that one of the new Chairman's first tasks was to put him and Hutchinson on trial. The charge was that they were attempting to leave their mission appointment without the permission of the Committee in London. As Thomas said at the time:

Gladly though with some surprise [we] received Mr Turner, Mr Cross and Mr Weiss we soon learned from them that instead of having come for us, they were come to remain on the Island – and try us for our past conduct ... I am truly astonished that our [Sydney] Brethren should have taken such steps respecting us upon such slight grounds as Mr Weiss's Journal and the evidence of Charles Tindale.
(THOMAS, JOURNAL*, 02/11/1827).

Weiss had been to Tonga previously. He had made the short visit in July 1827, and Charles Tindall, one of Lawry's young men who had stayed on for almost three years after the Lawrys departed Tonga, had returned to Sydney.

After the initial meeting the missionaries, both old and new, set off from the beach for the Mission House, Cokevernal, at Kolovai. Their arrival there greatly surprised Mary Hutchinson and Sarah Thomas. As Turner discovered:

the Sisters received us with astonishment, as their partners had done before, for while the brethren had gone down towards the vessel, they had employed themselves in packing some of the remainder of their Property, expecting to go on board immediately. (IBID).

Following the initial conversation the newcomers returned to the Industry for the night.

The next day the new missionaries came on shore and took up residence at Cokevernal. These newcomers would have added to Sarah and Mary's astonishment. The party consisted of no fewer than seventeen people in all: William and Mary Cross, Nathaniel and Anne Turner and their three children, John and Elizabeth Weiss and their three children, two female servants, a Maori girl and two Maori boys. (*Turner, J. G. Pioneer*, p.82). Their arrival, surprising and unexpected as it was, could be said to have saved the Wesleyan Mission. For it was from the moment of their arrival, that significant changes were set in motion

that would ensure the future of the Wesleyan Church in Tonga. (*SARAH THOMAS, JOURNAL*, NOVEMBER 1827*).

The new Chairman begins work

Turner, who had been appointed by the Sydney Wesleyans as Chairman of the New Zealand and Tonga Mission, (Thomas had been Superintendent) quickly got down to business. In discussions on the evening of his first day on Tongan soil, Turner had raised several very important issues. One of those matters which shocked and offended Hutchinson and Thomas was the investigation into charges against them for their decision to abandon their mission appointment. Turner handed Thomas a weighty document from the Mission Committee in Sydney, which set out the series of charges against him and Hutchinson, and which would form the basis of the Trial. The document, Tuner said:

was read over and some preliminary observations made but the Brethren were not prepared to make their defense – by their request the Meeting was adjourned to a more convenient opportunity. (INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE: LETTERS AND JOURNALS TURNER, JOURNAL, 03/II/1827).*

Turner also indicated from the outset that he was not committed to making the Mission settlement at Hihifo his base. He made it clear that *as yet we know not where we shall fix our abode nor what will be best to be done*. There was probably no chance that they would settle at Mu'a. Palu and Singleton had already come on board when the Industry first arrived into Tongan waters, and with what Turner described as broken English, Palu urged the new missionaries to come and reside at Mu'a.

Turner, however, would not commit to making Hihifo or Mu'a his base because Nuku'alofa was clearly a better option. His journal gives more than a clue to his thinking. The day after his arrival he expressed his opinion:

From all that now appeared, it did not appear to be our path of Duty to take up our abode with our brethren at Hihifo; we therefore at once turned our attention towards forming a new Station. Nugualofa [Nuku'alofa] presents itself as the most likely for a successful permanent Station. (IBID, 03/II/1827).

Turner's thinking proved to be prophetic. Nuku'alofa did become a new Wesleyan Station and continues, to this day, as the permanent headquarters of the Wesleyan Church in Tonga!

Turner and Cross, had already met the Tahitian Teachers, who, like Palu and Singleton, had met the Industry when it appeared off Nuku'alofa. So they decided to visit the LMS Station—at the first opportunity. On Sunday 4 November 1827, two days after arriving in Tonga, they went to Nuku'alofa to *see the place, people, etc. etc. for ourselves.* (*ibid**, 03/11/1827). The excursion to Nuku'alofa began at 4am on Sunday morning. The party consisted of Turner, Cross and Weiss, a castaway named Elliott who had been living with the Thomas's at Hihifo, and the two Maori boys. Four hours later they arrived at Nuku'alofa and found that Sunday worship was still in progress. Turner was overwhelmed by what he saw and heard:

When I entered the House which they had erected for Jehovah, and saw about 240 Persons therein, with their teacher supplicating for them, language cannot express what were the feelings of my soul. Nothing I had ever seen of the kind gave me so much satisfaction. All appeared serious, attentive, and respectful. When the Teacher had concluded, we sang a Hymn in our own tongue. (IBID, 04/11/1827).

There was another gathering for worship later that day. Turner wrote about what transpired during the afternoon when they went to the fale lotu – The House of Prayer:

About the same number attended as in the morning. The Tahitians sang a Hymn in their own tongue. Hape read a Chapter in the same and Prayed in the same. He afterwards attempted to speak to the People partly in his own Dialect and partly in Tonga. I was very sorry to find that he could not speak to them better in their own tongue and there is such a difference between the two Dialects that they cannot understand one another ... after he had closed I endeavored to say a little to them through the man who had been interpreting for us to Tubo [Aleamotu'a] We then sang a Hymn in our mother tongue and Bro. Cross prayed and again returned from the place Thanking and Blessing God. (IBID).

Turner's comment that the Tahitians and the Tongans could not understand each other must be taken with caution. He had just arrived in Tonga. He did not yet know the language. It is difficult to accept how he could make judgements

about what the Tongans could, or could not understand when the Tahitians led worship and sang about the faith. A chapel had been erected, and worship and teaching were taking place. Tupou and more than 200 people were meeting regularly for worship, a fact that is hard to reconcile with the statement that they didn't understand was being said. One can assume that Langi, *one of Tupou's men*, who had married a Tahitian wife, had lived in Tahiti and went to school there, would have been a crucial link between the Tahitian and Tongan languages. He had come with the Tahitian teachers and spoke Tahitian, Fijian and English as well as Tongan, his mother tongue. He was an experienced interpreter, having travelled around the Pacific as a translator for Captain Peter Dillon. His role in introducing the faith was surely an important influence in the success of the LMS Tahitian missionaries.

Furthermore, according to Thomas, there were many Tahitians living in Nuku'alofa at the time when Hape and Tafeta were there and they, presumably, would be bi-lingual and would be valuable in sharing information about the faith. (*Thomas, Small Journal** 06/09/1827; *Thomas, Journal**, 14/05/1832). Tupou certainly made it clear that everything he understood about the faith had come from the Tahitian's teachings. Additionally, some Tongans were wanting to be baptized and others, who had obviously been taught by the Tahitians, spoke of being lotu people who had *just begun in Religion*. (*INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE: LETTERS AND JOURNALS TURNER, JOURNAL**, 02/12/1827).

Turner's comment that the Tahitians and Tongans could not understand each other, became accepted as fact and found its way into print in Sarah Farmer's book on Tonga in 1855 and in the biography that Turner's son published about his father in 1872. (*Farmer, p.167*; *Turner, J. G., p.93*). The Tahitians missionaries, however, and their Tongan supporters, including Tupou, deserve much more credit for the successful establishment of a Christian community at Nuku'alofa. Despite Turner's comments, the editors of the Wesleyan Magazine did not want credit taken away from the Tahitians. When preparing Turner's Journal extracts for publication, they edited out his comments about lack of understanding, and also removed another of Turner's remarks, which was that the Tahitians were *very inadequate to the work that the Lord is beginning in this place*. (*IBID, EDITORS MARKS ON TURNER'S JOURNAL* 04-05/11/1827*).

Clearing the way to create a new Station at Nuku'alofa

After the morning service on Sunday the 4th November, Turner and party accompanied Hape, the principle (sic) teacher, to his house where they spent some time until a message came that Tupou wanted to see them. Turner had met Tupou [Aleamotu'a] about whom we had heard such pleasing accounts, at the Chapel a little earlier that morning and was impressed by the Chief, the eiki lahi, as he called him, who was:

a fine stout man in appearance, apparently about 40 years of age, very modest and unassuming in his manners and I conceive Him to be one who thinks and deliberates closely before he acts in matters of importance. (IBID).

At the Chief's house, matters of importance were quickly on the agenda. Turner had heard about Langi and asked that he be called to act as a translator. He would be useful, Turner thought, because he had been to the colony [Sydney] and understands a little English. But Langi could not be found, so an Englishman who had run away from his ship and has been residing amongst them more than three years was called to do the work of interpreter. (ibid). Turner and Tupou then spent a good deal of conversation and this resulted in some important agreements. Turner asked Tupou if he wanted European Missionaries to live amongst his people. Tupou said he did, and that he had wanted that long ago. With an eye to the future, Turner asked if, once he and the other new missionaries had learned the language, Tupou would be happy to let them go to other tribes [Villages and Islands?] to instruct them. Tupou replied that he would be perfectly willing:

and that it would be very good so to do, for the land was very dark and he wanted them all to turn to the lotu. (IBID).

Turner then asked about accommodation, and Tupou said:

that the House in which we then were which was the largest and best he had was then at our service, and what more we wanted should be provided as soon as practicable. (IBID).

Turner next raised a very pressing practical matter. He wanted to know if Tupou would assist in getting the new missionaries property off the Industry and on to shore. Tupou responded that he had a large canoe which he would launch to bring all our Stores at once.

The LMS Tahitian problem, a vital issue, came in for some serious discussion. Thomas and Hutchinson at Hihifo had, for many months, looked at Nuku'alofa as a possible better location than Hihifo for the Mission. There was severe opposition from Ata at Hihifo and few attended worship, whereas at Nuku'alofa there was a lively worshipping congregation of several hundred people, actively supported by Tupou. Turner was seeing for himself the successful work being done at Nuku'alofa under the leadership of Tupou and the Tahitians. He knew that *there appeared an obstacle in the way viz. it being already occupied by two Teachers from Tahiti*. But he had already spoken with them and they were keen for him to come to Nuku'alofa. That would allow them to proceed to Fiji which was their original appointment and destination.

In conversations with Tupou, Turner wanted to be sure that the Tahitians would not be *injured* by the Wesleyans coming to settle with them. He checked whether what he had been told was true, that Tupou had said he would treat the Tahitians kindly if the Wesleyan wanted to establish their Mission in Nuku'alofa. Tupou responded to the question with feeling: *Why should I treat them ill? Is it not from them that I have learned all I do know.* Tupou went on to say, however, that:

If we should come to live with him it would be very good for them [Tahitians] to remain also, but that if they wished to go to the Fejees to which place they were appointed, they were at liberty to go when an opportunity offered. (IBID).

As the successful wide-ranging conversation with Tupou concluded, Turner, Cross and Weiss said that they wished to stay the night at Nuku'alofa, and on the morrow have further discussions about what had been agreed. The Chief provided them with accommodation, *a New House*, and an evening meal: *a pig baked with yams and plantains*. After the meal they settled for the night in their *lodgings* and, after singing a hymn and offering a prayer they laid down to rest. Their sleeping arrangements were rather primitive but quite acceptable: a large sofa or rough bedstead made by the Tahitians ... a number of Matapules slept in the same house with us. All was peace and quietness. (ibid* 04/11/1827). So ended an unforgettable day: inspiring worship with the Tahitians, lunch and supper of roast pig, yams bananas and coconuts, a walk around *the settlement* and productive discussions with Tupou.

Early next morning Turner and his brother missionaries, Cross and Weiss, made an historic decision:

*after seriously conversing together for a time, we concluded
that it would be the best for us to set ourselves down at
Nugoalofa [Nuku'alofa] with Tubo. [Tupou Aleamotu'a]
(IBID, 05/11/18276)*

The conversation with Tupou the previous day had, in fact, cleared the way for Turner, Cross and Weiss to establish a new Wesleyan Mission Station at Nuku'alofa. Turner spelled out the details for this momentous decision in his Journal. The main elements included that the people were prepared to be taught, Tupou and his people wanted European Missionaries to instruct them, and they wished to have missionaries who could provide *something for them to read*. Most importantly, Turner said, the Tahitians were keen for them to come so that they could proceed to their appointment in Fiji. (IBID)

Geographically and strategically, Nuku'alofa appeared to Turner to be a most central and important location for access to other populous towns and villages, and was *the best anchorage ground for Vessels and the best place by far for landing Property*. Significantly, although the Tahitians were *good and useful men*, Turner still believed that they were very inadequate to the work that the Lord is beginning in this place. So, for these reasons, Turner, Cross and Weiss and their families decided, in good conscience, to immediately join with Tupou and continue the work that the Tahitians had begun. Thomas and Hutchinson would be left at Hihifo, to remain in a very difficult situation with Ata. The significance of these decisions, for the future history of the Church, cannot be over-emphasized.

Setting up in Nuku'alofa

It only took five days in early November 1827 for changes to get under way. Turner and the reinforcement party had arrived at Hihifo on Friday 2nd November 1827, worshipped at Nuku'alofa with Tupou and the Tahitians on Sunday 4th November, and by Tuesday the 6th November the three new missionary families and their goods and supplies landed at Nuku'alofa and began setting up the new station. It had taken the new Chairman a little more than a day to make a decision that had plagued Thomas and Hutchinson for more than twelve months! It was perhaps with some justification, however, that Thomas felt a little peeved about the rapid decision to settle on Nuku'alofa:

*this seems to me rather hasty ... all was hurry so that there
was scarcely time for anything, no not for prayer. (THOMAS,
JOURNAL* 05/11/1827).*

Tuesday the 6th of November was a stormy morning and the landing at Nuku'alofa was *very unpleasant* with everyone getting *a good wetting*. They took shelter in a Canoe House until the showers were over and then made their way to the house that Tupou had provided for them, a basic Tongan construction compared with the European style Mission House at Hihifo. No sooner had they arrived at the house than a welcoming meal was brought: *a baked hog with Yams and Bananas and Coco Nuts*. And from what Thomas had heard, the establishment of the new Station was *getting on well*. (*THOMAS, JOURNAL, 09/11/1827*).

At Nuku'alofa the new Wesleyan Mission's first Sunday was somewhat low key, and yet full of hope:

*At 11 am on Sunday 11th November Brother Cross preached
to us under a tree on the outside of our fence near the Chief's
House. Many natives were present and were very attentive
tho[ugh] not a word was understood by them. The text was
All things shall work together for good to them that love God
....[We] feel encouraged to hope that I shall soon be able to
say a little to the people in their own tongue. Have collected
some good sentences today for which I am thankful ...
(INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE: LETTERS AND JOURNALS,
TURNER, JOURNAL*, 11/11/1827).*

Church and State in Conflict

Despite the encouraging signs, there was a bitter sweet beginning for the new Mission Station. Tupou and his lotu Chiefs were keen supporters but many other Tongatapu Chiefs were bitterly opposed to the lotu and did not appreciate the presence of the European newcomers who had joined Tupou. During the first days of residence at Nuku'alofa, however, Turner and the others of the mission party were pre-occupied with practical matters – setting up home, building a store house for trade goods and getting a few words and phrases of the language. At the same time, however, the undercurrent of opposition from some of the leading Tongatapu Chiefs was obvious enough. Tupou Aleamotu'a now had a European mission party living and working with him, and this was seen as changing the political balance of power. Within his first week on the new Station, Turner was writing about some of the implications of Tupou's lotu decisions and activities:

Early this morning several of the principal Chiefs from different parts of the Island with their Matabooles [Matapules] or principal men arrived here. The object of their coming was if possible, to put stop to the Lotu or Religion of this place. They assembled in the enclosure of the Hotuas or Gods of Tonga which place has been deserted by our Chief and people in general. They sent for Tubo [Aleamotu'a] who attended with the other principal men of his tribe. (IBID, 05/11/1827).

Turner and Cross were interested to witness the gathering of chiefs and went to the place of meeting and found them sitting in rings within the sacred enclosure, under a large spreading tree. Tupou, they found, had been:

taken into the Spirit Houses, there to use their influence with him to return to his heathen customs and we understand entreated their gods they used entreaties and threats with him but we believe in vain. (IBID).

Turner and Cross learned that Uhila could not understand why the missionaries would come to the hostile gathering. So they spoke to Uhila and told him:

*that we had come to pay our respects to the strangers [Tongatapu Chiefs] but he advised us to return saying Why should we come to see them as they had come with no good intentions towards us. During the Kava [Cava] drinking after we were gone, much strong language we hear was used on both sides, but finding our Chief and leading Men determined to stand by and prosecute the work they had begun the party broke up and the leading Man of our opposition went away in a great rage, expressing his determination to put a stop to this Religion some way or other. (IBID, *, 15/II/1827).*

Two days later there was further disturbing news, including rumors of possible violence:

Today we have heard some serious reports concerning the intentions of our enemies. They now say that they cannot hurt Tubo, but they will put a stop to the lotu by putting an end to us. Report says that two Frenchmen are at the bottom of all this. These are runaways from the French Discovery Ship that was here some time ago. They are now residing with a powerful Chief in the interior. They endeavor to persuade this Chief and others with whom they have acquaintance that if they suffer us to remain and our Religion to spread, by and by the English will come and take their Country from them. (IBID, 17/II/1827).

Turner took a close interest in the political/religious struggle that was taking place around him and the mission families. He visited Tupou and found him poorly in body and mind because of the pressure and stress of the opposition from the hostile Tongatapu chiefs. He discovered that he was considering a fairly radical solution to the unrest. The Chief told Turner that:

If they [the rival Chiefs] won't suffer him to follow the Lotu quietly He will go to the Amoas [Samoa], where he has many friends that want the lotu and that he will take us with him. (IBID).

In this unsettled and potentially violent situation, distressing rumors continued:

Some say spies will be set tomorrow and that all who go to chapel tomorrow will be killed immediately. Some say Tubo

[Tupou] has given in and that He will no more attend but I hope, believe, otherwise. (IBID 18/11/1827).

Tupou, in fact, did not attend chapel the next Sunday. He said he was sick, but advised that *we must all go* [to chapel]. Very few attended worship that day. Turner believed it was because of the violent threats from the enemies of the lotu. He also believed that Tupou's illness was because he was afraid. He did not know what to do, whether *to give up or persevere and abide the consequences*. For Turner and the mission party who were attempting to establish the new Station, it was *a time of serious trial*. (IBID).

Thursday the 29th November saw another *great meeting* focused on resolving two contentious issues: firstly, whether to appoint Tupou as Tu'i Kanokupolu to stabilize the political situation and secondly, how to put a stop to the *lotu*. (*ibid, 22/11/1827*.) Turner knew something of violence and threats of violence. In New Zealand on more than one occasion he was assaulted and once was seriously clubbed and rendered unconscious and later presumed to be dead. (*Turner, J.G., Pioneer, pp.57, 61, 73*). Jane Turner, too, had suffered serious threats of violence. And yet in Tonga, he attended a meeting, in the midst of turmoil and threats and *sat with them for some time*. Questions were put to him about *politics etc* but he avoided the controversy by saying that he was *a Stranger in their Country and consequently to their ways I would rather say nothing*, the implication being that the Chiefs would have to solve their problems among themselves. (*Incoming Correspondence: Letters and Journals Turner, Journal*, 29/11/1827*). Eventually Tu-bou grew angry and left the Ring, because some opposed the line of conduct he recommended. (*ibid*). Later that evening matters had reached a crisis and Tupou ordered his two large Fijian Canoes to be launched immediately, saying that :

He with all his family, and those who love religion would leave the island in the morning and sail for the Navigators [Samoa] or Fejee [Fiji] Islands where they might worship unmolested. (IBID)

The next morning the large canoes were not put to sea but were held back *until the decision of the Chiefs was known.* (IBID)

Aleamotua's concessions to the Tongatapu Chiefs

The anxious wait for the decisions of the Chiefs was over when a compromise was reached and Tupou informed Turner and the rest of the mission party that:

for the present he had yielded to his Enemies, and from this time the Lotu-Religion was to be stopped, but that we must not be afraid, for nothing would come to injure us ... [that he would] go to Hihifo, where the powerful chiefs had assembled, to consult about the business. (IBID).

Some idea of the seriousness of the situation, especially the threats of violence, is gauged by Tupou's action as he prepared to leave Nuku'alofa for Hihifo. In effect he put the missionaries into home detention. He left a man *in charge of our Gate and wished us not to leave the yard during his absence.* (IBID, 30/11/1827)

Several friendly chiefs expressed support for Tupou, telling him not to be afraid, and assured him that *they would stand by him.* Turner went to see him to ascertain *his real intentions,* but the Chief simply said that he *could tell me nothing until he returned* [from Hihifo.] (*ibid, 30/11/1827*). The situation remained politically threatening and on Sunday 2nd December Tupou asked the new missionaries to worship quietly:

He wished us [Turner said] not to go to the chapel today, but to have worship in our own House or yard, assigning as a reason that some of the Chiefs were very angry and he did not wish to provoke them further until the business they had on hand is settled, which will be settled in another week and then the lotu will go on as before. (IBID, 02/12/1827).

A conversation that followed showed how firmly some of the Chiefs and people at Nuku'alofa were devoted to the lotu as they had come to understand it from the teaching, worship and leadership of Tupou and the Tahitians Hape and Tafeta. Representatives came to Turner from *Uhila and Ulakai and others,* saying:

that they wished to go to the lotu in the chapel as before, and wished to know if it was not right so to do, saying that the House was built for Jehovah but ours was not, and that Tubo [Tupou] was frightened and further, that he now

thought more about becoming a King as they called it than he did about the Religion. (IBID).

Cross and Weiss went with Turner to meet with the lotu Chiefs and people to discuss their powerful message of support in the face of the opposition and threats of violence. At the meeting some challenging questions were put to the missionaries. They were asked if they were afraid to die for the lotu. The loyal Tongans spoke like martyrs, telling Turner that they were *just begun in Religion and they were not afraid, but we had been bred up in it, and why should we be afraid.* Turner's response to this challenge was to say that they, the missionaries, were not afraid for their lives, but:

they were afraid of acting in any way that might prevent Religion from spreading amongst them and as this was a very critical time our refusing to comply with the Chief's [Tupou's] request might enrage our opposers and frustrate our great object amongst them. (IBID).

Turner's reasoning prevailed and the assembled 'loyalists' agreed to respect Tupou's wishes that we not go to the chapel for worship. The missionaries said that they would worship at home, as Tupou suggested, at least for the time being until things are settled. And so, on that Sunday, they worshipped under a large tree in their own house yard, and as Turner tells it:

For the first time sang two verses of a Hymn in the Tonga language to the Old Hundredth tune. The natives appeared much pleased and said they understood the words and that it was like aubito – very good or good exceedingly. (IBID).

Three days later things did become settled, and Turner and Cross set off for Hihifo in a large sailing canoe, to witness Tupou being installed as Tu'i Kanokupolu. Before the ceremony, Turner and Cross had some conversation with Tupou and learned that although some old chiefs wanted a traditional strangling of four or five men ... and a number of boys fingers cut off – finger amputations, according to ancient custom, Tupou would *by no means submit to it. (ibid, 05/12/1827; 07/12/1827)*. Turner admitted that he did not yet fully grasp the full significance of the ceremony at Hihifo. Nevertheless, he did find it, he said, *solemn and to me majestic*. He did understand, he believed, that the office of Tu'i Kanokupolu:

obliges the Individual thus created to maintain most of the ancient superstitions of the Land and this it is certain was the principal thing which the Chiefs who oppose our Religion had in view in creating Tubo [Tupou] to this office at this time. (IBID, 07/12/1827).

Things were settled in some way following the installation ceremony. Tupou was now Tu'i Kanokupolu, but the price he paid was an agreement to give up the lotu, and so friendly lotu chiefs advised Turner that it would be best to:

absent ourselves from the House erected for the honour of our God [the Chapel] and to confine ourselves to our own habitations in our acts of religious worship. (IBID, 16/12/1827).

Turner agreed but noted that, although this was difficult, still it may be for the best.

When Tupou had returned from the installation ceremonies at Hihifo he met with the missionaries at Nuku'alofa, and seemed *friendly, but on the subject of Religion [they] could not get him to speak*. Clearly, he was conflicted. He had agreed to give up the *lotu* which was demanded by opposing chiefs as a requirement for receiving the Tu'i Kanokupolu title and its responsibilities. But at heart, Turner believed, he was still a lotu man. (*ibid**, 23/12/1827). He had committed to the religion of Christ in May 1826. His acceptance of Religion (lotu) was based on what he had learned from various sources:

partly by means of foreigners who were here, and especially from one of his own men named Langi, who about that time returned from Tahiti in company with two teachers who were appointed to the Feejees. (MN, 1846, THOMAS TO SECRETARIES 16/03/1846).*

Prelude to Tupou's decision

Tupou had been opposed by many of the Tongatapu chiefs for some time before Turner and the mission party reinforcements decided to make Nuku'alofa their base in November 1827. A month or so before they arrived, Thomas at Hihifo was aware of the pressure on Tupou at Nuku'alofa:

We have heard the threatening against him [Tupou] but we have lived to see that it has not taken place ... he continues firm and he has two more respectable chiefs who are on his side, we begin to see that it is not likely that the other chiefs will attempt to kill them, they respect them too much, neither will they prevent them worshipping, and there is no reason to expect a war. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 30/10/1827).*

Just a week or so before Turner and the Mission party settled in Nuku'alofa, Thomas was still hearing about opposition to Tupou and the lotu:

Several great chiefs have been to see Toobo [Tupou] the last two days to require him to give over praying, if he would, well if not violence would be done. It is said they are stopping at Noogoaloffa [Nuku'alofa] to wait to see tomorrow, whether Toobo [Tupou] will give it up. (IBID, 17/11/1827).

It is true that Tupou finally yielded to give up the *Lotoo* [lotu] and to be installed as the Tooicanacabolo [Tu'i Kanokupolu], but all was not lost. The Chief gave the missionaries a ray of hope for the future. Outwardly he had given up the faith. Inwardly he said he would continue to pray. The missionaries sympathized with him in this difficult and conflicting situation:

Poor Toobo [Tupou] purposes Lotooing in the bush and he says he prays in his heart to God now, he seems to say that if he had not given up, the Tonga people would have killed the Papalangi, or Missionaries, poor Toobo cannot attend [worship services] but he goes into the bush to pray...he could not stand against them all. (IBID, 1/12/1827; 2/12/1827; 16/12/1827).

Tupou's return to public worship

Tupou worshipped privately for many months but in late March of 1828, William Cross had a pleasing conversation with him during which the Chief promised to go again to chapel next Sabbath. Explaining his absence at public worship Cross added:

*He has been kept away nearly six months, by the opposition
of those who are unfriendly to our cause. (MN 1830, p.130;
CROSS, JOURNAL, 16/03/1828).*

True to his word, Tupou attended chapel the next Sabbath and it was a day to be remembered. In preparation for his return to public worship, and perhaps to provide a clear symbol of a fresh start, he *ordered the roads cleared previous to the Sabbath*. In conversation with Turner, Cross and Thomas, he said that *he was determined to make another start, and openly and publicly to worship the Lord*. And so it was that on the first Sabbath in June 1828, Tupou and *many of his Matapules, or attendants, who absented themselves with him, accompanied him to the House of God*. Tupou's brave action to come out, openly, in support of the lotu, ensured the present success and the future permanency of the Wesleyan Mission Station at Nuku'alofa. That was Thomas's prayer at the time, that the new start would be lasting and important. And so it proved to be. (*THOMAS, JOURNAL, 26/05/1828; 01/06/1828; MN, SEPTEMBER 1829; CROSS, 27/03/1828*).

Thomas and Hutchinson on Trial

In the midst of the troubled political and religious conflict, a matter of deep personal anxiety hung over Thomas and Hutchinson. That issue was their trial, ordered by the Sydney Wesleyans, because of their decision to give up the Tonga Mission at Hihifo. It certainly caused Thomas great mental and spiritual pain, and it would be more than a year before that pain would be removed.

The background to the ‘trial’ was that Thomas and Hutchinson had packed up some of the mission property and their personal belongings and sent them back to Sydney, and had written to the Wesleyans at Port Jackson, asking that a vessel be sent to remove them from Tonga. They believed that their situation at Hihifo with Ata was alarming and that there were times when their lives were in danger. When the Sydney Wesleyans received the request for a rescue vessel, they convened a special meeting to deal with what they called *the painful business*, spending three days trying to decide what to do. Their opinion, finally, was unsympathetic towards their Tongan colleagues. They were, in fact:

fully convinced that the danger was little more than imaginary, and that if any did in fact exist, it had been occasioned by the brethren's gross imprudence. (INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE MANSFIELD TO COMMITTEE, 21/09/1827).*

The list of charges against Thomas and Hutchinson, drawn up by the Sydney Wesleyan Committee, ran to many pages and focused on whether the alleged danger was real or imaginary and whether Thomas and Hutchinson were imprudent – lacking in wisdom, unwise – in their dealings with Ata. The document drew largely from information given to them by Charles Tindall, Thomas Wright and John Weiss.

The trial conducted by Turner must have caused him some personal conflicts. He had previously left his posting in New Zealand without the permission of the London Committee and was put on trial in Sydney for deserting his post. He was cleared of blame, but as he said at the time, the trial *wounded me to the very soul.* (*Turner, J.G. p.79*). His own experience obviously coloured his thinking when dealing with Thomas and Hutchinson and allowed him to conduct the trial with kindness and understanding.

The trial focused, first of all, on whether Thomas and Hutchinson had been unwise, *imprudent*, in their dealings with their Chief, Ata. Conflict had arisen over several issues: the thatching of the Mission House roof, disagreement over

two silver candlesticks, and arguments over trading for yams and pigs. Further, the trial investigated whether Thomas and Hutchinson were actually faced with serious threats and whether their lives were really in danger. Finally, an investigation was made into the alleged strained relationship between Thomas and Hutchinson.

The trial ran over four days (3rd, 5th, 27th and 28th of November, 1827) and had long term implications for the history of the Wesleyan Church in Tonga. While awaiting the trial Thomas confided to his Journal, how much the affair was affecting him, by what he regarded as undeserved, unfair and unwarranted treatment:

The last 10 days I have suffered a great deal in my mind, the business of the [Sydney] District Meeting towards me – Oh how painful. I have for the last 16 months been devoting my time and power in the good cause have laboured hard and suffered much and now instead of a word of encouragement I am thought to be unfit for a Mission, and the copy sent home [to London] recommended that I be expelled from the connexion [expelled from ordained ministry] and yet I am not charged of any breach of any instructions of the Committee ... [It] is enough to sink me to the grave ... (THOMAS SMALL JOURNAL, 10/11/1827).*

Turner made it clear that the trial was a difficult assignment, and in dealing with his brother ministers he adopted a caring and compassionate approach:

The circumstances addressed by the Brethren [Thomas and Hutchinson] in their defense caused us to feel much for them, and made considerably in their favour ... Never did I attend a Meeting of the kind in which more of kindness and good feeling of any kind were manifested. Not a harsh word or unkind feeling of any kind was uttered or manifested The Brethren will now continue to work until the mind of the [London] Committee is known. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 28/11/1827).*

Although Turner, Cross and Weiss concluded that Hutchinson and Thomas had acted wrongly in deciding to leave their appointment, they hesitated to recommend punishment. Their decision was not:

to pass any censure upon them but decided to send a full account to the Committee in London, and leave it to that Committee to determine the matter, recommending them [Hutchinson and Thomas] to the mercy of the Committee.

*(INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE: LETTERS AND JOURNALS,
TURNER JOURNAL 28/II/1827).*

Thomas and Hutchinson would have to wait to see what censure, if any, would come from London. During this worrying time, Thomas used an image of ships, sailors and the ocean to describe how he was being overwhelmed with work and anxiety. He felt as if he was caught in a fierce storm at sea:

*Like a ship carrying too much canvas in a gale of wind – she
dashes through it but often takes in a heavy sea which
sweeps her decks and perhaps takes some men overboard.*

(THOMAS, SMALL JOURNAL 23/II/1827).*

When the decision of the London Committee finally arrived in Tonga (it took many months), the Sydney District Meeting that had brought the charges were severely reprimanded for the way in which they had handled the Tonga issues. The London Committee was *astonished beyond measure at hearing these things*. The Sydney brethren had acted *without orders from home*, and their actions were described as irregular, *unauthorized and extravagant*. Sending Turner, Cross and Weiss, and their families to Tonga had cost the mission £300 and Turner and *those who are implicated in the business*, were personally held responsible for that expenditure, although the Committee later changed their mind and settled the Tonga Mission debt. (*INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE*; MINUTES AND DISPATCHES*; MORLEY TO ERSKINE, 12/Q3/1828*)

. When Thomas learned of the severe letter from London, he felt justified and noted with obvious relief, that he was *not blamed by the Committee* and that the matter had been settled:

*The affair which gave me so much pain in November 1827
viz The Minutes of the District Meeting at Sydney and the
conduct of my warm mistaken brothers towards me so now I
suppose nearly at an end intelligence has been received from
the Committee in which they copy their decided disapproba-
tion the steps the brethren took in coming down in such a
way and at so heavy an expense. (THOMAS, SMALL JOURNAL,
04/05/1829)

Working on the alphabet and orthography

Despite all the political and religious unrest, the trial of Thomas and Hutchinson, and the work required in setting up a new Mission Station, Turner was able to provide strong leadership which saw a great advance in literacy for the Tongan people. Within a few months of his arrival, he organized the formation of a fixed orthography and alphabet and set in motion a plan to produce the first book in the Tongan language. During the fortnight leading up to Christmas 1827, he chaired meetings that led to these life changing decisions for Tonga and for the infant Wesleyan Church.

Nathaniel Turner's four years of experience in New Zealand working on Maori language with missionaries of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) helped him, Thomas believed, in standardizing the Tongan language's written form. Mariner was also very helpful with his several thousand word vocabulary and associated grammar:

*We found Mariner's work of great service to us in this part
of the world-his work does him great credit – it is of use
even to this day as it is the only Vocabulary English and
Tongan that we have. (THOMAS, JOURNAL*, 06/06/1848)*

Thomas had developed his own approach to language based on Mariner, as did George Lilley, one of Lawry's young men. Captain Cook and Labillardiere had also produced Vocabularies, although Mariner found there were many mistakes in their work. (*Mariner Vol. 2, Appendix, p.xxi*). William Brown, ex Port au Prince, had been teaching some reading and writing at Ha'apai and Vava'u, probably based on his own version of the alphabet and orthography. Thomas had already made a start in translating, using Mariner and with some help from Tama Nau, Lilley's work, and the 'boys' from his Hihifo school.

Early on the morning of December 12th 1827 Turner, Cross and Weiss met to decide on standardizing the language, based on Mariner but with various modifications. Mariner had spelled words such as bow down as *boono*. The team's version was *bunou*. Similarly, Mariner spelled the word for god or spirit as *hootooa* whereas the translation team's version was *Hotua* (1828) and then *Otua* (1830). Mariner's *facca-fe-tai* became *fakafetai* (*to be thankful*). There were, nevertheless, hundreds of Mariner's words that did not need any changes and went straight into First Lessons and the First Book, and have progressed through the years to the present day. In the prayers in the First Lessons of 1828 some of the

words were taken directly from Mariner. In *Lesone Lautohi 4*, [Reading Lesson no.4] we find *afi, foha, hala, hifo, mooni, nima, nofo, ofa, tafoki*. Words that the translation team changed included Mariner's langi, which was changed to lagi, malingi changed to maligi, and tangata changed to tagata. Many years later the spelling reverted to Mariner's original in a number of cases such as langi and tangata. Nevertheless, Turner, Thomas and Cross, with Mariner's assistance, created a form of spelling the language which has remained substantially unaltered for 200 years.

At the time, Turner was aware that something significant, historic he believed, was being achieved:

Nothing of the kind has been done (that we know of) save the system adopted by Mariner in his Grammar appended to his History of the Tonga Isles. We have thought well to differ from the orthography he has adopted. (INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE: LETTERS AND JOURNALS, TURNER, JOURNAL, 12/12/1827).*

The critical moment is captured in the minutes of the District Meeting of Boxing Day 1827, where these words are recorded:

A plan for the orthography of the Tonga language having been laid before the meeting and being unanimously approved of Resolved that it be forthwith adopted ... (IBID).

Some changes to Mariner's words have lasted over the years, others have not. Where Mariner used a sound written as oo, Turner Cross and Thomas proposed just the single letter u. Thus, Mariner's lotoo became lotu and his taboo and *fonnooa* became tabu and fonua. However, where Mariner and Martin had a consonant that they called ng, Turner, Cross and Thomas used a simple g, which, years later, was changed back to Mariner's form.

Mariner's role in the development of the written and printed form of the language cannot be overstated. He had been a resident of Tonga for nearly four years after the Port au Prince massacre. As an adopted son of Finau Ulukalala and Mafi Hape, he absorbed *the more excellent and refined form of the language*. His vocabulary reflects his family connection with the chiefs and it was Mariner, Toki Ukamea, through Turner, Thomas and Cross's work, who left a permanent mark on the language. He was the one, who with Dr Martin, introduced from ancient Tongan, the word lotoo [lotu], defined as *adoration, invocation, to invoke, to pray*. Thomas and the missionaries who followed him, used this word for Christianity, praying, prayer and worship, and as a general term for religion. (*Mariner, Vol 2, Appendix p.lxxvi*). Once introduced into manuscript and printed books, and the spoken word, it has remained in Tongan usage ever since.

Establishing a Wesleyan School in Nukualofa

The LMS Missionary teachers Hape and Tafeta had been running a school in Nuku'alofa for some twelve months before Turner, Cross and Weiss arrived. They had been teaching in Tahitian, so it has been said, using their chapel as a schoolhouse. When the prominent LMS missionary, Rev. John Williams, visited Tonga in 1832, he provided perhaps the only description of the first chapel/school house at Nuku'alofa although by the time he called, the Wesleyans were conducting worship and school classes in it. Williams speaks favorably about what he saw there at the school:

we went in the morning with Mr Turner to the native School It was held in the Chapel erected by Hape and Davida ... The Building was plastered with lime made from coral, but much of it has broken away to make the place larger to admit the increasing numbers who wish to attend religious instructions. The number of scholars were very considerable their progress also in reading and writing was very creditable both to themselves and their teachers. Many of the young females wrote remarkably well and we were informed they employed much of their time in copying those portions of the Scriptures translated by the missionaries into their own language. (WILLIAMS, SAMOAN JOURNALS, 26/06/1830, P.44-45).

Because the alphabet and orthography had been settled, and as there was a chapel/schoolhouse already in existence, Turner and Cross had been able to quickly establish the Wesleyan school. Their approach differed from what the Thomas's had introduced at Hihifo where he and Sarah were teaching English. The school at the new Wesleyan Station would teach in the vernacular, as Cross indicated to the Secretaries in London:

This morning (17th March 1828) we commenced a school at this station with the intention of teaching both adults and children to read their own language. (MN 1829, CROSS, JOURNAL, 1703/1828).

Students responded well. The 50 who attended on the first day showed a great desire to learn and within a short time the little LMS Chapel became crowded with 150 pupils which led to the modifications referred to by John Williams. (*MOYLE, SAMOAN JOURNAL OF JOHN WILLIAMS, P.45*).

Teaching reading and writing had its complications. Students had first to be taught the alphabet from printed cards, then learn how to express what they had learned in written form. Turner pointed out some of the difficulties to his superiors in London:

*we first teach them the printed characters [from Alphabet cards] then having nothing in print for them to read, we are under the necessity of teaching them the written characters – this makes it a time before they are able to read. (INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE: * LETTERS AND JOURNALS, TURNER TO SECRETARIES, 31/03/1830).*

The written characters then appeared as words and sentences in dozens of little manuscript books, used in the classroom to teach reading and writing. Eager students sought help outside the classroom. Visiting island trader, Captain Samuel Henry of Tahiti commented that:

At Nuku'alofa Messrs Turner and Cross have as much as they can attend to. The natives do not regard the regular school hours but they are always after the missionaries with slates and books, to receive instruction. (MN, JUNE 1829, CAPT. SAMUEL HENRY, 10/03/1829).

Progress with reading and writing, regardless of the difficulties, was rapid. A number of students who had mastered the art, became teachers of others. (*ibid*). They became, in effect, assistants to the missionaries in the classroom. Cross records the historic development when these first Tongan teachers were set to work:

Several of our pupils have made such progress that we are enabled to employ them as teachers: these are now able to spell words of five and six syllables, and are beginning to read the written hymns, prayers, and lessons from the Scriptures. (MN SEPT 1829; CROSS, JOURNAL 21/09/1829).

Preparing reading material

Advanced pupils were also able to assist the missionaries in other ways. Turner and Cross were helped by the daughter of one of the Chief's who had made large amounts of copy for them. She had produced:

above forty chapters of the New Testament. That they are thus able and thus disposed to assist us. I sincerely praise the Lord, who has not only sent us forth, but condescends to work with us, and to confirm the word preached. (IBID 20/07/1830.).

The Committee in London had first-hand knowledge of what was being achieved when, on one occasion, Turner enclosed an extra sheet with his Journal extracts which provided samples of the writing of two students. One of the samples was written by *Mary the wife of our Chief Tubou*. The other was by *William, a Youth who has been my assistant in the language for more than two years.* (*ibid*). Both samples showed a beautifully neat hand.

The thirst for books gave added impetus to the request for a printing press for Tonga and when it arrived in 1831 a literary revolution began in earnest. But until a press arrived, copies of reading material still had to be made by hand, and the missionaries had to spend long hours *to write out sufficient lesson papers*. This is where Anne Turner devised a simple way to meet the demand. She rarely gets a mention in published literature or in diaries and journals, but she was involved in something new and of great value at the Nuku'alofa school. With the Cross's, she developed what was called a manuscript Loan Library. Her method in preparing the little manuscript library books was to:

select the smartest youths, teach them to write a legible hand, then sent them to work to prepare copies. The young scribes, as they were called, were given the task of preparing books (TURNER, J.G. PIONEER, PIO4).

As more and more students learned to read and thirsted for knowledge, the young scribes were kept busy preparing reading material which contained some selections of biblical knowledge *with words of exhortation and application.* (*ibid*). One of the very effective scribes was a young Maori boy who the Turners brought with them from New Zealand. He had learned to write while they were there and now in Tonga, he *proved a most valuable scribe*, which helped large numbers to learn to read and write. (*ibid*). Even after the printed books (First Lessons 1828 and A First Book 1830) were available, the handwritten books were still popular as they contained extracts from the printed works. As Anne said of her lending library, *one copy of each book from the missionary's pen*

sufficed; they were quickly multiplied. Anne and her husband were thus involved in what they called some lively times providing school reading materials:

It is not easy to secure rest. Recreation was out of the question. Head, heart and hands were fully consecrated to the work. Besides studying the language, composing hymns, translating scripture for Sabbath services, and preparing lessons for the pupils, there was the superintending of the daily schools, and the care of the sick. (IBID, P. 106).

All the copying of teaching material meant that the Mission quickly ran out of paper. An order for stationery highlights the revolution in literacy that was taking place. Attached to the District Minutes of January 1828 is a lengthy order for stationery which included reams of paper, blank books, 1000 quills, six dozen lead pencils, and 500 common slates! (*Incoming Correspondence: Minutes and Reports, District Meeting Minutes**, 01/03/1828). Fortunately, on one occasion, when a trading ship called and was looking for goods to barter, Turner offered the captain some hatchets, from the Mission's store, in return for a quantity of paper, with the result that the school's library was increased. (*IBID* P.104).

The library was obviously meeting a need and producing increasing numbers of pupils who could read and write. The Missionary Register recorded the views of an un-named captain of a visiting war ship, described as *judicious and discerning*, when he called in at Nuku'alofa in 1830. No South Sea Islanders, he believed, were as impressive: none were *equal to those of Tonga*:

And when he heard with what fluency some of our people read, and saw them writing, he could scarcely believe us when we assured him that these persons had not been under instruction twelve months, and some of them not more than eight. (MISSIONARY REGISTER, 1830, P.159).

The little manuscript books played an important role when Peter Vi was sent to Ha'apai to teach Taufa 'ahau and his people until a missionary was available. Thomas provided Vi with the following teaching material:

A few books or parts of scripture, such as we could spare from our writings, also some cards of the Alphabet, some pens, ink &c. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 19/10/1829).*

A crisis develops at Hihifo

While the new Wesleyan Mission Station at Nuku'alofa was making amazing progress under the leadership off the Turner and Cross families, the Thomas's

were experiencing some of the most severe conflict of their time at Hihifo. In fact, *a life and death crisis arose* during October-November 1828. John and Sarah feared for their lives and the future of the Mission at Hihifo was thrown into doubt. Relations between Thomas's and Ata, difficult at the best of times, reached boiling point and violence was threatened and bloodshed feared. Ultimately Tofua, Ata's younger brother, acted as a mediator, saving the day and helping to restore the peace, at least for a time. The Mission Compound (Mission House and associated buildings and the Mission Garden), together with questions about ownership of the land and issues of authority were at the heart of the crisis. For the Thomas's they felt that they were being *tested as by fire*. Thomas had *narrowly escaped with his life*, he said, *and all from the fury of the Chief.* (*THOMAS, SMALL JOURNAL, 21/12/1828; MN 1830, THOMAS TO SECRETARIES 09/04/1829; THOMAS JOURNAL, 21/12/1828*)

A broken axe and a locked gate were early signs of the crisis to come. Ata had sent one of his men to the Mission House with a broken axe with the request that Thomas mend and sharpen it. It was Saturday and Thomas would have been getting ready for Sunday services. He refused Ata's request and sent the Chief's messenger away. (*Thomas, Journal* 16-18/10/1828*) Ata, himself, then came to the Mission House to speak to Thomas. He found the gate locked. So, like everyone else, the Chief had to stand at the gate and call out for someone to come and unlock it to let him in. Unfortunately, the gate keeper that day was a young English castaway, John Curtis, who was living with the Thomas's and working for them. He did not realize who Ata was and did not open the gate. Thomas's Journal details the extraordinary events that followed:

John, not knowing the Chief and having been informed by us not to open the gate except we told him – he asked him [Ata] what his name was. The Chief in a jesting way said Tahiti but John told him that was not true. He [Ata] then said Pomare – he met with the same reply. The Chief ordered the gate to be opened but John said he must go and ask leave first. The Chief was now enraged and began to shake the gate as though he would have forced his way in (IBID).

Thomas was sick in bed at the time, so Sarah, *hearing the noise*, went to the gate, told the Chief not to be angry, and opened the gate and the Chief *took hold of John [Curtis] lifted up his hand in order to strike him*. Sarah intervened and Ata desisted and went hastily from our place. He later returned to the gate, called the young girl who worked for the Thomas's and asked her why the gate was locked, and why the Thomas's wish to appear as Chiefs. Ata then said that the place [Mission Compound – house, yard, store and garden] was his not theirs. The young girl was *much frightened*. Sarah Thomas again got involved and told Ata that *we were not afraid of him* and that our gate would be kept locked. Ata left

in a rage and began to denounce the Thomas's and the *lotu*. (*THOMAS JOURNAL**, 18/10/1828)

Conflict over lamps a few days later increased the growing crisis. Ata sent a young man to Thomas asking to borrow two lamps *to use at some amusement* he intended to hold that evening Thomas was annoyed by the request and decided to bring months of bitter opposition and criticism to a head. In what could be seen as a summons to the Chief, Thomas responded:

Instead of sending them [the lamps] I requested the young man to go and tell the Chief I wished to see him to talk to him. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 22/10/1828).*

*Ata came to the Mission House, and what followed was a tense confrontation during which the Chief got very warm. Thomas asked him why he had been saying critical things about him and the *lotu*, that we had taken his land that we ought not lock our gate [of the Mission compound] and if we let any natives in he would come and set our house on fire. (IBID)*

Thomas told the Chief that his actions were very bad conduct ... he had no cause whatever to say what he had of us. (*ibid*). He then went on to say some things that would have been extremely provocative to Ata:

I told him that we had not taken his place in claiming the land at Hihifo. I acknowledged him as the Chief of this Part [Hihifo] but I told him the place I lived in with the Garden and yard was not his but mine while I lived here and that it was not proper for us to allow our gate to be kept open, but that whenever he wanted to come in if he would call we would open the gate for him as we have always done ... I told him that he hated Jehovah and our cause – he would not attend [worship] or allow his people or sons. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 22/10/1828).

Ata, understandably, was *much agitated in his mind* by this and had much to say, after which he left the Mission House rather *abruptly* and *not in a good spirit*. Thomas made a partial response to Ata's request and sent him one lamp *it being our Prayer Meeting tonight we could not spare more.* (*IBID*).

In the days that followed Thomas heard that Ata was continuing to speak against him specifically, and the *lotu* in general. The Chief was telling the people, Thomas said, that:

I was lahi fie loto lahi, that I want to have a great mind because I took upon me to reprove him and tell him his faults (IBID, 25/10/1828).

Ata had told Tofua, his younger brother, that if Thomas left Hihifo he would:

*take all our things from us he will let nothing go away-all
that is at Hihifo is his – he would not lotu (IBID).*

Papa, Ata's wife, and a tour of the mission less than a month later, strained relationship between the Chief and the Mission further. Again, the Mission House, and access to it, were at the centre of the conflict. The two-story timber Mission House, with its glass windows, lockable doors, timber floors, separate rooms and staircases leading to upper sleeping quarters, was a unique and marvelous sight, and people came from all over Tonga to see it and have a 'tour' of the place. (*Thomas, Journal**, 15/11/1828). At times this became a nuisance and an inconvenience to the Thomas's, and they limited the number of people who could be let into the house at one time. On the 18th November 1828, Papa, brought a large group of visitors to have a tour of the remarkable building. The Thomas's were annoyed by such a sizable group and would only allow a few of her contingent to come into the house. And, in what was to become a flash point, Thomas rebuked Papa for bringing so many people. In what would have been a considerable humiliation to the Chief's wife, a woman of high rank in her own right, Thomas then:

*blamed her because she knows it was wrong but we are
obliged to forbid a great number coming in at one time ...
and I have from the first wished to be the Master of my own
place (THOMAS, JOURNAL*, 19/11/1828).*

Papa, shamed and furious, went to Ata and told him about the unfortunate incident. Ata sent a messenger to order Thomas's out of the house immediately. Thomas sent the man back to Ata saying that he could not leave at such a late hour in the day and because they had nowhere to go. Ata repeated his demand. Thomas sent for Ulakai but he was not at home. He then tried to contact Tofua but he was not in the village. Thomas felt extremely vulnerable for, as he said, he *had no native with me.* (IBID)

Nevertheless, Thomas again said he could not leave because he needed to consult with his colleagues at Nuku'alofa, and with Ulakai and Tofua. Again, with what would have been a provocative comment, he told Ata he wanted Tofua to *have a voice* in the matter. The people who had gathered near the Mission House gate were astonished that Thomas should disobey the command of the Chief. Tensions were rising out of control and, as night fell, Ulakai offered to sleep in the Mission House *as a guard*, an offer that was *gladly accepted*. The next morning Ata repeated his demand, that the Thomas's leave the Mission House. This order was accompanied by threats of physical violence:

The furious Chief sent a man to order us out of our place immediately and told us if we wished to fight, we would let the Chief know. (IBID).

Soon after, the Thomas's were alarmed to see that *The Chief and his men were standing without [outside] the fence with axes &c.* Thomas said, in what was an understatement, that he now thought things would be serious. (IBID)

Ulakai, Halaevalu next attempted to bring about a reconciliation. Ulakai went with Thomas to see the furious Chief. They found Ata and some of his men in a kava ring. Thomas asked why he was so angry. Ata said it was because of the way Papa had been treated, *not allowing the people to come into our place.* He also said that that we had *taken his land that we hated him and his wife and we said we did not fear him* Thomas reflected later that Ata had:

said a good deal but I could not understand all, but he told me two or three times we must go away and he would have the house. (IBID).

Halaevalu, a chiefly woman from Vava'u, sister to Fenow, [Finau] King of Vava'u, who was at the place, then spoke to Ata, Thomas said, in our favour. Her speech, at some length, was delivered *in a mild and affectionate manner* and her words resulted in a calming of Ata's *angry tone.* Thomas then took the opportunity of asking the Chief two specific questions: firstly, did he want them to go to Nuku'alofa or stay at Hihifo, and secondly, if they were to go, what would he allow us to take . Significantly, Ata *made no reply* to these two crucial questions. Ulakai then left the gathering, taking Thomas with him. (IBID).

Tofua was the next person to try and bring peace. He came to the Mission House and Thomas told him what had happened during the day. In particular, there was uncertainty about whether Ata wanted the Thomas's to go or stay. Tofua suggested that, in the morning, he would go with Thomas to speak with Ata. Thomas was reluctant to be involved in another potential confrontation with the Chief and told Tofua that he *did not feel very free* to go to face Ata again, *yet in hopes of knowing the mind of the Chief, I yielded to go. (ibid*, 19/II/1828).* And so the next day, Tofua and Thomas set off to see the Chief. On the way Tofua told Thomas that *it was considered bad at Tonga to tell a Chief I did not fear him,* obviously an attempt, by Tofua, to warn Thomas to be careful what he said when they were in discussion with Ata. Thomas did not readily accept Tofua's advice and commented that he must *fear and obey God rather than man. (IBID, 20/II/1828.)*

As soon as they met with Ata, who was at a canoe house with his carpenters repairing a canoe, Tofua told his brother why they had come. Thomas, he said, did not wish his Chief to be angry with him and he was anxious to know if Ata wanted the missionaries to go or stay. Ata seemed pleased that Thomas had come to him and said that *we must not leave him but remain in our house.* Thom-

as's response to Ata was that it *was good for them to be so soon pleased again*, and he offered his hand in friendship:

I then rose up, [Thomas said] and the Chief shook hands with me. Joy and pleasure beamed in his face, and in the faces of all present, indeed, I scarcely ever saw him better pleased ... the furious and enraged Chief cheerfully sits by my side (IBID).

Later in the day Thomas met Ata on the road, invited him to the Mission House where he *gave him a little refreshment*. Ata responded by sending some fish and a bunch of bananas – a thing he scarcely ever done before. Thomas invited him and Papa to dinner the following evening and after that meal he was pleased that they left *with apparent good feelings*. He was pleased because:

The change in so short a time is wonderful and shows it to be of God who commandeth the storm become a calm. (IBIDL, 21/II/1828).*

Thomas's could well have added appreciation for Tofua's part in the happy outcome. His friend and neighbor was the one who suggested that another face-to-face meeting with Ata should take place to settle the uncertainty about whether the missionaries should stop or go. That decision led to the pleasing result. Clubs and axes were laid aside and, with the shaking of hands, reconciliation was achieved, and peace restored.

Ata's desire for control and his wish to preserve the rights of Tongan Chiefs, was not simply his personal view. It would not be long before another Chief, the Tu'i Ha'apai, would become King George, and when asked about foreign rule or control of Tonga by Europeans, he was adamant:

*it is not my mind, nor the mind of my people, that we should be subject to any other people or kingdom in this world.
(LAWRY, PP.71-72).*

King George's strongly held views about Tongan independence, and the views of other Tongan chiefs, including Ata, was one important factor that enabled Tonga to survive the colonial period that saw all of the other Pacific nations become colonies of the great powers.

Conflict between Ata and the missionaries would soon be solved by evolving circumstances. Taufa'ahau was pressing for a missionary for Ha'apai and the Thomas's were soon to be able to leave Hihifo and respond to his request.

A Wesleyan chapel in Nuku'alofa for the Mission

During August and September 1828, it was becoming increasingly clear that the old LMS Chapel (Tupou's Chapel) was too small to accommodate Nuku'alofa's school classes and the worshipping congregations. Cross noted, for example, that:

The chapel was so crowded today, that it was with difficulty some got within the doors. (MN, 1829; CROSS JOURNAL, 31/08/1828).

A month later he was making the same happy complaint, adding the additional detail that *many sat outside not being able to get within the doors. (ibid, 21/09/1828)*

A new chapel was desperately needed, and a sermon preached by Turner in early 1830 set things in motion. The sermon was preached on the 17th of March 1830 and was probably chosen by Turner to generate interest in chapel building. The sermon was about the temple building Biblical King Josiah. What he said about the good King Josiah during the sermon has not survived but he surely would have made reference to the Biblical King's religious reforms, his reading of the Law of God to the people, and his repair/renovation of the Temple, the Jewish fale lotu. The people, Turner said, *appeared much interested.* Aleamotu'a Tupou was obviously one of the interested ones because, after the service, there was a *general meeting of the people when the Chief gave orders to prepare materials for building a new chapel. (MN 1831; TURNER, JOURNAL, 17/03/1830)*

Two days after Turner's inspirational sermon, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the first post of the new chapel was *put into the ground.* Thanks and praise to God was offered, the workmen were encouraged, and then the people *descended the hill rejoicing.* Commenting on the day's important work, Turner added:

The site of the chapel is excellent, being on the summit of a little hill, about 80 feet above the level of the sea and has a commanding view of the water to the north, north east and north west. It is supposed to be the highest spot of ground on Tonga. And what renders the site of our chapel more interesting is, it is in the centre and on the summit of their great fortification at Nuku'alofa, of which Mariner gives an account in his History of Tonga. (MN 1831; TURNER, JOURNAL, 05/05/1830).

In the months that followed, the Tongan King Josiah's orders were being carried out:

The Chief and his men have been for some time past diligently employed in preparing materials for a new chapel, and we hope the time is not too far distant when it will be erected. (IBID, 3/05/1830).

Then on the 3rd day of September 1830 Turner was aware of the historic nature of the day. It was a day to be remembered in Tonga ... which has excited great interest. (ibid 03/09/1830). The excellent native building, 70 feet by 30, (21m by 9m) was *crowded to excess*, mostly with visitors, strangers Turner called them, because Tupou had:

ordered many of our own people to remain outside, in order to make room for those who had not been accustomed to attend. (IBID).

Turner estimated that there would have been a thousand worshippers in the chapel and another thousand outside. The seating arrangements, for Chiefs and missionaries, in this first chapel to be built on Sia ko Veiongo, Mount Zion, established a pattern that remains to this day

We have a pew for our accommodation on one side of the chapel, at a small distance from the pulpit, and another directly opposite on the other side for the King and Chiefs. (IBID).

The congregation sat, *in the Tonga fashion*, on mats on the floor. The pulpit, described by Turner as *an excellent one*, had been made by the carpenter of the wrecked whaler *L'Aigle* who had taken up residence in Nuku'alofa and was being employed by the Mission. (IBID)

There was one aspect of the opening of the chapel that drew a particular comment, and that was the dress of many of the Nuku'alofa congregation:

What rendered the scene novel and more interesting to strangers was, a number of our people appeared in the European habit, the females in particular. Their exertions have been great indeed to procure each a gown and bonnet in which to appear at the opening of the chapel, and not a few appeared thus attired, some of whom looked extremely well ... the bonnets are entirely of their own manufacture, under the direction of Mary the excellent wife of our Chief. The gowns have been principally made by our wives. (IBID).

Nathaniel Turner made no reference to the original LMS church that had paved the way for the new, larger Wesleyan building. Nevertheless, during the sermons and speeches on that day, history, surely, would have been recalled, and credit given to the pioneers of the original Church: Tupou and Langi, and the LMS teachers Hape and Tafeta! (*WMM 1831, TURNER JOURNAL SEPTEMBER 1830*)

A Wesleyan lovefeast was the final activity of the day: a service of singing, prayer, testimonies and a simple shared meal of bread and water. At least a hundred people spoke at the simple meal. *Josiah, our Chief or King* being the first followed by *the other Chiefs in order, according to rank*, and then by many others. It was, Turner said, *a most blessed season*, a fitting conclusion to a momentous day. Sia ko Veiongo, the site of the lovefeast, was a place of great historical importance, gaining new significance with the opening of the first Wesleyan Church there, a site where the principal Wesleyan Church in Nuku'alofa stands to this day.

Taufa'ahau seeks a missionary

Taufa'ahau had visited Thomas in March 1828 seeking a missionary for Ha'apai but there were none available at that time. So he was asked to wait a while before he could expect a missionary in his domains. (*Thomas, Journal*, * 28/03/1828). As Taufa'ahau left Thomas on that occasion, the missionary's thoughts were in fact prophetic:

It might appear some time that God who rules over all things to allow his own glory and the good of his cause has something to accomplish by this man. (IBID).

Something, in fact, was already being accomplished by Taufa'ahau in Lifuka. He had learned some basics of reading and writing from William Brown (of the Port au Prince). He knew about the true God Jehovah. He was observing the Sabbath and had a sailor (Brown?) say some prayers in a house set aside for the purpose. (*MN 1829 Captain Henry to Mansfield*, 10/03/1829).

Taufa'ahau, in July 1829, again visited Thomas at Hihifo, seeking a missionary. Thomas recorded in detail what could be called one of the most significant conversations in the history of the Wesleyan Church. In the midst of all the threats, disappointments, and struggles that the Hihifo missionaries had endured, Taufa'ahau's visit appeared as a ray of hope. Thomas recorded the conversation with the Ha'apai chief on the eighth of July 1829 in detail and because of its importance it is worthy of quoting in full:

Between 6 and 7 o'clock, the Tui Habai or Taofaahau [Tu'i Ha'apai or Taufa'ahau] came accompanied by Vili to our place his object was as he said to tell me his mind respecting the worship of Jehova. [Jehovah]. He began by saying that he very much wished to pray to Jehovah but that he waited until a teacher was sent him – that although he attended to the Tongan customs now he would cast them away if some Preacher would come and stop with him and that himself and all his people would turn to the Lord. He said he did pray to Jehovah but secretly and the people did not know his mind.

He knew how I was opposed at this place [Hihifo], and that he would be glad for me to go or send another saying there were many advantages at his place, for he only ruled there. He had much to say and wished to convince me that he was in earnest, that he did not lie,

— that where was the good of lying he said our God knows his heart and also that he wished to turn to him.

I thanked him for his good wishes, and I told him that we had thought much about him and his people, but it was reported of him that his mind had changed but he said he waited for a Preacher and then he would turn to Jehovah. I told him I should be glad to go to his island to teach him and his people but could not without the consent of my brethren that I would write to them and know their mind — I informed him also that we had not much property [trade barter goods] and that he must not expect property he said he did not want for property, that he had plenty of Guns — powder-shot &c but where was the good of it. Could not take it with him when he died? Was it of any use he said? I replied, true, we could not.

I then asked him what he would do for me if I came to him, as I could not bring my own house and for ought I know, Ata would strip us of all our things — he replied, Do for you? Why I will be thankful for your body only, and I will clothe you in native cloth if you wear it. I will feed you free of any expense. You shall not trade. I will build your house or get one moved directly for you. I will build you a chapel and come myself and, send all my people to be taught by you. And if you wish to go away, you shall take whatever you please and go where you please. (THOMAS, JOURNAL 08/07/1829).*

Thomas could not have been happier with what he had heard that day. His Journal shows the delight he felt about the discussion with Taufa'ahau, a Chief who he felt was genuine and straightforward:

I was well pleased with this. I need no more, nay, I did not need so much to induce me to do what I could to meet the views of such a Chief and I hope that very soon at least we shall be able to do something for the Haabai [Ha'apai] Islands. (IBID).

Thomas went on to imagine what might be achieved if they could respond to the Tu'i Ha'apai. The ground had been prepared, and Thomas was certainly impressed with Taufa'ahau as a direct, sincere and trustworthy Chief. In addition, there were numbers of people in Lifuka who were already lotu people:

There are now at that place [Lifuka] about 50 persons who are called lotu people some of them belong to the Tui Haabai and he does not interrupt them this is a fair trait in his character and from all I can see and hear respecting him he is

a free honest open hearted man and that his request calls aloud. (IBID).

Thomas immediately put into writing the details of this most important conversation with the great man, informing his brethren at Nuku'alofa of the opening that was being offered. His thoughts were *that God has opened our way to the Haabais and that I am ready to go.*

So Thomas pressed his brothers at Nuku'alofa for a speedy reply:

I wish for an answer to my letter, he said, (and) hope they will visit Hihifo, and that we shall be divinely directed.
(IBID).

Taufa'ahau and Mafile'o visited Thomas the next evening, July 9th 1829, when the Ha'apai Chief wanted to see what further things Thomas had to say about his request. They shared a meal and talked together and Thomas gave a progress report:

I informed him I had sent to my brothers and expected to know their mind on the morrow. He seemed pleased assured me of his respect for me, and in reference to Property [trade goods], he would be glad of my body, [that is, he was not interested in trade goods, simply a teacher missionary] (IBID).

Nevertheless, property became an important issue for the missionaries. It was their currency, and they were responsible to the Missionary Committee in London for its management. This obligation had to be taken very seriously. Valuable Mission property, mostly in the form of trade goods, had to be protected and used wisely. Taufa'ahau's comment to Thomas was that:

if Ata detained my property – if it would not be a sin against God, and I was willing, he [Taufa'ahau] would take my property from this place [Hihifo] to Nuku'alofa for me in his large canoe. The Tui offered very much but he wished me to do as I pleased ... that he would remove all our most valuable things in this way by getting them carried out while it is dark. (IBID, 09/07/1829).

Turner and Cross, at Nuku'alofa, responded immediately to Thomas's letter, *with some feeling*, urging that they all *pray for guidance*. They said that they would visit Hihifo the next day (11th July) for discussions. In the meantime, Taufa'ahau visited Thomas again to see what progress was being made:

The Tui Habai came in to our house after school and I told him the import of the note [from Turner and Cross] he seemed willing we should lay it before the Lord and know his mind. I told him it was good to consult together and to be of a mind in the business. He stayed and took tea with us was cheerful and wished to see a picture of Adam and Eve in Paradise which we had shown to some of the people yesterday. (IBID 10/07/1829).

Taufa'ahau's period of waiting

While Turner, Cross and Thomas were anxious to respond to Taufa'ahau's request for a missionary, they were more anxious that they would need to have London's permission to commence a new Station. Delay was inevitable while they waited for word from London. (*ibid*, 16/10/1829; *Thomas Small Journal**, 07/11/1829) Taufa'ahau was disappointed with the delay and Thomas, for his part, felt *very heavy with grief*. (*MN*. 1831; *Thomas Journal*, 19/11/1828). According to Pita Vi's narrative, he came up with a solution in the meantime. He went to the missionaries, he said, *to beg that I might be allowed to return with him [Taufa'ahau] to Ha'apai. It was therefore arranged that I should go.* (*Vi Narrative, West*, p.362). As Thomas relates it:

We thought it would be very proper, that some interesting Native should accompany the King of the Haabais [Ha'apai] ... [who] could teach some to read and write in preparing the way for a Missionary. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 19/10/1829).*

With the approval of Aleamotu'a and Taufa'ahau, Peter Vi, who was to be Thomas's teacher when London approved the new Station at Lifuka, was to work with Taufa'ahau until a missionary was free to move to Ha'apai. Vi was regarded by the missionaries as *very steady* and that there were *but few so well informed* as he. Peter Vi set off to Ha'apai, then, as the first 'lay Missionary', armed with a book from Thomas for Taufa'ahau, some other books, pens, ink, paper, and about 20 cards [Alphabet cards] (*ibid*).

Within a few weeks, notes and letters from Pita brought encouraging news from Ha'apai:

The King pays great attention to learning to read; he declared that Jehovah is his only God – he has told his people to attend to be instructed – has taken a large canoe to pieces which has been kept for years, it being sacred to their gods – he intends to make small canoes of it. He has sent to me for a slate declaring his love. These things cause us much joy.
(*IBID*, 01/11/1829).

Taufa'ahau then made a final attempt to put on pressure for a missionary. He sent a canoe in early January 1830, with Peter Vi and Mafile'o on board. Pita's message was that *the King was waiting for me*. Furthermore, he had made some preparations. He had:

*Burned down the houses of their gods [the Heathen gods]
because they were liars, and that as soon as I went, they
would build a large House for the Lord our God. (THOMAS,
JOURNAL*, 09/01/1830)*

Pita also said that Taufa'ahau was committed to learning and was actively preparing the way:

*He is very attentive to his book, he says he loves his book and
asked some who are opposed to Jehovah, and inclined to the
Devil, why the Devil did not give them a book if he was a
god to teach them what to do. (IBID, 09/01/1830).*

It was many months, however, before the Thomas's were in Lifuka and able to see for themselves some of the groundwork that had been prepared for a new Mission Station. Permission from London had not arrived but the missionaries in Tonga made the decision that the need was great and demanded action. On the 30 January 1830 the Thomas's arrived in Lifuka to commence the Ha'apai Mission Station.

The new station at Lifuka Ha'apai

Establishing a school in Lifuka was Thomas's top priority for the new Mission Station. As he explained to his superiors in London:

We began to teach a school two days after we arrived. I meet the males at six o'clock in a morning, and Mrs. Thomas the females at three in the afternoon. The average number is about one hundred in each school; besides these, the people of all the islands who can get any to teach them are learning also. We are extremely in want of books, as I have to write all that they read, after they have learned the [Alphabet] card. (MN 1831; THOMAS JOURNAL 16/02/1830)

As in Nuku'alofa, so in Lifuka, manuscript little books were produced by the hundreds and were in great demand. The requests were so great that the Thomas's had to limit book distribution and book 'sales' to specific days and times. He normally prepared the little books, but during one bout of illness, Sarah took over that role, for which he was thankful:

She has written several scores of books since I was taken ill these the people have become so eager for of late that instead of begging them they have brought some a basket of nuts others a bunch of bananas some breadfruit but chiefly they have brought us fruit we feed our fowls and Pigs which here are called Oliji [Olese – Lesi Papaya] by others called the prune apple. In this way we have of late been well supplied with these things and if more books could have been written we would have disposed of many more but we have so many calls that it is impossible we can meet them all. (THOMAS JOURNAL, 18/02/1831)*

Many people, Thomas said, were also coming in from the islands ... giving yams fruit or something, to 'purchase' books. The Chief from Niua, he said, *begged me to write a book for him as he wants to teach to read (ibid, 05/01/1831)*. On one book distribution day, people had gathered at the Mission House gates an hour or two before the set time, *sitting on the road to be ready lest they should not get one. (ibid, 06/04/1831)* On another occasion it appears the waiting crowd became

agitated and at times aggressive. He was able to give out 40 books and the competition for them was intense:

the people were almost ready to tear me to pieces for them. I much admire their thirst after books but do not approve of their noise and violence. (IBID, 07/05/1831)

Just as in Nuku'alofa, so in Ha'apai, advanced pupils were called upon to do copy work. Without a printing press, manuscript books provided reading material for the hundreds who were thirsting to read. Their role in the success of the Mission stations, (Hihiho, Nuku'alofa, Lifuka, and later Vava'u) was essential and both missionaries and people grew to depend on them. For the Thomas's, the demand was impossible to satisfy, not just at Lifuka, but for other islands of the group as well. Two youths, Thomas reported:

write nearly constantly for me now, ... the women also write a little at times. Mrs Thomas has set three others on now. We have been much engaged ... meeting the wants of the people, especially their claim for books, which we tried to meet but found impossible. Still, by employing several new writers we furnished many more than usual. Our people returning home to the islands want many new books, and our people going to Vava'u needed books. (IBID, 12/04/1831; THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS P.717).*

The alphabet cards, a basic tool in teaching reading, were not only used in the classroom. Various requests were made for them by people not involved as students in school classes. Thomas tells the story of some girls who had learned to read and wished to share that pleasure with their parents and how he was able to encourage them in this good work:

To-day a number of little girls came to our gate with many baskets of fruit, called here, oliji: [Olese – Lesi Papaya] we use it to feed our pigs with. They wished to buy some cards, or alphabets; and upon inquiry, we found they had been gathering this fruit in order to obtain means of instruction for their aged parents, who were anxious to learn to read. We were glad to be able to gratify these dear children with a few books for them – they received them joyfully and returned home like those who rejoice when they have found great spoil. (MN 1832; THOMAS, JOURNAL 9/II/1832)

The Thomas's longed for the day when a printing press would mean they no longer had to spend time writing hundreds of books by hand. Their hopes and prayers were soon answered with the arrival of a press in Nuku'alofa in March 1831 which was able to respond to the extraordinary desire for books.

Ha'apai's first chapel

The first few words of Thomas's journal entry of the tenth of April 1831 give no clues to the momentous occasion that took place that day. It was a Sunday and after worship Thomas began recording the day's events:

At approximately 8 o'clock we went for worship in the new house. I was much pleased to find it quite full and some hundreds sitting outside. The morning was very fine so they escape the heat of the sun ... (THOMAS, JOURNAL
10/04/1831)*

Worship that day was the culmination of six months of planning, preparation and building. September the previous year (1830) saw the first moves when, during the Sunday morning service, Thomas read and preached on the 10 commandments. Following the sermon, at Thomas's request, Taufa'ahau addressed the people emphasizing the importance of obeying the commandments but adding an important announcement. He told the congregation that he would soon build a chapel, a hint, Thomas noted, that they should start to make kafa (coconut fibre cord and rope used in building). (*THOMAS, JOURNAL* 19/09/1830*).

Just after Christmas (1830) a site for the chapel was chosen. Taufa'ahau asked Thomas to:

*accompany him to look out a piece of land upon which to build a chapel. We saw several spots, and fixed upon one near his own premises and in the midst of the people. (THOMAS,
JOURNAL* 27/12/1830).*

By early March 1831 the chapel was finished. Thomas's Journal had said nothing about the building of the chapel. He had been suffering *an affliction* for nearly two months during which time Sarah was waiting on him *day and night*. (*Thomas, Journal*, 15/02/1831*). By early

March he had recovered, and the building was opened with special services. It was *the largest and best building in the whole group* Thomas said. (*Thomas, Tongatapu or the Friendly Islands**, p.77). That it was *the best in the whole group* was not surprising. The Chief had supervised the work and, as Thomas said, he was *a Master Builder*:

*a clever mechanic and most industrious in the use of his Tonga tools – often he might be seen at work in this way.
(Thomas, notes *The King of Tongatapu or the Friendly Islands**, p.96)*

The Lifuka Chapel was 9oft long and 3oft wide (27m x 9m) and Nathaniel Turner, the retiring Chairman of the Tonga mission, noted that it was *larger than ours at Nuku'alofa*. (The new Chapel on Mt Zion was 7oft x 3oft (21m x 9m) (*MN, 1832 Turner to Secretaries 03/05/1831*). And Taufa'ahau made plans to ensure that the celebration to follow the opening would include a royal feast. He and his men went to *some of the islands to catch turtles towards making a feast for the opening of the new chapel.* (*Thomas, Journal, 07/03/1831*) The fishing expedition was obviously a success, and the Chief sent Thomas a present of a very large turtle. It took six men, Thomas said, to draw it up to the Mission House! (*THOMAS, JOURNAL* 21/03/2025*)

On the day of the opening of the chapel, Thomas chose chapters 28 and 29 of 1 Chronicles for the Scripture of the day. For the morning service he focused on chapter 28 verse 20, a verse that encouraged the biblical king Solomon to faithfulness:

to be strong and of good courage. Fear not nor be dismayed; for the Lord God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee ... (HOLY BIBLE AV.)

Thomas applied the verse specifically to Taufa'ahau who was sitting a short distance from him, addressing the Chief *personally*. He then turned to the congregation and:

addressed some others in power, exhorting them to give themselves to God, the God of the whole earth. (THOMAS, JOURNAL 10/04/1831)*

At the afternoon service Thomas read from 1 Chronicles 29:1-10 and, as he said, he :

took the opportunity, of addressing myself to the matapules from the islands and exhorted them to follow the Chief and build a house to the Lord at each Island. (IBID)

Thomas's exhortation to the Chief and the matapules was being delivered in the presence of a significant gathering: there were about 4,000 people there on the day – around 2,000, it was said, in the morning and 2100 in the afternoon. (Taufa'ahau, after the morning service *had appointed some of his men to count the*

numbers at the afternoon service!) Reflecting on the opening services Thomas proclaimed *Glory to God for what I have seen and heard this day.* (IBID)

A new Mission Station for Vava'u

While work on building a chapel at Lifuka was in progress, there were other local initiatives underway. Thomas had heard that some baptised members were wanting to teach and preach so he delivered a sermon on Matthew chapter 10 where Jesus sent his disciples to spread the good news of the Kingdom of God. Thomas's sermon emphasised what he called the design of Christ which included:

appointing preachers and sending them forth viz that all the world might hear and fear and believe. I cautioned the people [he said] against thinking too meanly of the Ministry as though it may be performed by anybody ... (Thomas Journal, 06/03/1831).*

He went on to say that he believed he had to address this issue because some of the people have *expressed themselves anxious to faifekau or preach ... as though I had nothing to do in the business of either sending them or preventing them.* (IBID)

Following the Sunday sermon with its strong caution and advice, a baptised member came to Thomas, telling him that he and some others had formed a 'meeting', separate from the regular Wednesday and Sunday public services of worship. In those gatherings some of the baptised men were preaching when they:

read and exhorted or preached to the meeting and they seemed disposed to think they must do so at other places, or they should do wrong in the sight of God. (IBID)

Thomas told him that just because they were baptised, they should not think they could preach. They would do wrong, he said, if they were self-appointed. They must not think that they could preach like the missionaries or even like Peter [Pita Vi]. They were new Christians. They were limited in what they could do. What they could do, he said, was to:

read a portion of God's Word to those who are less instructed than themselves that when they visited any of the islands of their friends, they might do the same, viz, read, sing and pray with them. (IBID)

Thomas did not want them imposing themselves upon the people as preachers. He would have known, and expected that, in time, the work of the church, in the chapels and schools, would depend on those who wished to instruct the people and lead them in worship. And that would be followed, later, by those who would become Native Assistant Missionaries, and missionaries to other Pacific Island countries. For the present, however, the baptised ones, he believed, needed to be restricted in what they were allowed to do.

Although Thomas was trying to keep some control over individual self-appointed teachers and preachers, there was something much more extensive, and beyond his control, that was under way. It was an initiative involving Taufa'ahau, a group of baptised men from Lifuka, a fleet of 24 canoes and a Sailing Match at Vava'u. Taufa'ahau had come to Thomas to tell him that he intended to go to Vava'u for a sailing match, and that he required the baptised men from Lifuka to go with him. Some were not happy to go, but Taufa'ahau gave a command that all the baptised men must go. Thomas did all he could to talk Taufa'ahau out of making the voyage. He was afraid that such an amusement, among idolators, would mean that the Ha'apai chief and his men would be led into sin. Taufa'ahau, however, could not be moved. As Thomas said, he is very headstrong – he did not consult with me but sent word to Ulukalala that at such a time he would come. (IBID 07/03/1831).

Unable to stop the voyage, Thomas tried to make the best of the situation, providing Taufa'ahau with a letter for Ulukalala, urging the Vava'u chief to embrace the faith. Interest from Vava'u and contact with Finau had been going on for several years. In July 1829 Finau had visited the missionaries at Nuku'alofa requesting a teacher to come and instruct him and his people *in the knowledge of Jehovah*. (*Incoming Correspondence: Letters and Journals, Cross, Journal** 30/07/1829). No missionaries were available at that time, so Finau's request went unfilled. Now, some action was being taken, not by the missionaries but by Taufa'ahau. So Thomas gave Taufa'ahau some literature to take with him: *a translation of the Book of Jonah* and a copy of *chapters 4 and 10 of Matthew's Gospel*: Jonah, a book about the prophet's adventures at sea, his initial reluctance to preach to unbelievers and his final evangelism of the heathen; Matthew 4 told of Jesus, in the desert, overcoming the temptations of the devil; Matthew 10 told the story of Jesus sending out a group to proclaim the coming of the kingdom of God. (Thomas, *Journal**, 26/04/1831). On the eve of sailing, Taufa'ahau came to the Mission House to say his farewells. The missionary told his Chief that he was:

sorry they were going but seeing I could not prevent it I advised him to do all he could towards bringing the King of the place to accept a missionary and turn to the Lord. (IBID, 21/04/1831).

Taufa'ahau sailed to Vava'u with his men, and the outcome of that voyage was remarkable. The sailing match, opposed by Thomas, was, it seems, not just a regatta, but clearly part of Taufa'ahau's larger plans. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that he knew what he was doing when he gave orders that all the baptised men were to accompany him to Vava'u. As it turned out, they would be qualified to teach the idolaters some of the basics of the faith. Furthermore, they would be in good hands as Peter Vi was among Taufa'ahau's Ha'apai contingent and the Ha'apai men had been through the baptism classes and had been baptised. They had also attended classes preparing them for receiving the Holy Communion. They were Members of Society, meeting in Class, and they were keen to share the faith. (*ibid*, 01/04/1831). In addition, they had copies of the Alphabet book, the first book off the press at Nuku'alofa, which Thomas had sent off to Vava'u, after the fleet sailed, asking that Taufa'ahau distribute [them] among his people. (*IBID*, 30/04/1831).

About a month after Taufa'ahau had sailed, Thomas heard news from Vava'u that gave him much pleasure. The voyage to Vava'u was not just a Sailing Match. It was an evangelistic campaign. Summarizing the amazing experiences at Neiafu he noted that:

While our people were with them, they had no rest night or day ... The Vava'u people laid aside their ordinary work, and said, "Let us learn first to serve God while you are with us, and we can do our work afterwards." One of our people said, "I was four nights and did not sleep, but was talking with the people, reading, praying, and singing." When they had done with one company, another would come, and thus they were kept employed. (MN 1832, THOMAS TO SECRETARIES, 09/06/1831)

The 'teacher evangelists' and their Chief returned from Vava'u, leaving one of the baptised men, Paula Nau, to continue the work of reading, praying and singing with the new Vava'u Christians. The returning ones, Thomas said, were *all on fire*. (*ibid.*) The Editors of the Missionary Notices, when they published an account of the Vava'u proceedings, spoke enthusiastically of the work done by the Ha'apai men and their Chief:

The heathen temples and the idol gods of Vava'u are no more! The Chief of the Vava'u Islands, and about one thousand of his people, have embraced the faith of Christ, and, setting fire to their temples, have burned them to the ground, and their gods in them The new converts, both Chief and people, have manifested the value they attach to the Gospel by their zeal for conveying to others the same blessed boon. (MN 1833, EDITORIAL COMMENT).

Not everyone accepted the lotu and soon Thomas and Taufa'ahau received word from Vava'u that the powerful chief Lualala, *a violent and cruel man*, was the head of the *oppressors of religion* and he had *ravaged and plundered several villages* and Vava'u was *unsettled*. (*Thomas, Tongatapu or the Friendly Islands**, p.746; *Thomas, Journal* 23/07/1831*). Thomas and Taufa'ahau discussed the worrying developments and it was decided that the Chief should return to Vava'u and try and settle the lotu conflict.

Taufa'ahau did not leave for Vava'u immediately. He asked to be baptised, and on the 7th August, with three of his children, he received the sacrament. At his baptism he did not answer the usual baptismal questions but preferred to make a statement of his Faith. It was quite a lengthy statement and included his unreserved wholehearted commitment to the lotu:

I stand here with my children in the presence of you all, and before the servants of the Lord, to give myself to Jesus that he may do with me as he sees good ... My wish is that all of you, my people should believe in the Lord Jehovah. (THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS, P.760)*

The following week Taufa'ahau, with 18 or 19 canoes returned to Vava'u to calm down the unrest in Vava'u. Success was not immediate and so he sent to Ha'apai to fetch down one of the large guns [ex Port au Prince. Thomas called it *one of the ships guns*] and some ammunition. (*Thomas, Journal* 29/08/1831*). That was obviously enough pressure to create immediate action from Finau and those opposing the lotu:

The offending Chief Lualala with above 20 persons are sent away in poverty and disgrace to the Feejee Islands or where he pleases [he chose Tongatapu]. Some others have been humbled and are at Vava'u, some are at Lifuka there as captives [captives of war Thomas called them] and will be servants of our Chief and when our people returned a hundred of the Vava'u people came with them being their relatives and preferring living here [Lifuka] to living in Vava'u. (Thomas, Journal 09/09/1831; MN 1833, Thomas, Journal 31/10/1831).*

Lualala's fortification was burned to the ground and

peace and harmony prevailed at Vava'u ... no lives have been lost or blood shed. (THOMAS, JOURNAL 30/08/1831; 09/09/1831).*

Finau's request.

Following the second Vava'u visit by Taufa'ahau and the Ha'apai men, Ulukalala again sought help from the missionaries. As Thomas says, Ulukalala had:

sent to me to send him a teacher, if no Englishman can go he wishes to have a Tonga man and as soon as possible. (IBID)

The Ha'apai contingent, *like John the Baptist*, had prepared the way. With many hundreds turning to the lotu, and no missionaries available to start a new Station, Thomas sent David Fala and his wife and children to assist Paula Nau who Taufa'ahau had left at Vava'u to continue supporting new Christians there. Just as Pita Vi had done in Ha'apai before the arrival of the Thomas's, so Paula and Tevita were filling in until a missionary was available. (*MN 1832, THOMAS TO SECRETARIES, 09/06/1831; 12/07/1831*).

Tevita's outfit for the new Station consisted of a few articles of trade for bartering, about 100 of the First Book, some Catechisms, Scriptures, 17 sermons, the Book of Jonah, the 5th Chapter of Matthew's Gospel, [Sermon on the Mount, Salt of the earth, Light of the world, Love your enemies, Bless them that curse you &c] paper, pens, ink, pencils etc.

The English missionary that Finau wanted for Vava'u was quite quickly appointed and the Rev William Cross arrived on the 20th February 1832, to establish a new Mission Station in Neiafu. (*HUNT, MEMOIR OF CROSS, P.60*)

The lotu in Niuatoputapu, Niuafo'ou

For some years the Niuatoputapu and Niuafo'ou people had been asking for a missionary. Come and help us was their cry. Ha'apai and Vava'u had sent teachers to the Niuas from the 1830s. Taufa'ahau from Ha'apai, and Finau with William Cross, from Vava'u had taken teachers to what was called the outer Islands. Cross spent some weeks there encouraging the work of the teachers that had been sent from Vava'u and Ha'apai. Peter Turner offered to be appointed there but his colleagues believed the numbers in the Niuas were too small, the distances too great, and travelling in Tongan canoes too dangerous, to consider appointing one of their number there. Furthermore, there were more important priorities, Fiji for example. And the people on Niuatoputapu and Niuafo'ou seemed to be getting on very well with the Tongan teachers who had been working there for years, encouraged by a very occasional visit by a missionary. (*Hunt, Memoir of Cross, p.62; Minutes and Reports: FIDM 25/11/1833; 11/06/1834; 25/11/1833; 11/6/1834; Watkin to Secretaries, 27/02/1834; Tucker to Secretaries, 23/01/1835; Turner, P. to Secretaries, 19/06/1835.*)

Now, after a decade of appeals for help, some trained men from the newly established Institution in Vava'u, were about to be appointed to the Niuas. English Missionaries were what the Niua people wanted, but such appointments were not Mission Committee priorities. The Institution men were what was being offered as a substitute. They would be an advance on the basically untrained teachers who had been sent, over the years, from Ha'apai and Vava'u to pioneer the lotu in these distant places. The relatively small numbers, and the isolation of the Niuas meant that a resident missionary would never be appointed there.

The Chairman's legacy

As the Turners sailed away from Tonga, heading for Sydney, Nathaniel found time to send a lengthy letter to the Mission Secretaries in London. The letter was dated *At Sea 3 May 1831*, and included extracts from his Journal. The letter shows that he believed he had laid a solid foundation during his relatively short four-year period of missionary service in Tonga:

My heart has been much set upon the Tonga Mission; and the prosperity which has attended our endeavors has given me the greatest pleasure I ever enjoyed. When I look at the mysterious way in which the Lord led me to Tonga, and the gloomy state of things in reference to our cause there at that time, and compare it with the state of things now, I am completely astonished and cannot but wonder and adore. To God alone be praise ... It is a great consolation to me that I have left the Mission in a very prosperous state, with every prospect of still greater success. (MN, 1832, 03/05/1831.)

One part of Turner's vision was to see a printing press and printer in Tonga. That was achieved during the last month of his time as Chairman of the Mission. In the extract from his Journal of the 3 May 1831, he thanked God that he had been spared to:

witness the press in full operation and to bring away with me specimens of its first productions. (IBID).

School books had been the first priority, and he hoped that *the Scriptures will follow*. Not long after he departed, that hope, too, was realized when a series of little school books, containing chapters of the Old and New Testaments, issued from the press at Nuku'alofa

=====CHAPTER 6 =====

Pioneer Interpreters and Translators: Missionaries and Castaways

The language barrier was the first and most important obstacle faced by the early Wesleyan Missionaries. The difficulty was overcome, to a degree, by cooperation between Missionaries, Chiefs and early ‘converts’, with some help from a several castaways and beachcombers.

Walter and Mary Lawry’s few months in Tonga did not contribute much to learning the language and getting it into written and printed form, although Lawry said he did make a determined effort to learn it. The Marquesan lad Macaone, brought by Lawry as a translator and interpreter, did not prove to be very helpful. The Tahitian language, his mother tongue, differed significantly, Lawry said, from Tongan. Charles Tindall and George Lilly, members of Lawry’s team, made a valuable contribution. Lilly prepared a ‘book’ of useful Tongan words and phrases, and Tindall, at a later stage, was most helpful with interpreting and translating when the mission was being restarted in 1826.

Thomas and Hutchinson were the ones appointed to re-commence the mission vacated by Lawry in 1823. The Thomas’s struggled with the language and were soon able to produce some simple school lessons, in manuscript, and a number of hymns. The Hutchinsons, however, made little progress. John was ill much of his time and despaired to learn the language. Mary may well have been making some progress. She was teaching a small group of girls, but these classes were short lived as Chief Ata and his wife Papa closed them down.

The new Wesleyan mission station at Nuku’alofa, established in 1827, led by Chairman Nathaniel Turner and his colleague William Cross, quickly produced material in Tongan. Peter Turner and James Watkin, who joined the mission later added to the development of the early printed books.

*Beachcombers and castaways James Read, William Singleton, William Brown and Samuel Blackmore also contributed to the advance of the written and printed word. William Mariner, although he had left the Islands many years previously, made a major contribution. His two volume **An Account of the Natives of the Tonga Islands**, co-authored with Dr John Martin included a sizeable Vocabulary and Grammar and was a valuable resource to the missionaries.*

The foundational work of this diverse group meant that by 1835 a Hymn Book and twenty one booklets, basically school books, were in print, of which there were a number that provided, for the first time, chapters of Old and New Testament books. This led to the production of the entire New Testament in 1849.

Early experiences at Mu'a 1822-1823

Walter Lawry.

The Lawry Mission party, ten in number, were the first to try and establish a Wesleyan Mission in Tonga. They were fortunate to have William Singleton, *Port au Prince* survivor, to ease their entrance into what would be, for them, a new and strange land. Singleton was able and willing to act as an interpreter for the new Wesleyan Mission, but when he wasn't available Lawry proceeded without one. For example, Lawry says he had discussions with Palu, on a wide range of subjects, including Tongan religion:

I conversed to-day at some length with Palau on the subject of religion: he said Tangaloa was the greatest god belonging to Tonga; he made the men, and would, by and by, take them to Boolotoo. [Polotu] I told him that was not true, for Jehovah made all men; that the thunder was his voice, and the sky his footstool; that his eye was upon him, and upon all men, in all places, and at all times; and that Jehovah would in a short time send bad men down to a lake of fire, and take good men up to the sky, where they would be very happy. The Chief seemed astonished to think that the white man's God could see everybody at once. I said, "When I can speak more of your language, I will tell you greater things than these", at which he seemed pleased. (MN 1823, Lawry, Journal, Cokevernal, 27/12/1822).

Lawry's comment, that he had discussions with Palau (Palu/Fatu) at some length seems hard to accept at face value. He had only been in Tonga a few months and would have had very little command of the language. However, the missionary and the Chief would have been able to have some communication as Palu spoke a little English. Thomas tells us that soon after he and Sarah arrived in 1826 he had a conversation with Fatu when that Chief visited Hihifo. Ulakai was with Fatu and the Thomas's gave the visitors some food and drink for which Fatu responded with the words *thanks or tank you Sir*. Thomas, writing later in his Journal, added that the Chief *speaks a little broken English*. In explaining something of Tongan customs, Fatu had told Thomas:

Tonga man too much foolish – when Tonga man too much sick then he cut off finger for him to get better – that no good.
(THOMAS, JOURNAL, 31/07/1826).*

Fatu seemed comfortable enough with English. As he prepared to leave Hihifo on that occasion in 1826 he asked Thomas to pray. Being late afternoon, Thomas shared family prayers with the Mu'a visitors.

Lawry's conversation with Fatu would have been a challenging experience. He had made a serious attempt to learn the language but his comments, such as the following make it clear that he did find it a burden:

The heat is now become intense. In so torrid a climate the study of a barbarous language is wearisome to the flesh (MN 1823, LAWRY JOURNAL, 20/12/1822; 16/10/1822; 12/12/1822).

Christmas 1822 found Lawry feeling deeply about the barriers caused by his lack of a workable grasp of the language:

my heart bleeds for them, and I attempt to teach them the way of salvation by faith in Christ; but my want of language, and their aversion to Christianity, makes it very discouraging. O for more prayer and patience. (IBID).

In a letter to the Committee, some months later however, Lawry tells of an occasion when he again attempted a lengthy conversation about religion:

This morning I walked into a native village, where, meeting with several of the more intelligent natives collected to build our Mission House, I began to tell them of the one true God, and his wonderful works in days of old; how he healed the sick, and raised the dead; and that he loved all men in every land, even the people of Tonga; and that we were come to the islands on purpose to tell them these things. The natives appeared much interested in the great truths delivered to them. They told me that they had two great gods; one of whom was an angry god, who lived in Boolotoo, [Pulotu] which was under the earth, and his name was Hercolea: [Hikile'o] the other was a loving God, who lived in the sky; but they did not know much about him. (MN 1824, LAWRY, JOURNAL 23/05/1823).

Whether the missionary and his listeners understood each other is doubtful. Lawry himself was unsure, telling the Committee:

I proceeded to explain as many of the great truths of divine revelation as I could find language to express; but, partly by reason of my inexperience in their tongue, and partly owing to the poverty of the language itself, I found it very difficult to utter the ideas which occurred to me, so as to be understood. (IBID).

Lawry had realized that language would be a barrier to success when attempting to establish a Mission Station, so he had made some provision to help overcome it. He brought to Tonga with him a young Marquesan (Tahitian) boy Macanoe who he hoped could help with language. In this he was disappointed. As he informed the Committee, he had hoped that Macanoe would have been *of service by way of interpreting*, adding:

but he knows nothing of the Tonga language, so much do the South Sea dialects differ. However, we find him very useful in domestic life. (MN 1823 Lawry Journal, 16/10/1822).

Lawry's short stay in Tonga did not contribute much to language development or translation. The value of his work lies principally with the young men, Lilly and Tindall, who he left behind in Tonga to care for mission property when he and Mary returned to Sydney. George Lilly and Charles Tindall, Lawry's 'young men' as he called them, were obviously capable in their respective fields – Tindall a blacksmith and Lilly a carpenter, and Lawry said he could not have done without them:

I am busy in cultivating a garden, and in sowing wheat, maize, and other useful articles, beside learning the language, &c. I know not what I should have done without two useful persons who came with me. George Lilly is a carpenter, a very pious young man from the Colony. He is preparing timbers for the Mission House. Charles Tindall is also a pious young man from New South Wales, a blacksmith; he makes togies (a sort of hatchet) and axes, from iron which I procured from the ship; with these we trade and make presents. (Incoming Correspondence: Letters and Journals, Lawry to Committee 16/10/1822).*

The young men were useful in other ways, apart from blacksmithing and carpentry. George Lilly stayed in Tonga for a short time after the Lawrys left, but took an interest in language and, at a later stage, assisted Thomas when he was putting together some Tongan words that he thought would be helpful in sharing the gospel. Tindall on the other hand stayed on Tongatapu for almost five

years and was helpful as a translator, especially when Hutchinson and Thomas first arrived at Hihifo.

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George Lilly, it has been said, *has a talent for language*. (*Incoming Correspondence. Letters and Journals** Captain Beveridge ‘St Michael’, November 1824.). Like many colonial born children, he was the son of convicts. Elizabeth Lilly, his mother, and George Boyden his father, were both *petty thieves* transported from England, Elizabeth arriving in New South Wales in 1800. (*Loftus, Six Australian Pioneers*). Despite his background, young George came under the influence of the Wesleyans and when he heard of Lawry’s proposed Tonga mission, he and Charles Tindall offered to join him. Lawry explained that he had no authority from London to employ them but suggested that they could come as volunteers. As he explained to the Committee:

When these young men proposed accompanying me on the Tonga Mission, which they were desirous of doing upon any terms, I told them that I could not put them on the Missionary Society, [pay them from Mission funds] none could do that save the Conference, or General Committee in London. But if they thought proper to go to Tongataboo upon a risk of their temporal property, I would supply them with food and clothes until I could learn the mind of the Committee concerning them, upon which they cheerfully came. (INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE. LETTERS AND JOURNALS LAWRY TO COMMITTEE, 6/10/1822).*

Sydney Wesleyans supported Lawry’s actions, noting that Tindall and Lilly were steady *active young men, members of Society* who were:

moved to volunteer for the work, principally from the particular regard they bear to Mr Lawry (MN 1823 CARVOSSO TO COMMITTEE, 15/07/1822).

The Lawry’s stay in Tonga was short – fourteen months – and Lawry wrote a long letter to the Committee as he was leaving, indicating that the young men were *perfectly willing to remain*, that they had made *very satisfactory progress in the native language* and that they had gained the confidence of the Chiefs, as they were skilled in carpentry and blacksmithing. But more especially, Lawry praised their honourable behaviour – *their steady and consistent uniformity of deportment*. (*INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE LETTERS AND JOURNALS* LAWRY TO COMMITTEE, 18/08/1823*).

Back in Sydney, Lawry had to defend himself before the NSW Provisional District Meeting of the Wesleyan Church for leaving his appointment to Tonga, and in reference to Lilly and Tindall he told the Sydney Committee that:

these young men possess a genuine piety, are strongly attached to the Mission, and discover considerable readiness in acquiring the language, and a fervent zeal for the salvation of the natives. (MINUTES AND REPORTS NSW PROVISIONAL DISTRICT MEETING, 30/12/1823).*

Captain John Beveridge who called at Nuku'alofa in November 1824 spoke approvingly of the young men who had been left in Tonga to keep the Mission door open. He made some specific remarks about their work with the language:

The young men have made great proficiency in the Tonga language, especially George Lilly – he has a talent for languages which you will observe from his work; ... he having put the language in some measure into a form with the assistance of Mariner's work and the knowledge he has obtained of the language [which will be] a blessing of God beneficial to the Mission when properly established. (INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE. LETTERS AND JOURNALS CAPTAIN BEVERIDGE, SHIP ST MICHAEL, NOVEMBER 1824).*

Beveridge's words were in fact prophetic. When Thomas was in Sydney, preparing to sail for Tonga, he worked on the language and was able to meet with George Lilly and benefit from his Tongan papers, providing Thomas with a list of useful Tongan words and expressions. Unfortunately, these papers do not appear to have survived. Nevertheless, they were some help to Thomas who said in November 1825:

I have lately been trying to acquire a little of the Tonga language, but I find a great deficiency of words – there are but a very few words additional in the work of the young men. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 21/II/1825).*

Some years later, however, when writing his history of Tonga, Thomas believed that he had *learned many Tonga words, but chiefly by means of the young men.* [Lilly and Tindall]. (*THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS** P. 349.).

Thomas considered taking Lilly with him when he eventually set off from Sydney for Tongatapu, but, in the end, decided against it. Lilly for his part went on to spend an adventurous life in the Australian colonies and New Zealand

until his death in Ballarat, Victoria in 1867. In the forty years after leaving Tonga, he had married Mary Anne Osborne and spent time in Sydney, Launceston, Hobart, Melbourne, Auckland, Portland and Ballarat. During that time, he worked at times as a teacher, stationer, bookseller, auctioneer, and shopkeeper. (*SMH* 18/07/1922).

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Charles Tindall was helpful the day after the Hutchinson and Thomas families arrived in June 1826. To begin with, he assisted the new missionaries to negotiate an agreement with Ata to allow them to live and minister with the Chief and his people. And then, later, Tindall was able to aid them to work through some difficulties when Tongan and English customs came into conflict. The Chief, Ata, had been speaking critically about the attitudes of the new missionaries, and the clash of cultures. The new English missionaries did not always understand and respect Tongan ways and there were clashes, in particular, over issues of authority. Ata held the view, as Thomas heard it, that:

At home we were Chiefs – were strong and could do great things, but here we were few and weak – that they [Ata and others of influence] were Chiefs and could do as they liked at Tonga. (*THOMAS, JOURNAL** 15/09/1826).

Sarah Thomas also tells about an authority issue, noting that Ata had come to the Mission House on one occasion and was frustrated that he was locked out of the Mission Compound. He responded angrily and:

threatened two or three times to burn down our house and said that the land was his and that we were not Chiefs.
(*JOURNAL OF SARAH THOMAS**, 16/10/1826).

When other misunderstandings arose, and the Chief was angry with the Missionaries, Tindall was able to act as a mediator. Thomas had agreed with Ata to have the roof of the new Mission House thatched and when the job was finished, he was not happy with it and told Ata so, offering what he regarded as a fair price for the work. Ata was furious and ordered the missionaries out of the house. Tindall, with Hutchinson, went to speak with Ata, taking some additional trade goods to try and calm the Chief's anger. For his part, Thomas did not agree with what Charles and Hutchinson had done and commented that *I did not like it and on that account did not take it* (extra trade goods) (*THOMAS JOURNAL**, 27/09/1826).

Within a year, following continual opposition to much of what the missionaries were trying to achieve, they decided to abandon the Mission. Tindall, too, believed it was time for him to leave and return to Sydney. When a vessel from Sydney, the Darling, arrived the missionaries sent on board a considerable

amount of their personal possessions: 6 boxes, 3 for each family, containing books and clothes, followed by several more boxes! (*ibid*, 06/07/1827). When the Darling departed Charles Tindall was on board.

Tindall had played a crucial interpreting role in helping Thomas and Hutchinson settle in at Hihifo but he now believed there was little hope of [him] being useful to them for the future. (*ibid*, 27/09/1826; 09/10/26) Importantly, he carried a letter from Thomas to the Sydney Committee asking for a larger vessel to visit ... as soon as possible to take them back to Sydney. (*ibid*, 08/07/1827). The Hutchinsons left when that vessel arrived. But the Thomas's did not leave. They remained for many years, finally retiring to England in 1860.

The missionary translators 1826-1845

John and Mary Hutchinson (1826-1828) were members of the missionary party who arrived at Hihifo in 1826 to help re-establish the Wesleyan Mission. John was in fact appointed the Superintendent of the Mission, but as it turned out he and Mary would only spend about two years in the Friendly Islands. Their short stay meant that they had little to contribute to translation and the development of Tongan literature.

Within three months of their arrival, they wanted to return to Sydney as things had not gone very well for them. (*Thomas, Journal**, 27/09/1826; 09/10/1826). They had some of their possessions stolen more than once. Hutchinson informed the Committee in London that they were being *robbed and abused by men and boys of all description*. Mary had been spat on and physically assaulted, receiving *a heavy blow by a large stick* from a person of *the lower orders*. (*Inwards Correspondence, Letters and Journals* Hutchinson* 31/08/1826). Papa, whose husband was Ata, had ordered the few girls that she had been teaching to cease attending her classes. As Hutchinson explained:

A few young women whom Mrs H. was teaching to sew and read, and who had made considerable progress, were taken away by the wife of the Chief, who was also strongly opposed to our object (MN 1828, HUTCHINSON, JOURNAL, 15/10/1826).

Mary was pregnant at the time, which would have been a daunting circumstance for such a young woman expecting her first child in what was a new and strange land. (*Incoming Correspondence, Letters and Journals* Hutchinson to Secretaries*, 31/08/1826; *Thomas to Secretaries*, 15/05/1825; 28/06/1826). Significantly, too, her husband was often unwell, referring frequently to *my affliction*, and telling the Committee that he had *often been near eternity in the course of these past two years*. (*ibid Hutchinson to Secretaries*, 17/05/1828). By his own admission, he could not cope with the language, telling the Secretaries as he was leaving his appointment, that his time in Tongatapu was painful and unproductive:

It has been a time of great trial ... [because of] the painful consideration of my inability to speak or even learn to speak the Tongan language ... I think it my duty to state that I fear I shall never be able to speak a foreign tongue which

makes me look back upon the last two years of my life as lost forever. (IBID).

That was not just the opinion of one whose health was failing and who had decided to leave Tonga. His colleague, Thomas, could also see that Hutchinson was not coping with mission life. Hutchinson, Thomas said:

despairs of learning the language – he would not be useful here (THOMAS, JOURNAL, II/04/1827).*

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John and Sarah Thomas, (1826-1850, 1856-1860) on board the *Andromeda* enroute to Sydney from England, attempted to learn as many Tongan words and phrases as possible. (*Thomas, Journal** 23/08/1825). John had also begun trying his hand at translation. He was working with Mariner's Vocabulary and Grammar and received some help from Tamma Nau the young man taken to England by Lawry and sent back to Tonga with the Thomas's by the Committee. At this early stage, Thomas felt that the language [Mariner's vocabulary] did not seem to have the words he needed to translate biblical truths. While working on a Tongan version of the Lord's Prayer, he wrote:

I find I cannot find words enough. This is the case I suppose in translating the Scriptures in all languages – but I trust when I get to understand the language, I shall find many words more than what at present I have. (IBID, 13/07/1825).

As the *Andromeda* sailed closer to Sydney, Thomas thought about beginning mission work in Tonga and how he could best serve the cause of Christ . He made a list of his priorities:

- (1) I must get a knowledge of the language as soon as possible. I must study it regularly and constantly.
- (2) Until I have obtained this, may converse with them by an interpreter if I can obtain one – if not by writing a few discourses and translating them into their language. [he listed six discourses to start with: Creation, Fall, Heaven and Hell, Life and Sufferings of Christ, Repentance and Faith]
- (3) I may translate the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and other parts of the Scripture which contain some important points to be known. (IBID, 08/20/1825).

Fortunately for Thomas, Charles Tindall was on hand when the Thomas's and Hutchinsons landed at Hihifo in June 1826. He played a crucial role as an inter-

preter from the time of their arrival. The newly arrived missionaries had to meet with Ata, state their purpose in coming to Tonga, and seek permission to live among Ata's people, promote Christianity, and teach as many of them who would come to be taught. As Thomas had said while preparing for Tonga, he saw his mission was to *instruct them in the Christian Religion and to teach them.* (*IBID*, 08/10/1825).

Soon after their arrival, and while they were making their way to meet Ata, Hutchinson and Thomas were able to see the piece of land that Charles Tindall had been able to secure for the Mission. The plot of ground was known by the local people as Amelica (America). It was some five acres in total, and was in a fine situation near the sea and near to Ata. It was situated just outside the Fort at Kolovai, *near the trench.* (*Thomas, Tongatapu or the Friendly Islands** p.1254). Here they built the Mission House on ground where the Wesleyan minister's house at Kolovai stands to this day. And as Lawry had done at Mu'a so at Kolovai the missionaries called the Mission House Cokevernal.

The agreements worked out with Ata the day after they arrived, appeared very satisfactory. In these important negotiations, Thomas said, *we were highly favoured in having Charles to interpret as he seems master of the language.* (*MN 1827; Thomas Journal 27/06/1826; Incoming Correspondence Letters and Journals, Thomas to Committee, 07/07/1826*). The conversation with Ata and his people concluded in a friendly way, and the mission party moved off:

*having thanked the chieff for his kindness, and having taken
our leave of him and many others by shaking hands, we left
the fort for the beach in order to go on board the ship ...
(Thomas, Tongatapu or the Friendly Islands* p. 350).*

That day, Tuesday June 27th, 1826, had gone well. Ata was happy to commit to all that the missionaries had requested, and more: he would let all his people that chose ... come to join us – that he would not prevent them. If the missionaries needed to leave Hihifo in case of sickness, they would be free to take all their property, even to the mat upon the floor. That was Thomas's understanding of what was agreed, but in the months that followed, the working of the agreements proved to be difficult, resulting in many conflicts. Before he actually arrived in Tonga, on the high seas, Thomas had a hopeful vision of the future, acknowledging, nevertheless, that it would not come easily. (*THOMAS, JOURNAL** 01/07/1825).

Thomas felt overwhelmed at times with the various duties he was called upon to carry out in setting up a new Mission Station. It took several months to erect the two-storey wooden Mission House they had brought from Sydney as a 'flat pack', build a store to keep their trade goods safe, and establish a garden. All the practical outdoor work meant that there was little time for language

study. And yet despite all these demands, he paid as much time as he could to learn Tongan, as various entries in his journal indicate:

Some natives were exerting themselves to teach us Tonga language this afternoon. (ibid, 07/11/1827.). I have been employed chiefly in the language. I desire to be acquainted with it ... I think I am very dull and shall require much time to be able to get master of it ... I have got many sentences this week and some new words. I feel a hope of learning this language, but I must be patient, and I think I am very dull in this matter and far from having a gift for language. (IBID, 07/01/1828; 19/04/1828).

Some of Thomas's work on the language took place with the students after school lessons had finished. These sessions played an important part in advancing his understanding. Two and a half years after his arrival in Hihifo, for example, he commented that when talking to our boys at school, he *got the word for the spirit*. They had been talking about what happens to the body after death, and in that context the word for spirit emerged. (*IBID, 10/01/1828*).

Thomas's most common way of developing a practical use of language, however, was to work with what he called a native assistant. In preparing material to read on Sundays and for school classes he called on local knowledge. His superiors in London learned about it in a letter he penned to them a little over twelve months after arriving in Tonga:

My manner of proceeding, so as to prepare subjects to read on a Sabbath day, and, at other times, is as follows. I select some striking part of the word of God; sometimes a chapter, at others a parable. I then procure a native. We sit down together, and I endeavour to tell him what I have selected, line by line, in the native tongue; and he gives me correct expressions for what I need. This I write down first upon the slate; I then read it over, and, by questions, ascertain whether or not he understands what I mean. Afterwards I transcribe this into a book which I keep for that purpose; and on the Sabbath-day I read it to the people, making such additions as I am able, and enforcing the great duties of the Bible upon them. This way of preparing my work is very laborious. The writing is great: but it is the best way I know of, since by this means I obtain a view of the language, partly by writing and partly by speaking it. We find it difficult at times to procure native assistance, as there are but few that are proper for this work. (MN 1829 THOMAS TO SECRETARIES, 22/09/1828).

Thomas, in the early days, repeatedly referred to his struggle with the language. Even after nearly three years in Tonga he could still write about being a novice in the language:

I feel thankful to God that the lessons I wrote in Pencil upon the slate required very little correction by the assistance of a native. I see from this that I begin to enter a little more into the meaning of some parts of the language. I have been encouraged in the language. I believe I make some progress. Oh that every new discovery may lead me to be more correct and more devoted to God. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 28/02/1829; 07/03/1829).*

Thomas's prayer was answered some 30 years later when in 1861 a new version of the Hymnbook, which included the liturgies for Morning Prayer, Marriage, Baptism, and Funerals, appeared in print. The title page in both English and Tongan bore the name John Thomas as its author.

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Thomas Wright (1822-23; 1826-1830) had originally gone to Tonga as a servant for the Lawrys in 1822. He left Tonga in 1823 and eventually travelled with the Lawry family to England. He ended up back in Sydney and returned to Tonga with the Hutchinson and Thomas contingent of 1826. He ultimately became 'a lay missionary' rather than a domestic servant and deserves a mention for his part in the Wesleyan Church's story. Wright, a former convict, converted by the Wesleyans in Sydney, had been given a pardon in 1822 by the Governor of New South Wales so that he could *accompany the Rev Walter Lawry to the Friendly Islands* as a servant. (*Colonial Secretary Index 1788-1825*). He had lived with the Thomas's in Sydney in 1825 while they were preparing for Tonga and arrived in the Friendly Islands as a paid servant to both the Hutchinsons and Thomas's. (*Thomas, Tongatapu or the Friendly Islands**, p. 341).

During the early days, and while the Thomas's were settling in, Wright was helpful with interpreting. Uhila would sometimes call upon the missionaries when he was visiting Hihifo from Nuku'alofa and Thomas tells about the time when he and *the men from Nukualofa* visited. It was in the evening, so the visitors stayed for family worship. Thomas Wright was at the Mission House at the time and gave help with interpreting. Thomas had very little Tongan at the time, Uhila spoke a little English, and so Wright was called upon to translate. As John Thomas said:

I got Thomas [Wright] to explain that I should be glad if I could speak their language so as for them to understand but

that our God could see them and I prayed that he would bless them. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 29/09/1826).*

Uhila replied in what English was available to him, saying that he and his people liked Jehovah, and added:

Tonga man foolish, people at Bear [Pea] and Nugaloffa [Nuku'alofa] like to pray but at Hehefo [Hihifo] no like prayer. (IBID).

Wright worked with the missionaries for almost three years, not without some problems, one of which led Thomas, Turner and Cross to decide that they would *have nothing to do with him*. He had already given up his agreement to be a servant with the Mission in March 1827 because of ill health! (*Incoming Correspondence Letters and Journals, Thomas to Secretaries*, 04/01/1828). No details were recorded about Wright's unacceptable behavior that led the missionaries to cut off all contact with him except that he had committed *a sin of no ordinary kind*. (*Thomas, Journal**, 04/07/1828; 04/08/1828). However, when the Thomas's left Hihifo two years later, Wright had obviously been re-instated, as the missionaries asked him to care for mission property including the vacated Mission House. Without a missionary at Hihifo, Wright undertook some 'missionary work' of his own. Peter Bays, survivor of the Minerva wreck, who spent some months in Nuku'alofa, went with Uhila to visit Wright at Kolovai. The old Englishman, Bays said:

has care of the Mission premises, under Ata ... speaks the Tongan language fluently ... and has about half a dozen native boys whom he prays with morning and evening and teaches them to read and write. (Bays, Wreck of the Minerva, p.118).

Wright also received a mention when Turner reported on the historic opening of the first Wesleyan Chapel in Nuku'alofa in September 1830. Previously the Wesleyans used the church building erected by Tupou for the Tahitians. In a lengthy report about the opening ceremonies of the new chapel, Turner noted that *our singing was uncommonly good*. William Woon, the newly arrived Mission printer, added that:

The singing was conducted by Thomas Wright, a servant of Mr. Lawry when on the island; and though Thomas does not understand music, he has succeeded in teaching them several of our congregational tunes. He has been very useful; and as the natives have good voices, we hope to make the singing a little better. (MN, 1832, WOON, LETTER, 23/03/1831; INCOM-

*ING CORRESPONDENCE LETTERS AND JOURNALS, TURNER,
JOURNAL*, 03/09/1831.).*

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Nathaniel Turner (1827-1831) was appointed to Tonga to support Hutchinson and Thomas and ensure the Wesleyan Mission's future. Soon after his arrival in 1827 he said that he was *truly thankful for being enabled to make a beginning of a new Wesleyan Mission Station at Nuku'alofa*. The way had been prepared well for him by the Tahitians, Hape and Tafeta (LMS), who had been there more than 18 months before the Turner, Cross and Weiss families arrived. During that time, they had made important headway in introducing the lotu. The new Wesleyan missionaries were blessed by having the support of the ruling Chief, Aleamotu'a, who said that it was to the Tahitians that he owed his conversion to Christianity. His two nephews were also there, Uhila and Ulakai, who were friendly to the lotu and who were bilingual to a degree, able to speak their native Tongan and a little English. In addition, Langi and his Tahitian wife were there. Langi was multilingual. As well as Tongan, he spoke Tahitian, Fijian and English. And there was also the young man Katoa, one of the first Tongans to embrace the faith, as far as he understood it, from the Tahitians. Katoa formed a close relationship, from the beginning, with Turner and Cross. Turner then, was well supported in his attempts to learn Tongan.

From the beginning Turner started to use Tongan words and phrases. He had been doing some preparation in Sydney the moment he was appointed to the Friendly Islands, presumably using Mariner as his source. Thus, just three days after arrival he began using Tongan words and expressions, referring to referred to Aleamotu'a as the Eiki lahi and to the Tahitian's Chapel as the fale lotu. (*INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE LETTERS AND JOURNALS* TURNER, 04/11/1827*).

Three weeks on he was enthusiastically reporting that he was:

enabled to put a few sentences together in the language of Tonga to read in the chapel [the Tahitian Chapel in Nuku'alofa] ... am truly thankful for being enabled to make a beginning and hope by the blessing of God I shall succeed in being useful to the people. (IBID 24/11/1827).

The next day being Sunday, he was able to share a simple prayer with the congregation and was pleased with his effort. He said that he:

read the prayer I had yesterday prepared in Tongan and the people afterwards expressed themselves as pleased and surprised that I should so soon speak in their Tongue and to my satisfaction said it was lea faka Tonga aubito aubito i.e. perfectly the language of Tonga. (IBID 25/11/1827).

This rapid progress is surprising, seeing that before coming to Tonga, and when he was finishing four years of missionary service in New Zealand, he declared to the Mission Committee in London that he had not been able to learn the Maori language. Writing from Parramatta in mid 1827, he said that after his years in New Zealand he was:

fully satisfied that I shall never acquire the language [Maori] and the principle reason is because I have little or no Natural Talent for such an undertaking ... The same opinion is [stated] by my two brethren who have lived and laboured with me ever since I went down to New Zealand. This they have publicly given as their opinion. (INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE, LETTERS AND JOURNALS, TURNER TO SECRETARIES, PARRAMATTA, 1827).*

He then asked to be appointed to an English parish in New South Wales. Nevertheless, he said, that if the Committee wished, he would go back into mission work, but he believed that it would not be God's will. He told the London Committee that he would:

go back to New Zealand or to any other Heathen Station which you may think well to appoint me into. Still, I must say that with my present views and feelings I shall go to such a station with full conviction that I am not going according to the will of Heaven. (IBID).

The Committee did not share Turner's views and feelings about his abilities and preferences and appointed him to Tonga.

In Tonga he was quick to pick up some basics of the language, and so wrote to the Committee in London, admitting that *the principal reason* for requesting to leave New Zealand was his *want of ability for learning the language of the Heathen*. Now living in Tonga he saw things differently. His experience, he said, *compels me to alter my mind*:

From the progress I have been enabled to make in the Tonga language since our arrival I feel satisfied that if the Lord favours me with health &c I shall be enabled to obtain so much of it as will make me generally useful. (INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE, LETTERS AND JOURNALS, TURNER TO SECRETARIES 18/02/1828).*

Turner certainly was generally useful and Thomas believed that his New Zealand experience gave the new missionary to Tonga an advantage over him.

(*Thomas, Journal**, 06/12/1827). When the first book in Tongan was printed in 1828 the title page indicated that Turner was the author. However, there were others too, who were assistants in this small but monumental work. They were the locals who helped with language advice and assistance. Turner, however, did not normally make acknowledgement of help from Tongan assistants. (He did on one occasion refer to a youth called William who he said had been his teacher for more than two years. See Chapter 7.) So, the first book went to print as Turner's creation.

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William Cross, (1827-1835) like his colleague Turner, was able to make rapid progress with the language. Cross's biographer, the Fijian missionary John Hunt, has claimed that Cross was able, *in less than five months after he landed, to conduct divine service in Tonguese*. Messrs Turner and Thomas, Cross, had prepared hymns to be sung in the native language; and a book of lessons was forwarded to Port Jackson to be printed (*HUNT, MEMOIR OF CROSS, P. 21*).

As Cross himself tells it, within a few months he had obtained a sufficient grasp of the language to be able *to tell them something respecting God and their souls, in their own language*, and to set up, with Turner, a school with lessons taught in Tongan. This decision was a major departure from Thomas's policy and practice at Hihifo which was to teach English. Cross's report to his superiors in London told of remarkable progress being made:

*This morning we commenced a School at this Station
[Nuku'alofa] with an intention to teach both children and
adults to read their own language. The number we had
today was about fifty. They manifest a great desire to learn.
(MN 1829, CROSS, JOURNAL, 17/03/1828).*

This was possible, it seems, because Cross's plan was *to devote the morning and forenoon to the study of the language* (*IBID.*)

Mrs Cross, in writing to her parents in December 1831, praised her husband's success with the language, saying that he had completed translations of the four Gospels, Acts, and a large portion of the Epistles, the Book of Genesis and other detached parts of the Scripture. *The Lord has helped him much. (ibid. p.57)* This divine help, Cross believed, had enabled him to communicate instruction *in a way that far exceeds any thing I expected in so short a time. (Inwards Correspondence, Letters and Journals* Cross, 08/09/1828)*. The content of the 'divine help' remains unacknowledged, except for a casual reference by a shipwrecked Englishman who lived at Nuku'alofa for a time. He spoke of Cross's helper as an interpreter called Vave, an obscure figure whose identity and contribution remains unclear.

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James Watkin (1831-1837) soon after his arrival in Tonga in March 1831 preached his first sermon in the Friendly Islands, in English and with an interpreter:

addressed a native congregation for the first time, through the medium of Brother Cross, whose knowledge of the language and utterance are excellent. (MN 1832, WATKIN TO SECRETARIES, 25/04/1831).

Within six months, he said, he was able to conduct Sunday worship in Tongan, although he made no reference to any help he would have been given in achieving such a remarkable feat. (MN 1833, Watkin Journal* 22/08/1831; 19/09/1831).

Soon after, on his appointment to Ha'apai, he felt that within a very short time he would be able to preach without notes. (*MN 1834, Watkin, Journal* Feb 1832*) and was able to explain to the Committee in London that:

During the week I have been employed in translating the book of Daniel. I read and remarked on John ix: and shall, I think, now shake hands with reading sermons. (MN 1834, WATKIN JOURNAL 12/05/1832).

At that time he also referred to translating the book of Esther and he was happy with his progress with the language. (*MN 1834, Watkin Journal* 12/05/1832*). He was able to use his translation of Esther in public worship, which, he said, *I had previously rendered into Tonguese, and which excites great interest.* (*IBID*).

The following year he reported that he was translating Jeremiah, Romans, Corinthians and Isaiah. In company with other early missionaries, he did not say what local people were helping him with the language, although he did make the comment on one occasion that he was getting assistance from *every help within my reach*, an obvious reference to Tongan assistants! (*Incoming Correspondence, Letters and Journals*, Watkin to Committee September 1833*). He was later to remark about the burden of translating and at the Annual District Meeting of 1836 he noted that he would be working on the Gospel of Mark, Isaiah, Proverbs, Hebrews and the Apocrypha. (*Minutes and Reports* Friendly Islands District Meeting 1836*). Despite all his work on language, when the New Testament was being prepared for publication (1844-1848), only the Acts of the Apostles was attributed to him when it was published in 1849. (*INWARDS CORRESPONDENCE, LETTERS AND JOURNALS, * THOMAS TO SECRETARIES 06/06/1848*).

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Charles and Jane Tucker (1833-1841) arrived in Tonga in June 1833 by which time considerable work on the language had already been done by Thomas, Turner and Cross with local assistants. There was an agreed orthography. The Alphabet and two booklets in Tongan were in print together with a number of small portions of Scripture. Both Charles and Jane quickly began learning Tongan which led to them making a significant contribution to the development of the language and the amount of material available in print for schools. When the Native Training Institution was established in 1841, Jane Tucker's manuscript books were used by Francis Wilson as class texts. (SEE CHAPTER 10)

From the beginning it was clear that both Jane and Charles Tucker had a gift with language. Thomas lists eight books of the New Testament that Tucker translated and were included in the 1849 edition of the New Testament (1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, 1 & 2 Samuel (Incoming Correspondence. *Letters and Journals** Thomas to Secretaries 06/10/1848). In addition, Jane made an indelible impression by her teaching and mentoring role. Her husband Charles, in his tribute to her after her death in 1875, said that she was:

*one of the honoured instruments of laying the foundation of
that temple of knowledge which has been reared and beauti-
fied by skillful hands in the Friendly Islands. (TUCKER,
MEMOIR, CITY MAGAZINE, 1876).*

One of Jane Tucker's significant contributions was her special class that provided advanced teaching to a select group of leaders. Fifty 'pupils' benefitted from her teaching and mentoring when she established a special school called the Mental Improvement Class. King George and Queen Charlotte attended together with some Local Preachers and Class Leaders. Those attending the class would have had their understanding and skills with the language expanded as they studied English, Reading and Writing, Geography, Mapping and Astronomy. In a Geography lesson King George, Jane said, was amazed at how small Tonga appeared on the Globe of the world. (*White, Memoir*, p.83-84; *WJO* 1852). Interestingly, when King George was speaking at a missionary meeting some years later in Lifuka he referred to Tonga as *these insignificant sand banks*. (*FARMER*, p.368).

King George also sought Jane's assistance when preparing sermons. Her Memoir tells the story that the King, on one occasion:

*Came with slate in hand, and asked for Mrs Tucker, re-
questing her assistance to make a sermon on a certain text ...
Mrs Tucker told him it was not in the province of ladies to
make sermons; but he replied that he knew she was a very
wise woman, and as he would take no denial yielded to his
importunity, pondered the text, and sketched for him a
sermon in Tonguese. King George preached it the same*

evening and informed the Local Preachers afterwards to whom he was indebted for it. From that time, she was often importuned by the local preachers to assist them in like manner, and she seldom refused. (WHITE, MEMOIR OF MRS JANE TUCKER, P.77).

King George also played an important role in Charles Tucker's translation work. In a letter to London in 1838 Tucker told how the King came to the Mission House to help in correcting some of his translations. (*INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE, FRIENDLY ISLANDS. LETTERS AND JOURNALS**, TUCKER TO SECRETARIES, 12/01/1838).

Commodore Wilkes of the US Exploring Expedition of 1834-1842, who visited Tonga, was impressed by Jane Tucker's educational work in the classroom as she helped her pupils expand their subject knowledge and vocabulary. She also took advantage of opportunities beyond the classroom. She told Wilkes of a trip from the northern Islands to Tongatapu when they were detained at Nomuka:

The evenings were spent in conveying to the natives, by familiar illustration, some idea of the first principles of astronomy. The lamp was made to represent the sun, a cocoa-nut the earth, some other object the moon, and as the cocoa-nut, suspended by a twisted thread, revolved round the lamp, they were taught the motions of the earth, with the cause of the change in its seasons. Lessons were also given on eclipses, gravitation, &c. Thus the views of the natives became corrected and enlarged ... (FARMER, P.332).

Late in 1838 catastrophe struck when a fire broke out and the Tucker's house was burnt to the ground. They lost everything except the clothes they were wearing! Valuable manuscripts were lost including Jane Tucker's maps and papers:

all Mr Tucker's translations: seventy psalms, and the whole of Proverbs and Hebrews with part of St. Mark, have fallen a prey to the flames. (MISSIONARY REGISTER 1839; WHITE, MEMOIR OF MRS JANE TUCKER, P.93).

Charles's loss was all the greater because, presumably, some of the translations that were burned were the ones that King George had helped him to correct!

The King, when he heard of the disaster, wrote immediately to the Tuckers, with deep feeling, indicating what help he could offer:

Mr Tucker I received your letter, and read it, and know the thing which has befallen your house, and all that belongs to you, and I desire that my ear might be torn open that I might attend to your writing. Now all the things you have

here, leave to me. I will bring them all, if I am alive. I do not boast, for you know my mind. I have no wish to love you in word only, but I will bring all your things. When I heard that all your property was burnt, my mind was pained because of your poverty, and because of what had befallen you; but I am thankful that you both are alive. I expect we shall see each other soon when I shall visit Tonga. I am your friend in Jesus Christ, George (INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE, LETTERS AND JOURNALS. TUCKER TO SECRETARIES 03/II/1838).*

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Stephen Rabone (1836–1850) contributed to translation differently from some of his earlier colleagues. By the time he arrived there were thousands of pages of Tongan material in circulation, issued from the Printing Office in Nukualofa and later, when the press was removed to the north, from Feletoa and finally from Neiafu. The ‘catalogue’ of printed material included a Hymn Book, Catechisms, Rules of Society, the Alphabet and Spelling Lists, and numerous portions of scripture (chapters of Mathew, Luke and John’s Gospels, Romans and Corinthians, Isaiah, Psalms, I & 2 Samuel). Rabone added to this list, and when the text for the entire New Testament was decided upon, Rabone’s translations of the Gospels of Mark and Luke, and Hebrews were included. He has been given the task of revising the entire text of the New Testament for publication and made a point of telling the Committee about his role in that process:

I do not wish it to be thought that I have really translated the whole of the New Testament. Most of it had been in print for years. My individual part in it was Mark, Luke and Hebrewsfor the remaining books are translated by Mr Thomas. (INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE, LETTERS AND JOURNALS THOMAS TO SECRETARIES 06/10/1848; RABONE TO SECRETARIES, 05/08/1849).*

Rabone’s other contributions to translation, however, were substantial and significant for both church and state. The missionaries often complained that they did not have a Tongan English Vocabulary/Dictionary apart from Mariner’s work. Lilly, Thomas and Watkin had all collated lists of everyday words but, although useful, they were in manuscript and were never printed.

In 1845 that lack was remedied when there was issued from the press in Neiafu the long sought after Vocabulary. Its title page bore the name of Stephen Rabone its author. The full title of the two hundred and fifteen page volume was:

A Vocabulary of the Tongan Language, Arranged in Alphabetical Order to which is annexed A List of Idiomatic Phrases. By the Reverend Stephen Rabone Wesleyan Missionary. Vavau. Printed at the Wesleyan Mission Press Neiafu 1845).

When the Vocabulary was published a number of copies were sent to the Committee in London and Rabone explained how the publication came into being:

On my arrival in these islands, I began learning the language as all my predecessors had done; namely, by “picking up” the words when and where I could. ... There was nothing in the shape of a Vocabulary except what is published in Mariner’s Account of the Tonga Islands ... As I proceeded picking up and putting together my words... paper after paper was filled with words. I then began arranging them alphabetically and after proceeding in this work for some time, I was requested by my brethren to prepare with an eye to publication ... Most of the words were collected when on the wing, when journeying, or voyaging, or conversing at home with natives, the practice being to carry a small blank book, and, on hearing a new word, to pencil it down, there and then. It was very difficult to get the meanings of some of the words, and, when obtained, still more so to give that meaning in English; hence the awkward length of many of the meanings, no known English word expressing the full sense of the Tonguese ... It is by no means to be supposed that this contains the whole of the Tonga language ... It does, however, contain all the language in common use; and a learner will rarely hear a word but here he may find it and its meaning. (MN 1846 RABONE TO SECRETARIES 05/08/1845).

Stephen Rabone’s translation skills were also called upon at the District Meeting of 1848 when a request came from King George for a Code of Laws. Almost a decade earlier the King had received help with what became known as the 1839 Code. Now the king wanted a much updated and expanded Code. As members of the District Meeting were reminded, King George had *repeatedly and earnestly requested the Missionaries in preparing a Code of Laws* and as a result Rabone was asked to respond to that request. He was to use as a model, *as far as applicable to Tonga, the code adopted in Tahiti published in Ellis’s Researches.* (*Minutes and Reports, Friendly Islands**, 20/04/1848). A year later Rabone’s translation

was completed, and his work was *recommended to the King and Chiefs for adoption and proclamation.* (*ibid* 1849) The Code was adopted by the King, and it paved the way for a Constitution in the years to come.

The Castaways 1822-1835

William Singleton, a Port au Prince survivor had been in Tonga for sixteen years by the time the first Wesleyans arrived. Much of that time, Watkin said, he had *lived as the natives themselves*. Lawry, in 1822, benefitted from Singleton's knowledge of the language as he played an essential interpreting role which led to the new missionary party being accepted by Tongan Chiefs and allowed to live at Mu'a. (SEE CHAPTER 2).

The week after Thomas and Hutchinson's arrival in June 1826 Singleton visited Hihifo from Mu'a, together with some of *Tammy Now's friends*. He came as Fatu's messenger. The Mu'a chief wanted Hutchinson and Thomas to know that he was sorry that one of them was not coming to live with him at Mu'a. He had recovered some mission property that had been lost after Lawry's departure in 1823 and that he had kept the Farm for us [Lawry's 'farm'] *and a part of the cattle.* (*Thomas, Journal** 04/07/1826). He also wanted Tammy to come to Mu'a so that he could:

bear about England. He says he has heard about it by Englishmen, and he now wants to hear about it by a Tonga man to see whether what he had heard was true. (ibid).

Thomas told Singleton to tell Fatu that he and Hutchinson wished to stay at Hihifo *until we had learned the language*, that they expected other missionaries would come to Tonga and that *perhaps some would come to him.* (IBID).

Singleton, with Fatu, was the first to come on board the Industry and welcome the Turner and Cross and families almost eighteen months later (November 1827), even before they had reached Hihifo to meet up with Thomas and Hutchinson. (*Turner, Journal**, 02/11/1827). Singleton was the interpreter, conveying Fatu's request that one of the missionaries be allocated to Mu'a. Again, Fatu was unsuccessful. It would be many years before a missionary would be stationed there.

Once Nathaniel Turner was established at Nuku'alofa, Singleton visited him and helped with the language. Singleton was a *thorough Tonga man in his manner and language*, useful to the missionaries as an interpreter and in various ways. After a visit in December 1827 Turner recorded his appreciation of Singleton knowledge:

Spent most of the afternoon at language with Singleton who had come over [from Mu'a] to spend the Sabbath with us. He rendered me considerable assistance. The Hymn and Prayer I had composed he assured me were perfectly native in their Language, and that the people could not misunderstanding (sic) them. (INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE, LETTERS AND JOURNALS, TURNER, 02/12/1827).*

....Singleton was also helpful to Peter Turner when he took up an appointment in Ha'apai in 1831. Taufa'ahau would often come to the Mission House and seek advice from the missionary about various matters. On one occasion the Chief had many things that Turner found difficult to explain: questions about marriage and whether servants could leave their master '*when they pleased*'. Turner sought help from Singleton and even *with his aid* (one who had *lived on the Islands many years*) he found some questions difficult to answer. The missionary *excused answering or giving advice*, he said, *until he had conferred with his brother missionaries*. Turner was being careful because Taufa'ahau made notes of conversations with the missionaries:

Everything we say of this nature, Turner observed, is written in a book, and becomes law in fact. (IBID, 06/08/1832).

On the question of marriage, Thomas had urged Singleton to marry the woman he was then living with because, he said *it was an evil to the cause of God*. Singleton replied that he had *spoken to his housekeeper as he called her* and she was pleased to comply, and Singleton and the 'housekeeper' were married. (*Thomas, Journal**, 14/08/1831; 11/09/1831). A few weeks later he became a member of the Wesleyan Church and began meeting in Class. When he died on the 13th of May 1832, Watkin believed that he had *died in the faith of the Gospel*. Lawry's prayers for Singleton, offered a decade previously, had not gone unanswered.

The extraordinary character of Wm. Singleton unfolds itself gradually: he has become a perfect Tonga-man in his manners and has consequently abandoned all civilized habits. What his intentions towards us remains doubtful. We have laboured much to bring this once civilized, but now uncivilized man, to a knowledge of his awful condition before God. We have prayed for him often by name; but hitherto he manifests no contrition. (MN 1823. LAWRY, JOURNAL, 20/12/1822).

The uncivilised castaway had eventually come to faith and when he died Turner and two or three of his countrymen attended his brief burial service which consisted of singing and prayer. According to the Tongans who were with Singleton when he died, he declared his faith in a few simple words:

Oku ou tui mau Kia Sisu Kalaisi [I believe fully in Christ]
*(INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE, LETTERS AND JOURNALS,**
WATKIN TO THE COMMITTEE, 12/05/1832).

James Read was another castaway who was very helpful to the missionaries with interpretation and translation. He had settled in Tonga following the wreck of the Ceres in 1821. There were thirty crew on board the *unfortunate vessel*, thirteen of whom were killed and the remainder, except for Read, left Tonga as soon as they could get passage on visiting whalers or trading vessels. Read, who spent the next forty years in Tonga, had been initially adopted by a Chief of Lifuka during which time he began to learn the language:

The Chief into whose hands I had fallen took a great liking to me, adopted me as his son, and treated me with such attention, as well nigh to reconcile me to my new mode of life. In a month I had made great progress in speaking the language. (ORLEBAR, P.65).

Read did not stay in Ha'apai. After leaving Lifuka he settled at Mu'a where he lived with a woman he called an old female who spent a good deal of time helping him to learn Tongan. As Read said, she:

took every opportunity of teaching me their language, and I readily began to understand them. (IBID, P.63).

He was then adopted, he said, by the Chief of that place:

I am now [1830] living in Tonga [Tapu] patronized by a chief called Fatou [Fatu], who has adopted me as his son, married me to his daughter, and given me a house to live in and land to cultivate: I have also three children, to whose education my life is devoted, and with God's blessing I hope to bring them up, a little removed from the Paganism in which all around are involved. (IBID P. 69).

Read had been in the islands six years when Thomas arrived and until his death in the 1860's, he supported the Wesleyan Mission. As well as interpreting and

translating he also played an important role when conducting the bartering between locals and the captains and crews of visiting whaling and trading ships, becoming known for his *integrity and honesty*. (*ibid*, p. 70). He deserves a mention in the story about the foundations of the Wesleyan Church because of his support of the mission and according to a crew member on board *HMS Serin-gapatum* who met him in 1830:

The missionaries who knew him gave him the character of being a useful and rather intelligent young man. (THOMAS JOURNAL 29-30/01/1827; THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS* P.363; ORLEBAR, P.70).*

James Read was certainly useful in January 1827, six months after Thomas's arrival. Using Read as a translator/interpreter, Thomas was able to talk more fully to the young chief Ulakai and his wives and friends about the *great object of our being in Tonga*. Read went on later to give Thomas a brief summary of the political situation on Tongatapu, leaving the missionary to conclude that *at this time they seem much confused, having no head man.* (*Thomas Journal**, 29-30/01/1827). As events unfolded, Aleamotu'a's installation as Tu'i Kanokupolu a short time later, would ensure that Tongatapu would again have a head man. Two years later, even though Thomas was able to get assistance from Ata's brother Tofua and the young chiefs (Lolohea, Mafile'o, Mataele, and Laupo) Read was still a useful resource. He visited Hihifo in early 1829, and, it would appear, spent some days at the Mission House. Thomas's journal tells of the missionary's appreciation of what the young Englishman could offer:

I have got several new words and some assistance in my work by James Read being with me, for which I desire to be thankful to God who has thus given me help in time of need and will I trust, continue to help me. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 23/01/1829; 19/03/1829).*

Read was thus a welcome assistant in the early days when Thomas was struggling with the language. Two decades later when he was having disagreements with colleagues over translation issues, he cast his mind back to early days noting that:

All first translations into an unwritten language, must necessarily be imperfect ... Had we known better, we might have done better. (INWARDS CORRESPONDENCE, LETTERS AND JOURNALS 06/06/1848).*

Samuel Blackmore (1824), a runaway from the whaler Rambler, is credited by Thomas as the first castaway sailor to teach Tongans about Jehovah, the true God:

An English Whaling vessel about this time called the Rambler, Capt. Geo Powel Commander ... some of his crew ran away, and got among the natives, among those who had left was a young man named Blackmore, that the Captain thought much about ... It was said that the ship was in disorderly state owing to the drunken habits of the Captain ... that young Blackmore, who was a relative of the owner, was a youth well brought up, and very unhappy because of the conduct on board ... He stayed some months at Vava'u waiting an opportunity to get away. He was spoken highly of by the natives as a godly man, and one who prayed to the Lord Jehovah, and told some young Chiefs about the true God, possibly by means of Brown, who could speak the language. This is the first (runaway) sailor who was ever heard to do like this, viz to speak of the true God. (THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS PP. 307-308).*

In order to force the Tongans to give up the runaways, Captain Powell fired on them. Several Tongans were killed in the gunfire. Captain Powell himself and several of his crew were killed. The incident attracted considerable interest in Sydney, and was written up in the Sydney Gazette, the editor of which made the enlightened remark that *the blood of those natives is as precious in the sight of God as ours.* (SYDNEY GAZETTE, 06/05/1824).

Blackmore did not stay in Tonga for long. When the opportunity arose, later in 1824, he left on board the English Whaler Sisters. (*Thomas, Tongatapu or the Friendly Islands** p. 313).

Blackmore could well have been the first runaway sailor to tell the Tongans about Jehovah. However, Will Mariner, Toki Ukamea, almost twenty years previously, had spoken about *scriptural and traditional* subjects (Cain and Abel for example), and had:

acquainted some of them with the Christian doctrine of eternal punishment. (MARTIN, AN ACCOUNT OF THE NATIVES OF THE TONGA ISLANDS, PP. 114, 124, 131).

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William Brown (1806-1830), also a survivor of the Port au Prince, played a role in the history of the church. He had helped Taufa'ahau to make a start with

reading and writing. And he was able to act as an important interpreter when Finau was wanting a missionary appointed to Vava'u and he wrote to Thomas, offering to assist in the language any missionary that was sent there. (*THOMAS, JOURNAL* 02/08/1828*).

During the visit of *HMS Seringapatam* to Vava'u in June-July 1830, Lieutenant *Orlebar spoke well of Brown*:

Being possessed of some shrewdness, joined with a perfect knowledge of the language, [Brown] stood high in the opinion of Fenou's [Finau's] father, and at present holds a situation of great trust and influence with Fenou [Finau]. I saw his house and his children who were very pretty and interesting; and though not knowing our language were taught by the father both to read and write, and above all, the knowledge of a Supreme Being. (ORLEBAR, P.80).

Brown also featured in some important correspondence between Finau, Tupou Aleamotu'a and the Chairman of the Mission, Nathaniel Turner. Finau had visited Tongatapu asking for a Missionary for Vava'u and when none was available, he returned disappointed but later put his request for a missionary in writing. That was where Brown played a major role. Finau's two letters, one to Tupou and one to Turner, were translated by Brown into English. The request to Tupou, his relative, was for a teacher to be sent. The letter to Turner asked that the Chairman *send to Port Jackson for some missionaries to come to my Island to teach me and my people.* (*MN 1829 03/04/1828*). Tupou responded to his letter from Finau with a strong appeal to his northern relative to embrace the lotu. The lengthy letter from Tupou, in Tongan, was probably prepared for him by Thomas and Turner, with perhaps some help from James Read and/or William Singleton.

The Sydney Gazette published Finau's letters to Tupou and Turner, and Tupou's response to Finau, with its English translation. In the process, the Gazette was making history as Tupou's letter would be the very first piece of Tongan language literature to appear in print. As the Gazette had said, the letters were:

a curious specimen of epistolary correspondence between chiefs of the Friendly Islands, carried on through the intervention of Europeans residing there. (SYDNEY GAZETTE, 27/10/1828).

No missionaries were available at that time to satisfy Finau's request. However, a short time after, when Turner, Cross and Thomas met for the District Meeting they passed a resolution, recommending to London that new Stations be established at Vava'u and Ha'apai and requesting a missionary for both the proposed new Stations. (*Thomas, Journal* 25/09/1828*). A missionary was sent to Ha'apai to

live and work with Taufa'ahau, but nothing was done for Vava'u until three years later. In mid 1831, an initiative by Taufa'ahau led to Finau and many of his people adopting the lotu. Two teachers, Paula Nau and David Fala, were then appointed to Vava'u to encourage the new converts until a missionary was available. (SEE CHAPTER 5)

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William Mariner (1806-1810) was perhaps the one castaway, above all other castaways, who began laying the foundation of the written and printed form of the Tongan language. His contribution is detailed in a subsequent chapter where the missionaries used his work when they produced the first book (booklet) in the Tongan language. Turner credits Mariner when he described the work that was done in December 1827 on standardizing the Tongan language including settling on an agreed alphabet and orthography. As Turner said at the time:

*Nothing of the kind has been done(that we know of) save
the system adopted by Mariner in his Grammar appended to
his History of the Tonga Isles. We have thought well to differ
from the orthography [he] has adopted ('THOMAS JOURNAL*,
12/12/1827).*

No other reference to Mariner was made by Turner who, within less than six months of his arrival in Tonga he had put his name to the book published, in Tongan, entitled First Lessons in the Language of Tongataboo.

John Thomas, however, provides a more realistic evaluation of Mariner's importance to the early missionaries. While confined to the Mission House with influenza in Lifuka in June 1844, Thomas reflected on the history of translation work in Tonga. He thought about his arrival in the Friendly Islands, twenty years previously and William Mariner came vividly to mind. Thomas wrote of his experience when arriving in a new land and faced with a new language:

*Our first work was to learn the language. We found Mariner's work of great service to us in this part of the work, his work does him great credit. It is of use, even to this day – as it is the only Vocabulary of English and Tongan we have.
(INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE*. LETTERS AND JOURNALS,
1844-1856*, THOMAS 06/06 1844).*

To this day was a fitting comment. The Hakluyt Society published Nigel Statham and Ian Campbell's edited version of Mariner in 2023 with the Society calling Mariner's work:

a classic description of a largely pre-European Polynesian culture. Martin's book is both an extraordinary real-life adventure story and a pioneering work of anthropology, and for 200 years it has been a primary and authoritative source for research into Tongan history and culture. (HAKLUYT SOCIETY CATALOGUE)

Thomas, Turner and Cross had found Mariner useful as they began standardizing the Tongan alphabet and orthography. Some consistency was certainly necessary. A variety of phonetic forms were being used. For example, Matapule was spelled Matta-Boolee (Lawry), Mataboolie (Hutchinson) Matabule (THOMAS).

Turner and his colleagues spent some days in early December 1827, working with Mariner, on an agreed orthography so that the Wesleyan Mission would be able to move forward with school books, other religious literature, and most importantly, a translation of chapters of the Scriptures. Turner, for his part, quickly set to work on what he believed was a first step. He went out *amongst the people*, he said, and *picked up something in the language that will help me forward*. A few days later he recorded what was amazingly rapid progress:

Finished the rough draft of the Lessons for the First Book ... settled on 39 Lessons and hope to get a few for Reading ere the vessel arrives. (INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE FRIENDLY ISLANDS, TURNER TO SECRETARIES, 21/12/1827; THOMAS, JOURNAL*, 16/12/1827).*

The District Meeting confirmed what had been discussed among the missionaries, and what Turner had been working on. The Minutes of the meeting recorded the historic decisions:

A plan for the orthography of the Tonga language having been laid before this meeting and being unanimously approved of Resolved 1. That it be forthwith adopted. 2. That a Child's first Book be forthwith prepared and forwarded to the Colony by the first conveyance and that a thousand copies of the same be printed. (MINUTES AND REPORTS FRIENDLY ISLANDS DISTRICT MEETING HELD AT TONGATABOO 25TH AND 27TH DECEMBER 1827).

Within just a few months a manuscript of the school book was sent to New South Wales to be printed by the *Sydney Gazette*. The result was a twenty four page booklet entitled: *First Lessons in the Language of Tongataboo, one of the Friendly Islands; to which are added a Prayer and Several Hymns*. Sydney 1828. The

title page of this groundbreaking little publication states that the author was *Nathaniel Turner, one of the Wesleyan Missionaries appointed to those islands*. Although the title page was in English, the remainder of the twenty four page book was in Tongan, and by its publication, the Wesleyan Mission in Tonga was heralding to the Committee in London that the literary age for the Friendly Islands had dawned. Regardless, William Mariner, who had left the islands almost twenty years before the arrival of Thomas and Hutchinson, and Turner and Cross, can be said to have had an important role in that historic development.

Significantly the missionaries adopted the word lotu, an ancient Tongan word for adoration, invocation, to invoke, to pray according to Mariner's Vocabulary, when they wanted to speak, write and teach about Christianity. Turner's book, First Lessons, included numerous references to lotu: it is in the spelling list (p.6), Reading Lessons 5 & 6 (pp.14 & 15), The Prayer (p.20) a Grace before and after meals (*Lotu Kai & Lotu Makona* p.24). And Hymn number 4 on page 24 of First Lessons included words about keeping the Sabbath – *Lahi fekau mai Jihova Kiate tautolu, Ko e aho Lotu lahi. Oua e mau mau i* (JEHOVAH'S GREAT COMMAND TO US ABOUT THE SPECIAL DAY OF WORSHIP DO NOT BREAK IT).

The word Lotu, first introduced in print in 1817 by Mariner from Tonga's ancient usage became the word to be used when referring to Christianity, prayer and worship in First Lessons in 1828. It remains the word for the Christian faith, prayer and worship to the present day.

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The language journey of the pioneer Wesleyans is often portrayed as the work of the missionaries alone, with some help from the small group of castaway Englishmen. Their years of living in Tonga, marrying into chiefly families, meant that they could help the early Wesleyans come to terms with the language.

Importantly, there was one other group who hardly ever gets a mention, yet they were essential to the success of the Mission. These were Tongans who could rightly be called assistant interpreters and translators. They were mostly Chiefs or the sons of chiefs for the most part overlooked or ignored. Something of their story is taken up in the following chapters.

=====CHAPTER 7=====

The Tongan Pioneer Interpreters and Translators

1822-1835

There has been one group, in the history of the Wesleyan Church in Tonga, who have been largely overlooked for 200 years. They were there at the beginning when the foundations of the church were being laid. Some lived at the Mission property, in the Mission Compound. Others were students in the first classroom, in the Mission House, at Hibifo. Still others were close neighbours of the missionaries. They were a mixed group, but most of them had one thing in common: they were from chiefly families. Together they could justly be called Missionary ‘assistant interpreters and translators’. Yet they have never been able to emerge and be given the credit they deserve. A number of them, a few years later, became active participants in Bible translation.

The neglect is, perhaps, understandable when we look at who was telling the church’s mission story in the 1820s and 30s. They were English missionaries, sons and daughters of the extensive British Empire which established colonies across much of the world. Colonial attitudes did not normally give credit to the peoples they were working among. Hence the neglect and oversight.

Documentary sources for telling their stories are scarce and for this chapter are taken largely from the journals of John and Sarah Thomas. Oral sources and traditions, if they exist, could well give a fuller picture of their contribution.

The Tongan Pioneer Interpreters and Translators
Macanoe
Tammy Now (WATSON NAU)
Ata Fisi’ihoi

Tofua ‘i Pangai
Langi
Uiliami (William) Ulakai
Sakalaia (Zachariah) Uhila
Timote (Timothy) Katoa
John Lolohea
Heamasi (Hermas) Laupo
Taniela (Daniel) Talia’uli
Latufakahau
Asaele (Asahel) Mataele
Setaleki (Shadrack) Ve’ehala
Sioeli (Joel) Mafile’o
Pita (Peter) Vi
Tama Joni
William

The Tongan Pioneer Interpreters and Translators

*Macanoe: 'his life was consistent as a
disciple of Jesus Christ'*

A translation assistant was on Lawry's mind as he thought about mission expansion in the Pacific. Before he was appointed to Tonga in 1822, he had frequently advocated the extension of Wesleyan missions in the South Pacific. Sydney, he believed, would provide an ideal base for such an enterprise. He also thought that having a Polynesian in any proposed mission team would help the English missionaries, in the early stages to break down initial language barriers. To this end he took into his own home a young Marquesan (Tahitian), Macanoe, in the hope that he would learn some English and be available if, and when, a mission to the South Pacific could be organized. So it was, that when Lawry was appointed to the Friendly Islands, Macanoe was one of his pioneering party.

Once in Tonga Lawry was disappointed that Macaone was of little help with interpreting and translating. In a letter to the Committee, he explained that he had hoped that Macanoe:

*would have been of service by way of interpreting—but who
knows nothing of the Tongan language, so much do the
South Seas dialects differ. However, we find him very useful
in domestic life ... (INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE, LAWRY TO
COMMITTEE, 16/10/1822).*

Although Lawry believed that the languages of Tahiti and Tongatapu were so different, there were numerous words in Tahitian and Tongan that were similar. Macanoe, presumably, would have quickly picked up on those similarities. Nevertheless, for the Lawrys, he was useful, not only in domestic life, but in other mission tasks as well. He worked, for example, with George Lilly, the carpenter, at the sawpit, preparing timber beams for the Mission House that was to be built. He could well have been helpful, also, to Lilly who was preparing a basic Tongan, every day dictionary of the Tongan language. (*ibid*, 30/11/2022.) Lilly's basic language work was useful at a later stage when, in Sydney, the Thomas's were preparing for their appointment in Tonga. (*THOMAS, JOURNAL** 21/11/1825).

Unfortunately, Macanoe became ill while in Tonga, and, when back in Sydney died of consumption. Lawry, when informing the Committee, praised his young friend as a devoted *disciple of Christ*:

This evening died Macanoe, a boy of about seventeen years of age, a native of one of the Marquesas Islands; he has resided with me between two and three years, during which period he has not been known to do an immoral thing. Having accompanied me to the Friendly Isles, I had an opportunity of observing his conduct among heathens, as well as among civilized people; in both situations his life was consistent as a disciple of Jesus Christ. (MN 1824, LAWRY TO SECRETARIES, 19/11/1823).

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Tammy Now (Watson Nau), it was hoped, would be ‘useful, both as an interpreter, and as an instructor of others’.

Tammy was a member of Hutchinson and Thomas’s Mission party that arrived in Tonga in June 1826. And, as events unfolded, he was the first Tongan to assist Wesleyan missionaries with interpretation and translation. He had lived at the Mission House, ‘Cokevernal’, at Mu’a, during the Lawry’s short stay in Tonga back in 1822. When the Lawrys left Tonga in October 1823, they took Tammy with them to Sydney and then on to London where he attended an English school and was the first Tongan to be baptized by the Wesleyan Church.

At the time the Thomas’s were appointed to Tonga, the Mission Committee insisted that Tammy be returned to the Friendly Islands, and so he accompanied the Thomas’s to Sydney and finally to Tonga. At his baptism in London he was given the Christian name Watson, after one of the secretaries of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, the Reverend Richard Watson. Interestingly, it was Richard Watson who gave the special address at Thomas’s ordination in London on 22 March 1825, just before the Thomas’s left for Sydney and ultimately Tonga.

Tammy’s preparation for interpreting

Tammy attended school in England, but knowledge about his time there is rather sketchy. Initially the Missionary Committee determined that he be sent to the *British and Foreign School* and be kept there till his return to Tonga. Lawry had other ideas and the Committee eventually agreed with him and Tammy was placed in the *Borough School* to obtain the benefit of instruction in the English language. (*Committee Minutes* Missionary Committee*, 15/02/1825*). John and Sarah Thomas, in setting sail for Sydney, did so with the Mission Committee’s

understanding that, during the voyage, Thomas would teach Tammy reading and writing and Tammy would teach Thomas some Tongan. This would prepare Tammy for the future, when he would be one of the Mission's first teachers thus fulfilling the Committees instructions to Thomas which said that Tammy would be *useful, both as an interpreter, and as an instructor of others.* (*INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE, LETTERS AND JOURNALS* THOMAS TO SECRETARIES, 16/04/1825, THOMAS, JOURNAL* 27/04/1825*).

Unfulfilled expectations

The hope was that the long voyage from England to Hobart and then to Sydney would give many opportunities for Tammy to work with Thomas, enabling the newly appointed missionary *to learn many words of the native language* (*Thomas, Small Journal*, 27/04/1825*). In reality that did not happen, although Tammy did, on a few occasions during the voyage, assist Thomas to learn a little of the Tongan language.

Thomas had a copy of Mariner's Tonga Islands, with its Vocabulary and Grammar of the Tongan language, to guide him. However, Mariner, Thomas believed, was lacking in some respects, specifically, he thought, that there was *a great deficiency of words*. Thomas was beginning to translate parts of the Scriptures so he would have been looking for words that dealt with biblical language which would not be found in Mariner. In attempting to write the Lord's Prayer in Tongan, for example, Thomas noted at the time:

I cannot find words enough ... I trust when I get to understand the language, I shall find many words more than what at present I have. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 12/07/1825).*

This was where Tammy did become helpful. More than once, Thomas said, Tammy had provided him with new words:

Today I have begun to select some Tonga words [from Mariner?] and to arrange them alphabetically. I have had Tammy in tonight and have got several words from him. (IBID, 23/08/1825).

The problem for Thomas was that he had great difficulty in getting Tammy to come regularly for English lessons and to assist with translation. Tammy was happier spending time with the sailors or in the Galley with the cook and the cook's assistant:

It was only at times on the voyage that I could prevail upon Tammy Now to attend either to be instructed himself or for my advantage – he was in general taken up with the sailors. (IBID, 04/07/1825; 03/08/1825; 31/01/1825).

Preparations in Sydney

On the 14th October the mission party arrived in Sydney: John and Sarah Thomas, Tammy Now and Thomas Wright, the Lawry's servant who had been with them in Tonga in 1822 and who they had taken to England with them. If Thomas had trouble encouraging Tammy to help him during the voyage, then on landing in Sydney the difficulty intensified. Tammy had been in Sydney before and had spent time with the Lawry family and their friends at Parramatta. Now back in Sydney, he preferred Parramatta to Sydney and spent most of his time there. Despite the fact that Thomas had told Tammy that he wanted him to spend an hour or two every day ... to instruct him, and to ask him questions respecting the language, that did not happen. (*Thomas, Journal**, 28/11/1825). As an encouragement Thomas gave him a reading book, a slate and pencil, and promised him a Copy Book *if he would attend*. Thomas also promised him all necessary things (food and clothing) if he would remain with them in Sydney. (*ibid*, 28/11/1825). Tammy did not remain, but left for Parramatta, and as a result, Thomas said:

I have not made much yet in learning the Tongan language ... Tammy himself says that he cannot answer our questions respecting the language – he says when he left the island he was only a little boy – he has not been with us since we have been in Sydney more than a few weeks – he likes Parramatta much better so he has been at Mr Lawry's friends where he may be very quiet and they are fond of him there. (IN-COMING CORRESPONDENCE, THOMAS TO SECRETARIES 31/01/1826).*

Nevertheless, Tammy did assure Thomas that he would go with him to Tonga, and Thomas was encouraged to believe that he would *be useful to the Mission if he is spared*. (*IBID*).

The Thomas's visited Parramatta while Tammy was there. They witnessed an examination of the Wesleyan Sunday School and were impressed. Thomas, in his journal entry of the day, said it was *very interesting and delightsome*, and then said something that it is difficult to interpret. Tammy, he said, *was much interested* [in the Sunday School Anniversary] and he is one of the teachers in the last Class. (*Thomas, Journal, * 15/03/1826*). The Missionary Committee had expected that Tammy would be useful in *instructing others*. Perhaps that was what was happening at Parramatta.

Making history

The Missionary Committee had also hoped that Tammy would be useful *as, an interpreter* and in the beginning that is what happened. When the Elizabeth anchored at Maria Bay, off Hihifo, in June 1826, with Hutchinsons and Thom-

as's on board, Tammy was on hand to fulfil an essential interpreting role. John Hutchinson, Superintendent of the proposed new Wesleyan Mission Station, needed to get ashore and meet with Ata to seek permission to settle there. In particular, an agreement had to be reached about what the new missionaries would be permitted to do. That was where Tammy fulfilled an historic role. He was the translator/interpreter taken by Hutchinson to make contact with Ata and establish the first basic agreements for the creation of a Wesleyan Mission Station at Hihifo. Hutchinson tells us about Tammy's role and its result on the morning of the 26th of June 1826:

myself and the young man [Tammy Watson Nau] who was taken from here by Mr Lawry to England ... proceeded two or three miles inland, in search of the Chief of the place ... after one hour's hard walking I was introduced to the Chief, to whom, through the young man, I mentioned my object in the presence of several hundred people. Having learned that Charles [Tindall] ... was living under Ata, I begged that every exertion might be made to obtain an interview with him ... The day being far advanced, I requested permission to return to the ship, the Chief, at the same time, promising to collect together the next day some of the neighbouring Chiefs, that we might have an opportunity of conversing more fully on the propriety of establishing our Mission among them. (MN 1828, HUTCHINSON JOURNAL, 26/06/1826).

Tammy leaves Hihifo

Once Ata had agreed to the missionaries' requests and they were landed at Hihifo with all their personal and mission goods, Tammy Nau does not appear to have been as useful as expected. He was in fact made redundant by Charles Tindall, one of Lawry's team who had been in Tonga almost four years when the new missionaries arrived. He was living under the protection of Ata, had a good command of the language, and took over the interpreter/translator role. Tammy, for his part, offended Ata greatly. His time in England probably gave him ideas beyond his rank. Ata was angered by Tammy's behavior and complained to Thomas that the boy:

Should not walk about like a Chief when he was only a cook [and that] it is not the custom of the country for a person of his low order to wear superior tappa in the presence of a Chief. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 17/08/1826).*

Ata concluded that he *did not want to see him here at all* at Hihifo. (*Thomas, Journal, 17/08/1826*). Fortunately, perhaps, for Tammy, Fatu wanted him to come back to Mu'a and sent Singleton to bring him. The Mu'a Chief said he wanted to:

hear about England – he says he has heard about it by Englishmen, and he now wants to hear about it by a Tonga man, to see whether what he has heard is true. (IBID, 04/07/1826)

Tammy abandons the mission for a time

Tammy, apart from the initial role of introducing the missionaries to Ata, was of little value to the Mission in the early years of its establishment. He drifted away from the Mission for a time, but when Lawry visited Tonga in 1847, more than 20 years after he had last seen Tammy, he was delighted with what he saw:

It was not a little gratifying to see the young people, whose dwelling was under my roof in the Mu'a in days gone by, coming with their mea ofa (offering of love). Among them was Malungahau now called Malachi, who accompanied me to Sydney, but is now a leader and local preacher, ... There was Watson Now, who went to London with me, he is also a local preacher. (LAWRY, TONGA AND FEEJEE ISLANDS, 1847, EDITOR ELIJAH HOOLE, 1850, P. 58).

Regardless of the missionaries' disappointment with Tammy Nau, no one can take away from him his place in the history of the Wesleyan Church. He was the first Tongan to receive Christian baptism, admittedly not in Tonga but in England. In addition, his role on the 26th June 1826, a date that is honoured by the Free Wesleyan Church as the day of its commencement, must be acknowledged. His assistance to Hutchinson, helped the new missionary to make initial contact with Ata. And despite some of the difficulties and frustrations between Thomas & Tammy, and Tammy & Ata, he can justly be honoured as the Wesleyan Missionaries' pioneer assistant interpreter/translator.

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Ata Fisi'ihoi: 'being very desirous for me [Thomas] to learn the language'

Although Ata opposed what Hutchinson and Thomas were attempting to do, he was, Thomas said, *very desirous for me to learn the language.* (*Thomas, Journal*, 01/12/1826*) Sarah Thomas, too, had discussions with Ata about language but with little success. Thomas's Journal tells of Sarah's attempt:

The Chief was here today. Mrs. Thomas asked him if he wished to learn to read and write—he said ikai kuou vale kuou motooa [I am foolish I am too old] putting out his hand, trembling showing us that his hand shook he said he was foolish and old—to [sic] old to learn. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 25/10/1826).*

Tofua ‘i Pangai, Ata’s younger brother (his cousin in fact but known as his younger brother), became closely associated with the missionaries and was a useful helper to Thomas with interpretation and translation.

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Tofua ‘i Pangai: ‘Tofua was in again today and I have got a few new words’

A helpful neighbour.

Tofua was particularly useful to John and Sarah Thomas during the first few days after their arrival at Hihifo. During that time three crucial matters had to be decided. The first was whether Ata would allow the missionaries to establish a station at Hihifo. With Tindall’s assistance this was decided immediately when Ata agreed to the missionaries’ request. The second was where the missionaries would live until the Mission House was built. This was also settled quickly. They were provided with temporary huts until the Mission House could be erected on a plot of land known as *Amelika*. [America] The third question, equally as important as the first two, was where would the Mission’s large supply of trade goods be kept safe until a secure store could be built. This was a vital issue. The missionaries had brought all the timbers for a two-story house (to be assembled in Tonga) together with hundreds of pounds worth of trade goods (axes, hatchets, chisels, knives, files, plane irons, spades, fish hooks, cloth/print, blue beads etc.) This was the missionaries’ currency, their money in effect, for purchasing labour and food. Tofua personally supervised the landing of the mission property, *even until the dark at night on one occasion*. Furthermore, until a store could be built, he offered to keep the Mission’s property secure:

*He lent his house to keep our property in and all was safe.
We gave him as a present—a Broad Axe, Broad Chisel, and a
few yards of print. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, * 26/07/1826).*

Tofua lived quite close to the missionaries. The Mission House, once erected, together with the garden and yard, were situated just outside the Fortress near the trench. Tofua’s place, presumably inside the fort, was, as Thomas said, near to us. (*Thomas, Journal**, 27/04/1828). They were frequent visitors to each other’s houses. According to Thomas’s Journal, during the nine months from March to

December 1828, the two men had visited each other dozens of times .(*ibid, 20/04/1828-21/12/1828*). There was a time when Tofua received a presentation of food from a neighboring village which he passed on to the mission family:

Tofua sent us a roast pig and twenty yams all cooked – this was brought him from a small Town about three miles off – there is a wonderful change in this man, from some cause, and by some means, – it is wonderful to us, for he is very friendly to us. (IBID 25/03/1828).

Tofua, he said, was a generous friend *who frequently brought us fish &c.* (*ibid 11/12/1828*). Thomas was also appreciative of his neighbor's generosity when he offered a substantial load of firewood for the mission family and asked very little payment in return for it:

Tofua [Thomas said] sent for me to look at some firewood he asked me to buy – he said he wanted an axe for it – this is not much for five or six men have been at work many days cutting it. (IBID, 06/08/1828).

The initial close cooperation with the missionaries continued, although there were some difficulties. A ban on trading, at one stage, resulted when Tofua was offended with what Thomas offered when *bartering for yams*. Tofua *tabooed the trade*. The result was that no one could barter with the missionaries, *even for oil*. The taboo lasted more than a week or so and when trade began again, Thomas found that Tofua and Ata had set the prices. Thomas was peeved that he had had lost control of an essential element of trading: setting prices for basic provisions. This was a tedious and oppressing outcome, leaving the missionary *awkwardly situated*. (*ibid, 05/05/1827-24/05/1827*). This quickly led to a show down over the value of a large pig, an argument that Thomas did not win. (IBID).

Helping with translation

The Thomas's came to regard Tofua, not only as a friendly neighbor but as a translation assistant as well as a mediator in times of conflict, which were frequent. (*ibid, 11/12/1828*). Tofua told Thomas that if anyone *ill used him*, then he should let him know and he would *put it right*. (*ibid*) That offer was life saving when relations between Ata and Thomas reached a dangerous crisis in late 1828.

Preparing Lessons and Readings for school and worship featured in some early references to Tofua's assistance with the language. Thomas was appreciative:

We are on friendly terms with Tofua – he seems favorable towards us...I was encouraged today in the language, and I do hope to get on. (IBID, 11/04/1828).

A week later he was quite specific about the kind of encouragement that he was receiving from his friendly neighbour. Thomas kept a language book for collecting words, phrases and sentences:

I have written out four lessons from my sentences they are chiefly upon the word of God and some important truths of Scripture. I read them to Tofua [who was] pleased to see and hear what I do &c. (IBID, 21/04/1828.)

Summing up the achievements of the week, Thomas reflected that he had been helped by Tofua with *correction as to language.* (*THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS**, p. 398, *THOMAS, JOURNAL*, 25/04/1828).

Thomas also made some interesting comments in early June 1828, just before Tofua visited him and they spent some time working on the language. Thomas had written that he had:

attempted to put a few lines into the native language and succeeded better than I expected yet no doubt it would be viewed as worthless jargon, and yet as we are in want of something to use at our family worship for the benefit of the natives, I think a few verses will be of some use, and when we get better, cast them to one side, but at present we only have 6 pieces called hymns in the language. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 15/06/1828).*

When Tofua called, Thomas shared some of his few lines with him. (*IBID*, 17/06/1828).

In conversations or when correcting draft translations, Tofua was clearly a valued resource. And when opposition from Ata kept him away, Thomas missed him greatly. He felt, he said:

grieved that Tofua (who for some time past has been attentive to all we wished to read to him) seems to care nothing about these things. (IBID, 13/08/1828).

When Tofua did appear again, Thomas's simple journal entry indicates that valuable language lessons were being learned. Tofua, he said, was in again today and I have got a few new words (*IBID*, 14/08/1828).

A life and death crisis

A life and death crisis arose during October-November 1828. Relations between the Thomas's and Ata, difficult at the best of times, reached an extremely dangerous level. Several unfortunate clashes had led to the crisis. Violence was threatened and bloodshed feared. When Ata's men, armed with axes and clubs arrived at the mission house gates, the Thomas's feared for their lives because of the fury of the Chief. Thomas said that he had *narrowly escaped with my life.* (*Thomas, Small Journal, 21/12/1828*). Ultimately Tofua acted as a mediator, saving the day and helping peace to be restored and reconciliation achieved, at least for a time. (FOR A DETAILED ACCOUNT OF THE POTENTIALLY CATASTROPHIC CONFRONTATION BETWEEN ATA AND THOMAS, AND THE CRUCIAL ROLE PLAYED BY TOFUA SEE CHAPTER 5).

Biblical and theological understanding.

Tofua who had played a significant role helping Thomas when school classes were begun at Hihifo in 1826. Sessions on the language with Tofua also provided Thomas with opportunities to teach his assistant about the lotu:

I read some pieces to Tofua [school lessons] also the prayers I had in order to give him an idea of what we said at our worship. He seemed pleased and is very attentive. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 17/06/1828).*

Some teaching had frequently followed the translation sessions. In late April 1828, for example, a session of translation then led to some instruction about biblical truths. Tofua, he said:

acknowledges the darkness of this and the neighboring lands and seems in hopes that by and by this land will be enlightened and then they will throw away their foolish ways. I endeavored to tell him of the love of God to this and other similar lands by comparing it to a mother towards a rebellious and stubborn son. (THOMAS JOURNAL, 24/04/1828)*

When, on another occasion, his neighbour sent 40 fine yams Thomas gave him a present and then some teaching, saying that he:

talked with him on the word of God and the design of religion viz to prepare us to live forever. (IBID, 01/05/1829).

Despite these frequent sessions with Tofua, working on lessons and talking about the lotu, Thomas felt he was not able to lead Tofua to make a commitment to the lotu. After Tofua had visited the Mission House on one occasion,

and the two men had conversations about religion, the missionary had to conclude that:

he is very friendly but seems without power or an inclination to attend personally to religion. (IBID, 30/04/1829).

Nevertheless, Tofua had obviously absorbed much of what Thomas had been telling him, as a fascinating exchange between the two men illustrates. Nathaniel and Jane Turner had come out to Hihifo from Nuku'alofa in June 1828 *for a change of residence for a time* because they were both *very unwell*. After several months at Hihifo they were ready to return to Nuku'alofa and Ata came to Thomas to ask if Turner would be replaced after he went back to Nuku'alofa. Thomas told his Chief that there would be no replacement as there were few lotu people at Hihifo because *they were all afraid of him*. At that point Tofua arrived at the Mission House and Ata left. Thomas, *after some conversation*, pressed Tofua *to persuade his brother to attend our worship and see for himself*. (*Thomas, Tongatapu or the Friendly Islands**; p. 398; *Thomas Journal*, 21/06/1828). Tofua smiled and said it was a very hard and difficult thing, but he thought it was as Jehovah pleased – it was, he said, *fai telihabe Jehova* [*fa'itelihā pe Jehovah*], that it was with Jehovah to please himself about Ata's turning to the lotu. Tofua probably did not realize the full significance of what he had just said, but Thomas certainly did. Tofua was expressing a basic Christian teaching. Conversion is a work of God. It is not what individuals do but what God does to them and with them. In a typical understatement, Thomas said that he was agreeably surprised *with this reply from a heathen*, but he stressed to Tofua that:

it was true that he [Ata] could not turn without the help of God, but God did not force men to be saved, he brought his word to show them the way ... (THOMAS, JOURNAL 05/02/1829: THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS, P. 471).*

Ata the stumbling block

The stumbling block for Tofua, in accepting the lotu, was the attitude of his brother Ata. Tofua could be friendly to the missionaries, provide them with food, helped with translations for worship times and school classes and act as mediator when things became difficult and violence was threatened. But, while Ata lived, he, and many of the people at Hihifo, would not be able to attend worship, a fact that Thomas was painfully aware of. He knew that *most of the people, including Tofua, would attend to our worship, but they are afraid of our chief.* (*Thomas, Journal*, 16/03/1828). Twelve months later Thomas was still working on Tofua, hoping he would openly attend worship:

I talked to him about the lotu, [Thomas said] ... he says if Ata will turn [to the lotu] then he shall turn. (IBID, 21/05/1829.)

Tofua becomes Ata

Ata [Ata Fisi'ihoi] died on 10 March 1833 and Tofua [Ata Tofua 'i Pangai] was installed in his place the next day. If Thomas had hoped that things would change with this appointment, he was to be disappointed. Tofua had been installed by the Nuku'alofa based Christian King Josiah, Aleamotu'a, the Tu'i Kanokupolu, but most of the other Tongatapu Chiefs were opposed to the lotu. Ata [Tofua] was not able to be an overt supporter of the lotu. Eventually he was deposed and exiled to Ha'apai. Finally, at Neiafu Vava'u in 1840 he married Papa (his late brother's wife) and was baptized by Thomas and chose to be called by the name of the Old Testament judge Jephthah (Sefesi). The Hebrew meaning of the name – *God has set free* was clearly significant for Tofua. For years he had struggled to reconcile Tongan political demands and the requirements of the lotu. Now, with his marriage and baptism, God had set him free. He returned to Tongatapu, was re-instated at Hihifo as Ata, and the former heathen Fortress there became a place of Christian refuge.

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Langi: 'had been to the colony [Sydney] and understands a little English'.

Langi deserves a special place among the pioneer translator/interpreters. He played an important part in Aleamotu'a accepting the lotu. Thomas's obituary for Aleamotu'a, when he died in November 1845, said that Langi was instrumental in Aleamotu'a becoming a Christian. (*MN 1846, Thomas, Journal, 16/03/1846*) . Tupou's commitment to the lotu, his support for the Tahitian LMS missionaries, and his building a chapel paved the way for Nathaniel Turner and William Cross to establish a Wesleyan Mission Station at Nuku'alofa in November 1827.

The achievements of Langi are perhaps not well known in Tonga today. And yet any telling of the Wesleyan story needs to bring him out of the shadows and give him proper recognition. Giving him that recognition is difficult as there are only snippets of information about him in the documentary records and published records. But when gathered together, these casual references help to create a fascinating picture.

....Langi is often simply referred to as the Tongan man or *Tupou's man*. He may not have provided much assistance with translating and interpreting, but his role in Tupou's becoming a lotu Chief was particularly significant during the foundation years of the church. Thomas provides some further glimpses of Langi and his importance in Aleamotu'a's obituary:

In the month of May, 1826, Tubou professedly embraced the Religion of Christ, of which he had heard a little, partly by means of foreigners who were here, and especially from one of his men named Langi, who about that time returned from Tahiti, in company with two [Tahitian] teachers who were appointed to the Feejees. (IBID).

Helping the Tahitian Teachers.

The Tahitian teachers had been appointed to Fiji by the LMS missionaries in Tahiti some months before Thomas and Hutchinson were appointed to Tonga by the Wesleyans. The Tahitian teachers, with Langi and his Fijian friend Takai, had called in at Nuku'alofa on their way to Fiji. Tupou decided to 'detain' them at Tonga because for him it was a matter of priority:

If the word of life was a good word, [he said] it must not go to the tail first [Fiji] but must begin at the head. [Tonga] (WILLIAMS SAMOAN JOURNALS, p. 55).

And then, with what was to become a prophetic word, Tupou said to Takai and Langi and the Tahitians:

Stop here with me and teach me and my people that good word and when we know it perhaps we may embrace it too and when I and my people have embraced the word you speak of let it be taken to the Fejees. (IBID).

Although there does not appear to be any documentary evidence of Langi's work with the Tahitians, it can be assumed that he would have been an essential interpreter/translator. The Tahitians knew no Tongan, to begin with, so Langi, who had married a Tahitian wife in Tahiti, and spoke Tongan and Fijian and some English and Tahitian, would have been in great demand when the LMS teachers began worship and teaching in Nuku'alofa.

When Turner and Cross and their families settled in Nuku'alofa in November 1827 and established a Wesleyan Mission Station there, the groundwork had already been done for them. Thanks to Aleamotu'a, Langi and the Tahitian teachers Hape and Tafeta, there was a thriving Christian community there, worshipping regularly in their own chapel, erected by Aleamotu'a, which doubled as a classroom for the school that had been established. And there were some of the LMS people who were wanting to be baptized, including one woman of high rank, who was asking for the sacrament from the LMS leadership in Tahiti (*Hape to Bourne, 01/07/1827; Bourne to LMS Secretaries, 20/10/1827; EM & C 1827, pp.46-47*).

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Uiliami Ulakai: ‘What I could not explain to them, Ulakai told them’..

A significant interpreter

William Ulakai, nephew of Aleamotu'a, was another person of rank, apart from Tofua, who played an important role in the early days at Hihifo. He moved frequently between Nuku'alofa and Hihifo and was a great help to the Thomases's, giving support to the lotu and in particular, assisting with interpreting and translating. On the one hand, however, the missionaries needed help with negotiation and mediation. On the other, when school lessons and readings for Sunday worship were being prepared, the missionaries needed help to ensure that their language was correct and appropriate.

Ulakai's main contribution was in the first category, as an interpreter and mediator. Although this role is only acknowledged on rare occasions by Thomas, Turner and Cross, it is clear that he was one who carried out essential interpreting and mediating functions. When discussions were held with Chiefs, the missionaries made sure, on most occasions, that they took Ulakai with them.

An important meeting took place, for example, at the Mission House, Hihifo, in early November 1828 in which Ulakai played a significant interpreter role. The Tu'i Tonga, Laufilitonga, and some of his people, had arrived at Hihifo and wished to see Thomas. When the revered personage arrived at the Mission house, Ulakai was there, for which Thomas said he was thankful. Thomas took the opportunity to converse with the great chief [Laufilitonga] on the Word of God. An interesting time of information sharing, questions and enquiries followed during which Ulakai played a crucial role. As Thomas tells it, Ulakai was there to help the parties to understand each other:

What I could not explain to them, [Thomas said] Ulakai told them as he understands my broken Tongan ... how little I know yet of their language – what a number of mistakes I make when attempting to and when they did not understand each other ... [Ulakai was] helping them when they did not quite understand my imperfect language. (THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS P. 426; THOMAS JOURNAL*, 04/II/1829).*

Ulakai came to the fore from earliest times as an important participant in significant events in the establishment of the Wesleyan Mission. And although there are no specific references to his role as a translator of lessons or readings, he certainly was present to help understanding to develop and progress to be made when important matters were being addressed.

Ulakai had become interested in religion during Mr Lawry's residence at Mu'a, and by the time Thomas and Hutchinson arrived, was a strong supporter of Tupou Aleamotu'a and the Tahitians at the LMS Mission at Nuku'alofa. He is referred to by Thomas at the time as our friend, and when Thomas, in retirement in England, was writing his History of Tonga, Ulakai is described, not merely as a friend, but as *our old and faithful friend*. (THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS, * P. 832 AND P. 885).

Participant in many firsts

Ulakai was involved in many 'firsts' during the early days of the mission at Hihifo. He was the first of the Tongan chiefs, apart from Ata, to make contact with John and Sarah Thomas and Mary and John Hutchinson in 1826. The day after the arrival of the new missionaries, he and Ata visited them on board the Elizabeth, anchored in Maria Bay. They *took breakfast on board*, Thomas said, *and remained some hours.* (*ibid*, p. 351 27/6/1826.) There was quite an uncomfortable moment at the breakfast which showed that at least a few Christian practices were already understood, and perhaps practiced, by some Tongans of high rank. Thomas described the awkward incident:

Some food was placed before them [Ata, Nuku and Ulakai]. Charles was with us [Charles Tindall]. They did not begin to eat and the Captain enquired the cause. One viz Ulakai said you have not spoke [spoken] yet meaning we had not asked a blessing. This was a reproof sufficient to us as we had not practiced this duty at breakfast. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 28/06/1826).*

As Thomas was later to say, Ulakai *would not forget some things Mr Lawry would have told them, and light had begun to appear, even then.* (THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS* P. 1213).

Ulakai was also present at the conversations with Ata and his people when an agreement was confirmed that led Hutchinson and Thomas to decide to establish the mission at Hihifo. Furthermore, he and several other Tongans were present at the first Sunday services of worship conducted at Hihifo when Hutchinson preached on Psalm 116:12 (*The Lord remembers us and will bless us; he will bless the people of Israel and all the Priests of God*). He was present, too, when Thomas, in the afternoon, spoke on Psalm 84:11 (*The Lord is our protector and glorious King, blessing us with kindness and honour. He does not refuse any good thing to those who do what is right*). Ulakai had many questions that day about Thomas's sermon and Charles Tindall told him, [Thomas said], *many things I had said in the sermon.* Ulakai stayed on after the evening service and joined the mission party for tea. After another Sunday service, a week later, he urged Thomas to keep him there at Hihifo, telling the missionary:

that he has given up their gods and that if we shut him out from us he did not know what he should do – he reprobates their spirits and spirit houses and says they are nothing.
(THOMAS JOURNAL, 20/08/1826.)*

Practical supporter of the Mission

In practical everyday matters, he was also supportive of the missionaries. He gave the Thomas's a significant gift of three coconut palms, *richly laden with fruit*, and when the missionary needed some timber to finish building the Mission House, and Ata refused to help, Ulakai came to the rescue and gave the missionaries a tree from his land to cut for timber. (*ibid, 29/01/1827*). He was also ready to offer support when Thomas and Hutchinson wanted to build a multi-purpose chapel/school house. Ata refused them the additional piece of land they requested so Ulakai offered the use of some of his land. After a service on the mission property on a Sunday in early February 1827, when many people attended worship, *people belonging to Oolaki [Ulakai]*, Ulakai said that if Ata continued to refuse land for a chapel, *we can have worship at his place*. Thomas and Hutchinson did not accept the offer for fear that it would anger Ata and so Ulakai's *very good house and premises*, within the fort at Kolovai, did not become the first Wesleyan chapel in Tonga. (*ibid, 04/02/1827*). Ulakai also assisted Thomas's understanding of cultural and historical matters. In early days, with castaway James Read translating, Thomas said that Ulakai:

made me acquainted with several matters respecting the current state of things in Tongatapu. (THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS, P. 363)*

A Peacemaker role.

Ulakai also gave support, at times, when difficulties with Ata arose and when, as an interpreter, he smoothed the way. He was on hand to try and bring peace when Thomas Ata was *angry and bitterly opposed to the lotu and all seems gloomy at Hihifo*. During that very difficult time, when the Thomas's were ordered out of the Mission House by Ata, and when the chief said he would burn the place down, Ulakai stayed overnight with the Thomas's as a guard and the mission family *slept in safety*. (*IBID P.432, 18/11/1828*.)

One of the most significant events in which he was involved was the discussions about establishing a new Mission Station in Ha'apai. When Taufa'ahau visited Thomas at Hihifo, exploring the possibility of Thomas moving to Ha'apai, Ulakai was present. On that strategically important day in July 1829, Ulakai and Tu'iha'ateiho spent all day with Thomas, bringing baked pigs and yams, and were there in the evening when Taufa'ahau, Mafile'o and Thomas talked over the pro-

cedures that had to be put in place before a missionary could be set aside for Ha'apai. (*Thomas, Journal**, 9/07/1829).

Thomas doesn't say so, but Ulakai probably stepped in to help make sense of Thomas's 'broken Tongan', as he had done when the Tu'i Tonga visited Hihifo some eight months earlier. In these later lengthy negotiations with Taufa'ahau, Thomas wanted Ulakai and Uhila to be present – not me only to ask whether one should go to the Ha'apais. These discussions, over several days, ultimately led to the decision that Thomas should move from Tongatapu to Ha'apai and take up residence at Lifuka with Taufa'ahau. The significance of this move for the history of the Wesleyan Church, in which Ulakai was an active participant, cannot be overstated. (*IBID*, 08-13/07/1829).

Church membership difficulties

Ulakai was a frequent visitor to Thomas at Hihifo, and attended public worship, family devotions and prayer meetings. He knew some basic English, as did other chiefly helpers, and with the assistance of Tindall, Thomas Wright and James Read, language barriers were being broken down. (*ibid*, 09/07/1826; 23/07/1826; 31/07/1826; 21/08/1826; 27/09/1826). At times Thomas and Ulakai corresponded with each other in writing, presumably with a mix of Tongan and English. Thomas is not specific, but simply recorded in his journal a few words about one such communication:

*Oolaki [Ulakai] sent a note to express his love to us and that
he should come very soon to this part. I sent him one in
return by the bearer, who seemed much surprised and very
careful of it. (IBID, 20/04/1827).*

Even though Ulakai's support for the missionaries was crucial, they did not initially allow him to become a Class member. Class meetings, a unique and essential part of Wesleyan Church practice, was observed by the Missionaries among themselves from the beginning. They had been speaking about the Class Meeting system and they had held their first Class meeting at Hihifo in mid-May 1829. It turned out to be painful experience for Thomas.

No one seemed interested. On the way to the chapel he *met with one man who with some persuasion I got to stop*. The only other one there, Thomas said, was *my boy who assists me with the language.* (*ibid*, 25/06/1829). His Journal tells how *grieved and embarrassed* he felt.

However, when Ulakai asked to join a Class, regardless of the fact that he was a great supporter of the lotu, and was a valuable friend and assistant of the missionaries, his request was declined. Thomas *reminded him of his wives which he must give up*. It was some time before Ulakai became *the husband of one wife* and thereby qualified to meet in Class! (*IBID*, 23/7/1829).

Assisting the Turner and Cross families

... Ulakai, friend and assistant to Thomas at Hihifo, played a similar role when Turner and Cross arrived in Nuku'alofa. He had estates at Hihifo but because of Ata's opposition, he had moved to Nuku'alofa and lived there with Tupou and the Tahitians. With this background, Ulakai was able to be a crucial participant in some very significant events, at Nuku'alofa, that had a lasting impact on the history of the Wesleyan Church. During a tense time for the lotu during Nathaniel Turneer's early days, when Tupou Aleamotu'a absented himself from public worship to appease some of the opposing chiefs, Ulakai played an important role. Tupou, not wishing to infuriate opposing chiefs, had asked the missionaries not to go to chapel on the Sabbath Day, but to have worship in their own house. As he said:

some of the Chiefs were very angry and he did not wish to provoke them further until the business they have on hand is settled. (INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE, LETTERS AND JOURNALS, TURNER, JOURNAL, 02/12/1827).

Uhila, Ulakai's cousin, when he heard of this, sent a messenger to the missionaries saying that they [Ulakai and other lotu people]:

wished to go to lotu in the chapel as before and wished to know if it was not right so to do, saying that the that House was built for Jehovah, and ours was not. (IBID).

Turner and Cross went to meet Ulakai and Uhila and a large group of people who had gathered to have a conversation about what Tupou had requested. A strained confrontation took place between the Tongan supporters of the lotu and their missionary leaders. Uhila, Ulakai and their people questioned the missionaries, wishing to know:

whether we were afraid to die for the lotu saying that they had but begun in Religion and they were not afraid, but we had been brought up in it, and why should we be afraid.
(IBID, 02/12/1827.)

Turner explained that he and Thomas and Cross were not afraid for their lives, but they were afraid that if they did not do what Tupou wanted, the future of the young Wesleyan Church might be harmed. If the missionaries refused to comply with the Tupou's request, it might frustrate our great object which was the spread of the lotu throughout Tonga. Conversations continued and finally Uhila, Ulakai and the others agreed:

that it would be best to listen to Tupou and worship in our own House until things are settled. (IBID, 02/12/1827).

Politics and Religion

The anti-lotu group of chiefs offered to accept Tupou as Tu'i Kanokupolu if he would give up the lotu. He agreed, and for a time ceased to attend worship. Things then did become more settled. But as the months went by and he remained away from chapel, the missionaries decided to ask him to come and meet with them. He had been praying secretly in the bush and they wondered if the time had come for him to make a clear public expression of support for the lotu. When Tupou came, Ulakai and Uhila were with him and before the missionaries could raise their concerns, the Chief indicated that he was now committed to openly and publicly worship the Lord. (*THOMAS, JOURNAL**, 26/05/1828).

Ulakai, on another occasion, acted as an advocate for the faith when Turner, Cross and Thomas decided to write to Finau in Vava'u to urge him to turn to the worship of Jehovah. Ulakai carried the missionaries' letter, and a gift for Finau, urging the powerful and influential Vava'u chief to accept the lotu. (*THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS** P. 403).

Ulakai and Public Worship

Ulakai also played an important part in the way in which public worship was organized. From 1826 to 1833, Tongan congregations sat during public worship as their traditional way of showing respect for chiefs and leaders. The missionaries had wanted them to stand when singing hymns, but Tupou, Aleamotu'a, did not want to see this English custom introduced. However, in the third week of January 1834, things changed. Thomas describes the historic event in his Journal:

Today the people stood up in the singing, a thing I have long wished for but have not accomplished until now. I spoke to the chief on Saturday and today he set the example which was followed by Abraham and Ulakai and all the people soon imitated them (THOMAS JOURNAL, 19/01/1834).*

When he came to write his History some thirty years later, Thomas obviously regarded the event as very significant and elaborated upon it:

the people, some of them at least, for the first time, [January 1834] rose upon their feet, and stood up at the time of singing the high praises of God. Tonga people sit before their gods and before great chiefs but never stand and it was considered disrespectful to stand before a superior. We have taught them

it would be more proper to stand to praise God, as well as to kneel in prayer, the latter they have long done, but not the former, and partly because of the King [Aleamotu'a King Josiah] who is not forward to give way in these things, but being spoken to yesterday on the subject, today set the example, which he seemed pleased to have the opportunity of doing when his brother Abraham and his nephew Ulakai, immediately rose and thus followed the example and the people did the same ... (THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS, P. 940, 19/01/1834).*

From that day on, following the lead given by Tupou and Ulakai, the people, during public worship, stood during the singing of hymns. Ulakai, one of the ‘translation pioneers’, active in other significant developments, had also played an important part in changing attitudes to public worship.

Ulakai’s passing

Ulakai died in Tongatapu in early August 1839 aged 54 years. When news of his death reached Vava'u, Thomas felt that sufficient words could not be found to express the loss:

The death of Uiliami or William is a public loss but his life to the cause of God will be ineffable, he was the oldest and best friend we had. King Jioisi [George] has lost his principal stay in Government. He stood firm from the first.
(THOMAS, JOURNAL 08/08/1839.)*

At Ebenezer Chapel in Neiafu, a fortnight after Ulakai’s death, Thomas conducted what could be called a ‘memorial service’ where Ulakai’s passing was seen as *a public loss and many people wept before the Lord*. Thomas used a verse of Scripture, from the Prophet Isaiah, *to improve on the death of Ulakai*, making the point that godly people often die before their time. As Isaiah had put it long ago:

Good people pass away; and the godly often die before their time. (Isaiah 57:1 (Thomas, Tongatapu or the Friendly Islands, p. 1207 and p. 1211, 07/08/1839; 25/08/1839.*

So it was with the pioneer interpreter/translator William Ulakai.

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Sakalaia Uhila: ‘a very wise, thoughtful and discerning man, a great Chief’

A keen Interest in books

Uhila was another significant Chief who had developed an interest in language and books well before Thomas and Hutchinson arrived in 1826. In the first attempt to establish the Mission in 1822, Uhila had been *one of Mr Lawry's acquaintances* and had obviously become interested in what Lilly was doing with the language. Quite soon after the Thomas's had settled at Hihifo, he approached them and:

enquired whether we had a book in the Tonga language he had been told we had that Mr Lawry had made one he was disappointed when we informed him we had none. (THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS P. 355, 09/07/1826; THOMAS, JOURNAL*, 19/07/1826.).*

He could well have been referring to the vocabulary that George Lilly had begun collating during Lawry's time. (*INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE. LETTERS AND JOURNALS*, BEVERIDGE, NOVEMBER 1827*).

Friend of the Missionaries

Uhila had frequent contact with Thomas, urging the missionary to learn the language, and in the meantime, assisting him with translation work. (*Thomas Journal**, 23/10/1826). He had land at Hihifo, but told Thomas that he lived at Nuku'alofa through his attachment to the [LMS] Missionaries;

and he says he will give his place up here rather than be deprived of them he has his faults but ever since we came and while Mr Lawry was here he has been a friend to the Missionary cause. (IBID, 28/09/1826).

Uhila, like his cousin Ulakai, was a Hihifo chief but had taken up residence in Nuku'alofa with Tupou and the LMS Tahitians and worshipped there rather than face the anger and opposition of Ata. The two Tahitian Teachers were in fact living with him at Nukualofa. (*Thomas, Tongatapu or the Friendly Islands** p. 355, 09/07/1826). However, he made frequent visits to Hihifo, giving valuable support and assistance to the missionaries there.

He made many friendly gestures of assistance to the Thomas and Hutchinson families, including gifts of food. Ata was angered by this support. He criticized Uhila harshly during a large assembly of heathens and called him foolish for his attachment to the missionary and the lotu, and blamed him for not taking his place at their own [Tongan traditional] worship. Uhila simply hung down his head and laughed. On that same day, Thomas said, after the rebuke from Ata, Uhila made a kind gesture to the missionaries when food was hard to get. Thomas noted a generous gift was given:

Uhila had two fine orange trees in fruit at his house, which was inside the fort, and he allowed me to gather the fruit whenever I pleased. This was a mark of his love, and it was not a small one either, as I do not know that there were other orange trees on this part of Tonga. (THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS, 09/01/1827, P. 363).

When Uhila heard of Ata's treatment of the Thomas and Hutchinson families, during and after a dispute over the thatching of the Mission House, he came to see them and offer support as a friend to the Missionary cause. (*Thomas, Journal**, 28-29/09/1826.) Thomas Wright was the translator during this visit when Thomas apologized for not being able to speak the language and explained that, nevertheless, God could see them and I prayed that he would bless them. Uhila like many of the chiefs, spoke some English, learned from the European beach-combers and castaways who had lived in the islands since Captain Cook's time. Uhila assured Thomas that the people at Nuku'alofa liked Jehovah but at Hehefo [Hihifo] no like prayer. (*IBID.*)

At his baptism in mid-1829 he and his family were given, or chose, new names. He became Zechariah, his wife Elizabeth and their young son, John. (*INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE. LETTERS AND JOURNALS, TURNER*, 05/05/1829).

The first Love Feast

Uhila gave evidence of his commitment to the lotu in many ways, not the least of which was when, on the eleventh of October 1829 the missionaries conducted the first Love Feast. This traditional Wesleyan custom may have appeared rather unusual to Tongan converts who took part in it because it was a fellowship meeting where individuals spoke about the Christian life and shared a simple meal of bread and water. One hundred and fifty people were present at that first Love Feast and forty of them spoke about what led them to turn to Jehovah and what God had done for them. Tupou was one of the forty who spoke, as was Uhila. In his testimony Uhila said that:

No one had been so wicked as he had been, and he thanked the Lord for his mercy to him. They all [the speakers] attributed the change to the Word of God which they had heard from the missionaries. (THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS P 527, II/10/1829).*

A translation assistant

During several weeks in December 1828-January 1829, Uhila spent some time with Thomas (the missionary called it a season) working on the language and on translations. Among biblical passages Thomas had chosen to translate was a

section of the Old Testament book of Daniel. This complex political and religious piece of Scripture focused on a powerful King's troubling dream about his kingdom, symbolized by a great tree that was going to be cut down. Daniel, in the Scriptures, was called upon to interpret the dream and the outcome was that the influential king came to recognize that God, not himself, was the supreme Lord:

Now I, Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of Heaven, all whose works are truth and his ways judgement; and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.
(HOLY BIBLE, KING JAMES VERSION, DANIEL 4:37).

Uhila's contribution to the translation of this unusual Old Testament story, Thomas wrote, was skillful:

He [Uhila] kindly attends to assist me in the language for this work he is the best qualified person I have met with ... I had the assistance of Uhila in translating the 4th Chapter of Dan [Daniel] – he is a more able assistant. (THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS P. 468, 20/01/1829).*

Mediator/Negotiator/Evangelist

Uhila was particularly helpful during the missionary conversations with the chiefs Ata and Tupou Aleamotu'a. During the difficult times when Tupou [Aleamotu'a], at Nuku'alofa, absented himself from worship, and prayed privately in the bush, Uhila and Ulakai went with Thomas and Turner to encourage them to urge Tupou to be more decided and open about the lotu. Tupou responded by saying that he was determined to make another start. He had given up public worship as a condition of his being installed as Tu'i Kanokupolu. From this point on, however, he would now be openly supporting the lotu. Although Thomas does not say so in as many words, clearly Uhila was there to be a translator in this decisive moment in the history of the Wesleyan church in Tonga. (THOMAS, JOURNAL* 26/05/1828).

Thomas emphasized Uhila's keen evangelistic spirit at the time of the great revival. Thomas reported that Uhila explained the revival to various Tongatapu Chiefs:

After the revival was felt in Tongatapu he [Uhila] was one of those who waited upon the heathen chiefs at various places to talk to them about turning to God. (THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS P.1011, 23/07/1834).*

A final tribute.

Some years later, when Uhila was seriously ill and in danger of dying, Thomas wrote that Uhila was:

one of the oldest and best friends, and one of the first who stood firm to Tupou. He was a person of great influence and power when a heathen, as he was a priest, and since he renounced paganism, he has exerted a good influence upon the whole. (IBID, P.1011)

Part of Uhila's great influence, undoubtedly, was when he assisted as an interpreter on various significant occasions and when, as a pioneer translator, he helped to bring the truths of the Bible into the Tongan language.

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Timote Katoa: 'amongst the earliest of his countrymen who embraced the outward form of Christianity'.

Turner and Cross's assistant.

Timote Katoa was another *assistant in translation* during the early days of the Nuku'alofa Mission. Admittedly Turner and Cross provide few references to those who helped them with the language but an obituary for Timote Katoa who died in 1849, sheds some light on translating and interpreting assistance he was able to provide for them. Written by Richard Amos, (Tonga 1849-1858) superintendent of the Wesleyan Institution at Nuku'alofa where Timote was a student, gives some valuable insights. Amos's interest in Tongan history and traditions emerges in the obituary where he notes some details of Timote's heritage. Amos says of Katoa that he was:

born of respectable parents in the fortress of Feletoa, Vavau, during the war between Finau and his aunt Toe-umu. At that time these lands were the abodes of cruelty; and his father Feke, with his mother Fuji, like their neighbours, dwelt in the midst of wars and rumours of wars While yet a boy, he embraced the outward form of the "lotu" in Nuku'alofa before the Wesleyan Missionaries arrived, having been instructed in the way of salvation by the Tabitian Teachers belonging to the London Missionary Society. (MR. JUNE, 1852. P. 249-250. OBITUARY OF TIMOTHY KATOA).

Charles Tucker, (Tonga 1832-1841) who also knew Katoa well, spoke of him of him as an early convert who:

listened to their [Missionary] instructions, and was amongst the earliest of his countrymen who embraced the outward form of Christianity. Being an intelligent youth, he soon learned to read his native tongue, and sing the sacred songs of Zion. He thirsted for knowledge, and eagerly sought information ... By the sacrament of baptism he was admitted into the Christian church, and received the name of Timothy ... (TUCKER, CHRISTIAN MISCELLANY & AND FRIENDLY VISITOR VOL 2, P.143, 1855).

From Ricard Amos we also learn some details of Timote's close relationships with the pioneer missionaries, Turner, Cross and Watkin. He had been, Amos said, taught by the Rev. Nathaniel Turner admitted ... into the Christian Church by the rite of baptism by Rev William Cross and received on trial as a local preacher by Rev James Watkin (*M R. June, 1852. p 249-250*). Amos informed Wesleyans in England and in other parts of the world, through Missionary Notices, that Katoa:

diligently attended to the cultivation of his mind, steadily increased his stock of knowledge, took a lively interest in every department of the work of Christ, and was anxious not to be outdone by any of his fellow-labourers. The late and present Kings of the Friendly Islands showed him marked respect. By his habits of observation, and habitual intercourse with the Chiefs, he acquired a correct and extensive knowledge of the peculiar idiom of his native language: hence he was employed for several years by the Missionaries, as a Pundit, or teacher, to assist them in translating the holy Scriptures; and, by his kind and gentlemanly conduct, continued fidelity, and sterling piety, he greatly endeared himself to them and their families. His Christian experience was clear and scriptural. (MN 1852. AMOS, KATOA OBITUARY; M R 1852).

Some dark days

There were, however, some dark days for Katoa. During the troubled civil unrest years in Tongatapu during 1837-1840, *his love to God grew cold*. He went to live in the heathen fortress of Bea, and had himself tattooed. Ultimately, however, after hearing a sermon preached by Thomas on the evils of war, *he was convinced of his*

error, returned to the lotu, to which he remained faithful to the end of his life. (IBID).

Timothy Katoa had been one of Ricard Amos's first students when he arrived in Tonga to resurrect the Native Training Institution, being present [Amos said] *at the commencement of our course of instruction*. Illness hampered his studies, however, (he had an infection in his throat and showed evidence of consumption) but he attended the Institution:

as long as he could walk, and devoured knowledge until his strength failed. He was greatly respected by King George, who regularly corresponded with him; and when the King resided here he was his constant companion. This was not surprising, as Timothy had acquired a good stock of general information and was highly respectful and dignified in his manners. (IBID).

On December 13th, 1849, after a long illness, he died, and *the Teachers of the Institution carried him to his burial and made great lamentation over him.* (IBID).

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John Lolohea 'one of the first fruits of the faith.'

First among the young chiefs.

Lolohea was one of the most significant language assistants in the very early days at Hihifo. The first Hihifo scholar, the first to be baptized, the first lay leader, one of Mr. Thomas's 'boys', one of the 'young chefs', who was most helpful from the outset. Together with Tupoutoutai, Lolohea was one of the first to plead with Thomas to be taught to read and write. He had learned something of Jehovah from William Brown, ex Port au Prince, when staying with family members in Vava'u and could speak enough English to ask for Thomas's help: Me foolish Me love book. You teach me book. (*Thomas, Journal**, 01/07/1826; 23/07/1826). Just three weeks after arriving in Tonga, Thomas was amazed at how eager Lolohea was to be taught and now quickly he was able to learn the Alphabet even with the little amount of time Thomas could devote to him during the earliest weeks of the Mission. Thomas was busy getting the Mission House erected but gave Lolohea an Alphabet card and spared him a few minutes of teaching. (IBID, 15/07/1826).

When Lolohea died a premature death on 12 January 1829 Thomas described him as the first fruits of the faith in Tonga. He was the son of Tupouniua. His mother was Ata's wife, Papa, when Thomas arrived in 1826 and Thomas fondly remembered how Lolohea:

became strongly attached to us, and to the worship of God from the time of our taking up residence here. He lived near our temporary house when we first landed frequently visited us, to make enquiries respecting the things of God ... Some time before we arrived at Hihifo he returned from Vavau where he had been living with his brother. [Tupoutoutai]. While he was there, he had been told a little about Jehovah, by a sailor, then residing at Vavau. [William Brown] The two brothers were impressed by what this sailor told them, and although they did not fully believe, at the time, yet when we arrived at this place, and they heard of the great things of Jehovah from us, they were both satisfied of the truth, cast away their Tongan Spirits, and determined that the Lord should be their God. They were the first two scholars we had, and being respectable chiefs, their example and sanction were the cause of others attending to be instructed as long as Ata permitted. (MN 1830 THOMAS TO SECRETARIES, OI/06/1829).

A leader and teacher

During those early days at Hihifo, Lolohea's witness to the faith was an encouragement to the Wesleyan mission party. He was *the guardian and head* of a number of other youths who lived with him so that they could attend school and worship, *safe under his protection*. In an atmosphere of strong opposition from Ata, Lolohea's support was a great comfort to Thomas:

By this young man and his youthful companions, the praises of the Lord our God were sung night and morning, and prayer was offered to him that is able to save. (IBID).

Lolohea, a keen student, an active teacher and mentor to others, also sought material for his personal devotions. He asked the missionary for help. Thomas responded with two prayers which Lolohea found to be too short. He had some other words he wanted added, as Thomas explained:

The young chief Lolohea, who was one of our more regular and attentive scholars, had long suffered from scrofula [tuberculosis of the neck]some time ago I had at his request written him two prayers which he had used, one for the evening and the other for the morning. He now found them defective, and he wished me to call upon him at his house that he might inform me what he wished added. On complying with his wish, I found him in a very serious

frame of mind. (THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS P.407, THOMAS 03/07/1828).*

Faithful to the end

Lolohea a faithful lotu man, was committed to learning to the end. When he became too ill to walk, he was wheeled to the school in a barrow, or carried by some of his friends. (*Thomas, Journal**, 14/05/1828). When he became too weak to come to chapel, Thomas would hold Prayer Meetings and Sunday Services at his home, Le'ole'o within the Fort. Reflecting on the events of New Year's Day 1829, Thomas spoke of their need *to walk by faith* because of continual opposition by Ata. There was much that was discouraging. School classes saw only a few students attending. Papa [Ata's wife] and her friends had prevented the girls and young women from attending instruction, and so school for girls was abandoned for the time. But Lolohea's faith provided some encouraging experiences. As Thomas tells it, he visited Lolohea at his house:

where we had had a little meeting for prayer for some weeks before, the young chief being too weak to go out. About ten persons were present and the young chief engaged in prayer. We had a profitable meeting and hoped for better times.
(THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS, P. 453, 01/01/1829.)*

Despite increasing weakness, there were, in fact, some '*better times*' for Lolohea. Just before he died, he asked to be baptized. Thomas prepared him for the sacrament and baptized him, without any opposition from Ata. The missionary wished him to take a Christian name, and suggested, because of his many years of suffering, that Job or Lazarus, notable Biblical sufferers, would be appropriate. Lolohea had ideas of his own. Thomas, in retirement in England, recalled, fondly, the day of his baptism:

I called Ulakai and other friends together. Mrs Thomas was chosen to give the name, which, after prayer, she did, and our dear afflicted friend was baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The mother of the young chief was in tears, and other friends were sitting all very serious. Our prayer was that the Lord would bless this event to the good of many and overrule it for his own glory. (IBID P. 459).

At his baptism Lolohea chose the Christian name John!

Two weeks later he died, *amidst the tears of many. (ibid, pp.459, 462)*. Just before he died he confirmed his faith in some simple but powerful words:

I am like a ship with a fair wind a fast sailing ship. I am making great speed. My heart is fixed. What can I say more.
(INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE, LETTERS AND JOURNALS, M. WILSON 25/04/1847).*

He was buried with the traditional respect given to high chiefs:

several Hamoa [Samoa] mats very fine in their texture and expressions of grief with beating of breasts and cutting the body to let the blood flow, wailing and many tears. (Thomas, Journal, 13/01/1829).*

The Thomas's were there, of course, but John decided, for a number of reasons, not to offer the liturgy for the Burial of the Dead:

I did not read any Burial Service, because as we are so much opposed by Ata and his wife. We thought they would not allow us to do this ... we have no form prepared and time will not allow us to prepare one at this time. (IBID).

Thomas, however, did prepare *a few remarks upon the conduct of John Lolohea*, which he intended to read to the people at an appropriate time. (IBID).

Some of the mourners who were shedding tears, apart from Lolohea's family, were the young lotu men Lolohea had encouraged and held together, even though he was increasingly weak. Following his death, the little band dispersed, which was a great discouragement to Thomas:

I hoped to see a group to serve God in this place, he wrote in his small private diary, but they had left this place for Nukualofa partly because of the Chief [Ata]. (THOMAS, SMALL JOURNAL, 01/02/1829).*

In his later tributes to Lolohea, Thomas provided an acknowledgement of the help given in preparing material for teaching, for worship and for publication:

We [Thomas and Turner] were both in the habit of visiting Lolohea at his place in order to his assisting us in the language and in preparing our pieces to read to the natives. As this little praying party lived near our place, we could hear them singing from time to time, and it was truly gratifying to us in our situation... and our affliction was made lighter through his tenderness and sympathy. (MN AUGUST 1830, THOMAS TO SECRETARIES, 01/06/1829).

Later missionaries, such as Thomas West (Tonga 1846-1856) paid homage to Lolohea who had persisted in the faith even in the face of the harsh opposition of Ata. He also praised him for his encouragement of other young believers. Despite persecution, West said, Lolohea was a true pioneer:

There were a few young men, headed by an afflicted son of a chief who often met, in comparative secrecy, to sing and pray; and, when at length their leader, Lolohea, died, there was every reason to believe that he was the first of many thousands of Tonguese converts who have since died in the Lord, and have entered into the heavenly rest. (WEST, TEN YEARS, p. 278).

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Heamasi Laupo: ‘possessed of so many excellencies’.

Hopes that much good will result.

Thomas was pleased to depend on Laupo because of the young chief’s *correct and extensive acquaintance with the Tongan language.* (*WMM April 1849*). Sarah Thomas was his teacher in the early days and one of her diary entries, just eight months after her arrival, was particularly perceptive. She was encouraged by the attention to learning shown by the boys she was teaching, particularly by Laupo’s ability and devotion:

This morning have been encouraged in instructing the boys to read. It is pleasing to see what progress they make in reading. Three men and two boys are learning to write. We have some [encouragement] from these, especially from the three Chief boys who live with us. They seem to be much attached to us one of them named Laubo ... and although some strove to persuade him to leave us, they cannot prevail upon him. He is considered to be a great Chief. What God may do through these boys at a future time is uncertain. I hope much good will result from their living with us.
(SARAH THOMAS, JOURNAL, 14/02/1827).*

Sarah’s hopes were, in fact, realized. When Laupo died some 20 years later aged 35 (April 1846), Wesleyan Methodists in London, and on Mission Stations around the world, heard about his passing. The editor of the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine published his obituary, prepared by Charles Tucker (Tonga 1832-1841) and Matthew Wilson (1838-1853) In a note to the obituary, the editor of the

Magazine explained that *We experience no ordinary pleasure in the insertion of this Memoir*, and went on to say that Laupo was a product of the Missionaries in Tonga who were in the tradition of the apostles:

*They labour on apostolic principles, after the apostolic model,
both as to method and objects, and with apostolic success.
(WMM, APRIL 1849, P.344. EDITORIAL COMMENT).*

With this generous language the Editor was linking Laupo directly to the very beginnings of the Christian Church, placing him, with Christians through the centuries, who could trace an unbroken line to the original apostles! Wilson and Tucker were equally generous in their appreciation of Laupo, saying that he was:

*Possessed of so many excellencies and his Christian career
was so interwoven with the history of the Wesleyan Mission
in Tongataboo, that some record of his short but useful life
ought to be preserved. (WMM, APRIL 1849).*

A clash of loyalties

Hermas Laupo, as a fourteen year old boy in 1826, was one of that important band of translation pioneers who were so useful and supportive when the Mission was being re-established Known simply as Laupo, at his baptism in 1834 he chose, or was given, the Christian name, Hermas. On the face of it, this was an unusual choice. Although Hermas is a Biblical name, it is only mentioned once in the Scriptures, (Romans 16:14). In Scripture the original Hermas lived with four others in a Christian community and it is probably that fact that led to Laupo's choice of the name. At Hihifo Laupo was part of the group of young men who lived with Lolohea under that chief's guardianship and protection, and who met at his house for singing and prayer. The Reverends Matthew Wilson and Charles Tucker valued Laupo greatly and said in their obituary of him:

*Thomas and Hutchinson, after fixing upon the locality where
they should reside, almost immediately commenced a school;
and young Laubo [Laupo], being somewhat related to the
family of Ata, the governing chief at the time at that part of
the island, soon connected himself with it, as did several
other youths, most of whom were of considerable rank and
influence. . . . the mind of Laubo expanded; he evinced a
considerable aptitude for learning, and soon excelled some of
his fellows (WMM, APRIL 1849).*

An enthusiastic scholar

Laupo certainly was an enthusiastic and regular scholar at Thomas's English language school which wasn't surprising as Thomas says, because he lived quite often *with us at the Mission House.* (*Thomas, Tongatapu or the Friendly Islands** p.448, 27/12/1828). Attendance at the school, by the small group who attended, was irregular depending on how carefully Ata was watching those who came and went to classes. Nevertheless, in early 1828 Thomas appears pleased enough with the number of students who came to class:

Our average attendance at school is 17. Day by day they attend to be instructed, several of them belonging to the royal family, as Lolohea, Tuboutoutai, Laubo, Latufakahau, Mafile'o & Bangia, and others are their relatives for the most part, and under their control to some extent. (IBID, P.386, 16/03/1828).

And it wasn't long before Laupo, who excelled as a student, became one of the earliest of the translation pioneers. As Thomas reported he had:

secured the aid of a young Chief as my teacher named Laubo which I hope will be a means of good to him as well as of great service to me. (IBID, 22/06/1828, P.406).

Laupo's attendance at school, however, and his role as Thomas's teacher, raised concerns in Ata's household and with other influential chiefs. Thomas learned of this opposition from Laupo himself:

The young chief Laupo informed me today [Thomas wrote] that Papa has been talking to him, and she wishes him to give up praying, and not attend any more ... but Ulakai is Laupo's guardian – and he does not regard what she says on these matters, besides, this is the most intelligent youth we have in the school and his mind is too well informed to listen to this dark minded heathen [Papa]. (IBID, P.448; THOMAS, JOURNAL, 27/12/1828).*

Laupo's assistance to Thomas raised conflicts, too, of another kind. He was well known for his traditional singing and dancing skills and was often in demand when Tongan amusements were being held. When, on one occasion, he was asked to take part in some Tongan festivities on the Lord's Day, he refused. Thomas was pleased that his scholar/teacher turned down the request:

I am glad to hear, [Thomas said] that the boy Laupo refused attending a Tonga amusement when invited to by Mataele because it was the Sabbath. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 26/04/1829).*

Nevertheless, the demands of traditional amusements did cause conflict for Laupo. When asked by Thomas to join a Class Meeting, he hesitated. He told Thomas that he enjoyed the Tonga amusements, *to play and dance*, and, furthermore he felt that he was too young *to meet in class*. Thomas clearly struggled with this response, as a long entry in his journal highlights some of the difficulties of the culture clash in a period of transition:

Laupo objects to attend our Class Meeting because he is young and fond of play ... I endeavored to inform him that if he was practicing that which was sinful he ought to cast it away and if he did not he would not be saved. On the other hand it was not wrong for him to play or dance, when he had done his work. I am aware that when the truth of God has a place in their hearts it will purge away these amusements and lead them to act differently but they must be made to feel before they will do it and while in their present state I do not see it right to lay too many burdens upon them but we should discourage them from attending ... (IBID, 26/04/1829).

To ease his conscience, perhaps, for taking a liberal and accommodating approach, Thomas went on to say that there were *no precedents* in Scripture and *no commandment* that was relevant, and *no code of laws drawn up by the Church* that could be applied to this cultural issue. (*ibid*). And although Thomas doesn't say it, if he had been too strict with Laupo, he would, perhaps have lost one of his best and brightest scholars, and his most useful language teacher and translation assistant. Laupo's later attendance in Class, his assistance to the missionaries in translation, and his strong support for the lotu in the presence of often bitter opposition from Ata, was a great encouragement to Thomas and Turner and other missionaries.

Ultimately, Ata's persecution culminated in exile for Laupo. The young chiefs and their families were expelled from the Fort at Hihifo. Tupou Aleamotu'a responded by giving the exiles some land nearby, and with that a new village was born :

By authority of Tubou the King ... these persecuted chiefs were cared for and a large and fruitful estate called Masilamea with its large garden lands and trees given to them, with a good seabound on the north side and here they had

put up a temporary house in which to hold their schools, and worship God without the fear of being interfered with by their ignorant and mistaken friends.

When Thomas visited them there he said he found the young chief Veehala with his wife and family, also Laubo a prince of the Hau family happily settled inn their new home. (THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS, P.876).

Glowing tributes

Laupo was valued for his efforts as a teacher of the language and as one who could give invaluable assistance in the process of preparing translations for the press. His obituary in the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine highlighted his linguistic skills:

Having a sound judgement, and a correct and extensive acquaintance with the principles and idiom of the Tonguese language, he became very useful as a Pundit, or Teacher ... several of the brethren derived great assistance from him in acquiring Tonguese, and also in revising their translations of works for the benefit of the people. The benefit was reciprocal; for through his long and intimate intercourse with the missionaries, and their families (compared with the natives generally) for increasing his knowledge on a variety of subjects; and whatever was of useful nature, he turned to practical purposes, and put it into immediate circulation. (WMM, 1849).

A brief and almost passing comment by Thomas in mid-1829 gave credit to Laupo and acknowledged the encouragement the missionary received by talking with the young chief about spiritual things while working on translations:

I have written a short piece today on the Judgment Day. I corrected it by the assistance of Laubo and talked a little with him. I feel a little encouraged in the native tongue. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 29/06/1829).*

The Rev Matthew Wilson emphasized an important, additional aspect of Laupo's character: his love of learning, literature and books. After his death, in his early thirties, Wilson made special mention of Laupo's collection of books and papers. It consisted of:

Two copies of the Scriptures, as far as they are printed, two hymn books, two copies of the Sunday Morning Service, a small Geography of the world, another copy of the Scriptures, two maps, and all the numbers of a small periodical, pub-

lished at the Mission Press. Besides these, he had in manuscript, the Rudiments of Astronomy, a Vocabulary of the English words introduced into their scriptures, a short chronology of some of the important events in the Bible, a paper containing the outline of the leading doctrines of Christianity; he had written off thirty whole chapters of those parts of the Scriptures not yet printed among them, besides other select portions, amounting altogether to six hundred verses. Another paper contained the names of the Tongan gods, with their pedigree. He had sixty skeletons of sermons: some of these original, others he had transcribed or written down after hearing them preached. It is impossible for a stranger to form a correct idea of the high value he set upon his books and papers. He esteemed them better than rubies, or than much fine gold. (WMM APRIL 1849).

There was also one other interesting aspect of Laupo's books and papers that did not make it into the published tribute. Wilson's manuscript draft of the obituary draws attention to Laupo's *Memorandum Book*. In that book he recorded noteworthy events including the birth of his children. When others heard of this record keeping they asked him to include their children. And so, many years before the government introduced Birth Registers, Laupo had shown the way. As Wilson remarked, Laupo's books and papers were, in fact, *his treasure, his library, his all!* (WMM APRIL 1849; INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE, LETTERS AND JOURNALS*, M. WILSON 28/04/1847).

Tucker and Wilson concluded their obituary with words of appreciation which highlight his role as a pioneer of the lotu and one who was significant in helping to lay the foundations of the church in Tonga:

Thus lived and thus died Hermas Laubo Here is, indeed, ripe fruit from the Mission field ... (WMM APRIL 1849).

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Taniela Talia'uli: 'one of our good Hihifo men'.

A most ardent and spirited young man

Only a very few specific references to Talia'uli appear in Thomas's Journals during the period 1826-1830. In one, Talia'uli is simply named together with several other chiefly 'boys', who were members of Thomas's English language school. He would almost certainly have been present when Thomas had Tongan language sessions with 'the boys' after class lessons for the day had concluded. In retirement in England, when compiling his History of Tonga, Thomas made a

glowing reference to Talia'uli. He recounted visiting Masilamea, Tongatapu, in 1832 and found Talia'uli there. He described him as:

a young Chief of high rank and most firm in his attachment to the true religion. (THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS P.876).*

On a visit to Beka, on another occasion, he similarly praised Talia'uli as:

A most ardent and spirited young man. He was at that time a local preacher, and had been one of our schoolboys at Hihifo. With Laupo, Ataata, Latufakahau and others, all persons of high rank, he had nobly stood out from the first against the hatred and opposition of their friends and with many others now had to suffer persecution for the Lord's sake. (IBID P.964).

During the terrible bloodshed at Hule in 1837 Talia'uli was killed. As Thomas has noted:

A Christian Chief and local preacher, one of our good Hihifo men Talia'uli, fell also having been shot and clubbed. He was a very dear friend, zealous for his God ... being set upon by two or three at once he was outnumbered and fell. (IBID, P.1078).

These references, brief as they are, justify his inclusion as one who helped to lay the foundations of the Wesleyan Church.

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Latufakahau: 'he prays that Jehova will strengthen his mind and keep him.'

A reliable student.

Ata's son, Latufakahau, does not appear, initially, in Thomas's Journals as an interpreter/translator. However, he did become useful some two years into the life of the Mission at Hihifo. He gets a mention when Thomas, describing the progress of the school, commented on the seventeen students who made up the handful of students that the Thomas's had encouraged to come to classes. (THOMAS, JOURNAL*, 16/03/1828.)

Latu, as Thomas usually calls him, was not only a regular attender at School. He was, in fact, one of the 'Chief boys' who lived with the Thomas's at the Mission House. This angered Ata (*ibid*, 10/04/1828.) That anger came to a head on

Sunday 27 April 1828. Thomas was surprised when he came to prepare for Sunday worship that day, in the 'make do' chapel, a screened off part of the Mission House, to hear someone already at prayer. As he observed:

I was pleased this morning to hear the boy [Latufakahau] in coming into worship to pray to the Lord our God. I happened to be on the opposite side of the partition where he kneeled down. I do think that the youth is favorably impressed in his mind. (IBID, 27/04/1828).

Persecution for faith

Latu's prayer in the chapel, and his attendance at worship, twice that day in April 1828, set off a furious response from Ata when he became aware of it. After Sabbath evening worship, the Thomas's heard a noisy disturbance close to the Mission House. Ata and Latu were at the centre of it. Thomas describes the distressing event in some detail:

This evening our ears were assailed by the voice of crying towards the Chief's yard. We soon were informed that the Chief was beating his son Latu because he prayed to Jehovah [Jehovah]. Last night on returning to rest he was heard by a native woman to be at prayer. She screamed out the Chief hearing her sought the youth, but could not find him, but after [Latu] attending our worship twice today the Chief was afresh aroused-and took hold of him by the hair of his head, which he wears rather long, and struck him many times about the breast, the side and face with his fist this conduct deeply affected his wife Papa she cried and ran and took hold of the boy bathed in tears. A number of other boys were present, these run away, and came to our yard soon after Latu came bathed in tears, he told the Chief he would go to Nuku'alofa. The Chief sent a man after him, lest he should go. Some time after Papa came and cried over the boy and took him to Tofua's place which is near to us. This boy as [has] several times told us of the Chief being angry on account of his praying, also told us if the Chief liked to kill him, he might, but he should not give over attending our worship ... It is thought if we worship in the intended School, that the Chief will burn it down. (IBID, 27/04/1828).

After the beating, Latufakahau wanted to escape from Ata's control. He spoke of going to Nuku'alofa, but that did not happen. Instead, he went to the island

of 'Atata, well away from Ata and persecution. On this isolated island, where he spent some 10 days, he took time to consider his future. Thomas missed Latu, especially at worship, but knew that the *promising youth* was absent because of *the persecution of the Chief.* (*ibid*, 04/05/1828). When Latu returned from Atata, he told Thomas that on the island he had spent time :

praying in the bush morning and evening his dreaming of being with me. How glad he was of knowing that the Lord could see him at all time and know what he thought and did ... he said that when he is with us, he is not afraid of Ata but of Jehovah, [Jehovah] and when he is with the Chief he does not feel so strong, he prays that Jehovah will strengthen his mind and keep him. (IBID, 07/05/1828).

A pastoral assistant

Latufakahau was not only a student in the classroom and an assistant with translation. He was a pastoral associate for the missionary as well. On one occasion, after visiting Lolohea, Thomas took Latu with him to see a lotu man, Aleki, who was very ill, nearing death. Aleki had been attached to the Mission previously, but during his illness he turned to traditional Tongan gods. Latufakahau took a leading part in the pastoral visit. Thomas says that his young assistant, *talked sharply to Aleki, in the folly of giving up praying and turning to the Tongan gods.* And Thomas followed up his young chiefly assistant when he:

exhort[ed] him [Aleki] to continue to pray unto God that he would enlighten his mind. (IBID, 08/01/1829).

At the time of Lolohea's death, Latu offered to give some pastoral support for the group that Lolohea had been mentoring. He said that he wanted to:

attend chapel and will stop at Leoleo [Le'o le'o] and try to keep the boys together'. (ibid, 12/01/1829).

This offer would have been encouraging to the missionary at a time when he was grieved that *his boys* had gone to Nuku'alofa now that their friend and protector, Lolohea, was dead. They wanted to have the freedom to worship Jehovah without fear. Latu was one of the boys who had enjoyed safety and encouragement with Lolohea, and now saw himself as able to take on that protective role of others. Unfortunately, his offer came to nought. The boys, who went to Nuku'alofa where they could worship without opposition, had not come back to Hihifo. Thomas, in conversation with Ata, spoke of his sorrow at the loss of the

boys. Ata's response would have been of little comfort to the missionary. The Chief told Thomas that:

Latu was here and mentioned another boy as though one or two was enough to be taught. (IBID, 19/01/1829; THOMAS, TONGATAPU; OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS P.467).*

Latu certainly supported the mission cause. At the burial ground on the day of Lolohea's funeral, Latu used the occasion as an opportunity for evangelism, discussing the lotu and '*God's Word*' with the largely '*heathen*' mourners. He made his point by using a sacred object to reinforce his arguments:

a Bible was sent for that God's Word might be seen, for some would hardly believe that God had visited our world with his word to teach us the way of salvation.' (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 13/01/1829).*

For Thomas there was mutual benefit in his friendship with Latufakahau. Thomas would have virtual one on one teaching sessions with the young chief, and Latu would be able to work with Thomas in pastoral work and in preparing lesson materials for use in school and church.

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Asaele Mataele: 'dying with desire to lotu'.

A ray of hope

As one of Thomas's boys, Mataele *spent time with Thomas on the language*, and was a great encouragement, providing some optimism amidst continual opposition from Ata. Despite the constant, sometimes bitter opposition, there were times when Thomas felt heartened, even hopeful, especially when Mataele started to attend worship. Ata's decision to give Thomas permission to build a house *for teaching and prayer* was also an element of emerging hope. For more than two years the Chief had stubbornly refused every request by the missionaries to build a school/chapel. Now, Thomas felt, Ata's decision was *too good to be credited* and was *allowing a ray of hope for Hihifo*. (*ibid*, 15/07/1928; 19/07/1828). Another feature of hope was that Thomas felt he was making some progress in learning Tongan. He was getting, he said:

many sentences and some new words [and felt] a hope of learning this language but I must be patient. (IBID, 15/07/1928; 19/07/1828).

And Mataele's assistance was obviously helping Thomas to feel some confidence as he struggled with the language.

A useful student.

It is perhaps strange that although Ata was so bitterly opposed to the lotu, his son Mataele became closely associated with the Wesleyan Mission. Mataele not only attended Thomas's English language school but he told his teacher that he wished to lotu, attend worship, but feared Ata, his father. As he said, *he was dying with a desire to Lotu, but was afraid of the Chief*. Thomas was impressed with this young man and encouraged him to resist Ata's opposition, telling him that *he was foolish to fear the Chief, the Chief would not kill him*. Thomas believed that *If the Lord is pleased to give us this man, I hope it will be of use. (IBID, 15/07/1828)*.

Mataele certainly was useful to Thomas as he struggled to prepare school lessons and Biblical teachings to read at Wednesday and Sunday services of worship. Even though Mataele was forbidden by his father to attend worship, Thomas could still work with his young assistant after school lessons were finished, as a brief comment in his Journal indicates:

Spent a little time with Mataele in the language. I hope concerning this young man though at present he is too much afraid of the Chief to attend our Sabbath worship. (IBID, 28/07/1828).

Mataele, who was permitted to attend school, with other young chiefs, was learning English but he wanted more. He really desired to attend worship, as Thomas noted:

[Mataele] came to our gate at night to be allowed to attend our English Service which we have in our House. (IBID, 17/08/1828).

Thomas does not say so, but presumably Mataele's request would have been readily agreed to. However, Mataele's attending worship could have been the reason why Ata increased his pressure on his son, ordering him to give up praying. Fai'ana, Ata's sister and Mataele's aunt, a Priestess with *powerful influence*, had also been pressuring the young Chief to give up the *lotu*. (*IBID, 29/05/1828*).

Even though he experienced severe personal, family and community attacks, Mataele continued his support for Thomas and the Mission. One report of attacks was particularly distressing. Mataele, with some concern, told his missionary teacher and mentor about it in some detail:

the Chief sent for him, and much displeased, ordered him to give over his praying but he says he will not. How far he

will be able to hold out I do not know. ... I told the young man that Jehovah wished him to pray but the devil wished him to give over – he says all his friends were against him and they told him, that the Otua's, or the devil as they call their gods, would kill him if he continued to pray. I told him not to be afraid but to continue he said he would. it is painful to see one after another torn away from us and our instruction. (IBID, 21/08/1828.)

The continual pressure from Ata did effect Mataele and Thomas was disappointed when his young helper did not attend Sabbath worship. He was also distressed when he heard that Mataele had made some offensive remarks about the lotu. When he next came to the Mission House, Thomas said that he *seemed ashamed what he said and what he did*. Thomas, however, was pleased to see him and was able:

to spend more than an hour with him in language. He seemed encouraged somewhat by what we had occasion to talk about. (IBID, 31/08/1828; 31/10/1828).

During the alarming incidents that occurred at Hihifo late in 1828, when Ata's physical threats led the missionaries to fear for their lives, Mataele took courageous action. He was distressed at the dangerous confrontation between Thomas, Ata and Papa. So he came to the Mission House after calm was restored, and expressed his support for the missionaries:

Mataele the chief's son came and shook me by the hand declaring his love to us and how he had been pained in his mind on our account and said last night he was not able to attend the [Chief's] Cava Party he was so distressed because of the anger of the Chie he mentioned many others who felt in a similar manner towards us. (IBID, 19/11/1828).

As the young chief and the missionary continued to work together, Thomas was encouraged, noting in his Journal that, after he spent a session in the language with Mataele he had *some hope concerning this man* (IBID, 25/11/1828).

Support for the lotu and its consequences

Thomas's hopes for ongoing assistance from the young Chief are highlighted by the fact that Mataele is the only one of the early translation helpers to be given considerable space in Thomas's Journals. Admittedly, other young chiefs, Lolo-hea, Laupo and Ve'ehala received recognition in the Missionary Notices for their assistance, not so much during their lifetime, but after their deaths. These young Chiefs were discouraged by Ata with threats, and finally by banishment,

for praying and for their commitment to their lotu. But it is Mataele who received special mention by Thomas:

Mataele who is the son of the Chief, and about 25 years of age, he became attached to the good cause renounced his former superstitions and attended our teaching. He is now assailed by his relatives and friends in a powerful manner. He is rather a kind disposed young man and I fear that he will not stand against their pointed rejection. They tell him he does not love them that he has cast them off he has choosed us as his friends they ask him why he does not cloathe as we do eat and drink and sleep as we do. They ridicule and do all they can to make him ashamed of the good cause here. (IBID, 15/08/1828.)

Thomas did all he could to support his young scholar/assistant and endeavored, he said, to give him encouragement:

telling him that in another world they [his persecutors] would see who were his real friends and that it would be good for him not to listen to what they said as their minds were dark (IBID, 25/11/1828).

Mataele certainly needed encouragement and, on a visit to the Mission House some days later, he told Thomas how he had suffered strong family pressure from Ata. His young friend's comments made such an impression on the missionary that he committed at least some of what Mataele had said to paper:

Ata is very angry with him because of the lotu he ordered him to give over his praying. The Chief threatened to kill his kau tagata [his people] if they continue to lotu ... he said he hung down his head and cried when the Chief told him to give over praying but he did not answer him. Ata told him that he should love him greatly if he gives over. (IBID, 06/12/1828).

In the face of this kind of pressure, Thomas was concerned about the young man's welfare. He looked *very thin and evidently grieves about the Chief's conduct.* Nevertheless, Thomas said he *encouraged him to endure hoping that the Lord would convert the Chief. (IBID).*

Threats of violence continued, however, with Mataele being warned that he would be beaten if he continued to lotu. He was caught between the demands of Tongan culture, on the one hand, and the requirements and expectations of the

lotu on the other. One Sabbath morning during worship, for example, Thomas was grieved to hear a great commotion, singing and dancing, coming from near the chapel. When he enquired later, he found that Mataele was involved, *if not the leader* of the Sunday amusements, then an active participant in them. Thomas thought this probably meant that the *promising young man has given way to the Chief* (*IBID, 14/12/1828; 21/12/1828.*)

Fading hopes

For the Wesleyan mission at Hihifo, the new year (1829) did not make a promising start as far as Mataele and Thomas were concerned. Some of the early hopes seemed to be fading. Mataele had been attending chapel early in the new year, but Thomas was concerned that did not observe what had become part of worship:

He did not bow down [kneel] when we went to prayer which is one sign of his having rejected the Lord. (IBID, 16/12/1828).

Thomas saw further evidence of declining loyalty when Mataele held what Thomas called a *Bo Ula or night dance* at his home during Sabbath evening worship. Mataele was obviously struggling with the clash of Wesleyan faith and Tongan culture. Nevertheless, although Thomas was cheered when Mataele next attended Sabbath worship, he felt that he seemed very serious ... very restless and looked unhappy in his mind. Thomas's prayer was that the Lord would *again raise this young man.* (*ibid, 19/01/1829; 05/04/1829*). That hope and prayer seemed unlikely to be realized, however, when Mataele was reported to be *sneering and making game at us.* Things seemed to be going from bad to worse when Mataele had *taken one of the wives of Taofa [Chief of Pea] to be his wife.* This, Thomas believed was *likely to cost him something as it is contrary to the customs of Tonga.* (*IBID, 22/04/1829*).

Mataele's illness drama.

The former close relationship between Thomas and Mataele was broken during Mataele's serious illness in mid-1829. Ata and some of his people took Mataele to a traditional sacred site, a boat house at Neiafu, two miles from the Fort at Hihifo. It was *supposed that a spirit is there* (*ibid, 29/05/1829*). Thomas visited the place and saw the large crowd who had gathered and spoke very harshly to Mataele, Ata and Fai'ana, Ata's sister, a priestess, attacking *their foolishness.* (*ibid*) What Tongan words Thomas actually used is hard to say. But there are some strong and emotive expressions in his Journal, in English, about the confrontation at the boat house. People there, he said, were *mistaken, wrong, foolish, wicked,* in error and, *displeasing to God.* Ata, bathed in tears, did not take kindly to Thomas's criticisms and asked the missionary *in a very respectful manner, and in*

a whisper, to leave. Ulakai who was sitting there took Thomas *by the arm* and led him away. (*ibid*).

Mataele's illness was a drawn-out affair. Traditional Tongan remedies continued: numerous Otuas were consulted, several god houses were visited, and *five persons have had a finger cut off as a means of obtaining a cure for the sick man.* (*ibid, 01/06/1829*). And it was reported that Ata had said that if his son, Mataele, died he would then know *that the Tonga Spirits are lies and he will turn to Jehovah.* Thomas visited Mataele on a number of occasions, first at a Spirit House and later at Tofua's place. He repeated what he had said previously, that Mataele had *done wrong* by turning to the Tongan gods and *turning away from Jehovah.* Mataele was clearly angered to be reproved again, and *in a sharp tone* told the missionary to go away. (*IBID 31/05/1829*).

Mataele eventually recovered and his recovery had the worst possible outcome for the Hihifo mission. Because he did not die, Ata was confirmed in his belief in the Tongan Otuas and became:

more fierce against the cause of Christ, determining that none here shall worship God that he can prevent (*IBID 26/07/1829.*)

Mataele and Thomas's relationship was also broken. Thomas heard that he now:

boasted of the Tongan Otuas saying that he soon got better when he left me and went to them and that the Otuas had cured him. (*IBID*).

This was heartbreaking news for Thomas. His reflections at the time illustrate the depth of his disappointment:

I mourn over this place and people. I am very sorrowful but fully persuaded that duty calls. I obey, not knowing where I will go, or what the consequences will be ...with few exceptions I must say then have I laboured in vain and spent my strength for naught. (*IBID, 26/07/1829*).

After nearly three years of opposition from Ata, the Thomas's left Hihifo for Nuku'alofa and ultimately were appointed to Ha'apai, leaving Ata and his domains without a missionary. (Thomas, Tongatapu or the Friendly Islands, * p.515). Almost eight years passed before the '*old station*' and the Mission House at Hihifo would see a Wesleyan Missionary again!

Return to the faith.

Mataele's rejection of the lotu was not permanent. Some three years after his break with Thomas he came to the Mission House in Nuku'alofa and declared to Thomas that *he now decided for the Lord with his wife and son* (*Thomas, Tongatapu or the Friendly Islands**, p. 850). And then, after another three years had passed, and the Thomas's were stationed in Vava'u, the former teacher and student, student and teacher, met up again. Thomas had the privilege then of baptizing Mataele, who had been *an object of deep anxiety* for several years. It had been a long and difficult journey from the Neiafu boat house, Hihifo, Tongatapu to the Wesleyan Chapel in Neiafu Vava'u. Mataele and Thomas were in fellowship once more and the sacrament of baptism was evidence of their reconciliation. The service was memorable, *a solemn time*, and the missionary was pleased that *many united to pray for the young chief who with other friends from Hihifo are still with us at Vava'u.* (*THOMAS, JOURNAL**, 27/05/1835).

Mataele chose Asahel [Asaele] as a Christian name, which may have seemed an unusual choice as Asahel was not a well-known figure in biblical history. But there was, perhaps, a special significance in the choice. Mataele, although called the son of Ata, was in fact a nephew of his Chief. In the Scriptures, Asahel was nephew to his chief, the famous biblical King David! The annual report of the Tongatapu Station for 1835 made a special reference to Mataele. Noting that there was an increase in numbers joining the church during the year the report said:

some who under the influence of worldly motives or strong temptation had apostatized have returned again and will we trust continue firm in their profession of Christianity.
(*MINUTES AND REPORTS*, TONGATAPU STATION REPORT FOR 1835*).

Among those who had returned, the report said, were Vaea and Mataele.

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Setaleki Ve'ehala: fine genius and superior mind.

One of the gifted youths

Ve'ehala was one of the *intelligent chiefs* who played a key role in early translation work. He was the son of Ata but also called Aleamotu'a his father. Even before he became a lotu man:

his fine genius and superior mind were clearly discernable. He excelled in everything to which he applied himself. (MN 1840, CHARLES TUCKER, MEMOIR OF SHADRACH VEEHALA)

He was one of the small number of students who attended the English language school commenced by the Thomas's in 1826. In those early days Thomas often simply referred to the class as the boys and as he taught them, they were able to help him learn something of the language as well. (Thomas, Journal, * 31/03/1827; 28/10/1826; 04/01/1827). Later, because of Ata's persecution, Ve'ehala joined several others of the Hihifo school and went to Nuku'alofa where, with Tupou and the Tahitians, he was able to *worship God without molestation*. Through frequent conversations with Thomas and by the witness of Hermas Laupo, Veehala provided great service to the missionaries and the church. The generous words of his obituary illustrate some of Veehala's great service and the part played by Laupo in helping him accept the lotu. Ve'ehala:

proposed many questions to a lad named Hermas [Laupo], whom he adopted ... respecting religion, Hermas having lived in the Mission premises during the principal part of Mr Thomas's residence at Hihifo. Hermas told him all he knew; and, at Shadrach's request, taught him to read and write. Shadrach now began to bow the knee before God. For some time, he did this privately in the bush, lest Ata should know of it and punish him (MN AUGUST 1840).

Master of the language

Like Laupo, Ve'ehala was a master of the Tongan language:

His sermons were clothed with figures, appropriate and striking, while he brought out of his treasury things new and old. The native Tongans used often to remark, after hearing him, that nothing remained on the subject for any one else to say. The Heathen looked upon him as an authority, and often used to come from various parts of the island to ask the meaning of different things; and they never thought of questioning the correctness of his opinion on the subject of their enquiry. (IBID).

Thomas regarded Ve'ehala as a very excellent linguist who:

tendered his service to assist in the correction of translations, which I read to him, and while he greatly benefitted in hearing so many new portions of the Word of God, we benefitted equally from his pains and skill in giving us suitable words to express its meaning. (THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS, P. 965, II/09/1834).*

Ve'ehala died at a relatively young age. He was only 36. As Charles Tucker was to write in the obituary following his death in March 1839:

For some years past he was our principal teacher in the native language on this station. He was invaluable to us in this capacity, both in teaching us the language, and in preparing our translations for the press. As a Tonguese scholar, perhaps he has not left his equal in these islands. He had an extensive and correct knowledge of the niceties of the language, accompanied by a sound and discriminating judgement. (MN, AUGUST 1840, p. 642).

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Sioeli Mafile'o: 'one of my scholars at Hihifo ... my teacher in the language

One of Thomas's first students.'

Mafile'o was a young Chief, one of the original Hihifo scholars, and who was a teacher of the language for Thomas. Known as Mafile'o Pangia, 'brother' of Ta-ufa'ahau, he was later to take the Christian name Sioeli following his baptism in Ha'apai in 1831. He had chosen, or was given, the name Joel (Sioeli) which would have arisen, it would seem, from missionary preaching about the day of Pentecost and the visionary words of the prophet Joel. (*Thomas, Tongatapu or the Friendly Islands** pp.487, 597, 736). Saint Peter's sermon to the crowds on the occasion, where 3000 people were added to the church in a day, quoted the prophet Joel's words about Jehovah's plans:

I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: (HOLY BIBLE, ACTS 2:17).

Mafile'o had joined Thomas's English language classes with Lolohea, Laupo, Ve'ehala, and Tupoutotai, Latufakahau and others, and began learning to read and write in English. (*Thomas, Tongatapu or the Friendly Islands** pp.357, 522). Lessons at the mission house served a dual purpose; the scholars learned English from the missionary, and the missionary learned some Tongan from the scholars. More than once, Thomas referred to this mutual benefit:

We have had 18 scholars today. Some of them got on very well. I get many Tongan words having these children here, as they are very anxious to learn to read. (Thomas Journal, 02/11/1826) We had about 12 persons in this morning to be taught chiefly Chief Boys – afterwards we spent a little time together in endeavoring to improve each other. (IBID 11/03/1828).*

After the arrival of Turner and Cross, and the normalizing of the Tongan orthography, Thomas had to become familiar with it and then began teaching it to his class of young chiefs:

the boys, he said, are much delighted with this [present orthography] though they do not think so well on it as they did learning the English. (IBID, 10/03/1828).

One can understand their delight with the new orthography. They were learning to read and write their own language! Mafile'o was a keen student and, on several occasions, asked Thomas for a book of his own, and Thomas, in July 1829, agreed to his student's request.

Mafile'o and the future of the Hihifo Mission Station.

Mafile'o had lived with the Thomas's at the Mission House and was referred to by John Thomas as *one of my scholars at Hihifo*, and as my teacher in the language and *our faithful friend*. These words of appreciation arose, obviously, because Mafile'o had played an influential role in a number of crucial Wesleyan Mission's decisions. (*Thomas, Tongatapu or the Friendly Islands** pp.811, 968, 1205) . Admittedly he was just one of an impressive group of young chiefs who were also Thomas's scholars. Nevertheless, it was Mafile'o whose name appeared more often than most others when Thomas, in retirement, penned his History of Tonga, based on almost thirty years of his journals.

Evidence of the friendship that existed between scholar and teacher is clear because Mafile'o was present, and a key participant, when the future of the mission at Hihifo was being considered. Nathaniel Turner, newly arrived Chairman of the Friendly Islands Mission, wanted to see if it was worth continuing the mission at Hihifo, given the fierce opposition of Ata to the worship and teaching of the missionaries. Turner wanted to bring the matter to a head and so, with Thomas, arranged to meet Ata and settle the matter. Mafile'o was to be an interpreter/translator at this particularly important meeting. The meeting was to decide whether to stay and persevere with Ata, or give up the Hihifo station and move to a more promising place. Mafile'o's part in the meeting with Ata would be important, for as Thomas said, his scholar was:

a native who is very useful in assisting us to understand Tongan and to be understood by others. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 10/03/1828).*

At the time of the crucial meeting with Ata, Thomas had only been in Tonga about eighteen months and was struggling to learn Tongan, and Turner had arrived just four months previously, with some understanding of Maori and a few basic words and sentences in Tongan. As Thomas confessed, he did not:

profess to understand the whole of their Tonga language, as we were still learning it ... (THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS P. 470).*

So Mafile'o's presence was particularly important to the missionaries at this crucial meeting.

The lengthy meeting canvassed numerous issues but basically focused on whether Ata would allow the Wesleyan Mission to carry on their work without opposition or restriction, free to teach and to worship without interference. In the end Turner and Thomas did not achieve what they wanted. They failed to convince Ata to change his unswerving opposition to the lotu. Thomas's record of the day's events describe the outcome in stark terms:

He [Ata] soon gave us to understand and in a cool and deliberate manner that he was the same man and had the same views of our object he was when he opposed Bro. Hutchinson and me, he said he did not on any account like prayer, or want to pray and that if the people came to our prayer he would kill them..., two or three times [he] expressed his hatred to the lotu or prayer ... (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 10/03/1828).

Mafile'o would have had the unenviable task of ensuring that, on the one hand, Ata understood what the missionaries wanted, and on the other, making sure that Turner and Thomas understood Ata's views. Reflecting, later, on the critical encounter Thomas noted that they asked questions more than once to make sure that Ata understood what the mission wanted:

A relative of Fatu was present, also our own man Mafile'o. We asked if they understood us, they answered us several times that they did, and we have cause to believe that the Chief did and that he has given us the undisguised sentiments of his heart. (IBID, 10/03/1828).

In the face of such fiercely frank expressions of opposition, the way forward would continue to be difficult, and, in fact, potentially dangerous. Thomas noted that it was just twelve months:

since him and his men watched around our gates and premises on the Sabbath day to see who came to our worship intending to kill them if they did come. He is just the same man he was then. (IBID, 10/03/1828).

Little wonder then, that Turner and Thomas *resolved to give up this place*. [Hihifo].

Nevertheless, for the time being, the Thomas's were to stay at Hihifo until a new appointment could be found for them. (*ibid*, 16/07/1829). Moves were afoot, however, in the plans of another powerful Chief, Taufa'ahau, that would see the Thomas's move away from Ata, leaving the Hihifo Station abandoned for a number of years.

Mafile'o, Taufa'ahau and a new Mission Station for Ha'apai.

The other powerful chief, the Tu'i Ha'apai, and Mafile'o had a close family connection. Thomas called him Taufa'ahau's 'adoptive brother'. With that family relationship, Mafile'o became involved in the crucial decision to establish a new Wesleyan Misson Station in Ha'apai. He was included in the discussions that took place at Hihifo in July 1829 when Taufa'ahau, not Ata, was the main personality. The negotiations were not just an afternoon, as with Ata, but ran over many days and led, ultimately, to a new Station being established successfully in Lifuka, Ha'apai.

Even before the Thomas's arrived in Ha'apai in January 1830, there was a small worshipping congregation conducted by a castaway sailor, probably William Brown of the Port au Prince. Taufa'ahau had already become interested in the lotu and had made some important decisions about the new religion. The missionaries on Tongatapu had become aware of these initial moves because Mafile'o had been the messenger who brought the encouraging news that there were quite a number at Ha'apai who were lotu people. At Hihifo Thomas had an interview with Mafile'o, when he learned of promising prospects at Ha'apai. Mafile'o, he said:

brings good tidings respecting the cause of God many persons at Ha'apai already profess to lotu, and the King himself continues favorable. For this we bless the Lord and trust our way will be made plain. (THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS P.498, 30/06/1829).*

At Nuku'alofo Cross and Turner heard the same heartening news, obviously from Mafile'o, and there were some additional cheering detail. Taufa'ahau, it was said:

*has taken the most solemn oath of which he is capable, that
he will cast away his lying spirits and turn to Jehovah, and
that he has already begun to observe the Lord's Day, by
ceasing from work, and refraining from the various amuse-
ments. (WMM 1829, p.630, CROSS, JOURNAL, 30/07/1829).*

This extract from Cross's Journal was regarded by the Wesleyans in London as particularly significant, and they quoted it in the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, with the editorial comment, echoing Psalm 72 and Isaiah 42, that '*The isles shall yet wait for the law and his [Jehovah's] dominion shall be from sea to sea*'. (IBID)

It was not long after Mafile'o's news from Ha'apai that Taufahau visited Thomas at Hihifo and Turner at Nuku'alofo, making his case for a missionary for his domains. Taufa'ahau was well aware of the hard times the Thomas's were having at Hihifo, and he was offering them the chance to leave Ata, where they were opposed and persecuted, and come to Ha'apai where they would be welcomed and encouraged. (*TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS** P.498 30/06/1829).

The visit of Taufa'ahau, which was spread over ten days including numerous meetings at Hihifo, and at Nuku'alofo and paved the way for the move to Ha'apai. One evening meeting was particularly significant. Mafile'o came with Taufa'ahau, to assist, it seems, to find out what Thomas was going to do about the invitation to move to Ha'apai. During that conversation, Thomas told Taufa'ahau that he had started the process. He had in fact written to Turner and Cross, believing that Taufa'ahau's request calls aloud, and that *the great man's wish* was an opportunity that the church should take up. He told his brother missionaries that he was *ready to go if they think proper*. As he recorded for history in his Journal:

*At night [Thursday 9th July] the Tui Haabai [Tui Ha'apai]
and Mafile'o came to visit and they took supper with us and
then we talked together. I informed him that I had sent to
my brothers and expected to know their mind on the mor-
row. He [Taufa'ahau] seemed pleased. (THOMAS, JOURNAL*,
08/07/1829).*

Taufa'ahau, keen to know the outcome of Thomas's letter, instructed Mafile'o to seek an answer. He:

sent over his brother Pangia [Mafile'o] from Mu'a to me to learn whether I was willing to go to Ha'apai. (THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS P.522. 03/10/1829).*

In the lengthy process, involving several meetings over a number of days, Thomas believed that Mafile'o played a crucial role:

He [Mafile'o] had from the first gone backward and forward to Ha'apai ... and I doubt not he had had great influence with him [Taufa'ahau] as well as with other Ha'apai friends. (IBID).

Ultimately the move was made from Hihifo, Tongatapu to Lifuka, Ha'apai. And Thomas said, on more than one occasion, that Mafile'o had played a significant part in influencing Taufa'ahau to commit to the lotu and seek a missionary.

Taking a famous name

At Mafile'o's baptism in December 1835 when he took the name Joel, Thomas again stressed his scholar's role in the successful establishment of the Ha'apai Station:

Joel was one of our firm friends and used his influence in order to induce the King of Ha'apai to turn to God to whom he was greatly attached. (IBID P.811, 04/12/1831; THOMAS JOURNAL, 27/12/1835).*

Mafile'o was given praise of the highest order when Thomas was writing his History of Tonga. Thinking over the thirty years when he and Sarah were missionaries in Tonga, he repeated that Mafile'o had been a participant in some of the Church's major decisions in the early days. He had been a messenger bringing hopeful news of happenings at Ha'apai. He had provided leadership as a prominent Local Preacher and Class leader. He played an important role during discussions about the future of the Hihifo Station. Young men, like Joel Mafile'o, were experiencing the words of the prophet about seeing visions and dreaming dreams.

After the great Revival

Mafile'o also brought news to Tongatapu about the Revival in Vava'u and Ha'apai in 1834. He had arrived in Nuku'alofa from Ha'apai and called on Thomas to deliver our letters and was able to share, first-hand the events from the North:

He told us many thousands had been made happy through this event ... [Mafile'o] was the bearer of a letter from King George in which he expressed much love, and gave account of the happy change which both he and the queen had experienced by the grace of God. (THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS, PP.968-969).

Mafile'o was loyally committed to the lotu fand wanted to see it progress through the islands. He visited his relative Fatu, a leading anti lotu chief at Mu'a, to tell him about revival in Ha'apai and Vava'u. Fatu heard from him about *the great work of the Lord*. And the Mu'a chief was *very surprised at his visit, especially at the object it.* (*ibid p.981, 13/11/1834*). He also voyaged to Samoa to encourage the Wesleyan people there in their conflicts with the LMS. His several visits, during the troubled times when the Wesleyan Missionaries and Tongan teachers were required by the London Committee to leave Samoa, offered support to the Wesleyan people *in their deep sorrow at the removal of the Wesleyan Missionaries and Tongan teachers.* One of the visits lasted four months during which time he worked to

try and comfort their friends there, in the deep trouble which has come upon them, in being about to lose their missionaries, who are, as it is judged, so cruelly and strangely to be taken away from them, although so much against their will.
(IBID, PP.1181, 1124, 12/02/1839, 17/07/1839).

Mafile'o remained a close and loyal supporter of Taufa'ahau. He fought beside him in 1852 during the last of the wars in Tongatapu, when rebellious anti lotu people were defeated. In that conflict he was severely wounded. The missionaries were called upon to offer what medical and surgical aid they could, because, as Thomas West records it, Mafile'o:

had been dangerously wounded in the shoulder by a musket ball. The ball had passed completely through the joint, shattering the bones most severely. When we arrived, we found that the native doctors had already dressed the wound, and we therefore contented ourselves by administering some needful medicine. (WEST, P.177-178).

Amputation was recommended by a surgeon from one of the British warships that called at Tonga, but Mafile'o refused, and treatment continued with Tongan doctors. Finally, after some months, his wounds healed, although, as West remarked, he *could not use his arm.* Thankfully, however, his life had been saved. (IBID).

Mafile'o's influence was not in translating scriptural extracts or helping with class lessons but more as an interpreter/translator in important Church discussions and decisions. And although Thomas at times berated himself as a complete failure and as having achieved nothing, the small group of Hihifo Chief boys, certainly made their mark on the history of the Church. Mafile'o stood out among that group. In retirement in England, Thomas reflected on the years he and Sarah had worked in Tonga. Of Mafile'o he said, he had been:

my steady and devoted friend of the missionary for many years. (THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS, P.300).*

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Pita Vi: I was his [Nathaniel Turner's] instructor in the Tonguese language and assisted him to translate'

A keen student and a willing translator

A fascinating piece of early Wesleyan Church history was produced by Peter Vi some time before 1856, written by his own hand, and in his own language. In it he penned an account of his mission to Ha'apai. He also told of his work in translation in the early days of the mission at Nuku'alofa. Thomas West (Tonga 1846-1856) included Vi's narrative, *as a free translation* in his book Ten Years in South Central Polynesia. In the narrative, Vi tells of his assistance with translation:

Mr Turner [Nathaniel Turner] was the missionary whom the Lord employed for my conversion. I was his instructor in the Tonguese language and assisted him to translate. The first portion of a book which he translated and from which he preached was the Gospel of Matthew. (WEST, P.360.)

In his narrative Pita Vi also wrote about being recognised over the years as one of the first Tongan preachers, and as the Tongan teacher appointed to work with Taufa'ahau in Ha'apai, which paved the way for a European missionary to establish a new Mission Station at Lifuka. (IBID).

Nathaniel Turner's friend and critic

Vi's translation work began when a close relationship was formed with Nathaniel Turner on his arrival in 1827. As Vi has said in his biographical sketch, he used to go to the Mission House each Monday as the missionary's friendly critic, and work over the services that Turner conducted on the Sunday just past. This language work obviously was a great help when First Lessons (1828) was being prepared for printing. J. G. Turner, Nathaniel Turner's son, just a boy when his father was in Tonga, later wrote about how Peter Vi was treated by the Turner family:

A young convert, named Vi, by request came to the Mission House every Monday morning, that the missionary might have the advantage of his strictures upon the public deliverances of the previous day ... Vi's frequent visits made him almost as one of the household and led to his daily attendance at family prayer. At these services he was greatly blessed; for, the servants being natives, Mr Turner offered prayer as well in their language as in his own. (J. G. TURNER, PIONEER, PP. 106 F.)

After his conversion and baptism, Vi began preaching and he was proud to be able to say that the missionaries:

called me to preach in different small villages near Nukualofa, such as Havelu, Faga [Fanga], and Hofoa. I was the first Tonguese preacher in all the Friendly Islands, because I was quick in learning to read the Bible. (WEST, PP.359-361).

Pita Vi and the 1849 Tongan New Testament.

Pita Vi's contribution as an assistant translator really started in earnest when the Thomas's arrived in Lifuka in January 1830. In what became the first entire New Testament printed in Vava'u in 1849, Thomas is credited as the translator of the majority of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. That major contribution was only possible because Pita Vi was one of his consistent and valued assistants. A glimpse of Pita Vi's role can be seen in a brief comment in Thomas's Journal of September 1830:

The Chief has promised to let me have Peter three days a week for the purpose of assisting me in translation and teaching me the language. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 07/09/1830).*

Vi's role in that biblical translation work is taken up in more detail the following chapter.

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Tama Joni: 'assisted in preparing native instruction by the boy Joni'

Tama Joni (the boy Johnny) is unique among the assistant translators and interpreters. He came to Tonga in 1822 with his parents who were sent from Tahiti to Vava'u where his father Borabora was to be a missionary teacher. He had a basic education in Tahiti and could read well and repeat accurately the old and new Catechism. (*Gunson p.111*) . By the time he is first mentioned in Thomas's journals his father, Borabora, had died and his mother had returned to Tahiti. Lolohea's death in January 1829 brought him into a close working relationship with Thomas.

Lolohea's death was a great blow to the Mission at Hihifo. He had been a leader, a mentor and a protector of a group of young chiefs who were attending Thomas's English classes and who were helping with translation/interpreting. After Lolohea's funeral, the young chiefs left Hihifo for Nuku'alofa where they would be able to worship freely under Aleamotu'a protection. It was at this point that *Tama Joni*, appears in Thomas's journals as an assistant with the language. The first reference to Joni came in late January 1829 from Laupo, who had visited Thomas for a few days and been helpful but was returning to Nuku'alofa. At this point Thomas makes the observation that Joni, despite some pressure, was determined to stay with the Thomas's and help to keep the small school open:

I have been getting a little native assistance from Tama Joni [Thomas said] he told me that Tupoutoutai wished him to come to Nuku'alofa and he wished to go but did not like to leave this place because if he did there would be none to attend the school. He has also serious regard for us and he knows it would be painful to me to lose the boys. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 25/01/1829; 29/01/1829).*

Joni, as one of Thomas's students, was not only helping to keep the school open. He was assisting Thomas in the preparation of teaching materials for the classes:

I was assisted, Thomas said, in preparing native instruction by the boy Joni.' (IBID 30/01/1829; 31/01/1829).

Tama Joni's support came at a critically important time for Thomas. Turner was preparing the First Book for publication and Thomas had responsibility for preparing Reading Lessons and the Spelling List. During February-March 1829 he made numerous references to the native assistance [Tama Joni? and Latufakahau?] he was receiving in checking drafts of material for school lessons, Sabbath worship and for the First Book:

I have been chiefly employed lately in correcting and preparing a few school lessons for the inspection of my brothers [Turner and Cross] previous to their being printed. (ibid, 12/02/1829). The Lord is good to me. I have been favored with native assistance a few days lately and the Lord has given me a few words to read on the coming Sabbath (ibid, 28/02/1829). I feel thankful to God that the lessons I wrote in pencil upon the slate required very little correction by the assistance of a native. (IBID, 29/02/1829).

Some time later, when the Thomas's were appointed to Ha'apai, Joni was helping with copying translations of reading material. Joni, Thomas said, *the son of Borabora the Tahitian teacher who was sent to Vava'u some years ago*, was helping to prepare the manuscript books that were needed for classroom lessons, private use and family worship. Thomas was very thankful that Joni was there at Lifuka as *he begins to be very useful to me in his writing.* (THOMAS, JOURNAL* 24/12/1830).

Others, too, appreciated Joni's work for the mission. When John Willimas of the London Missionary Society visited Ha'apai in 1830 he met Joni and made the young Tahitian *a small present out of respect to the memory of his father (Borabora).* (WILLIAMS, SAMOAN JOURNAL, P. 63).

Any possible help that Joni could have offered to the Wesleyan Mission was cut short by his premature death aged only 24. He died in Vava'u in August 1834 following an accident with a gun. (GUNSON P.III).

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William: 'my assistant in the language'.

Nathaniel Turner made a reference, as he was leaving Tonga in May 1831 to a youth called William, who, he said, had been my assistant in the language for more than two years. There appears to be no other references to this assistant translator who played a valuable role during the founding years of the Wesleyan Church's mission.

Vave: ‘Mr Cross’s interpreter.’

William Cross had an assistant called Vave, according to Peter Bays, *Minerva* wreck survivor who spent several months in Nuku’alofa awaiting a ship that would take him back to England. Bays lived with the missionaries and helped them by transcribing manuscript school books and lesson materials. In his lengthy report of his experiences in Tonga he noted, in passing, that:

As in Scripture every person’s name has its meaning, so Mr Cross’s interpreter’s name is Vave, ‘make haste’. (BAYS, A NARRATIVE, PP.124, 131).

Again, as with ‘William’, there does not appear to be any other reference to Vave and his essential work. No mention was made of him, or of any other assistants, when Mrs Cross said that her husband had:

translated the four Gospels, the Acts, and a large portion of the Epistles; also the book of Genesis and other detached parts of Scripture. (Hunt, Memoir of Cross, pp.56-57).

Vave, however, was surely there in the background. Similarly, when Cross had a letter published in the Sydney Gazette, he spoke proudly about the speed with which he and Turner had learned the language and been able to make translations:

The proficiency we have been enabled to make in the knowledge of the language far exceeds anything we expected ... the substance of the greater part of the most striking pieces of Old Testament history has been brought into the Tongan language, also many of the miracles and parables of our Lord, with a considerable part of the Acts of the Apostles; I am now as far as the 11th chapter of the latter in going over a second time... (SG 17/09/1829).

There is no reference here to any assistance he would have received from Tongan helpers. No mention of Vave his ‘interpreter’.

Postscript

The Thomas's time at Hihifo has often been portrayed as a failure. Such a view, however, does not give credit to the numerous interpreter and translator assistants whose work not only helped at the time, but continued in later years. The early work with the young chiefs was not wasted. When Turner and Cross arrived and the First Book was proposed, Thomas already had some raw material for this historic work: a number of hymns and a handful of lessons and numerous words for a spelling list. This was foundational work. These materials had emerged through the perseverance of Thomas and the assistance of a few key individuals, principally by the young chiefs of the first Wesleyan School in Tonga at Hihifo. Later when the translation of the scriptures began in earnest, some of the young chiefs were there assisting the missionaries. (SEE CHAPTER 9).

=====CHAPTER 8=====

The Tongan Bible's Assistant Translators

1829-1844

John Thomas on his way to Sydney from England on the way to Tonga, asked himself a basic question about the mission work he was about to begin with the Tongan people: 'how I can best serve the cause of Christ in living amongst them'.

First on his list was to 'get a knowledge of the language as soon as possible. I must study it regularly and constantly'. Until he learned the language, he knew that he would need to 'converse with them by an interpreter if I can obtain one'. If interpreters were not available, he would set about 'writing a few discourses and translating them into their language'. On the long voyage from England to Sydney he had already tried his hand at translation, using Mariner's vocabulary to guide him.

... Thomas listed discourses he would begin to translate: Creation of the World, the Fall of Man, Rewards and Punishments, Birth Life and Work of Jesus Christ and his Suffering and Death, 'the way to be saved, Repentance toward God and Faith in Christ'. He then said that he may 'translate the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and other parts of the Scriptures which contain some important points to be known' (THOMAS, JOURNAL 08/10/1825)*

So it was that Thomas saw his work in Tonga, first and foremost, as learning the language, using interpreters, translating biblical truths and bringing important parts of the Scripture into Tongan. In the published accounts of his missionary work, and that of other pioneer missionaries, references to any help given by interpreters and translators are scarce and, if mentioned, in most cases the persons involved remain un-named.

Two hundred years on, some of the un-named ones can be identified and given credit for the work they did in beginning the work of translating the Tongan Bible.

The Tongan Bible in print.

In 1826 Thomas's Journals begin to tell the story and when Turner and Cross arrived in November 1827 Tonga's first printed book was soon produced entitled First Lessons in the Language of Tongataboo, (Sydney 1828) with Nathaniel Turner listed on the title page as author. This early work introduced biblical ideas in a series of reading lessons, (such as Jehovah the one true God, Jehovah made the world and everything in it) some brief prayers, six hymns and a spelling list. This first printed book did not include any translations of portions of the Bible. First Lessons was quickly followed by a second publication called A First Book in the Language of Tongataboo, (Sydney 1830) authored, the title page says, by '*The Wesleyan Missionaries*'. It contained the first printed portions of the Bible such as the stories of Jesus and John the Baptist, Jesus calling the disciples, Jesus and Zacchaeus. From 1831 to 1834 some chapters of the Old and New Testaments, prepared by Thomas, Turner, Cross and Watkin appeared in a series of small school books. And then from 1836 to 1843 translations of whole books of the bible, twenty-three in number were printed on the Mission Press. Thomas was responsible for the majority of them with contributions by James Watkin, Charles Tucker and Stephen Rabone (*LETTERS AND JOURNALS* THOMAS TO SECRETARIES 06/06/1848*).

Reading the accounts of this extensive amount of translation work one gets the impression that the missionaries produced this foundational biblical work singlehanded. That view would be only part of the story. The missionaries depended on individual Tongans who worked with them, who acted as what could be called 'assistant bible translators'. These helpers were usually not named. Thomas acknowledges their help when referring to this early translation work:

every lesson we now read to them had first to be written out on a slate, and when corrected with the aid of a Tongan, written in a book. (THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS P. 531).*

The emerging Tongan New Testament

... The series of little school booklets (1831-1834) contained some selected parts of the Bible including chapters of Genesis, 1 Samuel, Isaiah, Psalms, Gospels of Mathew, Luke, John, Romans and Corinthians. This was followed (1836-1843) by the translation and printing of twenty-four books of the New Testament. The missionaries involved in the translations were John Thomas (Matthew &

John, Epistle of James, John's three letters, Epistle of Jude, Romans, Corinthians 1 & 2, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians), James Watkin (Acts of the Apostles), Charles Tucker (1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and 1 & 2 Samuel) and Stephen Rabone (Gospel of St Luke). Reading the published letters and journal extracts of the missionaries, this amazing amount of translation work was achieved single handed by the missionaries. What was missing from the published accounts was any reference to the contribution of their Tongan assistant translators.

John Thomas, writing in 1830 to the Secretaries of the Mission Committee in London said:

Since I have been here, I have made an attempt at a translation of St. Matthew's Gospel, the first twenty chapters of Exodus, the History of Joseph and his brethren, the first two chapters of St. Luke's Gospel, a few Psalms and Hymns, the first part of the Conference Catechism, the Lord's Prayer, Articles of Belief [the Creed], and a part of the Acts of the Apostles (LETTERS AND JOURNALS, THOMAS TO SECRETARIES, 26/II/1830)*

William Cross wrote to the Sydney Gazette, referring to the work that he and Nathaniel Turner had been doing, including the production of First Lessons, saying that *The proficiency we have been enabled to make in the knowledge of the language far exceeds anything we expected. (CROSS, 29/06/1829, SG 17/09/1829).*

... Thomas does provide one of the few examples that acknowledge the help of assistants when he informed the London Committee about his translation methods:

My manner of proceeding, so as to prepare subjects to read on a Sabbath day, and, at other times, is as follows, I select some striking part of the word of God; sometimes a chapter, at others a parable. I then procure a native: we sit down together, and I endeavour to tell him what I have selected, line by line, in the native tongue; and he gives me correct expressions for what I need. This I write down first upon the slate; I then read it over, and, by questions, ascertain whether or not he understands what I mean. Afterwards I transcribe this into a book which I keep for that purpose; and on the Sabbath-day I read it to the people, making such additions as I am able, and enforcing the great duties of the Bible upon them. This way of preparing my work is very laborious. The writing is great: but it is the best way I know of, since by this means I obtain a view of the language, partly by writing and partly by speaking it. We find it difficult at

times to procure native assistance, as there are but few that are proper for this work. (MNI829, THOMAS, JOURNAL 22/09/1828).

In a report to the District Meeting of 1830, Thomas also gave credit to some Chiefs for the help they were giving:

We are all learners of the language and far from perfect yet we have to attempt translation of portions of the Scriptures in order to instruct our people in the great truths of God this is our great work and takes much time, and requires great care the more so the language not having been written, there is no fixed standard, except what is found in the most intelligent of the native Chiefs whom we have to seek to in all matters of importance (THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS, P. 667; DISTRICT MEETING MINUTES*, 1830).*

Although unnamed in the District Minutes and in published records, some of the assistants can be found, principally in Thomas's extensive collection of Journals. The Bible, especially the early printings of the New Testament, would not have been made available without the help of a number of chiefly helpers. Some of their contribution is presented in what follows below.

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Taufa'ahau: *he has given some hundreds of good words of great importance*

The help of the king

Taufa'ahau may not have been the first to assist the missionaries with translation, but he certainly could be regarded as one of the most significant. His influence went well beyond helping to develop and standardize the vocabulary and find the most suitable words for telling the gospel story. His desire to learn to read and write, even before the missionaries arrived in Ha'apai, provided an example to his people, and prepared the ground for missionaries. Pita Vi had been sent in 1829 to 'fill in' as a missionary teacher until Thomas was free to leave Tongatapu and come to Ha'apai to establish a Mission Station there. Peter Vi, on a visit to Nuku'alofa in early January 1830, told Thomas that Taufa'ahau was:

very attentive to his book he says he loves his book and asked some who are opposed to Jehovah and inclined to the devil why the Devil did not give them a book, if he was a god to teach them what to do. (THOMAS JOURNAL 09/01/1830).*

Vi, when he arrived in Ha'apai in 1829, did not have to start teaching Taufa'ahau from the beginning. Before he arrived, the Chief had already made a start with reading and writing. William Brown [Port au Prince survivor] had been his teacher, and the beach at Lifuka provided the 'blackboard':

Captain Samuel Henry, born in Tahiti, son of LMS Tahitian missionaries, island trader, called in at Lifuka in 1829 and reported on the remarkable situation he discovered there:

At the Habai [Ha'apai] islands, a short distance from Tonga, and under the same government, they have actually made a sailor their teacher. He teaches them to read and write on the sand, and prays in the chapel on Sunday. One of the Chiefs has given up his house for a chapel. (LETTERS FROM MISSIONARIES AND MINISTERS, HENRY TO LEIGH, 10/03/1829).*

Taufa'ahau's use of written language

By the time the Thomas's arrived in Lifuka, the work of William Brown and Pita Vi meant that Taufa'ahau knew a little English and had begun to read and write. This meant that he could communicate with the new missionary, not only verbally, but in a series of notes which often passed between them. Thomas was fortunate to have this resource available as he got the mission under way and as translation work begun in earnest. Sometimes the notes from the Chief were brief, just a few lines, but on other occasions they occupied both sides of a slate.

One of the messages that passed between the Chief and the missionary focused on an interesting aspect of language and translation. Thomas used a large slate for his initial translations which, after correction, he transferred to a translation book. His translation slate was much larger than the ordinary smaller ones used in school classes. Taufa'ahau sent Thomas a note asking that the missionary give him the large slate. Thomas was not willing to surrender this important piece of equipment and told the Chief he *could not spare it*. Nevertheless, he did send a smaller one, an everyday classroom slate. Taufa'ahau's response was to send it back to Thomas, asking him to fill it with a lesson for him to read! (*Thomas, Journal**, 07/04/1830) Taufa'ahau some little time later sent a message to Thomas, by Peter Vi, asking the missionary to lend him his boat cloak to wear while he was repairing a canoe. Again, Thomas *would not consent to his request*. (*IBID*)

Notes flowed frequently between the Missionary and the Chief. Taufa'ahau sent a note wanting to know about the day of Jesus birth and the day of his death (*ibid* 05/10/1830). He offered Thomas a large pig and wanted to know when it should be delivered (*ibid* 21/02/1831). In a practical everyday issue, Thomas wrote

to Taufa'ahau requesting the Chief to arrange for two logs to be placed at the stile in the fence at the Large House (Chapel) so that:

our wives may get over without being in danger of tearing themselves with the ragged reeding. (IBID 16/04/1831).

Taufa'ahau's note writing reached out beyond Ha'apai when, in his own hand, he wrote to Nathaniel Turner and William Cross at Nukualofa, expressing his love to them for coming to Tonga to teach us. (*Letters and Journals**, Cross, 01/07/1830; *Turner Journal**, 15/09/1830). Some of the notes were of particular significance in the history of the Church. When the Chief went to Vava'u to encourage Finau Ulukalala to turn to Jehovah, he assured Thomas that he would make notes of their conversations *that he might bring to us a fair assessment of what Finau said.* (*Thomas, Journal**, letter 09/06/1831; *Cross Memoir*, p. 40.) When Taufa'ahau returned to Lifuka he had indeed made notes and was able to give the missionaries *the substance of what he [Finau] said.* (*THOMAS, JOURNAL**, IBID).

One note from Taufa'ahau to Thomas is perhaps significant in more ways than one. It is not just an expression of thanks, but it appears to take up an important cultural issue as well. Taufa'ahau had sent Thomas a gift of chiefly proportions: a very large pig and a huge turtle. The pig was *about 10 or 12 score weight* and the turtle was so large that *it took about 6 men to draw it up to the mission house!* Thomas was impressed by the gift and responded by sending the chief a present in return. Taufa'ahau sent a note in reply in which, it would seem, he taught Thomas something about giving and receiving gifts. As Thomas explained in his Journal:

I received a note from him thanking me for what I had sent but desiring us not to think of rewarding him for what he gave us, [that he] ought to love and give us things as a reward for what he was receiving from us, his knowledge of the things of God. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 21/03/1831).*

What words Taufa'ahau used in this exchange with the missionary, and in other notes, we shall never know. What we can be fairly certain of, however, is that Taufa'ahau would have expressed himself in the best Tongan. It is not too fanciful to suggest that the king's notes would have had within them, words and phrases that would help Thomas expand his knowledge of the language and the best ways of expressing it.

Conversational learning

Taufa'ahau's many conversations with Thomas, either at his residence or at the Mission House, or when on voyages, would also have been language learning experiences for the missionary. During these contacts, Thomas would have had

face to face experience of the spoken form of ‘the King’s Tongan’. As Thomas had previously reported, it was by listening to *the most intelligent of the chiefs* that the missionaries were helped to learn the language and make translations. In a long entry in his private Journal, perhaps reflecting on the many conversations with Taufa’ahau and other chiefs, he wrote:

I am satisfied that I know much more of the language than I did when I came to this place but I feel more of my defects in this respect ... I know enough as to enable me to talk for some time on almost any subject, but then I know I am not in possession of enough of the language as to enable me to talk in the best way, that is to use such words as are most proper ... how forcible are right words. (THOMAS, SMALL JOURNAL, 30/05/1830).*

The numerous references to conversations with Taufa’ahau rarely indicate what was being discussed. One is intrigued to know how the two men spent their time when Thomas simply says that the Chief came to the Mission House, brought cava, spent a considerable time in conversation *and would have talked longer but it was getting dark*. Taufa’ahau called at the Mission House at all hours, sometimes in the morning at breakfast, which he shared with the Thomas’s, and sometimes in the evening when he took *supper and talked*. (*IBID*).

On one occasion he brought Peter Vi with him:

The Chief and Pita came up together while we were at supper and took a little with us and afterwards talked comfortably. (IBID, 06/04/1831.)

Without doubt these occasions would enable Thomas to expand his Tongan vocabulary and enlarge his knowledge of the language generally. Taufa’ahau’s contribution to a vocabulary that Thomas was preparing would also have been an education to the missionary. There were previous vocabularies, from navigators, George Lilley and Dr Martin and Will Mariner’s Grammar and Vocabulary. Thomas himself, using Mariner, began a vocabulary while on board ship on the way to Sydney and the South Seas in 1825. Now, in the new Mission Station at Ha’apai, he set about completing that work. Various brief Journal entries tell of his progress: *writing a Vocabulary, adding words under K and that he had just introduced a further 100 words in the vocabulary.* (*Thomas Journal**, 3/05/1831, 9/05/1831, 2/6/1831, 10/12/1831). Taufa’ahau’s contribution to this work was significant:

The King was with me some time today, he felt great pleasure in giving me new words, and helping me otherwise

with the language (THOMAS TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS 23/08/1830, p. 642).*

A month later the King was again expanding the missionary's vocabulary:

I got many new words from the Chief who spent about an hour with me today. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 23/09/1830).*

Taufa'ahau's active involvement in expanding Thomas's vocabulary would have meant, presumably, that some of his words would have found their way into the emerging translations of books of the bible by Thomas and other missionaries.

Taufa'ahau and bible translation

There were a few occasions when Taufa'ahau paid attention to specific pieces of translation. During a visit to the Mission House in May 1830, he *united with his relative [Tufui]* in a session when corrections were being made. As Thomas says:

Tufui came to assist me in the language and a man called Nau or Now with him. It being Whit Monday (Pentecost Monday) I wrote a note to invite the Chief [Taufa'ahau] to dine with us at mid-day thinking the opportunity would be favorable to talk a little about the things of God. About one o'clock he came he sat and listened some time to me correcting some lessons I have written on the Conference Catechism. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 31/05/1830).*

It was probably in sessions like this that Taufa'ahau could suggest corrections or provide new words that were finding their way into translations. At a later stage Charles Tucker, who formed a close relationship with Taufa'ahau, told the Committee in London how the chief came to the Mission House and:

assisted me during the day in correcting some of the translations (INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE TUCKER TO SECRETARIES 12/01/1838).*

The king also would spend time at the printing office reading pages of the latest printings coming off the press:

The portions of the Scriptures which were now issuing from the press he carefully and prayerfully studied and gladly availed himself of every opportunity with the missionaries to ask questions respecting the meaning of various passages of scripture. (WJO, 1852, JANE TUCKER).

His deep interest in the printed word was also shown when on more than one occasion he went to the printing office and helped with proof reading pages of the latest transactions. (*Thomas, Tongatapu or the Friendly Islands**, p. 1195).

Some months after Tucker had written to the Committee about the king's help with language, a catastrophe struck when the Tucker's house was burnt to the ground. Valuable manuscripts, personal belongings and all their clothes were lost including

all Mr Tucker's translations: seventy psalms, and the whole of Proverbs and Hebrews with part of St. Mark, have fallen a prey to the flames. (MISSIONARY REGISTER 1839).

The loss was all the greater because, presumably, some of the translations that went up in flames were the ones that Taufa'ahau had helped Tucker to correct!

Taufa'ahau's legacy

More than one visitor to Tonga, in the early years, commented on the King's use of language. Commander Wilkes found that the Polynesian use of *figurative speech* was very *marked in King George* (*Wilkes, Vol III p. 9*). Others spoke of Taufa'ahau's *superior judgement and ability*. (*Moister, p. 378*). And the LMS missionary John Williams, from extensive experience of life in the South Seas and mission work in particular, gave high praise of Taufa'ahau when he addressed a gathering of Wesleyans in London. Williams told the audience at the anniversary of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society that while on a visit to the Friendly Islands in 1831:

The Chief of that island [Ha'apai] was one of the most astonishing men with whom he was acquainted. (MN 1833, Williams.)

Wesleyan historian, Sarah Farmer, who had access to the letters and journal extracts of the Tongan missionaries, also gave high praise of Taufa'ahau and his language skills:

He read well, wrote a good hand, had a pleasing enunciation, and an eloquent tongue. His sermons surpassed those of any of his people. (FARMER, P. 273).

When he died in 1893 obituaries appeared in the press in Australia. Typical of the praise heaped upon the 'old man of the Pacific' was the observation in the *Brisbane Daily Telegraph*:

As an orator he had no equal in the islands not only in his manner but his language, which was always to the most choice and his illustrations the most beautiful and striking.
(DAILY TELEGRAPH [BRISBANE] 17/03/1893).

Thomas had experienced, firsthand, his Chief's valuable assistance with language. In his Journal, we find him paying noteworthy tribute to his chief. Thomas commented that Taufa'ahau:

takes pleasure in assisting me in getting the meaning of words and in improving the translations; he has a fine taste and has given some hundreds of good words of great importance. (*THOMAS, JOURNAL*, 17/07/1837; THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS* P.1096*).

Writing about the ways that Taufa'ahau helped with the written and printed word Thomas noted that the King:

spent many hours at times with the Missionary, both in correcting the manuscripts, also in hearing the proof read from the press. (*IBID, P. 1222*).

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Pita Vi. *I was his instructor in the Tonguese language and assisted him [Turner] to translate.*

A man of many firsts.

Pita Vi was a man of many firsts. He has been celebrated over the years as one of the first Tongan converts, one of the first group to be baptized, and as the first Tongan Local Preacher. He was Turner's translator when Turner and Cross first arrived in Tonga. And significantly, and perhaps most importantly, he was the Tongan teacher appointed to work with Taufa'ahau at Ha'apai, paving the way for a European missionary to establish a new Mission Station at Lifuka. Pita Vi has not been given credit for his work with Thomas in particular, as one of the assistant bible translators.

A fascinating piece of early Wesleyan Church history was produced by Peter Vi, some time before 1856, written by his own hand, and in his own language. In it he penned an account of his mission to Ha'apai. Thomas West (Tonga 1846-1856) included it, in a free translation in his book *Ten Years in South Central Polynesia.* (pp. 359ff) Vi 's translation work began in 1827 when he formed a close

relationship with Nathaniel Turner. As Vi said in his autobiographical sketch, Turner was:

the missionary whom the Lord employed for my conversion. I was his instructor in the Tonguese language and assisted him to translate. The first portion of a book which he translated, and from which he preached, was the gospel of Matthew. (THOMAS WEST, PP. 359FF).

Vi used to go to the Mission House each Monday to act as the missionary's friendly critic, and work over the services that Turner had conducted on the Sunday just past. This language work obviously was a great help when First Lessons (1828) was being prepared for printing. Turner's son, just a boy when his father was in Tonga, later wrote about how Peter Vi was treated by the Turner family. As J. G. Turner tells it:

A young convert, named Vi, by request came to the Mission House every Monday morning, that the Missionary might have the advantage of his strictures upon the public deliverances of the previous day. ... Vi's frequent visits made him almost as one of the household and led to his daily attendance at family prayer. At these services he was greatly blessed; for, the servants being natives Mr Turner offered prayer as well in their language as in his own. (J. G. TURNER, PIONEER, p.106).

Tonga's first teacher and missionary assistant

Pita Vi was a keen student and his commitment to the lotu was seen as genuine and enthusiastic. His work with the missionaries entered a new stage when he was sent to Ha'apai to pave the way in Lifuka for a new Wesleyan Mission Station. Some time previously to his arrival, Taufa'ahau had become interested in the lotu after being taught about Jehovah by the Port au Prince castaway William Brown. So when Taufa'ahau visited Tongatapu in 1828 and 1829, seeking a missionary for Ha'apai, he already spoke some English and had made a beginning in reading and writing. Furthermore, as there were fifty people in Lifuka who were lotu people (as far as they understood the new religion) an opening for a new Wesleyan Mission was seen as having been prepared. Taufa'ahau wanted a missionary, the missionaries needed permission from London, which would take time, so Pita Vi was sent to fill in until permission from London was received. Ultimately, and without approval from London, the Thomas's commenced the Mission in Ha'apai, sent on their way with an encouraging sermon from the Chairman Nathaniel Turner:

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast and immovable. Always excel in the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain (1 CORINTHIANS 15:58).

The Bible translation partnership between Pita Vi and John Thomas began almost immediately the Thomas's arrived in Lifuka. Thomas's plan was to have Pita Vi available at his command, but this soon struck an annoying obstacle, creating conflict between the Missionary and the Chief. The problem was that Thomas wished to have Pita Vi available to him for translation work. At Hihifo, the Thomas's had the young chiefs living with them, that is within the mission compound, and therefore Thomas had help whenever he needed it. Now at Ha'apai, Pita Vi, his translation assistant, was living in his own house in the village, not at the mission house. Pita Vi was available only when he wasn't needed by Taufa'ahau. It was a tussle over command, as Thomas frustratingly remarked in his early days in Lifuka:

My teacher, Peter ... has just returned from Ahau where he went on Saturday -these things seem to be against me hence four days are gone and I have been without his aid. I need a person to live in the yard with me or to be at my command but the Chief calls Peter as often as I do so that I have no remedy but patience. (THOMAS JOURNAL 24/03/1830).*

In his private journal Thomas wrote somewhat angrily about issues of command. He was feeling controlled, his Chief was *a tyrant, a despot*, a ruler who was *in the habit of doing his own way and none shall counter him* 'He wants us under his command' (THOMAS SMALL JOURNAL, * 11/04/1830, 09/05/1830, 30/05/1830).

When Peter Vi was not available, because he was at Taufa'ahau's command, Thomas had to call on others to help with translation:

I have been trying to get a little assistance in the native language from a youth I have in the yard as Peter has not come back but I cannot depend on it. (Thomas, Journal, 30/03/1830). This morning I got little language from Fa'one. I got two new words and hope that the young man will help me if I allow him to attend, I think him a very intelligent man. (IBID, 31/03/1830).*

Ultimately the two leaders, the King and the Missionary, reached an agreement that seemed to satisfy the needs of them both, even if it did take some six months to achieve:

The Chief has promised to let me have Peter three days a week for the purpose of assisting me in translation and teaching me the language. (IBID, 07/09/1830).

A consistent translation assistant.

Taufa'ahau's offer came at a time when there was an increasing demand for books. Biblical reading material was in demand and led to translations of parts of the Genesis, Exodus, Proverbs, Job, Jonah, Matthew, Luke and John. A variety of Old Testament stories were also written up in small manuscript books: Noah and the Ark, Joseph and his Brothers, Moses birth and growing up in Pharaoh's Palace, the Israelites crossing of the Red Sea, Moses on Mount Sinai and the Ten Commandments, the sufferings of Job and Job's experience of the wisdom and power of God, God's testing of Abraham and the Sacrifice of the Ram, and the story of Jonah, together with some of the Psalms and Proverbs. Similarly, from the New Testament, Vi assisted with a range of Bible stories: Jesus sending out the Twelve Disciples to spread the Word, Stephen the first Christian Martyr, the Parables the Sower and the Seed and the Wise and Foolish Builders, the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord's Prayer, the Conversion of Saul, Peter's vision in Jerusalem and his ministry with the Gentiles, Paul's vision of the man from Macedonia and the call to Missionary work.

... Thomas's notes about translation were often very brief, lacking detail or comment. Examples of him expressing his feelings about the text he was working on are extremely rare but the day he and Peter Vi were translating chapter 3 of Revelation he said *my heart rejoiced while I was engaged in translating it into their language. (Thomas, Journal* 12/07/1831)*. Revelation chapter 3 is complex, uses much symbolic language (references to seven spirits, seven stars, keys, thrones, beasts, and the Synagogue of Satan), as John addresses the churches of Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. However it does contain some of the best-known words of Scripture. Perhaps it was one of these words that gave joy to Thomas's heart:

Behold I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me. (REV. 3:21).

... Thomas and Peter Vi spent many hours together translating and correcting translations. He was pleased, in his Journal, to give credit for Vi's assistance, in particular his better than average knowledge of the language:

I had the assistance of Peter, [Thomas said] who was much better informed than others who were not engaged in the corrections of the translations. He also had a good gift in prayer and often gave a word of exhortation.

With this kind of help, Thomas was able to put a great deal of biblical truth into Tongan. As he explained, late in his life when he was writing Tongatapu or the Friendly Islands:*

It was part of my everyday work either to be preparing books [small handwritten books and printed books] for the classes in the schools and the people who read in their homes or attempting the translation of portions of Scripture to read in public worship and explain and apply to the people ... I turned seven sections of the catechisms into lessons for the schools, which were read with interest. I was also able to prepare several parts of chapters of scriptures. (THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS P. 709, 30/03/1831).*

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Timothy Katoa: instructed in the way of salvation by the Tahitian Teachers.

A convert of the Tahitians.

Timothy Katoa was unique among the pioneer translation assistants. He had become a lotu person before the Wesleyan missionaries Thomas and Hutchinson arrived in Tonga in June 1826. While still a boy, his obituary tells us:

he embraced the outward form of the “lotu” in Nuku’alofa before the Wesleyan Missionaries arrived, having been instructed in the way of salvation by the Tahitian Teachers [Hape and Tafeta] belonging to the London Missionary Society. (MN 1851 P. 153).

He is unique also because there is no readily available record of his work with translation, except the comments that were made in his obituary.

Katoa was actively involved in the church during the time that Cross and Turner were beginning to bring parts of the Scriptures into print. Again, it is his obituary, published soon after his death in 1849, that provides evidence of his work as a pioneer translator. His obituary is also unique. It was published at least four times: Lawry’s journal entry in his *Second Missionary Visit to the Tonga and Fejee Islands*, Richard Amos’s original tribute to his friend and ‘late student of the Training Institution’ in Missionary Notices, the Church Missionary Society’s article in The Missionary Register and Charles Tucker’s honouring of his late

friend in *The Christian Miscellany and Family Visitor*. Lawry's entry in A Second Missionary visit to the Friendly and Feejee Islands was a verbatim copy of Amos's original, and the Missionary Register and the Christian Miscellany made some minor editing changes.

Amos's tribute to Katoa, says that :

While yet a boy, he embraced the outward form of the lotu in Nukualofa before the Wesleyan missionaries arrived ... He was an intelligent youth, and eagerly sought information; so that it was not long before he learned to read his native tongue ... His intimate knowledge of the peculiar idiom of the Tonga language induced the missionaries to select him as their instructor. He became a scholar in Mrs. Tucker's school. He was for several years the principal Local Preacher in Nukualofa. He was employed as an assistant in translating the Scriptures, and became endeared by piety, fidelity, and kindness. He was greatly respected by King George, who regularly corresponded with him; and when the King resided he was his constant companion. This was not surprising, as Timothy had acquired a good stock of general information and was highly respectful and dignified in his manners ... He took deep interest in the establishment of the Institution at Nukualofa and was useful in negotiating with the Chiefs concerning the land. He was present at the commencement of our course of instruction ... I rejoice that I can speak to you before I remove hence. My sins are forgiven. Christ sits in my heart. I fear not to die; yet I wish to live to be useful. This is the year in which the lotu begins to grow in Tonga, and I wish to live that I may see it spread. But this is my appointed time ... God has made my love to be perfect. I am dying fast. On December 13th, 1849, he gently passed into the unseen world. The Teachers of the Institution carried him to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. (LAWRY, SECOND MISSIONARY VISIT 1850, P. 76).

available in the documents of the time.

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*Sailosi Fa'one has had a great training
as to language*

A very intelligent man

Fa'one was one of John and Sarah Thomas's *warm-hearted friends ... clever, active as well as pious*. He was a chief of high rank and assisted Thomas with translation of some important parts of both the Old and New Testaments. Thomas had first met Fa'one in Tongatapu in July 1829 when Taufa'ahau came to Hihifo to see if the missionary would come to Ha'apai to teach him and his people. During those negotiations Thomas learned that, at Lifuka:

*There are now at that place about 50 persons who are called lotu people. Some of them belong to the Tui Habai and he does not interrupt them. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, *08/07/1829).*

Tu'iha'ateaho was there with Fa'one and Thomas could see that these two important chiefs, with Taufa'ahau, would be helpful to the cause if a new Wesleyan Mission was to be established in Ha'apai. Fa'one, he said:

was a member of the Tu'i Tonga family and Tu'iha'ateaho was of the Tamaha family. Both of these chiefs professed to lotu (THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS 09/07/1829. PP. 504).*

The Thomas's arrived in Ha'apai on the 30th January 1830 and the following day, Sunday, John recorded the historic occasion in his Journal. He had, he said, *opened my commission in Lifuka. (ibid, p. 558)*. Beginning that commission saw Thomas quickly working with Pita Vi and Fa'one on translation work. And although his comments in his journal were often just a line or two, nevertheless, they reveal how indispensable Fa'one was in the important work of bringing the Word of God into a written and printed form of the Tongan language. Quite early in Thomas's Lifuka days, Fa'one was helping in a particularly significant way, by providing Thomas with an ever-expanding vocabulary:

This morning I got a little language from Fa'one. I got two new words and hope that this young man will help me if I

allow him to attend. I think him a very intelligent man ...
(THOMAS JOURNAL, 31/01/1830).*

From that time, so early in the Thomas's appointment to Lifuka, there were numerous references to Fa'one's assistance:

*I got a few new words this morning by the assistance of
Fa'one with which I was well pleased. (IBID, 14/06/1830;
29/11/1830)*

Fa'one would have been about twenty six years of age at the time, as he was twenty seven when he was baptized by Thomas at Lifuka on 31 July 1831. (*HA'APAI BAPTISMAL REGISTER, BAPTISM NUMBER 101*).

Fa'one in the classroom.

Thomas's appreciation of Fa'one was because his skill with the language was leading to a much more accurate translation of scripture, and, in addition, it helped in creating simple catechisms for the classroom. For Thomas it was:

*a matter for joy when I find out words that will serve to
give a just view of God's word to the people. (THOMAS,
JOURNAL, * 14/06/1830).*

Thomas went on to record his gratitude for the sacrifices Fa'one was making by leaving Vava'u, (where Finau was strongly opposed to the lotu, at that time), in order to be a pioneer translator in Ha'apai. Fa'one, he said:

*is a young chief belonging to Vava'u but is content to live
here in a state of poverty here and serve God rather than go
to his property and friends at Vava'u to give up the worship
of the true God. (IBID, 14/06/1830).*

Fa'one's work with Thomas in developing catechisms began to bear fruit immediately. After school one morning Thomas noted with pleasure that:

*some of the students were able to answer the questions in the
catechism and also they make progress in their reading. (IBID,
17/06/1830).*

Fa'one was there in the school room with Thomas to see the result of their work for himself, and Thomas not only involved him in the conduct of the lessons asked his assistant to close the school sessions with prayer. (*ibid, 21/06/1830*).

Significant training in language.

It is not clear exactly how Thomas worked with Fa'one in translation work. One illuminating entry in his journal, however, sheds some light on the process:

This morning I derived a little assistance in the language by Fa'one. I read over to him [the material translated] yesterday which I had on a slate but had not written it off lest it should not be correct. I found it needed very little correction. I feel thankful to find that I make progress in the language, but I feel persuaded that I am far from being possessed of a complete knowledge of it. (IBID, 24/06/1830; SEE ALSO THOMAS, JOURNAL 27 & 28/07/1830).*

Fa'one provided valuable assistance during the frantic first year of the mission in Ha'apai when the people at Lifuka took to learning to read with enthusiasm. Consequently there was a demand for new pieces of scripture and for catechisms. Fa'one gave Thomas assistance with these important teaching materials:

After School Tufui and Fa'one came up with me to assist me in the language. I corrected a part of the catechism I had done before. I hope they will be a means of good to the people and will act to lead them to Christ. (IBID, 25/05/1830).

Fa'one's assistance was particularly appreciated because he came from a revered Chiefly family so brought particular skills to the translation work.

I often obtained the valuable aid of Faone, [Thomas said] who being of the Tu'i Tonga family, has had a great training as to language, as well as other things. (THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS P. 641, 20/08/1830; THOMAS, JOURNAL*, 24/09/1830).*

The great training was put to the test when Thomas decided to translate the Old Testament Book of Exodus. With Fa'one's help, he concentrated on the first twenty four chapters where there are the great stories about Moses and his leadership of the People of Israel out of slavery in Egypt, the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea, the forming of a Covenant with God and the giving of the Ten Commandments. Thomas needed help with these dramatic stories and so we read that he:

sent for Faone and by his assistance I got a part of the third chapter of Exodus. [the Burning Bush and God's call to

*Moses]. These are very interesting and important parts of God's word and I hope will tend to advance the glory of God in this place. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, * 24/09/1830).*

As Thomas continued telling the story of Moses and the Israelites, he provides a brief comment on the help given by his teacher:

I asked Fa'one to assist me with the language. I wrote chapter 5 of Exodus [Moses calling on Pharoah to release the Israelites] and another chapter. I wrote it in pencil ready for correction. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 28/09/1830; 03/01/1831).*

Some parts of the great biblical epic were particularly difficult translate. When he came to the Song of Moses (a poem about crossing the Red Sea) he noted that:

I wrote part of the 15th Chapter of Exodus Moses Song I feel sorry that in the Tongan language this fine and elevated song seems to lose much of its strength and beauty. (IBID, 30/10/1830).

The English version that Thomas was working with, the Authorized Version of 1611, certainly posed some difficulties when, in its poetic language, the Song of Moses used such expressions as

the greatness of thine excellency, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises doing wonders. Thou shalt bring them in and plant them in the mountains of thine inheritance. Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power, (HOLY BIBLE, AUTHORIZED VERSION, EXODUS 15:1-18).

Fa'one, even with his great training as to language, would have been challenged by the poetic language of Exodus chapter 15.

The Exodus project involved many sessions and spanned the months of May to November 1830. But there were other scriptures that Fa'one helped Thomas translate. In typical economy of words Thomas's Journal tells us:

*I have written a few verses in Matthew's chapter 7. Fa'one was my teacher ... Wrote two short Psalms today and corrected them by Fa'one also I wrote a few verses of the 8th Chapter of Matthew. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, * 23/07/1830; 28/07/1830).*

The Parable of the Prodigal Son was another Biblical story that called for Fa'one's assistance. With just a single sentence Thomas said:

Wrote the parable of the Prodigal Son and corrected it with the assistance of Faone. (IBID, 24/09/1830).

A version of this parable had already been translated by Turner, Cross and Thomas and appeared in the A First Book (1830) with the title: *Koe tala age, oe Eiki, mo ene fanau tagata e toka ua* (*The Story of the Master and his two sons. A First Book, Lesson XXV, p. 26*).

Thomas obviously felt that the former translation could be improved. He acknowledged that he often struggled to find the right words when translating New Testament passages commenting that some things he *could not translate*, because he could not find Tongan equivalents for some English words. (IBID, 29/09/1830).

One can imagine that difficulties would arise when Thomas and Fa'one came to the part of the story which tells that the prodigal:

wasted his substance with riotous living. (HOLY BIBLE, AV, LUKE 15:13)

The Turner, Thomas and Cross version of 1830 translated it as:

bea lahi ene fai mea kovi, bea oji vave ene koloa (*Many were the bad things that he did and his wealth was quickly lost.*) (*A FIRST BOOK, 1830 P. 27; LUKE 15:13*)

Unfortunately, we do not have Fa'one and Thomas's translation, although it was probably similar to a later 1838 version:

Beau maumau i ai ia ene mea kotoabe i he gaahi katoaga kai
(and he wasted everything he had in celebration and
feasting); (KO E GAAHI LESONI UO HIKI MEI TOHI TABU, 1838
LESONI 26).

Over the years various other versions of verse 13 appeared. West in 1862 has it as

o maumau'i ai ene koloa i he ene moui agakovi. (*HIS PROPERTY WAS WASTED BY HIS BAD LIFESTYLE*).

Moulton's 1880 New Testament translates it as:

Na'a ne toloweka'aki ene koloa i heene mo'ui fakalusa. (*HE VERY QUICKLY WASTED HIS PROPERTY THROUGH EXTRAVAGANT LIVING*).

Assistance with culture and Heritage.

Fa'one's assistance to Thomas was not only in Biblical translation, but also in what Thomas had called other things. And so, we find that, when there was an opportunity, Fa'one exposed Thomas to aspects of language and culture that would have broadened the missionary's vocabulary and understandings. One cultural experience occurred when Fa'one accompanied Thomas on a voyage to Tongatapu to attend the 1830 District Meeting. The party called at Mango on the way and while there, Fa'one took the opportunity of introducing Thomas to an old man known for his store of heritage material. As the missionary tells it:

Fa'one sent for old Siulua [Si'u'lua] to come to us that I might hear from him his talatupu'a, or tradition, on the origin of things ... on being requested by Fa'one to do so [to talk] the old man summoned his courage and began to relate what he had received and had been in the habit of repeating to others as to the true origin of the world as far as Samoa and the Tonga Islands were concerned, and the gods and their doings. It lasted about two hours, being occasionally interrupted by a few questions we asked by way of explanation. (THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS P. 664, 02/12/1830).*

Fa'one had previously taken Thomas to historic places in Ha'apai where they saw *several god houses in ruins*, met and talked with *an old priestess* and were shown:

the place where stood, till a short time before, a sacred canoe which had been worshipped for many years (IBID, P. 649, 30/10/1830).

In later years.

Fa'one, some years later, together with Joel Bulu and several others, went as missionary teachers to Fiji to assist Cargill and Cross in the Wesleyan Mission Station there. (*ibid*, p. 1136, 08/06/1838.) His translation work with Thomas would have given him a good knowledge of the Scriptures and prepared him well for a teaching role in Fiji.

There was also an interesting link to Fa'one's work with Thomas when the complete Bible of 1862 was being prepared for publication. The Thomas's had retired from Tonga in 1850, but returned to the islands in 1854 for a further six years. While back in Tonga Thomas had been asked by the Mission Committee in London to provide a revised translation of Exodus. Thomas West, also in retirement in England, and supported by the Missionary Committee, was working

on the Complete Bible and was waiting for Thomas to provide the update of Exodus, which he was progressing slowly. So it was suggested that the revision could be done in England, presumably by West and other returned missionaries. Thomas did not agree and argued a point of view that had guided him over many years. He emphasized that it is best, in translating, to take advantage of the local Tongan assistants and that the final draft of Exodus should be:

prepared on the spot where the language is spoken, and judicious natives can be consulted on all nice and difficult points rather than be left to be done in England. (Inwards Correspondence Thomas to Secretary Hoole, 27/08/1857).*

There are echoes here of years past when Fa'one worked with Thomas to make the original translation of Exodus. One imagines Thomas being transported across the years to Ha'apai in 1831, to one who had spent many hours with him working on translation. At that time, Fa'one was the local Tongan with a great training as to language. He was a 'translation pioneer', a forerunner of those who, in 1857, Thomas said, were judicious Tongans who could be consulted on all nice and difficult points. (*ibid*, 28/08/1857) Interestingly, Dr Moulton adopted that same approach throughout his long connection with the Tongan people, believing that no translation should be done without a native assistant. (J. E. MOULTON, MOULTON OF TONGA, p. 91).

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Samisone Ataata: *my friend and assistant in the language.*

A student at Hihifo.

Ataata, 'a young chief' was one of Thomas's valued translation assistants. Not a great deal has been recorded about him, except in Thomas's journals where the missionary speaks appreciatively of his former student. Ataata had lived with the Thomas's at the Mission House at Hihifo in 1826, and had followed them, in January 1830, when they pioneered a new Mission Station at Ha'apai. At Hihifo, while Thomas was struggling to learn the language, Ataata, his pupil, was able to help his teacher and Thomas took every opportunity to take advantage of that help. Between the morning and afternoon services on Sunday 29th March for example he *spent a bit of time* with Ataata and worked on *getting language*. As he said:

By means of a young chief named Ataata, the son of Fa'e a Chief of Bea, I have obtained many good Tongan words and these I made use of in my preaching (THOMAS, JOURNAL 29/03/1829; THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS* P.474).*

Some twelve months later, at Lifuka, Thomas was able to call on Ataata to help him prepare material for use in classrooms and at Sunday services. The former pupil became the teacher, helping Thomas translate some chapters of Scripture that he could use to encourage the people, including Taufa'ahau, to resist pressure from the anti lotu. The pressure came as the church in Lifuka was preparing for Easter.

A series of conflicts

During the days leading up to the Easter services a series of conflicts caused confusion and tension in the newly established Mission Station. Firstly, a beachcomber was causing some unrest among the people. Mafile'o, who had accompanied the Thomas's from Hihifo to Ha'apai, brought Thomas the worrying news that one of the survivors of the wreck of the whaler Minerva was slandering the Thomas's and insulting the lotu. Mafile'o told Thomas that he was:

telling the people that religion is not right, that he has been laughing and sneering at the people ... because of their praying to Jehovah...that the man told them that religion was all lies – that I was a deceiver or lying teacher and that no person went to Heaven and that many people have believed these lies. (Thomas, Journal, 01/04/1830).*

Thomas, concerned that Mafile'o appeared disturbed by the beachcomber slanders, assured his former pupil that he was a properly ordained minister of the church and a correctly appointed missionary and showed him his credentials, his inscribed ordination Bible *in the presence of an Englishman who read the contents. (ibid)* After seeing these papers, Mafile'o seemed better satisfied. But Thomas wanted the people to see his authority to preach the gospel:

*I produced my credentials [he said] told them I wished that there was a man that could read them [translate them into Tongan?] but if they believed me, these papers [Ordination Bible and Missionary Committee letters] showed that I was a proper person and regularly appointed to preach God's Word. The people seemed satisfied and wished me not to trouble myself about it for they believed what I said and did not believe what he had said. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, * 03/04/1830).*

Ultimately the troublesome man was *put in irons* and taken away by the captain of a visiting English warship. (THOMAS, JOURNAL*, 11/06/1830; THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS* p. 606).

... The second area of conflict involved a difference of opinion between Thomas and Taufa'ahau over Pita Vi's role as an assistant translator. Thomas had been used to having *the chief boys* living at the Mission House and available 'on call' for translation work. Now, at Lifuka, Pita Vi his assistant was a married man and lived in his own house and was at Taufa'ahau's command. (*See above for details in section devoted to Pita Vi*). Thomas was annoyed and had to find alternative helpers. This is where Ataata was called upon to help. When Pita Vil was not available Ataata and Fa'one became translation assistants.

... A third area of conflict involved differences of opinion about authority and control more generally. A spirited discussion between the missionary and the chief took place at a site where Taufa'ahau was working with his men repairing a canoe. Thomas had gone there, specifically, to confront Taufa'ahau over his request for the big language slate and Thomas's boat cloak. (*See above for details in the section devoted to Taufa'ahau*). Thomas felt that the chief was too demanding. The Chief saw it as a difference of cultural attitudes and practice. The Chief told Thomas how he saw things:

We [Tongans] had different minds to him – that we must act according to our own ways and they must follow the customs of Tonga. This he said is what each people and nations did, he said the Fijis and Haamoa [Samoa] had each their ways of proceeding. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 10/04/1830).*

Thomas had to agree with his chief, that the Fijians and Samoans did things in *their own way*, but, he said, *they acted wrong*. Here in Tonga, *we that pray unto the true God must pray in truth*. Taufa'ahau was not pleased to be challenged and asked Thomas *to leave him*. Thomas continued the discussion and Taufa'ahau, again, asked Thomas *to go*. (*IBID*)

The next day was Easter Sunday and a large crowd gathered for worship, *but neither the Chief or his wife was present*. On the Monday Taufa'ahau wrote Thomas a note, assuring the missionary that he continued to respect him and told him that *if I believe him, he will believe or attend to me*. Thomas did not receive Taufa'ahau's offer too kindly, believing that *if I will obey his will, he will then obey what I teach*. Thomas sent a note in return, telling his chief that he was *obliged by his love, and that I wished to talk with him on the things of God*. (*Thomas, Journal**, 10-12/04/1830). This led to Taufa'ahau being *cheerful, and better disposed towards us than he has been*, which was fortunate, for testing times and other more important conflicts perhaps, were about to disturb Taufa'ahau and threaten the progress of the lotu at Lifuka.

The final conflict came when a delegation from Tongatapu, led by *the old blind chief Ma'afu*, arrived at Lifuka. (*ibid, 15-16/04/1830*.) Ataata played a par-

ticularly valuable role during this critical time. Ma'afu was a representative of the *tae lotu* chiefs of Tongatapu. These, Thomas believed:

had become displeased with the conduct of our king ... because he has destroyed or removed all the spirit houses or those places where they have for ages worshipped the Devil. This old man seems to be deputed by the people at Tonga [tapu] who are opposed to the worship of God to come in their name to prevent our chief worshipping God. (IBID, 17/04/1830).

Ma'afu and the Tongatapu chiefs were pressing Taufa'ahau to rebuild the spirit houses and restore other sacred objects and places. Taufa'ahau sought help from the missionary:

He sent up to borrow a Bible to take with him to show the chiefs and those that were against him, the word of the true God which he would abide by. (IBID, 07/04/1830).

Taufa'ahau also wanted to know what he should say to those who were asking him to rebuild the spirit houses. He wanted advice, he said, because: *he wished to do what was right.* Thomas's advice was that he should not rebuild god houses but *let those who wanted to worship the Tonga gods rebuild them.* (IBID, 17/04/1830).

At the meeting with Ma'afu Taufa'ahau made a powerful statement. In what was a forerunner of his later actions in Vava'u where, in 1839 he raised a handful of earth and dedicated Tonga to God, Taufa'ahau in Lifuka 1830, told Thomas that he would tell Ma'afu and the Tongatapu group:

that he would not give up the Divine Worship but would take the Bible and holding it up with both hands would take a kind of oath as confirmatory of his word that he would abide by that Book. (IBID, 17/04/1830).

On this momentous day, in the midst of a highly charged situation where there had been several conflicts and disputes, Thomas prepared for Sunday worship. He selected the 6th chapter of Nehemiah as the basis for his sermon. The chapter tells the story of the prophet's unwavering faithfulness to God in the face of repeated threats from his enemies. The prophet, God's man, standing firm in the face of opposition. Thomas needed help to translate this story, so he called on Ataata. His Journal for Saturday 17th April 1830, the day of Ma'afu's arrival and the confrontation between Taufa'ahau and the Tongatapu deputation, tells in a few simple words about Ataata's contribution:

I have been assisted in the language today by Samisone Ataata. I have been getting for one subject tomorrow the 6th Chapter of Nehemiah. This shows the pious and resolute conduct of that good man. (IBID, 17/04/1830).

The next day some 200 people gathered for Sunday worship in the large house where Thomas preached from the Nehemiah story that Ataata had helped him translate. It was an emotional sermon in which he urged his people to follow the example of Nehemiah:

cleave unto the Lord and to harden themselves against the persuasion of the enemies of the Lord. I cried aloud, he said, to warn them lest they should be turning or yielding to the persuasion of the old sinner [Ma'afu] and who was their relation. I told them to warn their relatives lest they should fall into Hell ... (THOMAS JOURNAL, 18/04/1830).

A variety of translation tasks.

It was not just books of the Bible that Ataata was able to assist Thomas to translate. One of the missionary's teaching methods was to prepare lessons in a question and answer format (a catechism) and have students respond together, *as one voice*.

I wrote two or three short catechisms on the slates last night and corrected them this morning by the assistance of Samisone [Ataata] (THOMAS JOURNAL, 29/04/1830).

Liturgical materials also needed to be translated. Again it was Ataata who was assisting when Thomas was *correcting and improving the Burial Service. (THOMAS JOURNAL*, 22/04/1830)*.

Just how valuable Ataata was to Thomas, in the whole complex translating process is highlighted in a Journal comment in April 1830. When Ataata, with some others, was leaving Lifuka to return to Tongatapu, Thomas wrote, sadly:

I regret also that my friend and assistant in the language, Samson Ataata is going ... should be glad to detain him here. (THOMAS JOURNAL, 29/04/1830; THOMAS, TONGATAPU* 29/04/1830, P. 587).*

One can understand why Thomas would want Ataata to stay on in Lifuka. His contribution as a pioneer translator had already been invaluable. There was a lot more language work to do. Samisone Ataata would be greatly missed.

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Tufui: He came to aid in the translations and corrections (Thomas, Journal August 1830)*

An early convert.

Tufui, Thomas said, was *amongst the first to turn* [to the lotu] at Ha'apai. And once he became a lotu man, although mocked at times, he *kept firm*. Tufui also gave a lead in the new religion when he married Veatokelau, sister to Taufa'ahau. The marriage, in March 1830, just three months after the Thomas's arrived in Lifuka, drew people from all over Tonga, Christians and non-Christians alike. For Thomas it was obviously an important occasion:

Both these individuals were firm to God, and we hoped and prayed they might live to be a great blessing in these islands.
(THOMAS, JOURNAL 10/03/1830; THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS* P. 574).*

Thomas would, soon enough, see his hopes for this promising young couple come to pass, not in Tonga but in Fiji in Lakemba. There Tufui began making a significant contribution to the introduction of the Christian faith into Fiji.

A student, teacher and translation assistant.

In Ha'apai, when Thomas established schools in Lifuka, Tufui was a keen student. He came to the Missionary seeking some school supplies and Thomas was more than happy to respond, confiding to his Journal that he had made a present of a slate and pencil to Tufui. (Thomas, Journal, * 06/04/1830) . Tufui not only attended the school as a student, but was able to offer some leadership in the classroom as well. Thomas tells how on one occasion, when requested:

Tufui engaged in prayer at the close of the school this morning with great propriety and earnestness. (IBID, 03/05/1830).

Tufui gave leadership in other ways as well. When he had been away from Lifuka for a time, and had returned, the missionary noted with pleasure that the Chief had *sailed in the dark* in order to be back in Lifuka before the Sabbath because he had regard for God and his Day and Word. (THOMAS, JOURNAL* 19/06/1830).

....Thomas and the other missionaries were continually revising translations including First Lessons and Tufui assisted with this work and with other translation tasks:

After school Tufui and Faone came up with me to assist me in the language. I corrected a part of the Catechism I had done before. I hope they will be the means of good to the people, and tend to lead them to Christ. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 25/05/1830).*

A few weeks later Thomas was again working on translation with his chiefly assistant and noted that:

Tufui came up with me this morning to assist me in correcting some errors in my Catechisms and other lessons ... (IBID, 02/06/1830).

Thomas was pleased with his teacher but, in what was to be a prophetic note in his journal, he wrote:

I was assisted this morning in the language by Tufui, who seems willing to come to teach me, though I fear it will not be long. (IBID, 27/05/1830).

Tufui's Fiji plans

Tufui began showing an interest in joining a Class Meeting [*Lotu Fehui*] but was struggling because he wished to take part in a katoanga [celebration] organized by some *ta'e lotu* [not lotu] people. In discussions with Thomas the issue was resolved:

Tufui says he wishes to attend the Class Meeting but did not know what to do as he should have to attend the feast which is coming on. I told him to come to the Class. I think perhaps of the two evils that will be the least, especially has (sic) his mind is made up to give up these things when this meeting [katoanga] is over. I judge that Tufui's example in attending the Class will bring several others and hence some will be prevented from being swallowed up in the vain amusements of the vain world. (IBID, 29/05/1830).

Tufui's example paid off and a few days after the katoanga Thomas was able to record, with satisfaction, that when he went to meet his Class, he was pleased to

see Tufui and 10 others attend for the first time. (*ibid*, 31/05/1830). Thomas, at that time, also formed a Class Meeting for females. Seven women attended including Mrs Thomas. Among the other women attending were the King's wife and Tufui's wife. Thomas had high hopes for these two special women. He believed it was likely that they would *become useful characters*. Several of the Women's Class gave Thomas hope because, as he said, they had decided to *give themselves to Jesus to live and die for him*. (*IBID*, 01/06/1830).

A Fiji mission venture?

It wasn't long, however, before Thomas's joy turned to personal pain. He was going to lose Tufui his teacher and translation assistant:

I was informed that Tufui was going to the Fiji Islands that he had consulted with the Chief [Taufa'ahau] on the subject last night I feel a good deal astonished at this. (IBID, 05/08/1830)

Tufui came up to the Mission House to inform Thomas, face to face, about his decision. The conversation was tense. Thomas asked Tufui if he thought it was *the will of God that he should go to Fiji*. Tufui said he did not know. Thomas pressed the issue, telling Tufui that:

he had acted wrong in having first made up their minds to go and get ready before they [presumably Taufa'ahau and Tufui] came for advice. I told him that I had nothing further to say but thought that they were going out of the way. (Thomas, Journal, 05/08/1830)

At that point Taufa'ahau came to the Mission House and Thomas told him what he and Tufui had been discussing. Thomas had a number of reasons why Tufui and his people should stay in Ha'apai and give up the idea of going to Fiji. He told Taufa'ahau that he believed that:

it was their own will and not the will of God – that I thought the cause of God needed them here, that they should wait until they were more wise and as many of those were candidates for baptism they should wait until they were baptized also we were about to build a chapel and I thought they should stop and see it up and see religion more settled before they went especially as Tufui was one of the first lotu or praying men at this place. (IBID)

Taufa'ahau agreed that what Thomas said was true but insisted that they had got ready and their minds were fixed on going. Therefore, let them go. (*ibid*). Taufa'ahau's comment put an end to the discussion. Writing about it many years later Thomas said:

I greatly regretted that he [Tufui] had determined to go as I thought there were many reasons why he should remain in Ha'apai for some time yet ... Their services were much needed in Ha'apai, he being one of the first who professed religion there. Also he had begun to undertake public prayer and was my teacher in the language. (THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS, P. 635, 05/08/1830).*

As Thomas's teacher, Tufui continued assisting with translations, right up until the time he left for Fiji. Shortly before he departed Thomas says that he and Tufui were sharing a meal and then doing translation work:

*after tea I got my teacher to continue with me and I wrote a few verses in Tonga and corrected the short Catechism. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, * 16/08/1830).*

Preparation for Fiji

To his credit, although bitterly disappointed that Tufui was leaving for Fiji, Thomas threw himself into preparing his young teacher for his departure. He asked Tufui:

what means of instruction he had for himself and his people and had all the Sermons and books brought that they had of mine. I then selected such books as I had at hand and in the course of the night I wrote some others as to give them a variety of useful books, consisting of 1 Hymn Book, 1 Catechism, 1 Book of Lessons on the Catechisms containing longish lessons from the Creation to the final judgement including the fall, redemption by Christ, Judges, Heaven and Hell, several sermons, reading books and cards (IBID, 05/08/1830).

And among the resources Tufui took with him would be, presumably, some of the passages of Scripture and the Catechisms that he had helped to translate.

In addition to the selection of books, Thomas also provided a letter of advice and exhortation to help them continue to do that which is good. I sat up until midnight, he said, in providing for them. (*ibid*) When Tufui called the next morning,

being about to depart, he collected his little library of books. Thomas also had a few more things to give him, which the missionary said would be useful in Fiji: some whales teeth which, he said, were *the gold of Fiji*, a few other *small articles*, and a book *with some further directions how to proceed*. (*IBID, THOMAS, TONGATAPU**, P. 636).

Tufui, a much-appreciated teacher and assistant translator, would now be assuming a new and challenging role: living in Fiji, not only among the many Tongans who were already in Lakemba, but also with the Fijian population where they would be living as lotu people. But Thomas was also aware of something else. As he was farewelling Tufui he recorded his view that his former teacher and translation assistant, and another young Chief already in Fiji, would be forerunners of European missionaries, Cargill and Cross, who would follow some five years later. Tufui and Lasike, and Fa'one and Tupoutoutai, were not simply the forerunners. They can justly be called the first Wesleyan missionaries to Fiji.

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Setaleki Ve'ehala: a very excellent linguist.

A young chief with a superior mind.

John Thomas, in writing his history of Tonga (*Tongatapu or the Friendly Islands**) recalled his early days at Hihifo and the young chiefs who attended school there. Ve'ehala, he said, was *a very choice young Chief with a superior mind, a very excellent linguist*. These skills were of great assistance to the missionaries as they worked to bring the Bible into the Tongan language. Ve'ehala was one of Ata's sons (his nephew actually) and even before he became a lotu man he impressed the missionaries because his:

fine genius and superior mind were clearly discernable. He excelled in everything to which he applied himself. (WMM, 1840 P. 638).

Ata had given his consent to the Thomas's *to teach his children, and some other young chiefs, and Ve'ehala attended the English classes*. Charles Tucker's obituary tribute for Ve'ehala, noted the impact of their early schooling at Hihifo:

They soon became favourably impressed both with the word which was brought, as well as towards those who taught it, the result of this light upon the minds of these young chiefs was that, they saw the evils of their own heathenism; and

began to speak against it amongst their friends, and to absent themselves from certain amusements, also to regard the sacred day observed by the Missionaries, and these chiefs and people who before did them, and they were called a lotu, or praying people. Through frequent conversations with Thomas and by the witness of Hermas Laupo he provided great service to the missionaries and the church ...

Tucker says that Hermas, who *lived at the Mission premises* for most of the time that Thomas's were at Hihifo, taught Ve'ehala what he knew of the lotu. And he taught him how to read and write. The result was that Ve'ehala:

began to bow the knee before God. For some time he did this privately in the bush, lest Ata should know of it and punish him (MN 1840 P. 638).

A master of the Tongan language

Ve'ehala was just one of the small number of the boys at Hihifo when the Thomas's were there. Later when the mission was abandoned for a time, Ve'ehala took a leadership role:

He gathered a little band of fellow Christians, who formerly belonged to the school, and they began to meet at his house for religious purposes, but were soon driven away by Ata. (IBID)

Charles Tucker, who penned an obituary for him when he died in 1839, described him in complementary terms:

Veehala was a very choice young chief with a very superior mind, quick of apprehension and thoroughly master of the Tonga language, and most ready and willing to teach it to the missionary, and while so engaged his own mind was drinking the truth of God, as from a living fountain.
(THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS, P. 1190).*

Persecuted by opponents of the lotu, driven out of the Fort at Kolovai, resettling with his family and people nearby at Masilamea and then Fo'ui, he became a Class Leader and Local Preacher and finally, after the great revival in 1834 when persecution began again he moved to Nuku'alofa. Many houses had been burned down during the renewed persecution *and the inhabitants of six villages were driven to Nuku'alofa and ordered to remain there or go to Ha'apai:*

*The sons of Ata (including Veehala) with their wives, children and people have been called to suffer in the good cause. They are all with us at this place. [Nuku'alofa].
(THOMAS, JOURNAL* 21/08/1834; MINUTES AND REPORTS*, SPECIAL DISTRICT MEETING 11/06/1834).*

Translating, teaching and preaching.

It was there, at Nuku'alofa, that Ve'ehala played an important role in preaching, teaching the language, helping with translating scripture and preparing completed texts for the press. Tucker's obituary gives some indication of the language he was able to bring to the translating and correcting task:

His sermons were clothed with figures, appropriate and striking, while he brought out of his treasury things new and old. The native Tongans used often to remark, after hearing him, that nothing remained on the subject for any one else to say. The Heathen looked upon him as an authority, and often used to come from various parts of the island to ask the meaning of different things; and they never thought of questioning the correctness of his opinion on the subject of their enquiry (IBID, P. 641).

Charles Tucker's high praise of his teacher springs from firsthand experience. Thomas informed the Committee that nine of Tucker's translations (1 & 2 Thessalonians, the three Epistles of John, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon) had been printed by 1839 and that Ve'ehala's input had been significant:

For some years past he was our principal teacher in the native language on this station. [Nuku'alofa, Tongatapu]. He was invaluable to us in this capacity, both in teaching us the language, and in preparing our translations for the press ... He had an extensive and correct knowledge of the niceties of the language, accompanied by a sound and discriminating judgement. (WMM, 1840, P. 642).

Rabone was particularly thankful for his help with translation and noted that:

With the help of my teacher [Ve'ehala] I have been able to perform more this week than any one week since I have been in the Friendly Islands. (MN 1838.12/08/1837).

When Rabone was appointed to take up the abandoned Hihifo station, Seteleki worked with him on translation and the missionary arranged some temporary accommodation close to the Mission House. As he told the Committee:

During my twelve months at Hihifo we spent much time together. And as his dwelling [at Fo'ui] was a full mile from ours I had him made a small place in which he slept in order to be early at the language. (LETTERS AND JOURNALS 03/04/1839).*

Like Thomas at Lifuka some years earlier, Rabone was wanting to have his assistant 'on call'! From this close personal experience Rabone was convinced that Ve'ehala was *by far the best that the Friendly Islands could produce.* (IBID).

... Thomas, too, called Seteleki a very excellent linguist and when he and his people were forced out of their home at Fo'ui and driven to Nuku'alofa, Thomas said that the talented chief:

tendered his service to assist in the correction of translations, which I read to him, and while he greatly benefitted in hearing so many new portions of the Word of God, we benefitted equally from his pains and skill in giving us suitable words to express its meaning. (THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS P.965, II/09/1834.)*

An advantage to have different persons to consult.

Thomas found Ve'ehala particularly helpful when he was preparing Matthew's Gospel and the Psalms for the press. During the months August to October 1834 Thomas frequently made notes about translation and proof reading such as *we continued with the work all yesterday and we continued at the book till 3pm and proceeded in examining Matthew* (Thomas, Journal* 19/09/1834; 24/09/1834; 27/09/1834). His understanding of the language and being given important new words was benefiting Thomas significantly. He had been in Tonga eight years when he started working with Ve'ehala. While working on Matthew's Gospel, for example, Thomas said that he found it:

an advantage to have different persons to consult. Setaleki [Ve'ehala] has given me several new words of some importance. (IBID, P.1909.)

The other missionaries on Tongatapu at the time Ve'ehala was there were obviously helped in similar ways as Tucker's tribute indicates.

Thomas's work with Ve'ehala was cut short when, on the 26 March 1839, his helper became seriously ill and died. The published tribute to him, collated by Tucker, said that:

As a Tonguese scholar, perhaps he has not left his equal in these islands. He had an extensive and correct knowledge of the language, accompanied by a sound and discriminating judgment.

At his baptism on 26 March 1833 Ve'ehala chose Shadrack as a first name. His choice turned out to be somewhat prophetic. (*Thomas, Tongatapu or the Friendly Islands**, p. 915). Shadrack in the Bible, together with his friends Meshach and Abednego, became known for their unwavering faith and courage in the face of persecution. Seteleki in Tonga was driven from his home more than once by persecutors because of his faith! As his memoir concluded in speaking of his passing:

Thus ended the pilgrimage of one of the brightest ornaments and one of the greatest sufferers in the Redeemer's cause at Tonga. (MN 1840. TUCKER, MEMOIR OF SHADRACK VEEHALA REPRINTED FROM WMM 1840).

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Panepasa Kavamoelolo: Barnabas my teacher

The need for translation assistance.

At the District Meeting of 1832 the Thomas's left Ha'apai and were appointed back to Tongatapu. This meant that Thomas lost the services of several of his assistants who worked with him in Lifuka during his Ha'apai years. Fortunately, Barnabas, Panepasa Kavamoelolo, one of the first six converts who were baptised by Turner in January 1829, took Pita Vi's place and that of other assistants, as a teacher and translation assistant. One of the first references to Barnabas was when Thomas noted in his diary that he visited a very sick baby, *an infant child belonging to my teacher* (*THOMAS, JOURNAL** 05/06/1832; 08/06/1832).

Thomas's first reference to Barnabas as a translation assistant was in June 1832 when he said that he *spent a little time with Barnabas examining and correcting Exodus chapter 12. (ibid, 15/06/1832)*. This would have been a bittersweet experience for Barnabas as the chapter deals with the institution of the Passover and

also the tenth plague which saw the death of the first born of the Egyptians. Barnabas's sick child had died a few days earlier. (*IBID*, 08/06/1832).

Other references to Barnabas working with him are brief and lack detail:

After breakfast Barnabas and I proceeded with our work.

*We got through one chapter and part of another. (*IBID*, 16/07/1832).*

Thomas makes dozens of references to examining and correcting translations in his Journals but rarely says that Barnabas was assisting him. He does say more than once that we [he uses a plural pronoun] had examined or corrected or proof read some scripture translations. (*ibid*, 19/06/1832). Perhaps Barnabas is included in those references. Even when Thomas wanted to expand his knowledge of Tongan culture and spent time with Barnabas discussing traditional religion, his helper is not given a name:

*With the assistance of my teacher, I obtained a little correct information about the Tongan gods etc. (*IBID*, 19/06/1832; 26/04/32; 26/04/1833).*

Thomas did not have the services of Barnabas for long. On the 14th June 1834 his teacher became ill and passed away. Barnabas was only about 35 years of age. (*IBID*, 14/06/1834).

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The assistant translator's legacy.

The assistant bible translators played a vital role in the challenging process of bringing the English Bible into the Tongan language. That role is highlighted when the missionaries, especially Thomas, noted that they were being given help with examining and correcting their translations and when they were offered new words to make those translations more accurate and more understandable.

It is difficult to give recognition to all the assistants who worked with the missionaries and helped to lay the foundations for the emerging Tongan Bible. Documentary sources from missionaries are scarce, apart from John Thomas's extensive collection of Journals. Oral traditions and family histories may be able to fill out the record.

Without the assistants, the missionaries work on the Bible would have been the poorer. Thomas wrote, in 1830, about the hard task of translation:

this is our great work and takes much time, and requires great care the more so the language not having been written, there is no fixed standard, except what is found in the most intelligent of the native Chiefs whom we have to seek to in all matters of importance (DISTRICT MEETING MINUTES, 1830; THOMAS, TONGATAPU OR THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS*, P. 667).*

=====CHAPTER 9 =====

The Printing Press and a Literary and Social Revolution

When First Lessons in the Language of Tongataboo, arrived in Tonga from Sydney in 1828, the first book in the Tongan language had arrived. The twenty-four-page booklet signalled the beginning of a new era for the Friendly Islands.

A second and more significant event, in 1831, was the arrival of a printing press for the Wesleyan Mission. Thousands of pages of printed material quickly flowed from the press, schools sprang up across the Friendly Islands, catering for several thousand all age scholars, taught by hundreds of teachers. The head teachers were a new class in Tongan society, and with their leadership large numbers of the Tongan population learned to read and many learned to write. The press was originally set up in Nuku'alofa but during the unsettled times in the mid and late 1830s it was transferred to Vava'u, first to Feletoa and then to Neiafu. Later still it was returned to Nuku'alofa.

Before the arrival of the Printing Press, there were just four schools in the Friendly Islands, two in Nuku'alofa (one male and one female) and two in Lifuka (one male and one female) conducted by the missionaries. Two years after the Press arrived, dozens of schools came into being, from Tongatapu to Niuatoputapu, conducted by hundreds of teachers, catering for thousands of scholars. A literary and social revolution had begun. Large numbers of people were reading and writing their own language for the first time. In addition, they were learning another language as well, the language of the Wesleyan Church, of the Bible, of hymns and prayers.

A major change was that most learners were being taught, not by missionaries, but by their own countrymen and women. And the curriculum for the schools was a growing number of small books. Koe Motua Lea (commonly known as the Alphabet) was the basic

language teaching instrument. Other books, mainly chapters from Old and New Testaments and a Catechism of biblical knowledge, served a dual purpose. On the one hand they served as reading lesson material and on the other as teaching biblical truths.

As Peter Turner predicted, when giving thanks to the Committee in London for the gift of the Printing Press:

This will be the grand means of diffusing light and knowledge in these and other islands in the years to come. (MINUTES AND REPORTS FIDM, VAVA’U SCHOOL REPORT, 1834).*

Turner’s optimistic prediction in 1834 soon became a reality.

Thirst for Books and Learning

No-one could have imagined the impact that the initial Tongan language book would have on the people of the Friendly Islands. The book First Lessons in the Language of Tongataboo (1828) drew the Tongan language out of its ancient oral form and expressed it on the printed page. It taught Tongans a printed alphabet, gave them a spelling list to learn, lessons to read, and hymns to sing. Large numbers of the people developed a thirst for learning and when copies of the First Lessons were exhausted, the missionaries had to produce handwritten copies to meet the demand for reading and teaching material. As Nathaniel Turner the Chairman of the Mission noted that *the people thirst greatly for instruction. Fatu’s daughter*, he said, *could read a little and manifests a great desire to learn to write. (MN 1830, Turner, Journal, 06/06/1829)*. As the First Book had ‘sold out’, a manuscript copy had been given to her when she was visiting Nuku’alofa from the non-Christian stronghold of Mu’a, and as William Cross noted that *it had been written by one of her cousins. (Letters and Journals* Cross, Journal, 04/10/1830.)* Thomas at Lifuka made similar comments about the desire of the people at Ha’apai for reading material:

if more [manuscript] books could have been written we could have disposed of many more, but we have so many calls that it is impossible we can meet them all. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 18/02/1831).*

The thirst for reading material meant that the missionaries had to spend much of their time writing books. The Cross and Turner families at Nuku’alofa were often burdened with demands for books and their journals make frequent reference to the need for a press and a printer. Appeals for help were made to the Mission Committee in London and in their letters to the newspapers in the Colonies they also made their needs known. As the Hobart Courier reported:

Mr Turner, the Wesleyan Clergyman at Tongataboo, laments sorely that he has not a press, and a printer, to disseminate the gospel. He has a congregation of about 500 in that Island. (HOBART COURIER, 04/12/1829).

Until a press and a printer arrived, however, preparing the handwritten books was a necessary task. As Turner, early in his missionary years in Tonga, told the Committee in London:

This has been a most laborious week but one of great interest in my work. Much of my time has unavoidably been taken up in preparing school books for the people ... (MN 1830 TURNER, JOURNAL, 06/06/1829).

In Ha'apai the Thomas's were similarly occupied with writing schoolbooks. Thomas was distressed that the demands for books could not always be met. It was, he said:

Painful to be obliged to send them [the people] away without a book. This is the case with scores and I cannot at present remedy it ... [I am] worn out with writing for them yet could not half satisfy them. (THOMAS, JOURNAL; 02/04/1831; SEE ALSO 06/04/1831; 11/04/1831).*

... Two years later, even after the press had arrived, and numerous books were being printed, he was still troubled that the *great thirst for books* could not be met. (*FIDM 1833 Printing Report*). Manuscript books were still needed not only for the Tongan Group but also for Fiji as well. When, in 1830, Tufui was departing with his people for Lakemba, a voyage initiated by Taufa'ahau, he took as many books with him as were available, *all in handwriting*. Thomas *sat up until past midnight to write others*. (*Thomas, Tongatapu or the Friendly Islands**; 05/08/1830, p. 636).

Without a press, the demand for reading material meant that the missionaries needed to find ways to ease their burden of writing books. One remedy, at Lifuka and at Nukualofa, was to use the skills of the most advanced scholars to make copies of books. Cross said that he had *about 12 females who render me some assistance in this department*. (*Cross Journal**, 30/06/1830). Thomas, at Lifuka, depended on his wife Sarah and some capable scholars to make copies of translations and school books:

I have obtained some assistance in writing by Mrs Thomas and some natives. I have been able to give many more books amongst them ...

My dear partner labours hard now to assist me in the work. She has written the first five or six chapters of the translations. By this means I am able to translate a great deal more and to write other things (THOMAS, JOURNAL 02/10/1830).*

The natives referred to by Thomas were not named, but they were given credit for their important critical work:

The daughter of one of the Chiefs has copied for me, since the first of May, and there were two or three of the people that can write are now willing to write a few little books for me and by this we shall be able to give books away ...

two youths who write nearly continuously for me now ... and the women also write a little at times. Mrs Thomas has set three others now ... (IBID, 12/04/1830; 06/06/1830, 11/03/1831).

Another solution was to establish what could be called *lending libraries*, manuscript books given out for a week at a time, sometimes longer, and then returned to be loaned out to other borrowers. At Nuku'alofa the Turner and Cross families used this lending library approach. Anne Turner's son, in the biography of his parents, described how the system worked. The most advanced scholars were put to work, by Anne Turner, he said, for the benefit of the school and the Mission:

As all who learned to read thirsted for knowledge, the young scribes were kept busy in preparing a manuscript Loan Library. The contents were simply some selections of instructive Scripture, with 'words of exhortation and application added' ... One copy of each book of this class from the Missionaries' pens sufficed; they were quickly multiplied ... It is noteworthy that, by means of this Loan Library many natives ... had much of God's truth graven on their minds long before the printing press arrived. (TURNER J.G. A PIONEER, P.104).

Thomas explained to the Committee how his lending library system worked at Lifuka:

Three days a week we exchange or give books viz, Mondays Thursdays and Saturdays. The people keep their books a week or more and in the course of that time several persons read them. (THOMAS, JOURNAL 02/10/1830).*

At Nuku'alofa, the Turner and Cross families also appeared to have set up what they called writing groups. Cross chose scholars who were making good progress with reading and writing *to assist in providing copies of little books for circulation*:

Several of them are employed in writing schoolbooks. Two females I employ to copy from the slate all I translate. I have now by me the principal part of the Gospels, a great part of the Acts & various parts of the Old Testament written by the various natives. I have above 20 who can write a legible hand and whom I furnish with books to copy for the schools as Reading Lessons, Catechisms, Hymn Books and the Scriptures (CROSS, JOURNAL, 31/08/1830).*

Thomas, at Lifuka, also employed groups, as well as individuals, to make copies of translations and schoolbooks.

Turner, on the third anniversary of his arrival in Tonga, reflected on the amazingly rapid advance of the lotu and the part played by books. Like fellow missionaries he highlighted the assistance given by the more advanced scholars. Again, the helpers remain nameless, simply called auxiliaries, but their work was essential, critical it could be said, for the growth of the lotu and the Wesleyan Mission. It was through these auxiliaries, Turner said:

important parts of the Scriptures ‘in Manuscript’ [were made available] and we have also at least near thirty [scholars], daily writing portions into little Books from what we have translated &c for the use of the schools and to circulate amongst the people and thus by these auxiliaries we are spreading the word of God abroad without either Press or Printer. (TURNER, JOURNAL 02/10/1831).*

Clearly Turner believed that the local assistants, his auxiliaries, were crucial in the successes experienced during the early days of the mission in Nuku'alofa. As he left Tonga for the colonies because of ill health, he informed the Committee that:

I cannot but adore the goodness of God for leading us to adopt the last-mentioned method, viz, that of employing the most forward of our scholars to write for the use of the schools &c and we now have at least hundreds of these little books in circulation many of which contain a chapter each and some much more. Well may we exclaim “What hath God wrought”. (TURNER, JOURNAL, 02/010/1831).*

The Reverend John Williams of the London Missionary Society, when he visited the Friendly Islands in 1831, was impressed by the way in which reading and writing were progressing in Tonga. He was later to give a speech at the Wesleyan Missionary Society Anniversary in London where he spoke approvingly of what he had seen in Tonga:

Previous to the arrival of the press, the brethren wrote all they put into the hands of the natives; who, quickly learning the art of writing, copied the manuscript, so that the natives had, at this moment, a good deal of Gospel truth in their own hand-writing, which some could read better than even the printed works. (MN 1835 REV JOHN WILLIAMS ADDRESS AT THE WESLEYAN ANNIVERSARY MEETING).

Despite the help of capable scholars, the missionaries still carried a heavy burden in writing up translations into little books. It was not only demands for books at Nuku'alofa and Lifuka that created the load. In Lifuka, Thomas was appealed to by folk from the outer islands [The Niuas] and on book days there was clearly competition for books:

an hour or two before the time [for giving out books] the people were sitting in the road to be ready lest they should not get one and the people from the islands called also brought some of them oil and some nuts to give for books thus procured themselves books. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 07/04/1831).*

At times on these book days the competition became so intense that scuffles broke out. On one book day Thomas was able to give out forty books but was troubled by the behaviour of the restless crowd. He was afraid that:

The people were almost ready to tear me to pieces ... I much admire their thirst after books but do not approve of their noise and violence. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 07/05/1831).*

When Vava'u turned to the Lord, Finau wanted assistance from the missionaries. That meant Tongan teachers and books. As Thomas tells it:

The King of Vava'u has sent to me to send him a teacher ... One man is now at Vava'u who is baptised. We think of sending another to join him to go very soon. (THOMAS JOURNAL, 08-09/06/1831).*

This additional teacher was a Local Preacher. He had little preparation for teaching but had been baptised, could read and write and was given a collection of books some of which were printed and others simply handwritten. As Thomas explained, he gave the newly appointed teacher:

about 100 of the first books [the 1828 and 1831 Sydney based publications] and some catechisms, scripture and about 17 sermons, The book of Jonah, 5th chapter of Matthew's Gospel, then with paper pens ink pencils etc to make up his outfitwe then kneeled down, when I commended David and his wife and Paul their fellow labourer to the Lord that he would preserve them both by sea and land and that they may be blessed to the people of Vava'u. (THOMAS JOURNAL, 22/06/1831).*

Significant Events before the arrival of the Press.

Prior to the arrival of the press, the literary revolution was, in fact, quietly underway as the manuscript books increased and student numbers at the schools at Nuku'alofa and Lifuka expanded. The missionaries, both husbands and wives, were the teachers using mainly manuscript books. The Turner and Cross families taught the Male and Female schools at Nuku'alofa as Sarah and John Thomas did likewise at Lifuka. As numbers at Nuku'alofa reached 150, Cross sought help from some of the best students who he referred to as teachers. As he reported to London:

Several of the pupils have made such progress that we are enabled to employ them as teachers. These are now able to spell words of five and six syllables and are beginning to read the written hymns, prayers and lessons from scripture.
(MN 1829, CROSS, JOURNAL, 21/09/1828).*

At Lifuka, when class numbers reached 140 Thomas divided the large class into more manageable groups and as at Nuku'alofa, he appointed some of the better scholars to be their teachers:

Today I have divided two of my classes into three and gave them up to native teachers except one which I have given to Mrs Thomas. I feel reluctant to give them up, but I think that I can do more good by being less employed in the classes.
(THOMAS, JOURNAL 01/04/1831).*

The missionaries did not know, initially, about some teaching that was being done by a few enthusiastic local people. Various individuals on Tongatapu and in Ha'apai, were taking it upon themselves to share what they had learned with their friends and family. Cross, Woon and Watkin discovered some examples of local initiatives in September 1831. They made a visit to Ata at Hihifo to see if he was still opposed to the lotu, and to seek his permission to take some of the glazed windows from the unoccupied Hihifo Mission House to be used at the newly established Mission in Vava'u. (*MN 1833 Cross, Journal, September 1831*). On both counts they were disappointed. They found that Ata was still firmly resisting the faith, and, furthermore, he refused to let them take windows out of the old mission house.

The trip to Hihifo, however, was not without some value. Visits to some other villages, including Utulau, Hule, Matahau, Tekui and Nukunuku, allowed them to speak to chiefs, and conduct worship. Perhaps more significantly for the history of the mission, they found that villagers wanted to learn to read and were happy to be taught by their own countrymen and women. The visit to one village, for example is enlightening as it demonstrates the way in which the missionaries responded to local initiatives. At Matahau there were *a few praying people*, so the visiting missionaries held a service of worship *in the house of the Chief* and then approved, formally, what had been happening informally. As Cross explains it:

we entered the names of those who had begun to learn to read, and a few others who desired to begin; the number of males was eighteen, one of whom we selected as a teacher, the son of the Chief of the village. He is a very interesting young man; was the first in Matahau who renounced idolatry to become a Christian; he has made considerable progress in reading, &c., and I have no doubt that at some future period he will become a Preacher of the Gospel. The number of females who have begun to read is ten, one of these we appointed teacher and supplied them with several books.
Being our first visit to this place, we, according to the Tonga custom, made the Chief a little present. He in return presented us with a pig and some yams. (MN, 1833, CROSS, JOURNAL, 20/09/1831).

On preparing to return to Nuku'alofa, Cross, Woon and Watkin, *while waiting for the rising of the tide*, were surrounded by a number of persons from an un-named nearby village. The missionaries preached to the small gathering and then showed them some books. Some in the crowd could read, as Cross's discovered, having been taught by their friends:

we found several who knew the whole alphabet but said they had not a book among them. They were very earnest in their request for books; and not a little anxious to discover to us that they knew the letters. We distributed among them about a dozen copies of the First Book. These who know their letters have learned them when visiting those who have embraced Christianity. (IBID 19/09/1831).

Other villages, too, had people in them who were learning to read. At Utulau, it appears that some enthusiastic converts took it upon themselves to start a school. Cross, when making his first visit to the village, says that quite a number

of the people there had begun to read. So, he responded by appointing some of them as teachers. He says that he:

took down the names of those who attend the school, twenty-seven males and twenty-six females, we appointed four of these teachers two males and two females: (IBID, 25/10/1831).

In Lifuka, too, there were local initiatives at work. Thomas had heard that some baptised members were wanting to teach and preach so he delivered a sermon on the 10th chapter of Matthew where Jesus sent his disciples to spread the good news of the Kingdom of God. Thomas's sermon made a particular point of what he called the design of Christ which included:

appointing preachers and sending them forth viz that all the world might hear and fear and believe. I cautioned the people, Thomas said, against thinking too meanly of the Ministry as though it may be performed by anybody.
(Thomas Journal, 06/03/1831).*

He went on to say that he believed he had to address this issue because some of the people have *expressed themselves anxious to faifekau or preach as though I had nothing to do in the business of either sending them or preventing them. (ibid)*. Following the Sunday sermon with its strict words of warning, a baptised member came to Thomas, telling him that he and some others had formed a meeting, separate from the regular Wednesday and Sunday public services, and in those gatherings some of the baptised men:

read and exhorted or preached to the meeting and they seemed disposed to think they must do so at other places, or they should do wrong in the sight of God. (ibid).

Thomas told him that just because they were baptised, they should not think they could preach. They would do wrong, he said, if they were self-appointed. They must not think that they could preach *like the missionaries or even Peter [Pita Vi]*. They were new Christians so what they could do was:

to read a portion of God's Word to those who are less instructed than themselves that when they visited any of the islands of their friends, they might do the same, viz, read, sing and pray with them. (IBID).

Thomas did not want them *imposing themselves upon the people* as preachers. He would have known, and expected, that the time would come when the work of the church in the chapels and schools would depend on those who wished to instruct their fellow countrymen and woman and lead them in worship. And that would be followed, still later, by those who would become Native Assistant Missionaries, and missionaries to other Pacific Island countries. For the present, however, the baptised ones needed to be restricted in what they were allowed to do.

Some months later, Thomas received a note, written by a youth from Tungua, seeking the missionary's approval for what he was doing. The young man:

wrote to know whether or not it was good for him to teach some people to read and also, if I would send them a few Alphabets [a reference to Ko e Motua Lea].

Tungua was an important island, the home of the Tamaha and Thomas responded by sending the young man the resources he requested, and more. He gave him some of the *first books and two others and a little paper for the youth to write upon.* (*Thomas, Journal**, 02/06/1831). Thomas learned from the man who had brought the note, Fulilangi, that the young man was not only enthusiastic but effective. There were at Tungua, Fulilangi said:

about forty persons that are taught to read, that there are about five who are capable of acting as teachers! (ibid, 02/06/1831).

Interestingly, within eighteen months Thomas was given the news that the Tamaha, who was *revered as a god for many years* had turned to God together with *all the people of Tungua.* (*Thomas, Journal**, 12/12/1832). The youth from Tungua with a few books and some writing paper had presumably put his limited resources to good use.

Amazing groundwork was also undertaken during mid-1831, originating from Ha'apai. It was a local initiative involving Taufa'ahau, a group of baptised men from Lifuka, a fleet of 24 canoes and a *Sailing Match* at Vava'u. Taufa'ahau had come to Thomas to tell him that he intended to go to Vava'u, and that he required the baptised men from Lifuka to go with him. Some were not happy to go, but Taufa'ahau gave a command that all the baptised men must go. Thomas did all he could to talk Taufa'ahau out of making the voyage because he was afraid that such an *amusement*, among *idolators*, would mean that the Ha'apai chief and his people would be led *into sin.*

Taufa'ahau, however, could not be moved. As Thomas said:

he is very headstrong. He did not consult with me but sent word to Ulukalala that at such a time he would come. (IBID, 07/03/1831).

Thomas tried to make the best of the situation, providing Taufa'ahau with a letter for Ulukalala, urging the Vava'u Chief to embrace the faith. Thomas also gave Taufa'ahau *a translation of the Book of Jonah* and a copy of *chapters 4 and 10 of Matthew's Gospel and Jonah*, a book about the prophet's adventures at sea, his initial reluctance to preach to unbelievers and his final evangelism of the heathen. Matthew 4 told of Jesus, in the desert, overcoming the temptations of the devil. Matthew 10 included the story of Jesus sending out a group of 'gospel pioneers' to proclaim the coming of the kingdom of God. (*Thomas, Journal**, 26/04/1831). On the eve of sailing Taufa'ahau came to the Mission House to say his farewells. The missionary told his Chief that he was:

sorry they were going but seeing I could not prevent it, I advised him to do all he could towards bringing the King of the place to accept a missionary and turn to the Lord.
(*THOMAS, JOURNAL**, 21/04/1831).

Taufa'ahau sailed for Vava'u with his men, and the outcome of that voyage was remarkable. The *Sailing Match*, opposed by Thomas, was, it seems, not just a regatta, but clearly part of Taufa'ahau's larger plans. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that Taufa'ahau knew what he was doing when he *gave orders that all the baptised people [baptised men] are to go to accompany him to Vava'u*. As it turned out, they would be the best qualified to teach the idolaters some of the basics of the faith. Furthermore, they would be in good hands as Peter Vi was among Taufa'ahau's Ha'apai contingent. The Ha'apai men had been through the training for baptism. Furthermore, they had attended classes preparing them for receiving the Holy Communion. They were Members of Society, meeting in Class, and they were keen to share the faith. (*ibid, 01/04/1831*). In addition, Taufa'ahau and his men had copies of the Alphabet book, the first book off the press at Nuku'alofa, which Thomas had sent to Vava'u after the fleet had sailed, asking Taufa'ahau *to distribute [them] among his people*. (*THOMAS JOURNAL**, 30/04/1831).

When Thomas heard about events at Vava'u he was more than pleased. Summarizing what he had been told he noted that:

While our people were with them, they had no rest night or day ... The Vava'u people laid aside their ordinary work, and said, "Let us learn first to serve God while you are with us, and we can do our work afterwards." One of our people said, "I was four nights and did not sleep, but was talking with the people, reading, praying, and singing." When they

had done with one company, another would come, and thus they were kept employed. (MN 1832, THOMAS JOURNAL, 09/06/1831).

The Ha'apai men, when they returned from Vava'u, were, Thomas said, *all on fire*. (*ibid* 27/04/1831). And the Editors of the Missionary Notices, when they published an account of the Vava'u proceedings, spoke enthusiastically of the work done by the Ha'apai Chief and his baptised men:

The heathen temples and the idol gods of Vava'u are no more! The Chief of the Vava'u Islands, and about one thousand of his people, have embraced the faith of Christ, and, setting fire to their temples, have burned them to the ground, and their gods in them The new converts, both Chief and people, have manifested the value they attach to the Gospel by their zeal for conveying to others the same blessed boon (MN 1832, EDITORIAL COMMENT).

These *new converts*, like John the Baptist, had prepared the way. Ulukalala Thomas said,

has sent to me to send him a teacher, if no Englishman can go he wishes to have a Tonga man and as soon as possible. (THOMAS, JOURNAL, 08/06/1831).*

The work of Taufa'ahau, at Vava'u and of various individuals at Ha'apai and Tongatapu was paving the way for the growth of a large number of schools that were about to appear. And the mass of printed material that would come out of the printing office would make that growth possible.

The arrival of the Press.

The arrival of a press and printer fulfilled the missionaries long held hopes and prayers. During the first half of 1829, Nathaniel Turner could see that a press and a printer were not only desirable but essential for the work of the Mission and he wished that the Committee in London could share his passion:

If the Committee knew the real state of things with us here at present, they would, I am sure, send us a press and a printer immediately. (TURNER, JOURNAL, 09/04/1829).*

Some months later he was still yearning for a press and a printer:

Oh! That we had but a press and some one that could manage it then would these hungry souls soon feed upon green pastures. (TURNER, JOURNAL, 06/06/1829).*

The Committee finally granted Turner's request and an editorial comment in the Missionary Notices of 1832 announced the good news. Reinforcements had been sent to Tonga, they said, and one of the new missionaries was a printer who could *introduce the art of printing*, something that would aid the Mission greatly as there was such a demand for books. The Press, they said, would do away with:

the large and laborious employment to the brethren previously there, who had no other means of furnishing lessons to the numbers who were anxious to be taught, than by their own penmanship.

This new art would mean *that provision is now made for the wider, and we trust the still more effectual preaching of the Gospel. (MN 1832 EDITOR'S COMMENT)*.

William Woon, a 26-year-old printer from Truro, Cornwall, was the much longed for printer. Accepted by the Candidates Committee in February 1830, and, as he told the Committee *offers himself for any part of the world*. The Committee took him at his word and appointed him to Tonga. (*Candidates Committee Minutes**, 24/02/1830). Within twelve months he and his wife set out for the South Seas and arrived in Tonga on the 10th of March 1831. He was excited by his first impressions of their new home:

And O how shall my pen describe the wonders which the Lord hath wrought among this people ... We cannot move any way for several miles, but we hear the people singing the praises of God and engaged in other devotional exercises.
(MN 1832, Woon, 23/03/1831).

He could see that the missionaries had been working under difficulties because they were, he said :

at great pains to get books for the natives. They are nearly all written, which must have cost them much labour and time. The people are now quite elated, as they expect to have printed books soon. When they heard that the printer had arrived, and not the surgeon, they said, "We are glad that the printer is come: the surgeon might do good to our bodies, but the printer will do good to our souls." (ibid).

Woon was clearly encouraged by his reception and although things began well, he was not destined for a lengthy stay in Tonga.

Tongans who had never seen a printing press, were also enthusiastic. They knew about printed books, the ones that had come from Sydney in 1828 and 1830, but they never seen the machine that produced them. Residents of Nuku'alofa had witnessed Turner preparing for the press by building a Printing Office, and a residence for a printer. As Woon noted on his arrival, he was impressed by the preparation: that had already been made:

Mr. Turner had erected a printing-office, and a dwelling-house adjoining, into which wife and I have lately entered; and hope in a few weeks that our printing apparatus will be in operation. (MN 1832, Woon, Nukualofa, Tongataboo, March 23, 1831).

When the press was being assembled, Turner was again involved. Woon told the Committee about the noteworthy occasion:

This has been indeed a memorable day. [04/04/1831] Mr Turner, a carpenter, a smith, and I, set up the printing press sent out by the Committee, for the welfare of this and adjacent islands, and thank the Lord, every part is in good order, and ready for its office. I have also taken out my type &c, and in a few days, I expect to send forth a little work for the natives. May the Lord make it a blessing to this very interesting people. (MN 1832, 25/04/1831).

A few days later the press began its work, and it attracted many curious visitors to view the Mission's latest acquisition. Woon records numerous examples of the reactions as the King and Queen (Josiah and Mary Tupou) and Chiefs and people from all over the island came to see the amazing machine and the pages of printed material it produced. Even heathen chiefs, he said, were curious:

a Great Chief [Fatu] from another part of the Island [Woon said] was much delighted with my proceedings at the press: I have also had the king [Josiah], and Abraham the King's brother, to see the process. Almost every day some stranger comes to see the printing. (MN 1831, WOON 20 APRIL, 1831).

The visit of the Queen, Mary Tupou, also became part of the Church's history when she received a copy of the first book off the Press. Woon recorded the moment:

While engaged at the press, the Queen, Mary, an excellent, well-informed woman, paid me a visit: I gave her a copy of the work alluded to, [The Alphabet] with which she was much pleased and delighted. Several natives were also present, who seemed astonished and confounded at the operation of the press ... There seems a general movement among them to witness this strange thing. In the course of preparation for printing, I have been much amused at their curiosity and shall not soon forget their observations. (MN 1832, WOON, 25/04/1831).

More than once, Josiah Tupou showed his interest in the press and the material it was producing. As Woon observed, several months after the press was in operation:

The King has been up with us this afternoon, Woon informed the Committee in London. Mr Cross read some parts of the newly printed book, with which he is much pleased. May the Lord make it a blessing to thousands. (WOON, JOURNAL, 06/05/1832).

With the setting up of the press Tonga entered a new age. The missionaries could hardly have imagined what was about to happen. As thousands of pages of printed material became available, distributed as little books, the church had resources to put into the hands of willing volunteers who offered to become teachers. Within two years of the advent of the press, from the original few schools, there were now 77, conducted by 552 teachers, catering for nearly 6,000 scholars from Tongatapu to Niuatoputapu! And then, two more years later, there were 152 schools, 1,223 teachers, catering for 7,348 scholars. The literary and social revolution was rushing ahead. Several thousands of people, young and old, were beginning to read and write in their own language for the first time and a new class in society had been created, the village school teacher. Peter Turner's words, when giving thanks to the Committee for the gift of the press, highlighted the value of the amazing piece of machinery. The press, he said, would be *the grand means of diffusing light and knowledge*. (*Minutes and Reports, FIDM, 1834. Vava'u School Report*). A literary and social revolution was certainly under way. Woon's enthusiasm for the work led him to tell the Committee that:

The printing answers well and has been of incalculable service to the inhabitants of this and the surrounding islands and will be the means of spreading the truth in all directions. (IBID, 13/09/1831).

First fruits of the Press: the School Book series.

Woon's prayer, that the press would be a blessing to thousands was becoming a reality. Woon, and later John Hobbs began turning out an impressive number of teaching and learning resources. Firstly, came two books that were designed to teach people to read, then eleven books that were translations of sections of the Scripture and finally three other books, a Catechism, the Hymn Book, and a Tongan version of the Wesleyan Rules of Society.

Book No. 1 was designed to teach people to read. It was entitled *Koe Motua Lea* (*The Alphabet*) and contained the alphabet, numerals, a spelling list, several reading lessons, some prayers and a few hymns. It was just a little four-page publication, a pamphlet rather than a book, and with some minor changes, it was reprinted many times over more than 30 years! Once released it became immediately popular. The edition, May 1831 saw 3,000 copies printed, the second edition, September 1831, 4,000 copies, a third edition, April 1832, 1500, and a fourth edition, May 1833, 3,000 copies. According to Woon, *thousands have learned to read by perusing its pages.* (*Woon, Journal, 05/12/1831, 12/12/1831, 20/04/1832, 16/05/1833*). He was proud to be able to report, in December 1832, that, since his arrival in March 1831 he had printed almost 30,000 books! (*IBID, 10/12/1832*).

Koe Motua Lea, the basic learning and teaching tool, did not include translations of Scripture but dealt with basic religious teachings. An example can be seen in its first reading lesson:

Koe mea lelei ae tohi tabu; he koe finagia oe Otua; koe mea lelei ia ke tau lau Oku ou holi keu boto. Oku kovi ae loto v Keu fai kihe fekau lelei. Koe Eiki la Jihova; keu tauhi a ene afio. Teu alu moe kakai lotu: koe mea lelei ae lotu. O kovi ae fakabikobiko. Keu tokaga ke fai le Bea teu tui kihe fekau ae Eiki. Ke tau tala kihe Otua, mo fai ki hono finagalo ofa; ko e tau agalelei ia. Ke tau nonofo feofoofa mo holi ke tau maonioni.

(Reading Lesson 1, *Koe Motua Lea*, 1831, p.3)

The Bible is a good thing; it is the will of God; it is a good thing for us to read. I desire to be wise. The foolish heart/mind is bad. I will obey the good message. Jehovah is a great Lord/ God; I will be faithful to his majesty/greatness. I will only go with lotu/Christian people; the lotu/Christianity is a good thing. Laziness is a bad thing. I will pay attention to do good, and I shall believe the Lord's message. We shall believe and obey the Lord and attend to his loving will; It is a good fight. We will live in friendship/fellowship and desire to be righteous/holy. (TRANSLATION BY GEORGE LAVAKA).

The other five lessons focussed on such topics as *Jehovah the merciful Lord* and *Jesus Christ the great Lord of Heaven and Earth*.

Book 2, *Ko e Tohi-Ako*, ('The School Book) contained similar religious teachings. Again, the lessons were not translations from the Bible, but a series of readings about basic Christian beliefs. There were fourteen lessons with headings such as *Koe tohi oe Otua mooni*, [The Book of the true God]; *Koe gaohi oe uluaki tagata*, [Creation of the first man]. The book also contained the names of the days of the week, months of the year, punctuation marks, Roman numerals 1-900,000, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, opening and closing prayers for worship and prayers before and after meals.

A second category of books then followed, eleven in number, Books 3, 5-9, 12-16). They provided translations of chapters of Scripture from Genesis, 1 Samuel, Psalms, Isaiah, the Gospels of Matthew, Luke and John, and the epistles of Romans and Corinthians. Together with Books 1 and 2, these publications formed the basic resources for worship, personal use and formed the basis of the school curriculum.

A third category of books included a Hymnbook, Wesleyan Rules of Society (Book 10) and the Conference Catechism (Book 11).

The mission printer Woon, and later John Hobbs (1832-1837), John Spinney (1836-18339), William Brooks (1836-1840), George Kevern (1840-1846), Walter Davis (1849-1856, 1861-1866) and Thomas Adams (1846-1861) have been given the bulk of the credit for the amazing amount of printing work that was done. However, the stream of material flowing from the press was not the work of these missionary printers alone. Woon had helpers who, in the story of the print revolution, have remained largely unrecognised. In the early years of the printing office, two helpers assisted him. History records only their baptismal names, but their work was given some credit and acknowledgement:

Much of my time of late [Woon said] has been spent in superintending the printing of No.6 book. Two native teachers, Noah and John, are employed in working them off; and they print very well. This is a great relief to me, espe-

cially in such hot weather. (MN 1833, WOON, JOURNAL, 27/12/1832).

Other pioneer assistant printers helped missionary printers over the years but for the most part they remain nameless. Printer William Brooks certainly appreciated their work: when he told the Committee in London that:

The natives that I employ more generally are improving in their acquaintance with the art and two or three are very clever at the Press work. They have minds capable of acquiring anything and bye and bye they will, I have no doubt, have the Printing and Binding done altogether themselves.
(Letters and Journals Brooks, 24/01/1840.*

Brooks's hopeful prediction came true a few years later. Thomas Adams provides some appreciative comments about it when writing concerning the significant contribution made by unnamed printing office workers, especially in relation to the production of the New Testament. In correspondence with the Secretaries in 1858 he expected that the entire New Testament would be printed by December 1859 (which it was) and then complimented the ones who would be achieving this momentous task:

The work of the Printing Office is now carried on by Natives only and we have never before succeeded so well as at the present. (LETTERS AND JOURNALS ADAMS TO SECRETARIES 01/12/1858).*

King George maintained a keen interest in the Printing Office and when it was burnt down by an arsonist in 1848 (by a young man who *wanted to see a great blaze*) he judged the case himself and sentenced the offender *into the j hands of one of the great chiefs as a slave to the termination of his natural life.* (LETTERS AND JOURNALS* DAVIS TO SECRETARIES, 05/07/1848).

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Singing a new song: the evolution of the Hymn Book

The Tongan Hymn Book was one of the early publications issued by the Mission's press. Within just four months of its arrival a sixty-four page a hymnbook was printed. Since that time the Tongan Hymnbook has been revised, enlarged and reprinted many times with the most recent being the notation edition of 2019.

Hymn singing began slowly at Hihifo. Thomas was continually frustrated that he was not learning the language quickly enough. It was almost eighteen months before translating hymns and teaching English tunes became a feature of school lessons and public worship.

During February April 1828 Thomas's journal began to record his work on hymns:

Spent a little time in singing a few hymns in the native language with our boys ... doing a little each day in teaching the people and children to read and sing ... encouraged in the language this week; also, our boys get on very well both in their reading and singing. (THOMAS JOURNAL 17/02/1828; 23/02/1828; 26/04/1828).

Nathaniel Turner's experience was quite different. On arrival in Tonga in November 1827 he quickly composed several hymns. (*Inwards Correspondence, Letters and Journals*# *Turner Journal 02/12/1827*). His first hymns were written out in manuscript and later appeared on the printed page in *First Lessons* printed in Sydney in 1828. An example of their simple style can be seen in the first verse of the sixth hymn in *First Lessons*:

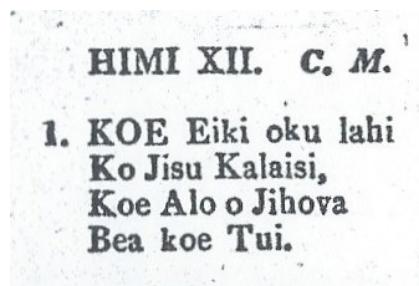
HIMINI 6. (6 lines 8's)

Manako lahi Jihova
Faka moui tautolu,
Koia ne omai Jisus
Ono Foha ki Mamani,
Faka boto-loto vale,
Faka mama loto bouli.

*Jehovah greatly desires to save us
Therefore he gave his son Jesus to the world
Making wise the foolish mind
Enlightening the mind that is dark.*
*(First Lessons in the language of Tongataboo.
Sydney. 1828. p24)*

First Lessons was followed by *A First Book 1830*, also printed in Sydney. The 80-page publication included 12 hymns, doubling the number of printed hymns available for use in school, chapel and family prayers. (A FIRST BOOK pp 72-80).

The new hymns of 1830 were like those that appeared in 1828 as a verse from Hymn 12 indicates:



Great is the Lord

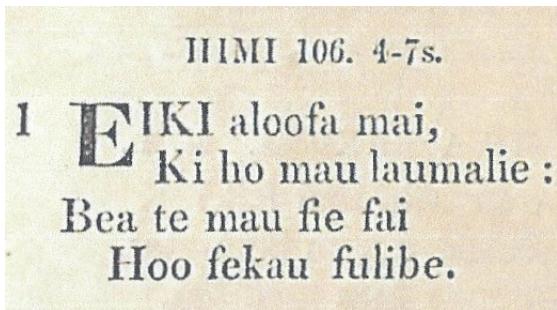
Jesus Christ

Son of Jehovah

the King.

(A First Book in the Language of Tongataboo. Sydney. 1830).

An important step forward was taken the next year (1831) with the printing of the first Tongan Hymn Book on the mission press in Nuku'alofa. It was called *Koe Tohi Hiva* (The Book of Songs) and contained 64 pages and 73 hymns. (*Minutes and Reports* FIDM 1833*). 1500 copies were printed (*Woon, 25/06/1831*). In July 1838 a major enlargement of the 1831 edition was printed on the Mission Press at Vava'u by William Brooks. The revised Hymnbook of 96 pages contained 106 hymns. Again, the language was simple. Hymn 106 begins:



*Lord grant us your Grace
to our spirit
inspiring us to fulfill
all your commands.*

(Koe Gaabi Himi, Mission Press. Vava'u. July. 1838. (TRANSLATION BY REV. TEVITA FINAU)

A few years later the District Meeting of 1844 decided to create a supplement to the 1838 edition and each of the missionaries was asked to prepare hymns for inclusion. For a number of reasons the 1844 resolution took nearly four years to be completed: (Brooks the printer became ill, shipments of paper were delayed, and the Printing Office was burned down). Finally, the 1849 edition appeared containing an additional 83 hymns making 189 in total. The language was still fairly simple :

HIMI 189. M. N.
1 Oku i mama ni
Ae gaue kovi,
Koe tau ae tevolo
Ki ho tau Huhui

In this world,

There is evil at work,

The warfare of the devil

Against our Redeemer.

(*KOE GAAHI HIMI, NELAFU. 1849.*)

The next enlargement of the hymnbook was published in 1861 and included two title pages, one in English and the other in Tongan. The English title page is entitled *Hymns, Catechisms and Prayers etc.* The Tongan title page is more descriptive and indicates that the book includes Hymns, Catechisms, the Service of Morning Prayer and services for Holy Communion, Marriage and Funerals. The District Meeting had asked Thomas to produce it. He was in retirement in England by then following almost 30 years of service in Tonga.

The words and ideas expressed in the hymns were part of a new vocabulary that had to be learned and understood. Even more difficult it would seem were the new English tunes, so different to traditional Tongan music. Some of the tunes new to Tonga but well known in England, were *Old Hundred, Blow ye Trumpets Blow, Voice of Free Grace, Devizes, Irish, Portugal, Sherwood, Job, and New.* Thomas was pleased with the way the members of the congregation were handling the new music. As he noted in a letter to the Committee:

Some few can sing several of our tunes and many are delighted with them. We have more than forty native hymns so that we can sing the praises of our Lord and God in the Tongan language. (MN 1829, Thomas to Secretaries 22/09/1828).

His experience with teaching the new music was not always positive. One Sunday he had to *reprove the boys* for laughing while singing and *not keeping the time* and for moving around during *the sacred exercise.* (*THOMAS JOURNAL** 09/06/1829).

In Nuku'alofa, at the opening of the New Chapel on Mount Zion in 1830 the printer Woon was impressed by the singing which was conducted by Thomas Wright (Lawry's old servant) who had succeeded in teaching them several of our congregational tunes. (*MN 1832 Woon to Secretaries 23/03/1831*). New hymns were frequently being translated and new tunes introduced. Francis Wilson, the Superintendent of the Native Training Institution in Vava'u went on an excursion among some of the smaller islands in 1842 (Taunga, Ovaka, Hunga, Nuapapu, and Falevai). While at Falevai, he said:

Three young men, who were singers in the chapel came and wished me to teach them a new tune. (MN 1843, WILSON JOURNAL, 20/09/1842).

A few hymns continued through the years, from one hymnbook to another. Small changes were made to some, but others were given major modifications. An example of one hymn that has survived the 200 years is number 265 in the present Hymn Book *Na'e pekia 'a Sisu* (The death of Jesus). That hymn began with five verses in 1830 and 1831, was reduced to four verses in 1838, and back to five verses in 1849. When Thomas's Hymnbook of 1861 was published it included an appendix of about a hundred hymns that he said contained some old favourites. It included *Na'e pekia 'a Jisu* as hymn 265 but with six verses. Those six verses, unchanged, have been included in successive reprintings of the hymnbook including in the 2019 *Tu'ungafasi* musical notation edition.

1830 version of verse 1

HIMI VII. S. M.

1. NAE mate Jisu
Nae kalusifai,
I he hia a tautolu
Ke tau moui mai.

A First Book i the language of Tongataboo Himi VII
Present day version of verse 1

I NAE peka a Sisn,
I he kalaufai;
I he hia, atauolu;
Ke tau mo'uli ai.

*Jesus died,
crucified for our sins
to save us.*

(*Ko e Tohi Himi* 1967 & *Ko e Tohi Himi* 2019 HYMN)

The hymn book in use today includes Thomas's version of 1861. Hymns 1-360 are a reproduction of Thomas's 1861 collection. The hundred old favourites are numbered 246 to 360 under the same heading that Thomas used, namely *Ko e Ngaahi Toenga Himi* (The Remainder of the Hymns).

Thirty-seven missionaries served in Tonga during the years 1826 to 1866 when the hymnbook was evolving. How many of them composed hymns is not clear. Only two have their names attached to hymns during the time. Nathaniel Turner's name appears on the 1828 publication of *First Lessons* which included 6 hymns and John Thomas is credited on the title pages of the 1861 edition as the author.

With the arrival of James Egan Moulton in 1865 hymn writing entered a new and grander style. Nevertheless, in 1884 when he published *The Hymn Book of the Wesleyan Church in Tonga* it included all 360 of Thomas's 1861 collection under the heading *Ko e Gaahi himi eni na'e fa'u 'e Misa Tomasi* (Hymns compiled by Mr Thomas).

Wesleyan Rules of Society

On 28 February 1832 a crucial part of Wesleyan Church organisation was introduced to Church members in printed form. More than 2,000 copies of John Wesley's *Rules of Society* of 1743 were published in a Tongan translation. When it was reprinted in 1834 it was issued as Book No.10 bearing the title *Ko e Ako-naki eni ki he Kakai Lotu Fehui* (Instructions for Church Members). It was not intended as a school book but was designed to regulate the behaviour of church members, It could in fact be called the Wesleyan Church's Code of Laws.

The Rules set down the way in which the Christian Faith was to be expressed and was summed up in three principles: *Do No Harm, Do Good, and Observe the Ordinances of God* (*Worship, Holy Communion, Bible study, Private and Family Prayer*). The Rules were to be put into the hands of all those who were accepted as full members of the church. The Rules had been used by Thomas, Cross and Nathaniel Turner in manuscript form and read to the people for several years before they were available in printed form. After a baptismal service in Nuku'alofa in 1829 when 31 women received the sacrament Thomas noted that:

Brother Cross read the Rules of Society to them which have been prepared for them and made some enlargements by way of explaining them. (THOMAS, JOURNAL 20/12/1829).*

At Lifuka in September 1831 Thomas used the Rules when conducting an afternoon service. There was a very large congregation present, and he *read and explained the Rules of Society*. Following the service he held a Class Meeting *in which the Chief [Taufa'ahau] meets*. At the close of the Class meeting Taufa'ahau asked to borrow the (*handwritten*) copy of the rules to *tread it*, obviously wanting to familiarise himself with the Church Rules. Three days later Taufa'ahau decided that he would put the rules into operation. The Chief made it known that he was going to beat two men *for idleness*. Wesley's Rules said to avoid *softness and needless self-indulgence* which the missionaries translated as *oua naa nau nofo fak-abikobiko* (don't be lazy). Thomas was more than a little concerned when he heard of the King's intentions. He went to see his Chief and *interceded* for the men saying he would *reprove them sharply and if they did not leave off their sin ... would put them out of Society*. Thomas was emphasising Wesley's Rule that said discipline was a three-stage process: rebuke the offenders, bear with them for a season, and then if no change in behaviour was made, suspend membership of the church. The Chief *harkened* to what the missionary said, and Thomas went

home thankful that he was able to be of some use to the poor men. (*THOMAS, JOURNAL** 24/09/1831).

Once the Rules were printed all members of Society were to be given a copy. Reprints of the Rules were made from time to time. The initial printing in 1832 was 2500 copies. (*Thomas, Tongatapu or the Friendly Islands** p.890). This was followed by 5,000 in 1834, (*Minutes and Reports, FIDM* 01/06/1834) and 10,000 in 1842 (*MINUTES AND REPORTS* FIDM 1842*).

Ko e Akonaki (the Instructions) provided a unique Tongan language version of Wesley's Rules of Society. First of all, the Rules listed the responsibilities of Class Leaders which included meeting with each member at least once a week to advise, comfort or exhort them; meet with the minister once a week to inform the Minister of any who were sick or who were not keeping to the rules. This section simply followed Wesley's text.

The Rules were then organised under three headings, again following Wesley:

Do No Harm, *avoiding evil in every kind*

Do Good of every possible sort to all people

Attend upon all the ordinances of God (Public Worship, Family and private prayer, study of the Scriptures, Fasting)

Do No Harm listed behaviours, *evils to be avoided*, which included taking the Lord's name in vain, breaking the Sabbath, dishonest buying and selling, drunkenness, fighting, quarrelling, speaking evil of Magistrates or Ministers, singing songs which do not tend to the knowledge or love of God. Wesley's rules also said that church members were to avoid such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Wesley's Rules did not give examples of *diversions* and did not give a long list of *evils to be avoided*. The Tongan translation, however, gave quite a list relating to long held cultural practices. Members were not to:

fai ae tagifetuki (beat the face with the fist during mourning), *pe febubi* (burn the cheek bone), *be ae tekefua* (shave the head during mourning), *be nima tabu* (taboo on a person's hands who touched a dead body), *be maumaui ae jino* (cut the body), *ke oua naa nau fai butu fakatevelo* (conduct devilish [heathen] funerals), *be tatatau* (tattoo), *be tono fefine*, *be tono tagata* (commit adultery), *be feauaki* (fornicate), *be jinifu* (practice polygamy), *bea oua naa nau mavae ae unoho kuo fakamau* (separate from a lawful wife), *bea oua naa nau fakatau ae kaiga*, *be foaki* (sell or give away relatives), *Ke oua naa foaki ke fakanonfo* (chiefly wife providing a second wife to her husband), *be fai fakabunuga* (compel a girl to marry against her will), *Ke oua naa fai ae jika* (competitive Javelin or dart games), *be ae faiva aoga kovi* (play evil games), *be ae fakatau kuli*, *be ae fakatau moa* (dog and cock fighting), *Bea oua naa nau fonoga noabe*, *be folau noabe* (journey or voyage without reason), *be nofo*

fakabikobiko (*live a lazy life*). *Ke oua naa nau ai ae vala fakalaukau* (*wear showy clothes*), *Ke oua naa fai ae mee?*, *moe ula* (*traditional dances*), *be ae mea fakamama, be oku kovi kotoabe ki ho tau Eiki, ko Jisu Kalaisi* (*OR DO WORLDLY THINGS FOR THEY ARE EVIL IN THE SIGHT OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST*).

(*Ko e Akonaki pp.2-3. Translation by George Lavaka*).

Doing Good, Wesley said, was also required of all members, as far as possible. They were to do good by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and visiting those who are sick or in prison. The Tongan version translated these requirements but did not include prison. Instead, it added *ofa kihe kakai kotoabe.* (*to be kind to all people*). Wesley's Rules also urged members to do good to everyone whom they had contact with by *instructing, reproving or exhorting them*. The Tongan version said *Ke ako kihe kakai vale, mo valoki ae kakai angahala, mo ahiahi ke au aoga ki he kakai kotoabe.* (*teach the ignorant and rebuke the evil doers and try to be useful to all people.*).

Wesley's final paragraph of the Rules takes up the matter of discipline, establishing a penalty for those who continually break the Rules:

We will admonish him of the error of his ways, and will bear with him for a season; but then, if he repent not, he hath no more place among us. (JOHN WESLEY & CHARLES WESLEY 1743, RULES OF THE SOCIETY OF THE PEOPLE CALLED METHODIST).

The Tongan translation reads:

Bea kabau e ikai fakatomala, e ikai nofo mo kimautolu: ka e tuku age ia; bea to kiate ia a hono kovi. (IF HE SHOULD NOT REPENT, HE SHOULD NOT LIVE WITH US. LEAVE HIM BE AND HIS EVIL WILL FALL UPON HIM).

This direction in the Rules was what was commonly called putting a Church member *out of Society*, a penalty that was in most cases a matter of considerable shame and humiliation. The penalty was usually exercised in three stages as Wesley's Rules required. First there were warnings and if there was no change, exclusion.

Early examples of members being disciplined involved two women who had quarrelled which led to physical violence. The woman who struck her opponent with *a very large stick* was disciplined. *I must put her out of Society*, Thomas said, as *a warning to others* (*Thomas, Journal, 22/08/1829*). During a Quarterly meeting in October 1831 in Lifuka many who had been *on trial* were received into full membership, but some were *put away having been overcome by sin.* (*Thomas Journal**

10-15/10/1831). At about the same time Taufa'ahau and Thomas exchanged several notes about a traditional practice that had been specifically banned in the Rules. The Chief had written a note to Thomas asking if he had done right in giving a young woman to be the wife of one of his men. When Thomas enquired about the matter, he discovered that the girl had offended the Chief and he, *by way of punishment* was going to give her to one of his men as a wife. Thomas said that it was not a sin to beat her, but he must not deal with her *according to their previous wicked practices*. (Thomas was obviously referring to *fakapunga* in the Rules). After three notes passed between the Missionary and the Chief, Taufa'ahau came to speak with Thomas face to face. The result was that *the Chief yielded but did not seem pleased.* (*THOMAS, JOURNAL**, *17/10/1831*).

An illustration of the effect of penalties for breaking Wesleyan rules can be seen following a Quarterly Meeting in Vava'u in 1836. When Thomas met with the Local Preachers there were no cases of immorality to deal with, but several preachers were removed from the lists *for some minor matter*. They were reproved but not put out of Society and felt the penalty severely. As Thomas noted:

One or two who were removed from the lists were deeply affected as they left the chapel which was painful to witness.
(*THOMAS, JOURNAL** *25/06/1836*).

Referring to the incident later he said that *some of those who were suspended wept aloud as they returned from the Chapel.* (*IBID 26/06/1836*).

Through the Methodist Rules of Society, Church members were introduced, firstly to a verbal form of the Rules and then later, following the arrival of the press, to a printed code (*The Rules of Society*) which was widely distributed. The Wesleyan Rules prepared the way for Taufa'ahau a short time later, to ask the missionaries to prepare a government Code of Laws for him. (*MN 1840*) The Code of Vava'u of 1839 was the result and a number of the Rules of Society found their way into Taufa'ahau's Code.

Expansion of Schools and Demand Teachers

Before the advent of the press the missionaries had been the school teachers. John and Sarah Thomas in 1826 conducted the first Wesleyan School at Hihifo. And when the Turner and Cross families arrived in November 1827 and set up at Nuku’alofa, they were the teachers in the schools there. As scholar numbers increased some of the more able students had become assistant teachers. There was also some teaching taking place outside the classrooms. The Thomas’s in Ha’apai found that, as well as the two schools they were conducting in Lifuka, some young scholars were teaching their parents to read and write. Other initiatives by young people were also taking place. A young girl from Vava’u who was living in Ha’apai, also wanted to share what she had learned. She attended public worship and school in Lifuka and had learned to read. She came to Thomas to beg a book (probably a manuscript book) to send to her mother in Vava’u who she discovered, had turned to the Lord. Thomas was particularly pleased with this request:

because the parent is the great Halaevalu who pleaded our cause when we were in trouble at Hihifo. She, her husband and family have now turned from idols to serve the living God. (*THOMAS, JOURNAL, 18/06/1831*).

Writing about the role of some other children in Ha’apai Thomas said that two girls had been sitting at the Mission House gate on the day when books were given out waiting for the distribution to begin. Once they had received their prize, they ran home *like those who rejoice when they have found great spoil.* (*Thomas, Tongatapu or the Friendly Islands**, p.658). The District meeting Report of 1834 also noted that some enthusiastic children began teaching members of their community who were prevented from attending a school because of old age, being *on the very verge of the grave.* The Mission responded by putting in an order for a large number of spectacles! (*INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE*FIDM 1834*).

Also, at Lifuka, a man who was afflicted with leprosy, isolated because of his disease, was still keen to learn and be part of the Church community. A young Class Leader took on some one-to-one teaching with the afflicted man. Watkin reported that the isolated sufferer was:

much affected by his appearance. He of necessity lives alone, none daring to go very near to him. He earnestly desired to

meet in Class but this could not be permitted, the natives shudder at the idea of the infection. One of our Class Leaders (Moses by name) a very zealous young man, visits and instructs him occasionally, though self-preservation compels him to sit at a distance. (MN 1834. WATKIN TO SECRETARIES, 30/06/1832).

The result of the young man's teaching was that the afflicted man *desired to be baptised.*

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The rapid expansion of schools in Vava'u, Ha'apai and to a lesser extent, Tongatapu, was a direct result of the arrival of the press. In a very short time thousands of pages of printed material became available. The Rev John Williams of the London Missionary Society who visited Tonga in November 1832 noted in his Journal that since the arrival of the mission printer, William Woon, 29,100 copies of small books containing over 4,000,000 pages had been produced! (*Moyle, Samoan Journals of John Williams, p.209*). The incredible output from the press continued as the District Minutes of 1834 indicate. That year saw *a total of about 50,000 books issued from the press.* Thomas could rightly claim this as a record as there were :

*many more books as was ever printed in any one year yet:
10,000 Catechisms, 5,000 copies each of Isaiah, 1 Samuel, the
Psalms and Rules of Society and 15,000 of Book 1, the
Alphabet. (MINUTES AND REPORTS* FIDM PRINTING
REPORT, II/06/1834).*

This amazing amount of literature led to a significant change in the way the missionaries were involved with the schools. Tongan literature was being put into the hands of the people and teachers were needed to help them learn to read it. The missionaries could not continue as the only teachers. An army of teachers had to be recruited as dozens of schools were springing up across the group. The missionaries had already been employing the more advanced pupils as teachers at the schools in Nuku'alofa and Lifuka. At the time the press arrived in 1831 there were four schools in Tonga, a Male and Female school in Nuku'alofa and similarly a Male and Female school in Lifuka. The combined number of students on the roll at the time was 490 students. Within less than five years there were 135 schools in the Friendly Islands, conducted by 1,055 teachers providing instruction for 7,562 students!. (*IBID, SEE ANNUAL SCHOOLS REPORT, 1833 TO 1836*).

As the number of schools began to grow the missionaries used stirring language to describe what they were witnessing. The Ha'apai Station report spoke of:

The rapidity with which the work progresses in the Friendly Islands is exhilarating to the labourers who toil in the field
(MINUTES AND REPORTS FIDM HA'APAI REPORT, 1833).*

Similarly, Peter Turner at Vava'u reported enthusiastically about the amazing changes that were taking place:

It must be confessed that the work of God in this place has proceeded since its commencement with a rapidity that has far surpassed the most sanguine expectations of those who have the honour to be employed in it. We may say 'What hath God wrought' in the two last years ... Christianity has taken an extensive spread, and there is not a place on this island where it has not been felt and seen by many... Relying on the strength and wisdom of God, we hope to go on in this glorious work, the instruction of immortal souls in those things which make for their eternal peace. (MINUTES AND REPORTS*, FIDM, VAVA'U REPORT, 1833).

It must be said that Thomas, at the Tongatapu Station, was not so enthusiastic about things there. He spoke of it being a year of *many trials, some painful conflicts*, nevertheless the progress of the *truth of God, although not very rapid*, yet there was *a steady progress in every part of the island.* (*ibid, FIDM, Tongatapu Station, 1833*). Admittedly there was political unrest in Tongatapu (which lasted till 1852), and schools could not be easily established and maintained in an atmosphere of conflict and uncertainty.

Teacher training

No system of formal teacher training existed at the beginning of the rapid expansion of schools. Missionaries appointed individuals whom they regarded as suitable. (*MN, 1833, 16/06/1832*). However, although Peter Turner said that they were sent out with *nothing from us but books, written and printed*, they did have something more. They had the experience of public worship on Wednesdays and Sundays, school classes, and sessions to prepare them for Baptism and Holy Communion. And in addition, there were the Love Feasts, Class Meetings, Rules of Society, Prayer meetings and Local Preacher teaching sessions, all of which were part of the Methodist system. This was their teacher training.

Charles Tucker at Ha'apai explains how he coped with the demands of an expanding education 'system' in Ha'apai and the need to encourage support for the teachers. It was impossible for him to visit all the places in Ha'apai where there were schools. So he arranged for the teachers to come to him at Lifuka to receive some teaching and encouragement.

I have thought that my time is more usefully employed in remaining stationary and give advice and direction to the Preachers and Leaders on the various islands than if I were occasionally to visit themit cannot be otherwise while there is but one missionary on the Station. (MINUTES AND REPORTS FIDM, MINUTES 1835).*

Justifying his decision to remain *stationary*, Tucker went on to say that:

The assistance afforded by native agency here is great. This is a cause for gratitude to God who has raised up so many efficient labourers in this distant part of his vineyard and under the direction of a few missionaries scattered here and there, they will under God be increasingly useful and help in carrying the Gospel of Salvation to many remote islands. (IBID).

Thomas felt a little guilty that he could not give more time to the schools but felt some reason by selecting teachers whom he believed would carry out teaching duties effectively. And he had genuine appreciation of those who rose to the occasion:

I have in a general way attended to the male school at Neiafu four mornings in every week for the purpose of mending pens and writing copies for those who are learning to write. I regret to say, that I have found it utterly impossible to give any attention to the schools, any more than to see that each school has proper teachers and that the people are regularly taught ... the schools have been attended to by the natives, much to the credit of the native teachers. I believe hundreds who know not how to read, have been taught, and others who read very badly have learned to read well, and a mighty thirst for instruction is created in many. To God be the praise. (MINUTES AND REPORTS VAVA'U SCHOOL REPORT, 1835).*

Thomas's system for selecting teachers was to gather a group of interested Local Preachers and evaluate their potential as teachers. His method was quite basic. He would:

*hear the experiences of those who think they are called as teachers I spoke to them closely and then heard them give their sentiment. Upon the whole I felt pleased and although many of them are defective as to their knowledge of the things of God, yet I believe they are mostly sincere and some of them will probably be engaged in trying to help forward the work of the Lord. Upward of forty had their names taken down. (THOMAS, JOURNAL *12/09/1835).*

Teachers who were selected and appointed to conduct schools were still learning themselves, as Thomas noted in a Tonga Station report in 1836:

Our schools such as they are, are well attended and regularly conducted, singing and prayer usually commence and close every school service. The scriptures are the book principally read ... our people are fond of reading. Our teachers who are in some part scholars too, are generally diligent in attention to school duty and discipline. The Conference Catechisms are in almost daily use...A considerable number have learned to write, and I am trying to improve some of the teachers and others in this important area. (MINUTES AND REPORTS FIDM TONGA STATION SCHOOL REPORT 1836).*

At Niuatoputapu, a distance of just on 600 kms from the main Mission Station at Nuku'alofa, and 300 kms from the Mission at Neiafu, was left very much to

their own devices. Their Chief came to Vava'u and asked for books, and the missionaries responded to his requests by sending a teacher where *many persons are now meeting in society and are expecting a missionary to visit them.* (*MINUTES AND REPORTS* FIDM 1833, 25/11/1833*).

Taufa'ahau added his voice and influence to recruitment and appointment of teachers. The Missionary Notices of 1834 published comments which illustrate his interest:

Our Chief still deserves the title 'Champion of the Faith' in these realms. He yesterday assembled the Teachers in consequence of our having had some difficulty in procuring Teachers for two places, exhorted them against supineness, [laziness, disinterest] and told them that the conduct of some of them was like allowing their wisdom to sleep. Some stood reproved, and the zealots had their zeal fired afresh. (MN, 1832, WATKIN'S JOURNAL, 01/06/1832.)

Perhaps the missionaries had difficulty filling some appointments at this early stage because the teachers were not paid an allowance or a wage for their work. They were in effect volunteers. As Peter Turner's report to the district meeting of 1833 indicates:

We have fixed Native Teachers in every place where there are schools, to conduct them and lead the classes. This they do without remuneration. We endeavour to convince them that it is their duty to do all they can for him who has done so much for us. (Minutes and Reports FIDM 1833 School Report Vava'u).*

The zeal of some of the Ha'apai Local Preachers and Leaders was clearly demonstrated when they began an experiment, the *first enterprise of this kind*, by making visits to islands where there were no schools. The experiment was a local initiative, and the preachers *were delighted with the work*. Importantly the missionaries added their approval and praise, noting that one of the visitors *preached eight times, at four different Islands others of them four times*. As Watkin was to report:

Thus, the seed is scattered in places previously unvisited, and light is springing up in the darkness. (MN 1834, Watkin to Secretaries 06/08/1832).

Teachers' Resources

School facilities were basic. A building was sometimes provided but more often than not the chapel served for worship and for teaching. After the great revival in July 1834 there was a move across the group to build specific schoolhouses. In Vava'u and possibly in Ha'apai and Tongatapu, building chapels and school houses became a competition. The Vava'u school report to the District Meeting in 1835 highlighted the competitiveness:

The people have built themselves handsome chapels and schools ... they seem to contend with each other, which should erect the best houses. (MINUTES AND REPORTS VAVA'U SCHOOL REPORT, DISTRICT MEETING 02/01/1835).*

The curriculum was basic. Apart from the Alphabet (*Ko e Motua Lea*) an increasing number of portions of the scripture were used as teaching resources. The annual school report for Tongatapu for 1835-6 indicated that:

The scriptures are the books principally read, and it is a matter of gratification that we are getting more and more of the Sacred Records into the hands of the people. (MINUTES AND REPORTS, FIDM TONGA SCHOOL REPORT 30/09/1836).*

Among the 30,000 books that Woon was pleased to have printed just eighteen months after his arrival were chapters from Genesis, Luke, John, Romans and Corinthians. (Books numbered 3, 5 and 6). Just a year or so later eight more books of scripture had been printed with chapters from Psalms, 1 Samuel, Isaiah, Matthew, and John. (Books 7-9, and 11-16). And as Turner and Cargill had said:

*Whenever a new book comes out all are wishful to procure it. We have still cause to be thankful for the press sent out. This will be a great means of diffusing light and knowledge in these and other islands in years to come. (MINUTES AND REPORTS*FIDM MINUTES, 11 JUNE 1834).*

Thomas at Vava'u praised the students who had *a thirst for instruction* and who had books to help satisfy that thirst:

I believe hundreds who knew not how to read, have been taught, and others who read very badly have learned to read well, and a mighty thirst for instruction is created in many. To God be all the praise. All sit upon the floor of the school and each has a book in his hand, old and young, rich and poor, chief and people all appear one in the Lord and are found reading in the book and enquiring after its meaning.
(THOMAS VAVA'U SCHOOL REPORT, 1835).

Thomas's comment that each student has a book in his hand may refer to any one of the many twelve page books of Scripture that had already been printed. However, it was not uncommon for people to bind the small books together probably for safekeeping and convenience making one sizeable volume. Charles Tucker noted this in his report to the 1835 District Meeting:

Many of the natives collect a complete set of all which have been printed [there were sixteen by 1835] and sew them together, which when done, they prize as their choicest treasure and generally take their library with them when they go on a voyage or journey. (MINUTES AND REPORTS, HA'APAI SCHOOL REPORT 1836).*

The individual books, providing chapters of Scripture, Rules of Society and the Hymn Book, had also become increasingly valuable to the missionaries, not only as teaching resources but *as an article for bartering*. A School Report for 1836 stressed that :

The native books are in great request on this station and are becoming increasingly valuable to us as an article for bartering and very much lessens our expenditure of other trade. (MINUTES AND REPORTS, FIDM HA'APAI SCHOOL REPORT 1836).*

Assessing Teachers and managing the schools.

Missionary assessments of teachers ranged from passing comments to very generous appreciation. Peter Turner made a brief reference to a teacher he had appointed to *one of the most distant islands called Fotuha'a* simply saying *I hear he is doing well.* (*Turner, Journal**, 02/04/1833). On other occasions the missionaries spoke generously of the teachers and their work. Turner and Cargill reported that:

They are zealous and unswerving not fearing the face of men or devils in the performance of duty ... We cannot say more than that they are in every respect what we wish them to be. (MINUTES AND REPORTS VAVA'U STATION REPORT 1834).*

Chairman Thomas, from Tongatapu, always cautious, felt that the Vava'u missionaries were writing *too strongly* about their Tongan co-workers!

Tucker, at Ha'apai where there were schools on eleven of the eighteen inhabited islands of the group, placed on the record some glowing words of appreciation for the teachers. He felt he needed to *bear his testimony* to their *piety, talents, simplicity, and usefulness.* (*MINUTES AND REPORTS* FIDM HA'APAI SCHOOL; REPORT 1835*).

John Waterhouse's visits to Tonga in 1840 and 1841 came at a critical time. During his first visit in 1840 he had taken what he called *a bird's eye view* of the Friendly Islands Mission and was convinced that it would be:

Vastly important as I shall be so much better qualified to meet the missionaries in their several districts. I have conversed freely with most of them ... so that there are few subjects in the working of the system with which I am unacquainted. (MN 1840 WATERHOUSE TO SECRETARIES 08/09/1840).

He went on to say how impressed he was that *the Gospel has had a wonderful effect* in the Friendly Islands and that there were:

many truly pious persons and some of the native teachers are exceedingly interesting in person, mind, religion and manners. (IBID).

Presumably during his conversations with the Chairman John Thomas he would have been given some of the Missions impressive statistics, relative to churches and schools from Eua in the south to Niuatoputapu in the North, showing that there were 8,248 church members, 154 schools, 1,448 teachers and 9,244 scholars (male, female, adult, youth and children) attending the schools! (*MINUTES AND REPORTS* FRIENDLY ISLANDS DISTRICT MEETING 23/03/1841*).

Such an extensive system Waterhouse could see needed some organisational and administrative improvements and on his return visit, a year later, he chaired the District Meeting where a Native Training Institution was established, (See Chapter 10 for details). A set of General Rules and Regulations for Schools was also approved and a Translation Committee to supervise work on translating the Bible was set up. (ibid). In reference to the schools, Waterhouse could see that some rules were needed to support the handful of Missionaries appointed to the Friendly Islands Mission and to guide the hundreds of untrained teachers who had been recruited and appointed to take care of the schools and congregations.

Eleven School Rules were agreed to at the historic meeting with the General Secretary. A Management Committee for the schools was established, classes were to be opened and closed with singing and prayer, class rolls were to be kept and marked regularly, scholars absent from class *without leave* were to be reported to the Management Committee. Any scholar who *repeated absence* from class or who was guilty of *swearing, lying, pilfering or any kind of gross immorality* was to be excluded *from the benefits of the school* (expelled). Teachers absent from the school *without sufficient cause* were to be reported to the Committee of Management. School Visitors were to *attend to examine the scholars once a week, and to give instruction to teachers and scholars*. (*THE RULES, UNFORTUNATELY, DID NOT INDICATE WHO THESE SCHOOL VISITORS WERE TO BE*).

The final rule stated that *a public and careful examination* of each school shall take place at least once a year, even on the smaller islands. That rule was observed in various ways given the scattered nature of the Tonga islands. Francis Wilson on his visit to *some of the small outer islands* (Taunga, Ovaka, Hunga, Nuapapau, Falevai and *two other places*), preached, distributed Tickets and examined the schools. (*MN 1843, Wilson Journal 20/09/1842*). The annual event was regarded as special as missionary reports indicate. William Webb (1841-1853) examined the schools on Tungua and was pleased to find that the scholars were *dressed in beautiful mats and native cloth prepared for the purpose*. (*MN 1847 William Webb to Secretaries 16/03/1846*). And in Neiafu for a six-monthly examination in January 1846 the scholars were *dressed in fine Samoan mats*. (*ibid Turner to Secretaries 17/04/1846*).

Turner's Journal gives a full description of the Neiafu examination which was a very lengthy and colourful event. In the lead up to the celebration he expected that they would be *engaged in the examination of the schools for a whole week or more.* (*Turner, Journal*^{*}, 10/12/1846). His description of the examination highlighted the festive nature of the event. The examination, he said:

has just ended, and the scholars have been assembled on an area near the chapel and have partaken of a feast prepared by themselves—1500 yams cooked on the occasion besides a great variety of other foods. The schools had their standards, [flags and banners] and some were made very tastefully. The standard of the Neiafu schools was made by Bro. West and on it the following inscription 'Neiafu School. Best of all God is with us'. We were 5 days in the examination of the schools, and we were much pleased with the improvement which they have made. They all repeated a chapter of the Scriptures, from 1 to 3 chapters of the Conference Catechism and 20 of the Geography of the Scriptures and of the World, besides spelling and repeating figures as high as 900,000, sums in addition subtraction, and multiplication. Nothing pleases them so much as repeating figures. They do most in the way of chanting which makes it somewhat pleasing to the ear.
(IBID).

Turner concluded by saying that there were 46 schools involved in the examination. They spent long hours each day and turned an expected five-day event into just three days. Apart from all the positives associated with the examination festival, Turner did have some negative comments. By the end of the three long days he said he was *fit for nothing at all* and that:

As in every large assembly when all sorts come together there were some who seemed careless and manifested more pleasure at hearing the figures repeated than even the Word of God.
(IBID).

A service of worship on Sabbath morning (where Turner judged that there must have been 2 or 3,000 attending), a Love Feast in the afternoon, and a service of worship in the evening brought the school feast to a happy conclusion. (IBID).

Turner's negative reference to *hearing the figures repeated*, highlighting what had actually become a problem. Chanting figures was a feature of classroom learning but it was what was happening after classes that was troubling. During the late 1840s there developed a pastime called *lau fika pouli* (nighttime chanting

of figures). The people, particularly the youth, had found a way of reviving night-time amusements, substitutes for the traditional dances *po me'e* and *po ula*, banned in the Rules of Society a decade or more previously. At a quarterly Meeting in 1848 Chairman John Thomas urged the King and the 120 Local Preachers present to use their influence *to prevent night schools, lau fika bouli etc.* (MILLER, JOURNAL, 28 JUNE 1848. SEE ALSO IBID, 02/07/1848 AND 22-23/07/1848.)

Koe gaahi Fika.		
Taha	I	1 Tolugofulu ma nima XXXV
Ua	II	2 Fagofulu XL
Tolu	III	3 Fagofulu ma nima XLV
Fa	IV	5 Nimapofulu L
Nima	V	3 Nimapofulu ma nima LV
Ono	VI	6 Onogofulu LX
Vitu	VII	7 Onogofulu ma nima LXV
Vahu	VIII	8 Fitugofulu LXX
Hiva	IX	9 Fitugofulu ma nima LXXXV
Hogofulu	X	10 Valugofulu LXXX
Hogofulu ma taha	XI	11 Valugofulu ma nima LXXXV
ma ua	XII	12 Hivagofulu XC
ma tolu	XIII	13 Hivagofulu ma nima XCV
ma fa	XIV	14 Teau C
ma vima	XV	15 Uageau CC
ma ono	XVI	16 Telugeau CCC
ma fihu	XVII	17 Figeau CCCC
ma vatu	XVIII	18 Nimapageau D
ma hiva	XIX	19 Afe M
Uofulu	XX	20 Ua afe 2000
Uofulu ma tabu	XXI	21 Tolu afe 3000
ma ua	XXII	22 Fa afe 4000
ma tolu	XXIII	23 Nima afe 5000
ma fu	XXIV	24 Mano 10000
ma nima	XXV	25 Ua mano 20000
ma ono	XXVI	26 Tolu mano 30000
ma fihu	XXVII	27 Fa mano 40000
ma valu	XXVIII	28 Nima mano 50000
ma hiva	XXIX	29 Kili 100000
Tolugofulu	XXX	30 Hiva kili 900000

(Page 5, Ko e Tohi Ako. 2nd edition March 1835)

The Neiafu schools' examination of 1847 also provided a way to continue traditional practices and still satisfy the Rules of Society. The examination saw crowds assembled from the various islands for the school feast. 40 schools were involved, and the celebration lasted a full week! The large, combined examination day in Vava'u ensured that School Rule 11 (that an examination of each school should take place at least once a year) could be kept and at the same time provide a good and acceptable reason for voyaging and journeying, activities which under normal circumstances were banned by the Rules. Large crowds journeyed and voyaged from numerous islands to Neiafu without breaking the Rules of Society. (TURNER JOURNAL 10-19/01/1848).

The Print Revolution's lasting Legacy

The collection of 16 little school books and the Hymnbook that came off the press in Nuku'alofa in less than four years, (1831-1834) introduced knowledge, ideas and concepts that created a literary and social revolution. Elements of the revolution impacted not only the life of the Church but society in general and on Government. And echoes of the revolution can still be heard two hundred years later.

Echoes can be heard in the Tongan language as it is spoken today. Not only did the people in the foundation years have to learn the written and printed form of their own language they also had to learn the new language of the Bible and Methodism. For example, Book No 13 *Ko e Buka ae Balofite ko Aisea* (The Book of the Prophet Isaiah) published in May 1834 introduced concepts such as balofite, visone iniseni, hosite, kounisela, koloia, Imanuela (prophet, vision, incense, host, counsellor, glory, Immanuel) and personal names including Aisea, Samiuela, Elikena, Iseleli, Hesekaia, (Isaiah, Samuel, Elkanah, Israel, Hezekiah), together with a variety of other words, Saione, vaine, oke, sita (Zion, vine, oak, cedar). Taken together the sixteen little books contained literally hundreds of new words and concepts, many of which are still part of the language today.

Several words that the missionaries found it difficult to translate are found in Isaiah 1:18. The English Bible reads:

Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. (HOLY BIBLE. AUTHORISED VERSION. ISALAH 1:18).

This was translated as:

Oku behe e Jihova, hau, ke tau a lea: kabau oku tatau mo e sikalete hoo mou agahala, e gaohi ia ke hinehina, o hange koe sinou; kabau oku kulokula ia, o tatau moe kilimisoni, e gaohi ia o hage koe uulu. (KO E BUKA AE BALOFITA KO AISEA. TONGATABOO. 1834 VAHE 1:18).

Sikalete (scarlet) in that original translation disappeared from the language, as did *kilimisoni* (crimson) because appropriate Tongan equivalents were found. But the word *sinou* (snow) has survived. The whole Bible published in 1862

(known as West's Bible but the title page says it is the translation of *the Wesleyan Missionaries*. (Thomas certainly had a lot to do with it). West's bible translated snow as *oha hinaekiaki* (white rain) and modern reprints of his Bible retain *oha hinaekiaki*. In 1904 when the Church received Dr Moulton's complete revised translation of the Bible and the 5th edition of the Tongan Hymn Book, which he called an edition for the 20th Century, both continued to translate snow as *sinou*. (*The Methodist*, 05/08/1904). Hymn 171 of the 1904 edition, which is hymn number 531 in the present hymnbook, included *Ko Hinehinaange*. In the last two lines of the chorus, it says:

'E fufulu au ho ta'ata'a

Pea u hinehina he sinou.

Wash me in his blood

and I will be white as snow.

(*KO E TOHI HIMI 1904 AND KO E TOHI HIMI 1967 AND 1978*)

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The Wesleyan Church's Rules of Society, could well be regarded as preparing the ground that led to the 1875 Constitution. Published in a Tongan translation in 1832 the Rules of Society certainly influenced the Code of Vava'u of 1839. Eight years before the Code was issued Taufa'ahau held an important meeting in Lifu'uka when it was said about seven hundred people were present, *all neatly dressed*, including chiefs and matapules and their people, Thomas said it was a *fono*, ... a speech on a code of laws and gave sundry commands to his people. Many of these commands reflected clauses from the Wesleyan Rules of Society. (*THOMAS JOURNAL 12/09/1831*).

Taufa'ahau, as a member of the Church, knew the Church's Code and lived according to its demands so when he wanted a 'civil' code, he asked the missionaries to draw it up for him. Stephen Rabone was allocated the task and the Church's Printing Office printed the document. The code included a number of the provisions that had appeared in the Wesleyan Rules. Section one of the 1839 code summarised the Ten Commandments, Section two outlined religious duties (Observing the Sabbath, attending worship), and a final section prohibited tattooing, and 'idolatrous ceremonies'. (*KO E GAAHI LAO KI HE KAKAI O VAVAU MO HAAFULUHAO, ME 16, 1838*).

When the Code of Vava'u was promulgated, members of the Wesleyan church had become used to a printed code that regulated the way they were governed and how they were to live their lives. Copies of the Rules had been

given to all full members of the Church and by the time the Code of Vava'u was issued, large numbers of people could read and write. The District Meeting of 1837, for example, reported that for Ha'apai and Vava'u alone there were 7,716 full members of the Church, 1,030 teachers and 7,441 scholars! These thousands of people were accustomed to a printed code. Taufa'ahau's 1839 Code, printed at the Church's Printing Office, paved the way for the 1850 and 1862 Codes and ultimately the Constitution of 1875.

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The contribution to Tongan music and hymn singing is a lasting legacy of the print revolution. Some of the early hymns from the hymn books of 1838, 1849 and 1861 are still sung today. They are found among the three hundred and sixty hymns that form the first section of *Ko e Tohi Himi 'a e Siasi Uesiliana Tohi Himi 'a e Siasi Uesiliana Tau'ataina 'o Tonga* (*Hymnbook of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga*). Some are reproduced exactly as they appeared in 1838 and 1849. Several appear with slight modifications while quite a few have received major modifications. Hymns from almost 200 years ago that are still sung today include for example numbers 6 and 15 (for special anniversaries and celebrations), 38, 48, 204 (for funeral services), 272 and 360 (Communion services), 232-236 (New Year). Hymn 114 about the depth of God's love, deep as the ocean, *Ko e moana loloto*, is sung by other Christian denominations in Tonga and has also assumed national importance. (Hymn numbers quoted above are from the present hymnbook. (PERSONAL COMMUNICATION FROM REV. TEVITA FINAU).

The Tongan hymnbook in its many printings over almost 200 years, from the 1830 publication of *A First Book* to the most recent edition of 2019, has honoured Wesley's words and fulfilled his expectations when he explained the essential role of hymns for Christians living out their faith. Hymns, Wesley said, were to the Christian:

A means of raising or quickening the spirit of devotion; of confirming his faith; of enlivening his hope; and of kindling and increasing his love to God and man. (JOHN WESLEY, LONDON 20/10/1779).

In passing it is interesting to note that new music in the Church has been introduced many times during the church's history. Today brass bands often accompany the singing of hymns and anthems during Sunday worship and on other occasions. One of the earliest instances of Tongans being captivated by brass bands occurred as early as 1850 during a visit of HM Ship Meander. Lawry was visiting Tonga at the time and later when he had the opportunity to speak at the Anniversary of the Missionary Society in London, he spoke of the impact brass instruments had during the *Meander's* visit:

*I may tell you, that, just before I left Tonga, Her Majesty's ship "Meander", commanded by the Hon. Captain Keppel, arrived; and, on coming ashore, after having had an interview with myself, he brought with him his brass band. The natives had never heard such a wonderful thing as this band of brass instruments, fourteen or fifteen in number. They listened till they rose and capered. [ran off excitedly]. Here was no restraining the overflow of their delight. (MN 1851.
LAWRY SPEAKING AT THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE WESLEYAN METHODIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY).*

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Establishing some *School Rules* and creating the *Native Assistant Missionaries Institution* to support the emerging school system was also a result of the teaching and learning material being produced by the press. John Waterhouse, General Secretary of Wesleyan Missions in Polynesia had brought a focus on the Mission's work in education when he visited in 1841. There were already 154 schools, 1448 teachers, and 9,241 scholars in the Wesleyan schools by the time of his visit. Missionaries could not be expected to conduct and supervise such an extensive system that ranged from Eua in the south to Niuatoputapu and Niuafo'ou in the North covering dozens of islands spread across 650 kms (400 miles) of ocean. The Ha'apai school report of 1836 highlighted this feature of the school system when it said that:

The schools scattered over the Islands of this Groupe have been regularly attended to in the course of the year by the Local Preachers and Leaders. (MINUTES AND REPORTS FIDM 1836).*

The press had laid down a foundation by making available increasing amounts of printed material, but the need in 1841 was twofold: Rules to govern the schools and an 'Institution' to train Assistant Missionaries and Head Teachers to conduct and supervise the schools. Rules were agreed to and a Native Training Institute was formed. Initially based in Neiafu and later transferred to Nuku'alofa the Institute eventually evolved into Tupou College.

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The Press had made some initial portions of the *Holy Scriptures* widely available for church, school and private devotion during the months from June 1832 through to December 1834. By the time John Waterhouse visited Tonga in 1841

there were sixteen books in print, twelve of them being chapters of Scripture. Waterhouse initiated the formation of a Translation Committee. A majority of the members of the Committee were to sign off on all translations to be printed. The translators were to *substitute Tongan words for the English as far as practicable* when portions of scripture already in print were being revised for reprinting. The missionaries were also urged to proceed as soon as possible with the translation and printing of the complete New Testament. This was achieved in 1849 and by 1862 the whole bible was in print.

The Missionary Committee in London in 1851 when writing about the early foundational work on Bible translation spoke approvingly of what had been achieved and what was being planned:

Some parts [of the Bible] have been in print since 1833 and have passed through several editions; having undergone revision by those who had a competent knowledge of the language. Four thousand copies of the present edition were printed in 1849, at the Society's press on the Mission, which have all been sold, and are in the hands of the people ... The number of people for whose benefit the proposed new edition is designed is perhaps not less than twenty-six thousand, of whom, probably, not less than six thousand can now read the word of God. Greatly is it to be desired that they may be speedily furnished with a large supply of the blessed book which many of them are so eager to become possessed of.

(MN 1851 EDITORIAL COMMENTS ON THE HISTORY OF THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS MISSION).

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The press also impacted *Tongan social organisation*. A new social class, the Village Head Teacher came into being as schools were established throughout the Tonga group. Francis Wilson, when he was appointed superintendent of the Institution for training Native Assistant Missionaries, believed that all the head teachers should spend at least some time at the Institution. The future of the Church's mission, he said, *depends very greatly on them*. He went on to explain why he regarded the Head Teachers so highly and why he saw them as carrying out the work of Assistant Missionaries:

These men combine in themselves the office of Leaders, Local Preachers, Schoolmasters and Society Stewards. In fact, they are the shepherds of the flock where they reside. If they were full of faith and the Holy Spirit and well instructed in the Doctrines and Morals of Christ as held by our body, the

work would not fail to prosper in their hands. If their wives were of the same stamp and thus qualified to conduct the female schools and help their husbands nothing could be wanting but to be instructed in the Infant School System. (*MINUTES AND REPORTS* FIDM 1844; SEE ALSO FIDM 1837*).

With the establishment of the Native Training Institute a band of Tongan Assistant Missionaries emerged. Researching the years 1841 to 1865 a list has been compiled from District Meeting Minutes and reports of Wesleyan Missionary Society meetings held in Sydney which provided information about the church in New South Wales, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands. Some on the list were 'old hands,' and others were graduates of the Vava'u or Nuku'alofa Institute. There were several teachers who were sent to Niuatoputapu and Niuafo'ou who were not given the designation Native Assistant Missionary even though they were, in fact, carrying out that role. (SEE CHAPTER 10).

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A selection of Psalms published in 1833, foreshadowed the wording on *the Tonga Coat of Arms*. Book 7 entitled *Ko e Gaahi Same a Tevita mei he Tohi Tabu*. (Psalms of David from the Bible) contained the first seventeen of the Psalms and the School Report for 1836 made special mention of this book saying that it was introduced into the schools for the scholars *to commit it to memory* (Minutes and Reports* FIDM 1836. Ha'apai School Report).

Psalm 16 stands out because it has a unique heading: *Oku fakaha e Tevita a hono Koloa*. (David declares his koloa, his treasure.) The words of the psalm find echoes in a significant speech by Tupou I some forty years later at the opening of the Parliament of Tonga in 1875. King George, in speaking about the Constitution that was about to be passed, made this history making statement with some words he wanted associated with the Constitution.

*I have ordered a National Coat-of-Arms for our country ...
I want these words to be printed on it: God and Tonga are
my Inheritance that these words may become the motto of
the Kings of Tonga forever. (KING GEORGE TUPOU'S SPEECH
AT THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT 1875. KO E BOOBOOI, VOL
II. NO.6.1875. ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY VIELA KINAHOI).*

... The three elements of the motto, God, the Land (Tonga) and Inheritance appear to find their origin in King David's Psalm 16. In the original Hebrew, and in the 1611 Authorised version, the Psalm is headed *Michtam of David*. Scholars over the centuries have found it difficult to give meaning to the word Michtam. Some have translated it as precious, a jewel, or golden. The mission-

aries at the time (Thomas, Turner, Cross, Watkin and Tucker) called it David's treasure. (*hono koloa*). The 1862 Bible gave it the heading *Ko e Same mahinga a Tevita*. (David's Precious Psalm). Moulton, in 1904, called it golden: *Ko ha Same Koula a Tevita*. (DAVID'S GOLDEN PSALM).

There is some debate about who actually composed the motto. Some say it was Wellington Ngu the King's grandson. An article in the Sydney press, reporting on the Constitutional Parliament of 1862, commented that

a great seal has been adopted for appending to all public documents ... King George aided by Mr D.J.Moss long resident in Vava'u [King George's adopted son known as Tupou Ha'apai] being anxious to follow as far as possible the laws of more enlightened counties (SYDNEY MAIL 25/10/1862).

What that great seal was like is not clear. It can be seen as an early version, perhaps, of the Coat of Arms. Regardless, a decade or more later King George spoke words about the Coat of Arms at the 1875 Constitution Parliament with some passion. For him it was a forever moment.

The motto was being spoken about by one who had helped the early missionaries with translations of the Bible. He had spent many hours at the printing office, proofreading the latest parts of the scripture that came off the press. He was a local Preacher and, with other Preachers, regularly took his appointments to conduct services of worship. He attended school regularly in the early days, including the Native Training Institution in Vava'u. And he was a member of Jane Tucker's special Mental Improvement classes. He knew the Scriptures well and preached the Word of God. Until other evidence emerges it can be said that the motto is his strong word, originating from the Scriptures and spoken from the heart:

God and Tonga are my Inheritance

that these words may become the motto of the Kings of Tonga forever.

Concluding observations about the Print Revolution

Even before the revival the Missionary Committee was generous in their praise of the revolution that was taking place in the Friendly Islands:

A Mission of greater promise, or, we may add, of more extraordinary success, both as to the rapidity and the extent of its progress, does not, we believe, exist on the face of the earth. (EDITORIAL COMMENT, MN, FEBRUARY 1834).

Thomas also gave an evaluation in an annual report in 1835:

I believe hundreds who knew not how to read, have been taught, and others who read very badly have learned to read well, and a mighty thirst for instruction is created in many. To God be all the praise. All sit upon the floor of the school, and each has a book in his hand-old and young, rich and poor, chief and people all appear one in the Lord. (MINUTES AND REPORTS VAVA'U SCHOOL REPORT, 1835).*

Charles Tucker, using rather colourful language, recorded his view:

The foundation has been laid and the heavenly building is dressing in beautiful and pure decoration, and we doubt not but the great architect will carry on his work until the top stone has brought forth and put on with shouting grace, grace, grace unto it. (MINUTES AND REPORTS HA'APAI STATION REPORT, FIDM MINUTES, 1835).*

=====CHAPTER 10 =====

The Wesleyan Native Training Institution

1841-1865

By the late 1830s a number of significant developments in the history of the Wesleyan Church were coming together: a printing revolution was producing thousands of pages of reading and teaching material in the language of the people, the great Revival of 1834 brought hundreds into full membership of the Church, schools sprang up in many villages across the Group, hundreds of teachers catered for almost ten thousand students, (adults and children) and the resident missionaries could say to the Methodist world that Christianity (the lotu) was established from 'Eua to the Niwas.

In addition, the Wesleyan Missionary Committee in London had been urging for some years that missionaries needed to train up Native Assistant Missionaries to carry out the bulk of the work of the church. From the growing number of Class Leaders, Local Preachers, and Teachers, capable individuals needed to be selected and given some form of training.

As all these challenges and opportunities were converging, the Missionary Committee in London appointed the Rev John Waterhouse as General Superintendent of Wesleyan Missions in Australasia and Polynesia. His visit to Tonga in 1841 led to the establishment, in Vava'u, of "The Wesleyan Academy for the Training of Native Assistant Missionaries", later known as the Native Training Institution.

The Institution had a varying history, sometimes thriving, at other times on the decline or closed for lack of a qualified missionary to conduct it. The Rev Francis Wilson was appointed the first Superintendent, but when he died prematurely in 1846, the Institution was discontinued for a time.

With the arrival of Rev Richard Amos in 1847, the Institute was revived and transferred from Neiafu to Nuku'alofa where it was operated successfully for several years following the Glasgow System of education.

In 1854 Amos was moved to Neiafu and concentrated on the children's schools, known as Normal Schools with some time given to training teachers and local preachers.

Following the departure of the Amos family for Sydney in 1858 due to ill health, some District or Circuit Institutions' were established when missionaries in the three stations, Tongatapu, Ha'apai and Vava'u were able to offer some training to head teachers, lay preachers and prospective Assistant Missionaries. This arrangement operated for some years until pressure from King George led to the appointment of James Egan Moulton to revive the Nuku'alofa Institution.

When Moulton arrived in 1865, he called the Institution 'The Wesleyan College' and then it soon became known by the name it retains to this day: Tupou College.

A history making visit to Tonga

The Rev John Waterhouse, General Superintendent of the Wesleyan Missions in Australia and Polynesia made a visit to Tonga in 1840 and 1841. The 1841 visit was particularly significant in the history of the Wesleyan Church in the Friendly Islands. Waterhouse chaired the Annual District Meeting held in Lifuka, Ha'apai, and that was when historic decisions were made. The church in Tonga was experiencing the impact of a literary revolution when dozens of village schools were opened, and the missionaries were eagerly awaiting the visit from Waterhouse, hoping that his advice would assist the development of the Mission. As Thomas said to the London Committee:

*We are looking forward with much pleasure to the time
when we shall welcome our dear brother Waterhouse to these
shores ... may it prove a great blessing to us all, and to our
people! (MN 1840 THOMAS TO SECRETARIES 20/06/1839.)*

The District Meeting that Waterhouse chaired, dealt with the standard questions that had to be addressed at a District Meeting: the number of missionaries, their appointments for the coming year, what new buildings had been erected during the year, what buildings were planned for the coming year, the state of the schools, the printing office report, and any additional matters. Then, as the Minutes of the meeting indicate, the history making resolution was passed:

*That there be an Institute for the training of Native Assistant Missionaries to be called 'The Friendly Islands Wesleyan Academy for the Training of Native Assistant Missionaries'
[and that] the Academy for training be at Vava'u. (MINUTES AND REPORTS *FIDM MINUTES 23/03/1841)*

The meeting then established a number of Rules and Regulations (see appendix to chapter for details) that would govern the Academy. Candidates were to be selected from among the list of Local Preachers in the District who were to be 'carefully examined' as to their suitability for training covering such topics as:

Conversion, present state of Christian experience, their acquaintance with the sacred scriptures, their views of our

doctrines, attachment to our discipline, their ability to communicate what they know, and their willingness to go to any Island where God and his Church may appoint. (IBID)

Normally, candidates were to be not younger than twenty years of age and not older than thirty and there were to be *as few married students as possible*. The superintendent missionaries of the three districts, Tonga, (Tongatapu) Ha'apai and Ha'afuluha (Vava'u) were to provide character references for students they recommended and *be responsible for the character* of candidates they proposed. Candidates accepted into the Academy were to be offered, normally, two years of instruction. There was to be an examination, during the Annual District meeting and during the year each student had to conduct a trial service one a month, to be assessed by the missionaries stationed in Vava'u. Once students completed the Academy course successfully, the District Meeting was to:

recommend to the Committee [in London] any whom they may judge eligible to be immediately employed, stating their age, whether married and if married, the character of the wife, their personal experience and qualifications for the work and the terms on which they are willing to be employed. (IBID)

Successful students, once employed, were to receive:

a sum not less than £10 annually for himself and family, the people to who he is sent supplying him with Native food.
(ibid)

In addition to the rules, several special requests were recorded in the Minutes. First and foremost, King George was to be requested to provide land for the Academy, close to the Mission Premises in Neiafu, including a suitable plot for the students to grow their own food. In addition, he was requested *to free the candidates [Institute students] from all tributary labour*. The Committee in London was also invited to make an annual grant in support of the Academy and Wesleyans in England were to be encouraged to donate books and equipment.

General Superintendent Waterhouse was also asked to promote the Institute in the Colony (NSW) seeking donations of books and equipment.

There was also another important resolution: the Rev Francis Wilson, newly arrived in Tonga, a graduate of the first Methodist Institute for training ministers in England, was appointed superintendent of the Vava'u Institute. The London Committee approved the decisions of the District Meeting but asked that the new educational venture be called an Institute, not an Academy.

The historic resolutions of 1841 had not come unexpectedly. The Mission Committee in London had been urging its missionaries for years, to make sure

they were training up their most promising converts for leadership. And on arrival in Tonga, Waterhouse, after *a careful examination* of the qualifications of some of the native teachers believed that:

Unless special attention be paid to the training of Native Teachers, very little permanent good will be done. An efficient native agency is of paramount importance ... This I consider of more importance than anything else in these lands. (THE SECOND JOURNAL OF THE REV JOHN WATERHOUSE)

Superintendent Francis Wilson

Francis Wilson, trained in the Wesleyan Institute, Hoxton, England, was the first 'Institution man' to be appointed to Tonga. (*WMM* 1842, p.350). His introduction to mission work was marked by personal tragedy. On the high seas, aboard the Mission Ship *Triton*, on their way to Tonga, his wife Sarah gave birth to a still born baby. Soon afterwards she also died. Rev John Waterhouse recounts the distressing scene:

a strong, neat coffin was made, covered with white calico, and on the breast a crown, under which was inscribed, "Sarah Wilson, aged 27, 1840."

The mortal remains of Mrs. Wilson being placed in the coffin, and her babe resting on her breast and right arm, all was made secure, having iron in the foot of the coffin, and holes perforated in the side, to sink it ... I then read the Burial Service, and concluded by saying, "We now commit the mortal remains of our friend and her child to the great deep, until the sea shall give up her dead." Immediately the bodies were let down, and, in a few seconds, sank to be beheld by us no more. (MN 1841 WATERHOUSE TO SECRETARIES 08/09/1840).

Wilson was devastated and wished to return to England because he was now without his wife and newborn baby. Reflecting on it later, he said:

he felt no spirit in me and thought I must abandon the work. I was left a stranger in a strange land, suddenly and bereaved of the wife of my youth, and of my choice, and my nervous system is shattered by this severe shock. (INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE. LETTERS AND JOURNALS, WILSON TO SECRETARIES, 18/05/1841.)*

Despite the tragic circumstances, Wilson needed to have permission from the Committee in London to return home to England. That process would take twelve to eighteen months, perhaps two years. Wilson had no alternative, therefore, but to remain in Tonga for the time being. Notwithstanding his bereavement, the District Meeting appointed him to pioneer the newly established Wesleyan Academy. As he told the Committee some time later, although he supported the idea of the Academy, he was not happy to be asked to take on the important work of superintending the new venture:

I remonstrated against being appointed to take so prominent a part in it [the Institution], but without success ... the thing itself is unquestionably good and greatly needed, and if judicially conducted must by the Divine blessing be productive of great good. (IBID).

The Committee wrote to the District Chairman John Thomas, supporting Wilson's appointment and suggested that David Cargill, who was appointed to Tonga for the second time, would be able to give Wilson assistance in his work in the Institution:

In the appointment of Mr Francis Wilson to the superintendence and direction of the new Institution, according to the regulations specified in your Minutes, we cordially concur, and it is our earnest hope that his endeavours will be crowned with abundant success ... [re Cargill appointed to Vava'u] ... he would be able to render Mr Wilson important assistance in the management of the Native Institution.
(OUTGOING CORRESPONDENCE COMMITTEE TO THOMAS
12/01/1843)*

Cargill, an Aberdeen MA, (linguistics) would certainly be helpful with educational matters and there was also help coming from another quite unexpected direction as well. Wilson had never received a reply from the Committee to his request to return to England, and after waiting nearly three years for an answer, the arrival of the Cargill family led him to tell the Committee that he no longer wished to return home. The Cargills had brought a governess with them from England, Miss Hull, to help Mrs Cargill with the six Cargill children. It was not long before Wilson had formed a friendship with the governess. Writing to the Committee, he spoke about her making a name change from *Miss Hull to Mrs F Wilson*:

You will be pleased to know, that a brighter day has again dawned upon me, that the Lord has provided a help meet for me, in a way little expected in this semi-civilized place.
(INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE LETTERS AND JOURNALS
WILSON TO COMMITTEE; 19/04/1844)*

Wilson told the Committee that he now *abandoned the idea of going home*. Then followed an *Island wedding* as he called their marriage ceremony, the first example of a missionary marrying in Tonga. As it turned out, Miss Hull, as Mrs Wilson, quickly became involved in Wesleyan education. She was acquainted with the Infant School System in England, and opened a model Infant School

in Neiafu, and later, another in Leimatu'a, conducted by a young couple who had been *under the instruction of Mr and Mrs Wilson*' (*Minutes and Reports* Ha'afuluhao [Vava'u] School Report 1844*) . Mrs Wilson's school at Neiafu provided on the job training for the staff of her school and for other teachers who were close enough to attend from time to time to learn something about the new system. King George supported the Infant School System and was on the committee of the Neiafu School. (INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE LETTERS AND JOURNALS*WILSON TO COMMITTEE, 19/04/1844)

The Academy School House

At daylight, on Friday the 3rd of June, 1841, Wilson met with the Local Preachers at their usual weekly meeting. As the meeting concluded, he was surprised to see what was obviously a group of workmen arriving. Mystified by the appearance of the group he soon discovered that:

the people had come to erect a house for the Academy. King George had given orders to the chiefs to build it free of expense to the Mission. (IBID WILSON TO COMMITTEE, 03/06/1841)

Waterhouse's District Meeting had agreed that an Academy School House was needed and an amount of £10, paid for with trade goods from the Mission's store, was set aside to build it. (*Minutes and Reports*FIDM 1841*). King George had other ideas. He was seriously committed to education, with together with the Queen he had attended Mrs Tucker's Mental Improvement Class. (Williams, Memoir of Mrs Jane Tucker, p.83) So, it is not surprising, although it was to Wilson at the time, that the King should take a leading role in getting the institution started as soon as possible.

Work started immediately and by sundown that same day the house was completed, *floored with native mats and ready to go into*. It was smaller than Wilson would have liked (it was only 21 feet by 12 feet), but the timbers had been cut and brought from the bush so nothing could be done about it. The next day work began on Wilson's study, and again the King's hand could be seen at work -labour and materials were provided free of any expense to the Mission. (*INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE LETTERS AND JOURNALS*, WILSON, 04/06/1841*)

Work then began on furnishing the new School House. Desks and benches were needed, and the candidates came to the rescue. Wilson was pleased to report that:

The students went to the bush in quest of trees, cut them up into planks and we forthwith turned carpenters fitted up our desks and benches. (MINUTES AND REPORTS FIDM 1842)*

Wilson and his colleagues, Kevern and Turner, had already had some experience with desk making for the Public School at Neiafu, Wilson suggesting that they should have been given some training in carpentry in England before being sent

out to the islands. (Incoming Correspondence Letters and Journals*, Wilson, 16/06/1841). Students and missionaries, working together ended up making some basic furniture:

two benches and a large double desk ... to which ten can sit, five on each side. (IBID WILSON, 13/07/1841)

In his first report on the work of the Institution, Wilson thought that the school room had a rough look. It had:

a rude appearance it is true [he said] but the desk and bench, strong and massive and durable has answered well while no tax has been laid on the Fund save the price of a few axes.
(MINUTES AND REPORTS FIDM 25 JUNE 1842)*

Soon, some of the roughness of the school room would be modified with the arrival of valuable teaching aids from the Committee and from Charles and Jane Tucker. The Tuckers, who were leaving Tonga after almost a decade of ministry in the islands, provided a '*paper Globe*', and copies of books they had translated into Tongan. The Committee wrote to the Chairman detailing the contribution they were making:

We send out for it [The Institution] a capital pair of globes, with maps, atlases, books etc and shall always be ready to furnish the needed supplies to render the establishment efficient. (OUTGOING CORRESPONDENCE SECRETARY HOOLE TO THOMAS 07/04/1842)

With the gift were encouraging words of support from the Committee, stressing that the future of the faith, its growth and development, would depend, not on a few European missionaries, but on trained Native Assistant Missionaries and Head Teachers, trained at the Institution:

Your commencement of an Institution (we prefer the term Institution to that of Academy) for the training of Native Assistant Agents has our hearty approval. ... only a small portion of the work of the world's conversion can possibly be affected by European missionaries ... it must be principally by means of Native Assistant Missionaries that the original Commission of the Saviour shall be carried into effect. On no other plan does it appear possible that the Gospel can be preached to every creature. (OUTGOING CORRESPONDENCE SECRETARY BEECHAM, TO THOMAS, 12/01/1842)

Selecting the students

Passing resolutions, setting up rules and regulations and building and furnishing a school house with desks and benches was achieved easily enough. Selecting suitable candidates (as the Regulations described the students) was another matter altogether. Finding candidates that met the Rules and Regulations proved almost impossible. Only two candidates satisfied the rules. They were both single men, Local Preachers from Tongatapu, aged between 20-30 years of age, one of whom was *a native of Fiji.* (MINUTES AND REPORTS*FIDM, INSTITUTE REPORT 1842.)

An Institution with only two candidates was extraordinary, impractical, and an embarrassment perhaps. So, something needed to be done. The Rules would need to be modified. Therefore, the missionaries gathered the Vava'u Local Preachers together and explained the *design of the Institution* and asked who *amongst them were willing to consecrate themselves to the work of the Lord.* As Wilson tells it, there was keen interest, but the result was, again, disheartening:

We had plenty of applications. Many were anxious to come and be instructed. Several of them were Chiefs concerned in the government of the islands and though anxious to be instructed yet they could not of course give themselves up to the Lord and the Church. Others of the Local Preachers who were willing to give themselves up entirely to the work of the Lord, were found on enquiry, to be ineligible, on account of their age, numerous family or other circumstances not one was found whom we could conscientiously recommend as answering the description given in the Rules of the Academy. (MINUTES AND REPORTS FIDM 1842.)*

Faced with this selection problem Wilson, again, had to make a decision. Despite the Rules and Regulations he felt forced to *take such as we could get.* In effect that meant taking older, married students, some of them with families. This decision modified the Rules and Regulations and, in the process, broadened the purpose of the Institution. The two Tongatapu candidates were still to spend three years in the Academy and would be recommended as Native Assistant Missionaries. Several others, however, not intended to be Assistant Missionaries, were to be accepted for training as Head Teachers for the growing number of schools. The course of training for these head teachers would normally be just

one year. Accordingly, Wilson selected five candidates, older men, who together with the two younger men from Tongatapu, were taken on to enter the Institution. Two more *were subsequently added*. This meant that the Institute would now have nine candidates entering an Institute with a dual purpose: preparing some candidates to become Native Assistant Missionaries, and training others to be appointed as Head Teachers. The District Meeting approved the changes, and the Institute began operating with this two-class system. (MINUTES AND REPORTS* FIDM 1842)

The experiment begins

The first day's teaching at the Institution (13th July 1841), was a very modest occasion. Wilson was beginning a test, as he called it, to see if the bold Academy resolution of the District Meeting could be put into practice. It was to operate:

On a small scale, by way of experiment to ascertain whether it was likely to succeed or not until the mind of the Committee should be known.

On that July morning in 1841, the large table [students' desk] for the Academy and the two benches were completed and then later in the day the first classes were held. As Wilson explained:

In the afternoon we began school for the first time. I had nine scholars. We did very little the first day. I heard them read Tonguese and write on their slates – after that began with the English Alphabet ... [and] agreed to have School 5 days a week in the afternoon. (INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE LETTERS AND JOURNALS, WILSON TO SECRETARIES 13/07/1841)*

Two things became very clear from the beginning. English as *the chief branch of instruction*, and teaching classes five days a week in the afternoons, was not going to work. The married students who were finally selected were older men, married with families. Five days a week at the institution was too demanding for them. They needed to tend to their plantations and the needs of their families. So the five days a week was reduced to four and ultimately to three. Furthermore, Wilson believed that the older men were *too late on in life* to be able to grasp enough English language to be able to *read it with understanding and profit*. As a result, he gave up teaching English to the older married students and:

Confined them to their own language, teaching them Reading, Spelling, Writing, Theology, and Geography ...

*four days a week and afterwards three. (MINUTES AND REPORTS*FIDM INSTITUTE REPORT 1842).*

At the same time, he continued to teach English to the two young single men who it was hoped would become Native Assistant Missionaries.

Teaching material for the students raised a challenging obstacle. There was a lack of *textbooks in the Tonga language and a Grammar and Vocabulary for those who are studying English*. The Scripture, in the form of the series of school books (chapters from the Old and New Testaments) *was their Reading Book*, and Wilson used it at each lesson, followed by a session of questions *when any difficulty in it [was] explained or attempted to be explained*. Compounding the problem was that Wilson, who had only been in Tonga for less than two years had *a very scanty knowledge of Tonguese*. That meant that it was quite *hard work to get up a few books to go on with*. Fortunately for Wilson, and the future of the Institution, Jane Tucker's manuscript books allowed him to work up a little collection of teaching material:

A small Geography of Canaan and of places mentioned in the Acts has been introduced in manuscript with maps of Canaan and the countries visited by the Apostles. An outline of Geography of the World has also been used, along with the Map of the World. A small book too contains the English words found in the Tongan bible with their meanings in Tonguese.

In preparing these books, Wilson acknowledged Jane Tucker's work :

we were indebted to Mrs Tucker who had devoted a great deal of time to these things and left us her books.

Listed among the teaching materials that Wilson reported to his fellow missionaries at the district meeting of 1842 was the puzzling comment that:

The students have written a short course of Lectures on the leading Doctrines of Christianity as held by our Body, following Dr Hannah's order.

How the students prepared this set of 'lectures' was not explained.

Reflecting on the first year of the Academy, Wilson was encouraged to believe that :

from the experiment that has been made we are thankful to be able to say that by the Divine Blessing, it is likely to work well.

An additional encouragement came from King George. Whenever he was in Vava'u, he attended the Institution and, as Wilson was pleased to report, he:

highly values it [the Institution] but of course is not reckoned amongst the number of students. (MINUTES AND REPORTS FIDM MINUTES 1842.)*

The English language dilemma.

General Superintendent Waterhouse had some strong views about the English language and the role it should play in the Institution. He believed that, after competent instruction, students who showed a great thirst for knowledge, would benefit greatly by acquiring a working knowledge of English so that:

*the key of knowledge will be in their hands, and out of this treasure, by the blessing of God, they will enrich others.
(WATERHOUSE JOURNAL 02/05/1841)*

Wilson also believed in the value of English for prospective Native Assistant Missionaries. English would:

open to them a treasury of knowledge to which they could never have access in their own tongue. (MINUTES AND REPORTS FIDM 1843)*

So it was not surprising that the Rules of the Institution which he had helped to draft at the District Meeting of 1841, included:

Rule 4: English to be the chief branch of instruction

Rule 9: That a Library of English Books be provided for the use of the Academy (MINUTES AND REPORTS FIDM 1841)*

The emphasis on English led some to reflect on John and Sarah Thomas's first school at Hihifo in 1826 believing that if English teaching had been *persevered in, our task would have been comparatively easy. (MINUTES AND REPORTS* FIDM 1842)*

Twelve months on concerns over English teaching continued with the Minutes of the District Meeting noting that the Institute:

by no means comes up to the standard contained in the rules and regulations [and that] prayers, and pains be patiently and perseveringly exercised in order that the object contemplated may be ultimately realized ... [and] as the experience of two years has confirmed the opinion that the adult Tonguese cannot acquire a practical knowledge of the

English language during their stay in the Institution it is resolved to discontinue it for the present.[and that]

*English be given up for the majority of students. The two likely to be recommended as Native Assistant Missionaries would continue to be taught English. (MINUTES AND REPORTS*FIDM 1843).*

Some years later, in the 1850s Amos struggled with the English issue as did Moulton when he was reviving the Institution in the late 1860's early 1870's . His report of the 5th year of Tupou College noted that he was working to:

bring them [the students] into contact with European thought by enabling them to read English with facility ... We are aiming at both these ends though the goals seem very distant. (LETTERS OF MINISTERS AND MISSIONARIES MOULTON TO SECRETARIES 31/12/1875)

Grappling with the Rules and Regulations

Wilson's Institution, in its second year of operation, saw the Rules and Regulations still in place, but in practice they were, in several important ways, being disregarded. In particular older men, married with families, unable to commit to go anywhere the Church might appoint them, became typical students of the Institution. Thinking over the second year's experience, Wilson told the Committee that he was still struggling with *the long string of rules and regulations* governing the Institution. It was quite right, he said, to have *a good standard at which to aim at*, but Tongan students were not ready for what was being asked of them. Wilson was writing to London against the background of advice from the Committee, which emphasised their belief that:

The perpetuation and extension of that great work which you have been instrumental in promoting must chiefly depend, under the blessing of God, on a native ministry and too much attention cannot be devoted to the instruction and preparation of those among your converts who give promise of usefulness. (OUTGOING CORRESPONDENCE ELIJAH HOOLE TO THOMAS 07/04/1842)*

Wilson's letter to the Committee stressed the fact that, although the Institution needed to admit students who did not meet the Rules and Regulations, they were, nevertheless, critical to the life and mission of the Church. As he explained, echoing some of the Committee's comments:

up to the present time it [the Institution] has been confined chiefly to the teachers of this circuit ... few if any of them will ever be acknowledged as regular Assistant Missionaries, but they are agents on whom the prosperity of the work very materially depends. (INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE WILSON TO COMMITTEE, 19/04/1844).*

Justifying the acceptance of candidates who did not satisfy the rules, Wilson went on to explain to the Committee the plan for the Head Teachers *as they are called here*. He went into detail, explaining how the church was operating in every village in Vava'u where there was a Chapel and Society :

A person is appointed to superintend the cause [the lotu] generally in that place. He is selected from amongst the Local Preachers either at that place or any other whither a suitable person can be found willing to go and undertake it, whose wife is also a steady woman and a leader ... if possible.

*The principal duties of the teacher are
1st to conduct the men's school (and his wife the female school)*

2nd to see that the Native Drum is beat at the proper times for the religious services also; preaching and prayer meetings on the Sunday and week days, and conduct prayer meetings.

3rd to act as Society Steward in collecting the yams, or what the people are able to contribute Quarterly. (ibid.)

He went on to say that these three main areas were *over and above the teacher's regular work as a Local Preacher and Leader*. The Head Teacher, he said:

exercises a general Superintendency over the work where he resides.

He is the Bishop of the place. He is called in Tongan the Tauhi – that is 'the one who provides for and watches over'. He is the Shepherd of the flock where he resides. (IBID)

At the time when Wilson was justifying his modification of the Institution Rules, there were 25 Chapels and Societies in Vava'u *where no missionary resides*. In these villages the Head Teachers were the tauhi's:

These are the men, Wilson told the Committee, who comprise the students of the Institution, that is, as many of them as can attend, those from the islands and distant places cannot come regularly. They have their own schools on the same days [as Neiafu schools] and on vacant days attend the Institution. (IBID)

Attendance at classes fluctuated, depending on the weather. If favourable, Head Teachers from the nearer islands attended Institution classes. Other factors also led to variable class numbers and attendance. As needs arose, the best students

were selected and sent to what Wilson called *out-stations* or distant places. The Committee learned that some 30 teachers had been appointed from the Vava'u circuit to Mission Work, as Wilson called it, *in Niuatoputapu, Niuafo'ou, Uvea, Rotumah, and Samoa*. The best ones, he said, have been selected time after time and sent away so that the present students are the remnant. (LETTERS AND JOURNALS* WILSON TO SECRETARIES OI/OI/1844)

Developing a workable Timetable

Afternoon sessions, five days a week was the original plan for instructing the candidates of the Institution. Quite soon it became clear that this was impractical. Most of the students were Head Teachers with responsibilities with their schools. They were also tauhi's in their villages. They were married men with children and needed to tend to their plantations to provide for their families. In view of these limitations a two day a week for *Institution days* was finally agreed to. The remainder of the week was organised to suit the needs and responsibilities of the Head Teachers:

Monday the Teachers conduct the schools at their respective village and meet their Classes.

Tuesday is their Preaching day.

Wednesday, they attend the Institution and the Preaching at Neiafu and Leaders Meetings.

Thursday

at daylight we have a Lecture on Theology and answer any questions they may propose.

the forenoon is devoted to writing and preparing their lessons for our afternoon Meeting

Friday, they conduct the schools as on Monday

Saturday, they prepare for the Sabbath (MINUTES AND REPORTS, FIDM 1844)*

As Wilson explained to the Committee, this program would ensure that *the Head Teachers of all the principal places* in Vava'u would be able to enjoy *a course of instruction* at the Institution, while caring for the schools and societies in the villages where they lived. He admitted that not all of them could attend the Institution. Nevertheless, it was desirable for them to attend, when possible, because the prosperity of the work [of the Church] *depends very greatly on them.* (*IBID*).

The plan in practice was that there would still be an opportunity to train some eligible candidates as Native Assistant Missionaries, but the majority of

the students would attend to improve their abilities as teachers and leaders in their villages, making the Institution, for most of its students, a kind of ‘in service’ teacher training college.

Excitement about Native missionaries

The decision to establish the Institute created excitement among the people. Experience had taught them how things had worked over the years, the gradual progression as many individuals became Members of Society, Class Members, Class Leaders, Local Preachers, Teachers, Head Teachers, and Stewards (*tauhi*). Now there was a new hope, a new amazing possibility. Some chosen ones could become Assistant Missionaries, and that led some of the people in Vava'u, Wilson said, to speak of the Institution as a miracle (me'a mana) (MINUTES AND REPORTS*, FIDM 1843).

The miracle that people were dreaming about was that the Institution would *raise up Missionaries from among themselves!* (*ibid*). The seeds of that hope were being planted as the Institution experiment got under way. Instruction was being given, appointments of 'graduates' were being made. But using the title Assistant Missionary would be a long time coming. The missionaries believed there would be difficulties in placing graduates of the Institution with a title 'Assistant Missionary', over older, faithful teachers already ministering as *shepherds of the flock*, in villages where they had lived and worked for the church for some years before the advent of the Institution. So, for some years the title Head Teacher, or Institution man, was applied to graduates. (INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE, LETTERS AND JOURNALS* AMOS TO SECRETARIES 03/II/1853)

First graduates appointed to the Outer Islands

Niuatoputapu was the first place to receive an Institution man. In March 1843, Chairman of the District, John Thomas, and Francis Wilson, Superintendent of the Native Training Institution, together with five students from the Institution, set out from Vava'u for the Niuas to:

*preach and visit the societies and place teachers where they
should be needed and carry them a supply of books.* (LETTERS
AND JOURNALS* WILSON, 25/03/1843)

For many years the Niuatoputapu and Niuafo'ou people had been asking for a missionary. Come and help us was their cry. Ha'apai and Vava'u had sent teachers from the 1830s. Taufa'ahau from Ha'apai, and Finau with William Cross, from Vava'u had taken teachers to what was called the outer Islands. Cross spent some weeks there encouraging the work of the teachers that had been sent from Vava'u and Ha'apai. Peter Turner offered to be appointed there but

his colleagues believed the numbers in the Niuas were too small, the distances too great, and travelling in Tongan canoes too dangerous to consider appointing one of their number there. Furthermore, they thought that there were more important priorities, Fiji for example. And the people on Niuatoputapu and Niuafo'ou seemed to be getting on very well with the untrained teachers who had been working there for years, encouraged by a very occasional visit by a missionary.

(Hunt, Memoir of Cross, p.62; Minutes and Reports*, FIDM 25/11/1833; FIDM 11/06/1834; FIDM 25/11/1833; FIDM 11/6/1834; Incoming Correspondence* Watkin to Secretaries, 27/02/1834; Tucker to Secretaries, 23/01/1835; P. Turner to Secretaries, 19/06/1835.)

Now, after a decade or more of appeals for help, some trained men, Institution men and their families, were about to be appointed. English Missionaries were what the Niua people wanted, but such appointments were not local missionary or Mission Committee priorities. The Institution men were what were being offered as a substitute. They would be an advance on the basically untrained teachers who had been sent, over the years, from Ha'apai and Vava'u to pioneer the lotu in these distant places.

The 301 Members of Society at Niuatoputapu in 1843 were the first to receive a 'graduate' of the Institution. Tiafilusi [Theophilus] Otu was the chosen one. He had been in the Institution for a little over a year, but the calls for help from the outer islands were so strong that it was decided to send some of the best of the Institution men, even though they had not completed the two years recommended in the Rules. Nevertheless, Wilson had confidence in his student .He believed that he would fulfill the role of a Missionary and:

should be able to answer many of the questions on the meaning of Scripture which the Local Preachers wish to propose, and will, if he continues steady, in some measure supply the place of a Missionary. (LETTERS AND JOURNALS WILSON, JOURNAL, 01/04/1843).*

An Institution man for Niuafo'ou

After a brief stay at Niuatoputapu, when they distributed books *gratis* to Local Preachers and Leaders, and left Tiafilusi to do the work of a missionary, Thomas and Wilson set sail for Niuafo'ou. (*ibid*). Arriving at Niuafo'ou they found solid lotu work going on: there were 6 chapels and 597 members of Society. They were able to leave two additional teachers there, Institution men with their wives and children, to support the three teachers who were already working there, workers who had been left there by Waterhouse and Tucker in 1841. (*WJO 1854, p25ff*).

The mission printer, George Kevern, who farewelled Thonmas, Wilson and the teachers destined for Niuatoputapu and Niuafo'ou, was high in his praise of these Institution missionaries who were, *in the absence of European Missionaries*, about to fill a gap in the mission's work:

The service performed by a Native Agency is exceedingly important and valuable and perhaps a more eligible band of Tonguese Teachers never left the shores of the Friendly Islands than those who have just taken their departure in the 'Triton'. Four of them have been under a course of training in the Institute at Vavau [Vava'u] and reflect credit on Brother Wilson and also evidence the value of such an establishment for training a native agency. (LETTERS AND JOURNALS, KEVERN TO SECRETARIES, 14/04/1843.)*

Paying the Institute men.

The District Meeting had already decided that Assistant Missionaries should receive £10 a year (in trade goods) plus some clothing from the Mission Store. (*Minutes and Reports* FIDM Institute Rules, Rule 17*). But there was a problem . The 'graduates' being appointed to the Niucas had not been recommended as Native Assistant Missionaries out of respect for the older teachers, the old hands who had done pioneering work in the outer islands and in other places in the Groupe. As Wilson described the dilemma, the graduates being left at the Niucas:

should have been recommended to the Committee as Native Assistant Missionaries being virtually such, but it was thought by some of the Brethren that it would be unjust and unfair to the old teachers already on the ground, for the new

ones to be placed so much above them, who were not their inferiors in natural talent or holy zeal but only in this that they had gone out before any Institution had been established. Hence it was thought they could not in fairness recommend them to the Committee as Assistant Missionaries unless they recommended some of the old hands also. (MINUTES AND REPORTS FIDM 13/05/1844. F WILSON. THIRD INSTITUTE REPORT.)*

So, the new men and their families being placed on Niuatoputapu and Niua-fo'ou would not be called Assistant Missionaries, but they would receive the 'salary' recommended in the Rules of the Institution, that is the £10 a year and clothing allowance. And what did that salary look like? Wilson tells us when describing the presents given to each of the new Head Teachers:

- 1 suit of clothes
 - 1 Native dress (2 fathoms of calico)
 - 1 complete Native Bible (that is covering all the books of Scripture printed, bound in cloth)
 - 1 School Book (containing the 1st and 2nd Conference Catechism in small script, small Geography of the World, in the form of quetions and answers)
 - 1 Looking Glass
 - 1 Butcher's knife
 - 1 Plane iron
- Paper, Pens, Ink, and a few Fish Hooks

For the wives:

- A shirt dress each
- Pair of leggings
- A box of thread, needles etc
- A few Books

This, Wilson noted:

*was their present for the year or salary it may be called and is a sample of what they were to receive annually. The articles vary according to the sorts of trade that were sent from home [England]. (LETTERS AND JOURNALS * WILSON JOURNAL VISIT TO THE OUTER ISLANDS, II/06/1844)*

The dilemma about what the graduates were to be called was resolved when some of the old hands such as Pita Vi were recommended as Assistant Missionaries. (SEE APPENDIX I)

The bold experiment interrupted.

Just three years into the Institution's brief history the 'experiment', the *me'a mana*, the miracle, received two heavy blows: Wilson became seriously ill and the Institution was destroyed by fire. It is hard to find much about the fire. Peter Turner included a passing comment about it. Around eight o'clock in the evening, he said:

The alarm was given that the institution was on fire and in a few minutes it was a heap of ruins. We are at a loss to conjecture what the motive can be or in what we have so much displeased some of our people. (TURNER P. JOURNAL VOL II ML B310 17/07/1845).

There had been other recent fires, at the Printing Office and the Mission House and the large Mission Store had been set alight resulting in £30 worth of goods being destroyed (*ibid* 04/11/1844). Turner and the other missionaries at Vava'u at the time (George Kevern, Stephen Rabone and John Spinney) had *some talk with the King about the burning of our houses* and he promised to do all he could *to make us comfortable.* (*IBID*, 08/07/1845).

More serious than the fire was the illness of the Superintendent of the Institution. For some months Francis Wilson was losing weight, had a persistent cough, was often breathless and spoke in a whisper and eventually had to be carried when he wanted to attend chapel or spend time outside the house. As he had *consumption* (Tuberculosis) he was not expected to live. (*ibid* 07/04/1845; 01/02/1846) He was too ill to attend the District Meeting in 1845 and his colleagues gave a verbal report about the Institution on his behalf. His last service was at the island of Falevai. It was Good Friday and he began the service but was too ill to continue. *He was brought home exhausted* his colleague Peter Turner said. In the early hours of the 4 of March 1846 he died. Turner, who was with him and saw his colleague's breathing *become louder and shorter and he gently and quietly fell asleep in Jesus.* (*IBID* 04/03/1846).

Mourning over the death of Wilson and the loss of the Institution, Turner could only say:

*How I lament that the Institution cannot now be continued.
I am now alone in this extensive Circuit, [Ha'afuluha]*
*Vava'u] with nearly 3,000 persons in Society, twenty eight
infant schools, sixty six adult schools, thirty preaching places,*

*in the midst of a blessed revival, (MN 1847 TURNER,
NELAFU, APRIL 1846)*

It would not be long, however, before the experiment was again attempted, and that not at Neiafu Vava'u but in Nuku'alofa, Tongatapu.

Reviving the Institution

The Mission Committee in London responded to Tonga's requests for help with education by announcing that they had made a significant appointment for the Friendly Islands Mission:

Mr. Amos, who has had thorough training in the Glasgow Normal Institution, with his wife, who has also been accustomed to tuition, is designed for the school department of the work. (MN 1847 editorial comment).

Apart from training at the Glasgow Institution he had additional educational experience. According to his son Richard Capewell Amos his father had also been a student at Dublin College. (*The Methodist* 06/212/1924.) Walter Lawry, General Superintendent of the Wesleyan Missions in Polynesia had the pleasure of bringing the Amos's to Tonga, together with other missionaries, the Davis, Daniel and Adams families and felt that the Amos appointment would mean that:

The Native Institution, which had declined after the death of Mr. Francis Wilson, is again revived; and from it I shall fully expect to see the same beneficial effects as we witness in New Zealand from the Institution there. (MN 1848 LAWRY JOURNAL 29/05/1847)

The Friendly Islands District Meeting, for its part, passed several important resolutions about the Institution at its 1847 meeting. The first recorded appreciation to the Committee for appointing Amos to Tonga and emphasizing the vital role of education in the Mission's work:

We are very thankful for the efficient aid sent out by the Committee for the purpose of assisting the Mission in educational effort, a part of our work which we deem second only to the preaching of the Gospel, but in which our progress will, we hope, be now satisfactory in future than in past time. (MINUTES AND REPORTS FIDM 14/07/1847).*

A second resolution placed on record the significant decision to restart the Institution with a new location, Nuku'alofa not Neiafu, and with an expanded purpose:

We agree to revive the Institution ... but which we hope may now be carried on in connection with the Training School at Tonga, [Teacher Training School] and by the same Master. (ibid)

The Nuku'alofa Institute would have a threefold purpose. Amos would be in charge of a Normal School for Children, a Training School for teachers and a Training Institution for Native Assistant Missionaries, all sharing the same ground and some of the the same buildings.

A third resolution included special provisions for Assistant Missionary candidates studying in the Institution:

*That the most hopeful young men in the District who are recommended by their respective Superintendents as fit persons for the Institution shall be supplied with a few articles of clothing out of the Stores and also with yams...
(IBID)*

The District Minutes of 1847also included other references to the arrival of the Amos's. The Ha'afuluha [Vava'u] School Report of 1847 said that:

We have been happy to welcome to this Mission Mr & Mrs Amos for the express work of training Natives for our Children's Schools.(IBID)

Lawry commented that

Forthwith [Amos] will start his training school at Nuku'alofa, composed of three divisions, namely, 1. Children 2. Catechists, 3. [those who would] rise to the rank of Native Assistant Missionaries. (MN 1848, LAWRY, JOURNAL, 13/07/1847)

Thomas expressed his pleasure that important educational improvements were beginning to take place, although he did sound a word of caution:

We are fully expecting that ere long these schools will be much improved through the means of the new and improved System introduced at Nuku'alofa by Bro. Amos, but we are called to exercise patience for the present, as several

untoward circumstances have occurred to retard the efforts of that zealous and dedicated brother in the good work. (IBID)

The *untoward circumstances* that fell heavily on the Institution would be explained in Amos's reports of 1848 and 1849. (*Minutes and Reports* FIDM 1848 and 1849.*)

The new and improved system

The appointment of Amos heralded major changes for the growing school 'system' in Tonga. The Glasgow System involved radical ideas and practices in the way the schools were conducted and how teachers were to be trained. And although there are frequent references by the missionaries to the new *Glasgow System*, no actual description is given of how that system was supposed to work in practice. David Stow, the creator of the scheme, published a book (reprinted many times over the years) in which he explained the system that Amos was to introduce to the Friendly Islands

In his introduction to the Glasgow system Stow lists *a few things* which he said were basic to his approach to education:

Physical Exercises

Marching and Singing

Simultaneous Reading

Answering, and the filling in of Ellipses [leaving out a word or words in a sentence to be filled in by the listener]

Playgrounds

Gallery training lessons on scientific subjects and particularly on Common Things

Daily Oral Bible Training Lessons.

Stow emphasized that his system required *an uncovered* and a covered school room. The *uncovered school room* was in fact the playground. In the playground, supervised by teachers, students experienced *healthful exercises* and *out of doors play*. The *circular swing* was an essential apparatus in the playground. It was a pole with ropes attached and, unlike an ordinary swing, (*the lazy habit of sitting on a seat and being swung backwards and forward*), *the circular swing allowed each individual child to be the regulator of his own movements*.

The *covered school room* included a gallery where up to one hundred students could be seated and where *simultaneous training* [up to 100 voices responding as one] could take place.

Daily Oral Bible Training Lessons were to be based on the picturing out method, using biblical images (the hen gathering her chickens under her wings, the well of water springing up to eternal life, the lilies of the field, all of which were *examples of the Saviour* as Stow called them). Starting with what the children were familiar with, picturing out allowed the teacher to *draw the lesson from the children in their own language*. (David Stow *The Training System of Education*).

Stow also made a significant point about the difference between teaching and training. Teaching involved giving the students material they were asked to learn. Training allowed the teacher to encourage the students to discover things for themselves. The Glasgow System involved a good deal of fun and physical activity. And as Sarah Farmer commented, the Glasgow system was likely to meet the taste of the people, *fond of evolutions and processions, and displays* (*SARAH FARMER TONGA AND THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS*, P.382)

Making a start on the Institution in Nuku'alofa

Soon after arriving in Nuku'alofa Amos commenced school even before all the basic buildings and equipment were in place. He reported to the Committee that:

The arrangements having been made with the King, a large house was soon in the course of erection and upon its completion, I had the old school house brought into my yard so that the Establishment is now neat and compact, all the premises being within the one large fence. (*LETTERS AND JOURNALS**, *AMOS TO SECRETARIES*, 13/06/1848).

One essential element of the system that was not adequate to begin with was the playground. The land that had been allocated was *hardly enough for the playground* but Amos was confident that when King George was next down in Nuku'alofa from Ha'apai he would *remedy this defect* and so it proved to be. (IBID).

The new system was readily accepted and the Committee in London was happy to report:

There had been difficulty sometimes [in the past] in getting the children to school. "Now," says Mr. Amos, "so attractive is the new system, there are numbers cleaned and lingering about our gate long before the hour, and asking whether it is not time to begin." (*SARAH FARMER*, P.382)

Amos remained enthusiastic and confident and assured the London Committee that:

The children are rapidly improving in knowledge and proficiency in reading, spelling, writing, geography, and arithmetic. The system of marching and singing is very popular indeed. The school is the most popular thing on the island and when the swings are up and the system in full operation the children's happiness will be complete. (IBID)

The Amos's enthusiasm and hopes for the future were soon frustrated, at least for a time, by events beyond their control .

Much depression and discouragement

In a Tonga School Report Amos detailed some of the difficulties that were encountered as they set about introducing the Glasgow System:

I commenced my operations some months ago in the old School House which the people removed near to the new dwelling house that had been erected for me; but in the great storm which visited the Island in January last the school house was levelled with the ground. Since that misfortune happened we have been obliged to hold the school in the Chapel. (MINUTES AND REPORTS, NUKU'ALOFA SCHOOL REPORT FOR 1848)

In his report on the Training School he added additional information about the many and varied difficulties he faced:

Two severe hurricanes destroyed the premises so that the instructions were suspended for a considerable time, until a temporary house could be erected in which the school has been held up to the present time. This building is exceedingly inconvenient, and I have not been able to bring the 'System' to bear upon the children because of these difficulties. This absence has considerably retarded the work ... We have no playground as yet, nor can we take the apparatus etc into the present dilapidated School House ... I have been the subject of much depression and discouragement ...

The want of suitable premises for the reception of Native Teachers from Haabai [Ha'apai] and Vavau [Vava'u] have prevented the missionaries from sending anyone from these Circuits so that the persons under training are individuals belonging to Nuku'alofa and have no ulterior view of removing from this place to take charge of Schools at a distance. The Chiefs of Nukualofa have, however, pledged themselves to make all necessary preparation for the Training Establishment and each missionary has engaged to select for the purpose of being trained, those who will be sent by the first opportunity.

Despite the barriers, Amos remained optimistic:

... Notwithstanding these obstacles I am conscious of having done my best to improve the children & teachers, and many have learned to read and write, while others have made steady progress in Geography, Arithmetic, and Scriptural knowledge and select members have acquired the elements of

the English language. (MINUTES AND REPORTS FIDM
TRAINING SCHOOL AT NUKU'ALOFA 1849)*

Amos included a chart showing the numbers involved in the children's Normal School and those being prepared as teachers in the Training School.

Teachers in training 6 male and 5 female, Reading Scripture 55, Writing 55, Geography 55, Arithmetic 40, Reading Lessons 75, English 22.

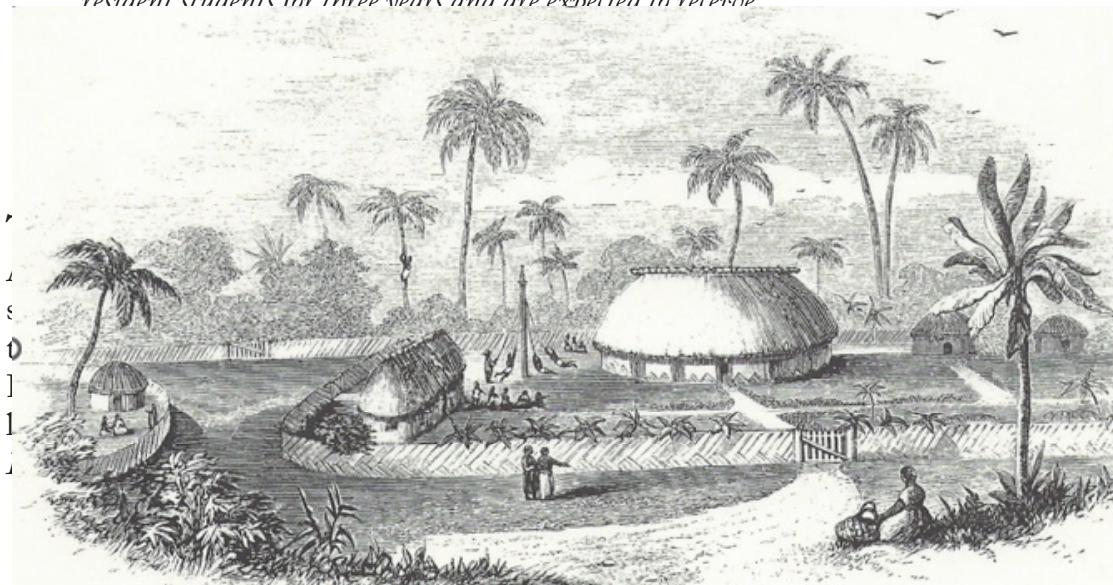
Total boys 71. Total girls 108. Total in school 179.

He completed his report with reference to the results of the system which showed some anticipated improvements in the Mission's educational work:

We have Samson Latu at Niua [Niuatoputapu] and Elisha Tupou at Niuafoou [Niuafo'ou] who were trained in this Institution also four young men at Vavau [Vava'u] and three at Haabai [Ha'apai] who were in some measure benefitted by the instruction given here, but they left before the completion of their term of residence. (IBID).

In conclusion Amos spoke about the likely decisions of the District Meeting:

most of the Teachers now in the Institution have been resident students for three years and are expected to receive



Training Institute, Tonga from Sarah Farmer, Tonga and the Friendly Islands, 1855, based on a sketch provided by Richard Amos.

In what can be seen as prophetic Amos referred to the Institution (Normal School, Training School and Training Institution) as *College like*.

The sketch was followed up by Amos with a detailed explanation of it. The Committee in London was told that:

The house opposite the gate is the Childrens' School, the house on the left is the Institution or fale [House of Learning he called it] for the Teachers under training – it has a front garden facing the public road to the sea – the space between the two buildings where the swing stands is our playground. The post of the swing is one immense ironwood tree with its immense trunk some eight feet in the ground. More than three hundred men went to cut it out of the bush and drag it to Nuku'alofa. From the house on the left there extends a broad path of five hundred paces length and stretches away inland to the right of the picture.

If you were standing at the back door of the house on the left and were to look down this long avenue it would present the appearance of a beautiful grove from which at measured distances small walks, bounded by myrtle trees, branch off at right angles and conduct you to the neat collages of the students who are all Local Preachers. Two of these cottages are prominent in the drawing to the right of the Children's School. The Centre Avenue is bordered with pineapples, and before each cottage is a neat grass seat in the form of a crescent which serves the teacher and his family for a dining room in the open air where they generally eat their meals.

We have built twenty such cottages on the ground during the past three years and wrought several thousand feet of wicker-work reed fencing, all belonging to the Mission. The inhabitants in Tonga say that it was never known since the world was drawn out of the ocean, that 22 men should fence in more than twenty acres of land with reeds out of the bush and plait all the sinnet themselves, besides planting their farms, fishing, cooking and attending to instruction every day.

Amos completed his description of the buildings and gardens of the Nuku'alofa Institute with the comment:

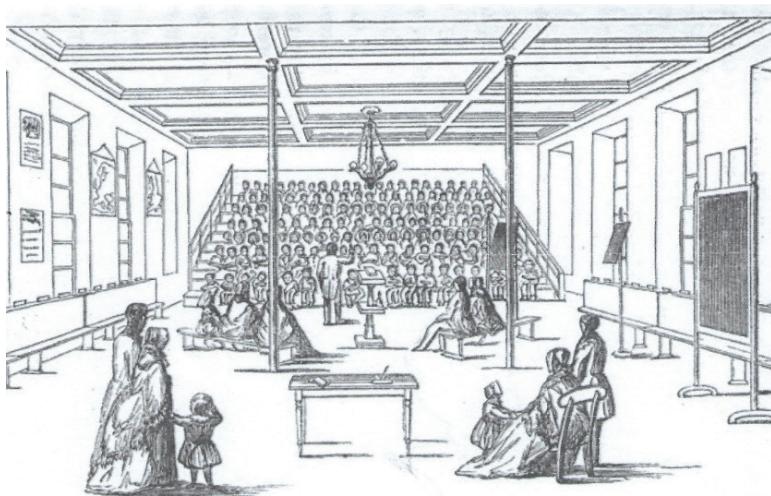
It may be my vanity, but I think there is no more pleasing feature in the Friendly Islands Mission than that which this College-like establishment presents. (LETTERS AND JOURNALS AMOS TO SECRETARIES, 19/05/1852)*

THE FIRST TRAINING SCHOOL FOR INFANTS.—1826-7.



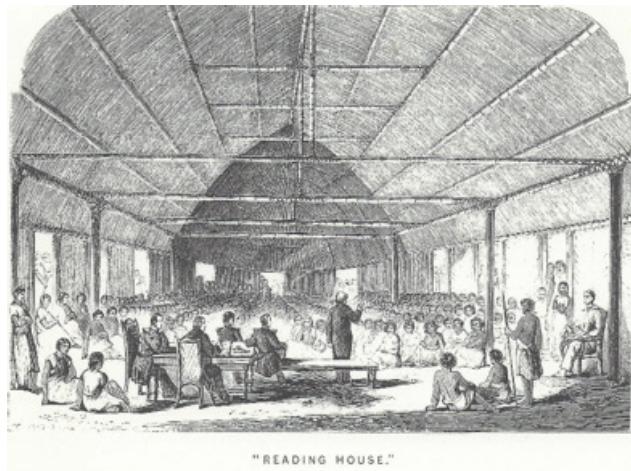
BACK HOUSE AND GARDEN—OFF DRYGATE STREET.

David Stow's The Training System of Education 1849



THE COVERED SCHOOL-ROOM—GALLERY.

David Stow's *The Training System of Education 1849*, p. 183, showing the Gallery.



Sarah Farmer's *Tonga and the Friendly Islands 1855* showing the Reading Room [The Glasgow System's Gallery] at the Institute in Nuku'alofa.

The Curriculum.

It is sometimes difficult to form a clear picture of the curriculum of the Institute because the establishment had three branches, the Normal School for children, the Training School for Teachers, and the Training Institute which prepared candidates for work as Native Assistant Missionaries.

By 1851 Amos reported to the Annual District meeting that he was having *some difficulty in conducting the Institute* [Institute for training Native Assistant Missionaries] but his duties *have generally given me pleasure. (Minutes Reports*FIDM 1851-2)*. He expressed the hope that if any of this class were able to aid the missionaries, he would be *abundantly satisfied* with his labour. (IBID)

He added that John Faubula is recommended to become an Assistant Missionary, Hezekiah Langi will take charge of the the *large school at Neiafu*, and Methuselah Fifita will be in charge of *the head school at Lifuka*. The remaining sixteen, he said, will be *distributed through the three groups of Tonga, Haabai and Vavaau* [Tongatapu, Ha'apai and Vava'u] *to commence Schools on the Glasgow System. (IBID)*

In some detail he described his work with the students being trained as Teachers:

Their knowledge of geography is by no means small, and they always listen with intense interest to our simple lessons in natural history and philosophy.

But their Scriptural knowledge is the most satisfactory. They show great concern about the meaning of the Bible, and our Bible lessons, with the plain lectures on Theology have removed the thick veil of ignorance from most of their minds. Mr Calvert [missionary in Fiji] obligingly supplied me with Hunt's lectures translated into Tonguese, and with Dr Hannah's Lectures and Dr Watson's Institutes as references.

I have prepared a course of Lectures which will supply all the Teachers with a compendious view of the Christian system. We have delivered twenty three lectures to which they paid great attention, and some have diligently transcribed them in full from my manuscript. (IBID)

Writing to the Secretaries of the Mission in London Amos gave a breakdown of a typical day at the Institution:

- Daybreak: Teachers do their gardens until 10 am.
- 8.00 am Conduct Children's School with the assistance of two students.
- At the conclusion of the Children's School the Teachers assemble and attend to instruction until 2.00pm

He went on to outline the content of his *weekly routine* with the teachers which included:

- Reading and Analysis
- Writing and Arithmetic
- Bible Training Lessons
- Sacred and General Geography
- Natural History and Philosophy
- Traditions of Tonga

He explained to the Secretaries in London that the *Traditions of Tonga* consisted of *conversations that I write down, in order to collect matter for a short history of the Friendly Islands to be printed in Tonguese.* (IBID)

In addition to the curriculum outlined above he held a *Singing Class* on Tuesday afternoons open to Normal School children and members of the Training School which he said was *quite fascinating to both children and teachers.* (ibid)

A summary of achievements 1848-1853

Walter Lawry's visit to Tonga in mid-1850 led him to heap praise on Richard Amos and his educational work at the Institute:

Education, he said, has received a most powerful impulse at the hands of Mr Amos, and gracious dew descends upon the hills of Zion, refreshing and cheering the minds of the Ministers, and quickening the souls of thousands throughout this land. (LAWRY SECOND MISSIONARY VISIT, P.105)

During his visit Lawry had asked King George what benefits Christianity had brought to Tonga and the King, in a written reply, stressed the importance of the institute:

I am very very pleased in my mind with Mr Amos's Institution, and my will is that these schools of Mr Amos's teaching shall ever abide in the land and be handed down for the benefit of our seed after us. (IBID)

Just two months after Lawry's visit, King George gave practical support to his praise of Amos's school. He and Queen Charlotte sent their young son George Vuna from Ha'apai to Nuku'alofa to be enrolled in the Normal School. He was to live with the Amos family and take advantage of all that the new system of education had to offer. Both King George and Queen Charlotte sent young George Vuna off with letters of advice and encouragement. The King's letter is particularly significant. He told young George Vuna to pay attention to what Mr Amos was offering. Written in his own hand, he, urged his son to:

Oborou tohi kia'e koe ne fak
eku ofa kiho mata oku ika
tuku eku hufia koe koke e i
kesne faka bolo koe ihe gane
ave koe kia'i bea ukonu lala
te koe ko hoku fohā keke tokag
lahi kike gane oku ke iai na
gane oku ke iai na koe gane o
lahi bea mamafa bea faigata
ka koe gane iku fugani hono le
ihe gane kotoa'e i namanam

Extract from Taufa'ahau's letter to Vuna 23/09/1850

Miscellaneous Papers* 1827-1877

Queen Charlotte's letter to her son prayed that his time at the school in Nu'
ku'aloa would make him *wise quickly in the work which has been appointed you.*

She went on:

*I say to you Vuna, endure the separation of you and me in
these days [Vuna was about 9 years of age at the time], and
be wholly engaged in your duties, for it will be for your
happiness, both in temporal and spiritual point of view. You
will grow up, in consequence, useful to God and his work.
You will be of service to the King, your father, and will
become a blessing to the country and the people. (MJO
July-August 1851 Queen Charlotte to George Vuna,
23/09/1850)*

Amos, too, was pleased to be able to report favourably about the Institute's usefulness, highlighting some significant progress to the District Meeting of 1852. Despite inadequate school buildings and the destruction caused hurricanes significant developments were emphasized. First of all, the Institution for training Head Teachers and prospective Native Assistant Missionaries, was now in operation. As he explained:

During the first two years of my residence there was no Normal Seminary [Assistant Missionary Training Institution] but merely a Training School for teachers who were learning the Glasgow System. You already know the reasons which led to the delay of two years before the Training Institution could be put upon its proper basis...Previous to the formation of the present Establishment a few persons were instructed in several branches of a common education, and are now useful members of our church and active agents in our schools, (MINUTES AND REPORTS FIDM 1851-52)*

The Normal School for children and the Training School for teachers had been operating soon after Ricard and Elizabeth Amos arrived in Tonga. Now, with the aid of several assistants, the Institution was becoming fully functional:

Thomas Tuakilamea, the first to attach himself to our school is our Singing Master (also useful as well in teaching singing in Normal School). Shadrack Mumui attended the school before the Institution commenced and took the elementary part of instruction in the Institute and left me at liberty to attend to the higher class. John Mohulamu, a youth of no ordinary intellectual powers is Master of the Training School at Nuku'alofa in which he was once a scholar. (IBID)

Amos's missionary colleagues had been encouraged and hopeful for the school system when his appointment was first announced. Their excitement and relief were justified as he was to be the first fully qualified teacher to be appointed to the Friendly Islands. Additionally, his wife was an experienced teacher. Peter Turner, in Ha'apai, was typical of his colleagues who, although they were not trained teachers, they were involved in running or overseeing or assisting with the schools on the stations where they were ministering. When Amos arrived, there were eight missionaries already appointed to Tonga: John Thomas, Thomas Adams, George Daniel, Walter Davis, Stephen Rabone, W.G.R. Stephenson, Thomas West and Matthew Wilson). As Tuner reported to the District Meeting of 1848, he was looking forward to Amos and the new missionaries as Tonga would enter a new age raising up of good Native School Masters. (MINUTES AND REPORTS* FIDM 1848, HA'APAI SCHOOLS REPORT).

Once Amos had the Glasgow System underway in Nuku'alofa his colleagues were hoping to see is the benefits. Vava'u was waiting to receive:

the help of teachers from Tonga, who have undergone some training in the Normal School System under Mr Amos.
(MINUTES AND REPORTS FIDM 1848 VAVA'U SCHOOL REPORT.)*

And when Amos visited the Niuas in 1854 he could report that the Assistant Missionary, Jone Latu was doing good work and that Elisha Tubou, *my old scholar* from the Institution in Nuku'alofa, had:

gone so far ahead as to set up a Normal Institution with fourteen students and had hired an Englishman who touched at the Island in a whaler to serve as a sub-teacher.
(MN 1855. AMOS TO SECRETARIES, 17/10/1855)

Visitor impressions of the Institute

During Walter Lawry's visit to Tonga in 1850, as General Secretary of Missions in the Pacific, he became quite emotionally stirred on several occasions. One such instance was during his visit to Amos's Institution in Nuku'alofa:

These youths were examined in reading, writing, spelling, figures, and the Catechism; in all which they quite astonished me. There is no lack of intellect, nor of application in these persons, and their order would do credit to any school in any land; but when they repeated, by chanting, the Mathematical-Table and Catechism, all at once, everyone keeping the most exact time, the same note was struck by two hundred tongues at the same instant, and the interest continued to rise, until the youths themselves became much excited, and all present partaking of the enthusiasm, the interest flowed on till it reached its highest point, and swelled into a gust of rapture. The tears rolled freely down my face while I witnessed that most lovely scene and I felt that such an exhibition would cast into the background every lion in Europe. (LAWRY, SECOND VISIT, 1850, P.8)

Lawry had already witnessed Amos marching and counter marching his pupils on the green outside the school room and had inspected the cottages and gardens belonging to the students in training as Assistant Missionaries or for teaching positions. These gardens, and cottage he said, had nearly sustained the Institution during the past year. (*ibid*) The gardens and cottages were an essential part of the Institution and were called Eden by the students. (WJO 1854 SHEM MAFI TO AMOS. FOA, HA'APAI, 14/08/1853)

Lawry spent five hours with Mr Amos at his school and Institution and concluded that the Amos's had succeeded beyond expectations and would likely give Tonga a trained and greatly educated population. (Lawry, Second Visit, 1850, pp.10, 56).

The Rev Robert Young visited Tonga in 1853 as a representative of the Wesleyan Church in England to report on the state of the church in Australia, New Zealand and the South Sea Islands. His report was to recommend if England's Wesleyan Church was to continue administrative and financial links with the Wesleyan Churches in the 'Southern World'. During his stay in Tonga, he had the opportunity to evaluate the Training Institution in Nuku'alofa. He was impressed by what he saw and heard:

The students of the Normal Training Institution ... fourteen in number, three of whom were females, comprising the Queen, the wife of the Chief Justice, and ... a most extraordinary woman, a poetess, – the Mrs. Hemans of Tonga. The

Queen submits to the rules of the Institution, and toils, as a student, that she may keep pace with others, as she says it would never do for any native of the country to know more than the Queen. They were examined in reading, spelling, and arithmetic as far as reduction, acquitting themselves well, and indeed making but one mistake. Their answers to questions on Scripture history were prompt and correct. Their attempt to read English was encouraging; but in translating English into Tongese they were not so successful. They all appeared in the European costume and looked remarkably well. Three of the students, men of considerable promise, were being trained with a view of their entering the Ministry, and the other male students to prepare them for taking charge of village schools. (YOUNG, SOUTHERN WORLD P.228)

At the same time (1853) the Vava'u Schools Report noted that the teachers who had been at the Institute in Tonga were making a noticeable difference in the schools where they were working:

The few schools conducted by those teachers who have been under the instruction of Mr Amos for a suitable time have an acknowledged superiority over others and people are beginning to estimate their value and are now anxious to have such teachers placed among them. (MINUTES AND REPORTS FIDM 1853 VAVA'U SCHOOLS REPORT)*

Similarly, the Schools Report from Ha'apai praised the work of the graduates from the Institution:

The teachers who have completed their term in learning the training system have returned to Ha'apai and commenced schools in different parts of the Group have given a new and mighty impulse to our schools. (IBID HA'APAI SCHOOL REPORT.)

Not everyone, however, was so enthusiastic about what was happening in Nuku'alofa. There were criticisms of the way the system was working in practice. The Institute was too focused on Tonga[tapu] at the expense of the rest of the group. There were many schools throughout the whole of Tonga and there were only a few graduates coming out of the Institution in Nuku'alofa. As early as 1849 the comments were that Vava'u, for example, had not benefited by the new system and that it would be *some time ere they will receive much benefit.* (*Minutes and Reports* FIDM 1849*) The solution the report suggested was to have Amos

moved to Vava'u. Having him in Vava'u would eliminate the problem of students having to relocate to Nuku'alofa for training. As it was, there was *little hope of finding suitable persons who will make the sacrifice of living at Tonga for two years or more.* (*ibid*). A year or so later the problem was still present. As the Ha'apai School report indicated:

*There was little help from the Institution and the teachers
who were sent thither to learn the Glasgow system [are] still
under Mr Amos's tuition.*

The annual statistical reports highlighted the problem. The few graduates coming out of the Institution made little impact on the Friendly Island's very large educational system. In the Ha'apai Groupe alone there were dozens of schools, (52), hundreds of teachers (312) and thousands of scholars. (2560). (*MINUTES AND REPORTS* FIDM 1851-52, HA'APAI SCHOOL REPORT*).

Amos himself was aware that not everyone was happy and some comments in his report to the District Meeting of 1853 raise the possibility of a move away from Tongatapu. As he foreshadowed, when *an adequate number of schoolmasters had been trained for this Circuit [Tonga]* then *the Institute itself could be removed to Ha'apai or Vava'u.* (*Minutes and Reports* FIDM 1853*). Amos explained why he made such a suggestion. The geography of the Friendly Islands [its *irregular character* he called it] meant that the benefits of the Training School were limited to *the island on which it* [the Institution] was situated (*ibid*). He went on to say that locating the Institute in Nuku'alofa was a significant barrier because:

*The teachers of Haabai and Vavau [Ha'apai and Vava'u]
are unwilling to remain three years in Tonga. (IBID).*

More importantly, perhaps, in the discussions about moving Amos to Vava'u was the attitude of the Acting Chairman of the District Thomas West. In a letter to the Mission Secretaries in London, which criticized the Institution, he stressed that he was not critical of Amos's abilities. As he assured the Committee, Amos was *a talented man and we esteem him as such.* However, he wanted the Secretaries to know that:

The Training Institution has been in a very discouraging state during the last two years ... the Glasgow system of Education has not been taught to the teachers trained at the Institution nor introduced in the schools-nor even such a modified form of it. (MINUTES AND REPORTS WEST TO SECRETARIES, 24/07/1854).*

West's criticisms must be judged against the massive task that Amos was being asked to address. When West wrote his letter to London there were 7,111 scholars in 202 schools being taught by 208 teachers! And the majority of the schools were in Vava'u and Ha'apai. (*AUSTRALASIAN WESLEY METHODIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY REPORT 1855*).

+++

During the visit of Robert Young issues about the Institution were discussed, and following his visit it was agreed that the Amos family be moved Vava'u. to concentrate on the Glasgow system. As Amos said to the Committee, with uncharacteristic brevity for such a significant decision:

It is decided I remove to Vavaau [Vava'u], in compliance with the request of the Chiefs and on account of the health of my wife and family who are unwell. (INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE. LETTERS AND JOURNALS AMOS TO SECRETARIES 17/10/1854)*

The District Meeting minutes were equally brief about what was a substantial change:

it has been resolved that Mr Amos and his training system be removed to Vavaau [Vava'u] (MINUTES AND REPORTS: FIDM 1854).*

Vava'u was pleased with the move. The District meeting believed it would lead to real progress, at least for the Vava'u Circuit:

We trust that our educational department will receive considerable impetus from the coming of Mr Amos into the Circuit, to give them the advantage of the training system. He has commenced with about sixteen young men who are all willing, when they have been instructed, to go to any place to which they may be appointed to conduct the schools. (MN 1855 AMOS TO COMMITTEE 17/10/1854).

The emergence of 'Circuit Institutes'.

The move to Vava'u effectively meant the demise of the three stage Institution in Nuku'alofa and the emergence of a series of 'Circuit Institutions'. Amos ran the Normal school at Neiafu until he and his wife, because of ill health removed to Sydney in 1858. During the years, 1858-1865, 'institution training' and other

educational work was carried on, in various ways, by the missionaries appointed to the several Circuits. At least ten or more missionaries served in Tonga during those years. A selection of comments from some of them show that they saw training as important.

John Thomas told the Committee:

You will be glad to learn that Bro. Adams is most actively engaged at Vava'u where without a colleague he has the Circuit to look after and has an Institute of forty or more young men whom he is training for the ministry. (INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE, LETTERS AND JOURNALS, THOMAS TO SECRETARIES 08/10/1858)*

Thomas Adams himself informed the Secretaries about his responsibilities:

I have an Institution containing about forty students from which I hope to send forth an improved race of school masters to the villages. (INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE, LETTERS AND JOURNALS, THOMAS ADAMS TO SECRETARIES 01/12/1858).*

Walter Davis, in the Circuit Report for Ha'apai noted that:

Special attention is being paid to the Institution, which is felt to be valuable in training native agents. (SMH 16/04/1861)

George Lee, at Vava'u, working *this large circuit alone* was responsible for:

the printing office, the work of training a native agency [Institute work], the superintendence of the schools, as well as the ordinary work of managing and ministering ... (IBID).

Frank Firth was also actively involved with teaching and training when he was appointed to Vava'u in 1861:

We have a weekly school to assist the school masters and young Local Preachers and are just commencing an "Ako" or Native Training Institution... with eighteen young men (INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE, LETTERS AND JOURNALS, FIRTH TO SECRETARIES 20/11/1862).

Joseph Shaw, newly appointed to the Friendly Islands in 1859 summed up the 'Native Training' situation as he saw it, with each missionary making his own particular contribution:

*The Institution at Tonga has been given up for some time.
Each of the brethren in the different stations [Tonga,
Ha'apai and Vava'u Circuits] has his class of young men and
is endeavoring to do all in his power to help the teachers and
local preachers in the acquisition of that knowledge which is
necessary for proper discharge of their duties. (INCOMING
CORRESPONDENCE. LETTERS AND JOURNALS* SHAW TO
SECRETARIES 12/12/1859).*

And that was the arrangement operating in the 1860s when the King pressed the church to revive the Institute at Nuku'alofa.

Reviving the Nuku'alofa Institution.

John Thomas wanted Nuku'alofa revived as did King George. The Thomas's had retired from Tonga in 1850 after nearly 40 years in Tonga but returned a few years later and it was during this return that he wished that the Nuku'alofa Institute could become operational again. King George also wanted the Nuku'alofa Institute restored. The Mission Committees in London and Sydney knew something had to be done because Rabone, former Missionary in Tonga and now Mission Secretary in Sydney, had told them that the Friendly Islands wanted a missionary appointed to *pay efficient attention to the Native Training Institution.* (Rabone to Boyce 20/02/1863). When nothing was being done, King George put pressure on the church, bringing matters to a head with what amounted to a threat to do something about it himself.

The King's interest was not a sudden impulsive move. For three decades he had been an enthusiastic supporter of education . In the late 1820s, even before a missionary was appointed to Ha'apai he had 'employed' a castaway sailor to begin teaching him to read and write. In the early mission days in Ha'apai he attended school with his people. He and the Queen had attended Jane Tucker's Mental Improvement Class. He had taken a leading role in establishing the first Institute in Vava'u in 1841. In 1850, together with Queen Charlotte, he had sent Prince Vuna to Amos's Institute in Nuku'alofa. And in 1853 he preached the famous sermon in Lakemba Fiji: *My people perish for lack of knowledge. (HOSEA 4:6 YOUNG, SOUTHERN WORLD, P.287).*

The King's sermon, although directed to the large Tongan congregation in Lakemba, contained some of his key beliefs that applied in Tonga just as importantly as in Fiji. The King chose his text from Hosea because he had:

learned that his own subjects residing at Lakemba for the purpose of building canoes, were not very attentive to the means of intellectual and moral improvement established among them in connexion with our Missions. (IBID)

The content of the sermon was important: the *evil of ignorance*, the centrality of the Book, the Bible as a compass, a chart, telling us where we are and where we are going, and the lotu providing the ability of man for usefulness. (IBID p.454).

The manner in which the sermon was delivered was, perhaps equally as important as the content of the address. Young was profoundly moved by the King's obvious deep commitment to education, in the sermon *delivered with such gracefulness, fluency and energy*. Young went on describing the effects of the royal preacher's words. When King George held up a copy of the New Testament, Young said, the preacher's voice:

became elevated, his countenance radiant, his manner impassioned, and his utterance powerfully eloquent. (IBID).

Nathaniel Turner, former Superintendent of the Friendly Islands Mission, was with Young and would have interpreted the King's message for him and would, perhaps, have been the translator of the sermon as it appears in English in Young's published Journal).

The way forward

The King's *energy and passion*, a decade on from the Hosea speech, was obviously still there when he urged the church to appoint a missionary with specific responsibility to revive the Institution in Nuku'alofa: As Rabone informed the General Secretary of Wesleyan Missions W.B.Boyce:

It is said that they [Wesleyans in the Friendly Islands] must have a man in these Islands to take charge of the Native Educational Department. And so interested is King George in this matter that he has said something to the effect if the Missionary Society cannot give them a man, they must get one not a missionary to do this work. (INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE, LETTERS AND JOURNALS, RABONE TO BOYCE 20/10/1864).*

Rabone was dismayed at the prospect of the King choosing someone *not a missionary*:

Who can say what sort of a man they may get and a wrong man in charge of the Native Schools would soon do incalculable mischief. (IBID)

Three months later, King George's ultimatum bore fruit. Rabone was able to report that James Egan Moulton, Headmaster at Newington Collegiate Institute in Sydney, was appointed to Tonga and that his:

peculiar aptness for teaching and the pressing necessity long felt in Tonga for such a person indicated this as his providential sphere. (LETTERS FROM MINISTERS AND MISSIONARIES RABONE TO BOYCE 19/02/1865).*

Almost forty years later Moulton recalled leaving Newington for Tonga, telling a large crowd at a Tupou College Speech Day in 1901 that he had been appointed to the Native Training Institution, *at the express invitation of the Old King [King George] (SMH 23/08/1901)*.

Anticipating great things

When the Moulton's arrived in Tonga in May 1865 Rabone commented to Boyce that the church could now *anticipate great things from this Institution.* (*Incoming Correspondence, Letters and Journals** Rabone to Boyce 22/08/1865).

Great things certainly resulted from Moulton's appointment. The year 1865 saw the first steps taken to transform the District Training Institution into something more extensive than it had been previously. *Henceforth*, a report in numerous papers in Australia announced *it is to be known as 'Tubou College' in honour of the good King George ...* (SYDNEY MORNING HERALD 26/01/1869; AD-ELAIDE ADVERTISER, 25/08/1869; THE EMPIRE, 26/01/1869; THE NEWCASTLE CHRONICLE, 28/01/1869).

Appendix I The Pioneer Native Assistant Missionaries 1841-1865.

... Although the Assistant Missionaries were vital in the foundational years of the Church their contribution has been largely ignored. More research needs to be done before these pioneers can be given their just recognition.

Francis Wilson, first superintendent of the Native Training Academy in Vava'u in 1842 made significant comments about some of the head teachers who entered the Institution. For some years before its establishment they had been carrying out important missionary roles well beyond the classroom. The typical head teacher, he said:

exercises a general superintendency over the work where he resides. He is the Bishop of the place. He is called in Tongan the Tauhi -that is 'the one who provides for and watches over'. He is the Shepherd of the flock where he resides.

(*INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE* WILSON TO SECRETARIES, 19/04/1844*).

Following the satisfactory completion of their course of study at the Institution the candidates were to become Native Assistant Missionaries.

A few other individuals who had been assisting with mission work before the Institution was established were also recognised as Assistant Missionaries. Benjamin Latuselu and Pita Vi fit into this category.

The following list of Assistant Missionaries for the period 1847-1865, which includes graduates of Wilson's Vava'u Institute, Amos's Nuku'alofa Institute, and several who were called 'old hands', has been compiled from *the Records of the Methodist Missionary Society (as filmed by the Australian Joint Copying Project)* *Minutes and reports of district committees, 1822-1862* and from *the Reports of the Australasian Wesleyan Missionary Society 1855-1865*, some of which were published in the Sydney Morning Herald and the Empire (Sydney), the South Australian Register and the South Australian Advertiser (ADELAIDE).

The original spelling contained in the Reports and Minutes is reproduced verbatim and stations to which Assistant Missionaries were appointed have been shown in brackets in the list below.

1847 Benjamin Latuselu (NIUA TOBUTABU)

(MINUTES AND REPORTS* FRIENDLY ISLANDS DISTRICT 1847)

1852 John Latu (Niua Foou)

- Benjamin Latuselu (Niua Tobutabu)
Peter Vi (Haabai)
(MINUTES AND REPORTS* FRIENDLY ISLANDS DISTRICT
06/04/1852).
- 1853 John Latu
Peter Vi
John Faubula
David Kata
(MINUTES AND REPORTS* FRIENDLY ISLANDS DISTRICT
22/04/1853).
- 1854 Peter Vi (HAABAI)
David Kata (HAABAI)
Benjamin Latuselu (VAVAU)
John Faubula (VAVAU)
John Latu (Niua Foou)
(MINUTES AND REPORTS* FRIENDLY ISLANDS
DISTRICT 06/06/1854).
- 1855 Benj. Latuselu N.A.M. (Hahake Tongatabu)
John Latu N.A.M. (Eua)
Peter Vi N.A.M. (Tungua Haabai)
David Kata N.A.M. Haano [Haabai])
John Faubula N.A.M. (Falevai Vavau)
Ilaiase Langi N.A.M. (Niua Foou)
(Minutes and Reports* Friendly Islands District 07/09/1855. T
However, the Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Missionary
Society 1st Conference 8/01/1855 lists John Latu, not Ilaiase Langi,
as the Niua Foou appointment.)
- 1856 Benjamín Latuselu (TONGATABU).
John Latu (Eua).
Peter Vi (Haabai)
David Kata (Haabai).
John Faubula (Vavau).
Elias Langi (Niua Foou.)
(WESLEYAN AUSTRALASIAN CONFERENCE: FRIEND-
LY ISLANDS DISTRICT REPORT SYDNEY MORNING
HERALD 18/02/1856).
- 1857 5 Missionaries and 5 Assistant Missionaries.
(Australian Wesleyan Missionary Society. Sydney
Morning Herald 05/05/1857.)
- 1858 John Faubula (Tongatabu).
John Latu (Haabai).
David Kata (Haabai).
Pita Vi (Vavau).

- Mark Baogo. (Haabai).
Elias Langi (Niua Fo'ou).
Barnabus Ahogalu. (Samoa).
(Colonial Wesleyan Conference Stations 1858.
South Australian Register (Adelaide), 19/02/1858.
- 1859 Three un-named Native Assistant Missionaries were admitted into full *connexion*. Naphtali Fifita and John Mahulamu are possible two of the un-named ones and Phillip Taufa may be the third.(See note 5 below) (*SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ADVERTISER* 21/02/1859)
- 1860 Naphtali Fifita (Tongatabu).
John Mohulamu (Tongatabu).
Peter Vi (Haabai).
John Faubula (Haabai).
Elais Langi (Haabai).
John Latu (Vavau).
David Kata (Vavau).
Barnabas Ahogalu (Samoa Satufaitea).
Mark Baogo (Niua Foo).
(*ADELAIDE ADVERTISER* 03/03/1860).
- 1861 Naphtali Fifita (Tongatapu).
John Mohulamu (Tongatapu).
Phillip Taufa (Eua).
Pita Vi (Haapai).
John Faubula (Haabai).
Elias Langi (Haabai).
David Kata (Vavau).
John Latu (Leimatua Vavau).
Mark Baoga. (Niua Foo).
Barnabas Ahogalu (Satufaitea [Samoa])
(WESLEYAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY, FRIENDLY
ISLANDS DISTRICT REPORT. SYDNEY MORING
HERALD 16/04/1861)
- 1862 David Kata (Maofaga).
Peter Vi (Kolonga).
Napthali Fifita (Eua).
John Mohulamu (Haano Haabai).
Elias Langi (Uiha, Haabai).
John Faubula (Haafeva Haabai).
John Latu (Leimatua Vavau).
Philip Taufa. (Niua Foo).
Mark Baoga. (Niua Tobutabu).
Barnabas Ahongalu. (Satupaitea, Samoa).

(Stations of Ministers and Preachers on trial in connection with the Australasian Methodist Conference. The South Australian Register (Adelaide) 24/02/1862).

- 1863 Mark Baogao (Houma Tongatabu).
David Kata Maofaga Tongatabu).
Peter Vi (Kologa Tongatabu).
John Faubula (Haano Haabai).
John Latu (Haafeva Haabai).
Peter Tuakifalelei (Nomuka Haabai).
James Fonua (Leimataua Haabai).
Phillip Taufa (NIUA FOOU).
Elias Langi (Niua Tobutabu) .
(Australasian Wesleyan-Methodist Missionary Society 1864 for the year 1863, Friendly Islands District Stations: The Empire 05/05/1863).
- 1864 Mark Baogo (Houma Tongatapu).
David Kata (Maofaga Tongatapu).
Pita Vi (Kologa Tongatapu).
John Faubula. (Haano Haapai).
John Latu. (Haafeva Haabai).
Peter Tuakifalelei. (Nomuka Haabai).
James Fonua. (Neiafu Vava'u).
Phillip Taufa. (Niua Foou).
Elias Langi. (Niua Tobutabu).
(AUSTRALASIAN WESLEYAN METHODIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY. REPORT 1864).
- 1865 Maake Baogo (Houma Tongatabu).
Tevita Kata (Maofaga Tongatabu).
Pia Vi (Eua).
Jone Faubula (Haano Haabai).
Jone Latu (Uiha Haabai).
Jotame Havea (Haafeva).
Phillip Taufa (FALALEU UVEAN)
James Fonua (NIUA FOOU).
Elaiasi Langi Niua Tobutabu).
(Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society. Report April 1865).

- 1865 Fiji District
As a matter of interest, the Fijian District Report for 1865 listed thirty four Native Assistant Missionaries,

twenty six of them were Fijians and eight were Tongans . The eight Tongans were Mathius Vave, Moses Manafainoa, Aaron Fotofili, Joel Bulu, Daniel Afu, James Havea, Paul Vea and Joel Nau. (Fiji District Report Australasian Wesleyan-Methodist Missionary Society 1865).

Friendly Islands District

Assistant Missionaries 1847 to 1865.

Barnabas Ahogalu.
Mark Baogo.
Naphtali Fifita.
John Faubula.
James Fonua.
Jotame Havea
David Kata.
John Latu.
Benjamin Latuselu.
Elias Langii.
John Mohulamu.
Phillip Taufa.
Peter. Tuakifalelei.
Peter Vi.

Notes relating to particular years

1. 1847. Benjaman Latuselu was the first to be appointed as an Assistant Missionary.
1. 1855. The District meeting of 1855 was the first after the establishment of the Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society following the separation from the English parent body. The Minutes of the 1855 meeting, for the first time, attached the letters N.A.M.(Native Assistant Missionary) to the names of each of the assistant missionaries.
2. 1857. The Report for the year simply says there were 5 Missionaries and 5 Assistant Missionaries with no names given for the missionaries or the assistant missionaries.
3. 1858. Mark Baogo's name sometimes appears in records as Boaga.
4. 1859. Three Assistant Missionaries '*were admitted into full connexion*. No names were provided. However, two new names appear the next year, in the 1860 listing, namely Naphtali Fifita and John Mohulamu. These could be two of the three un-named ones. Phillip Taufa could be the third.
5. 1861. The London Missionary Society and the Wesleyans were both involved in mission work in Samoa in 1861. The Tongan Wesleyan congregations were administered from Tonga as part of the Friendly Islands District. Hence Barnabas Ahogalu was listed in the Friendly Islands District Report for 1861.
6. 1862 Barnabas Ahogalu is again included in the Friendly Islands District Report. However, as from 1862 Samoa was made a separate District so the Tongan listing of Assistant Missionaries no longer included any Samoan appointments.
7. 1863. The annual report for 1863 said that there were *10 missionaries and 11 assistant missionaries* in the Friendly Islands District. No names were recorded.
8. In 1862 the Fiji District Report listed six Tongan Assistant Missionaries in the Fiji District: Joel Bulu, Daniel Afu, Moses Mana-fainoa, Mathius Vave, Aaron Fotofili and Paul Vea.
(Stations of Ministers and Preachers on trial in connection with the Australasian Methodist Conference. The South Australian Register (Adelaide) 24/02/1862).

AN ALPHABETICAL LIST
 OF THE
 WESLEYAN METHODIST
 NATIVE ASSISTANT MINISTERS,
 AND
 NATIVE PREACHERS ON TRIAL
 IN CONNEXION WITH
 THE AUSTRALASIAN CONFERENCE.

1851 Buli, Joel, <i>Lakemba</i> . 2	1856 Ngaropi, Samuel, <i>Mau-</i>
1852 Faubulu, John, <i>Vavan</i> 4	1856 <i>nukau</i> . 1
1856 Hannah, Philip, <i>Chat-</i>	1855 Takelo, Eliezer, <i>Rotu-</i>
<i>ham Islands</i> . 1	<i>mah</i> . 1
1854 Kata, David, <i>Haabai</i> . 3	1855 Thataki, Nathan, <i>La-</i>
1851 Ketetha, Joel, <i>La-</i>	<i>kemba</i> . 1
<i>kemba</i> . 2	1856 Tuilangi, Solomon,
1856 Langi, Elias, <i>Nina Toon</i> 1	<i>Ovalan</i> . 1
1852 Latu, John, <i>Tonga</i> . 1	1855 Vave, Matthias, <i>La-</i>
1848 Latusela, Benjamin	<i>kemba</i> . 1
<i>Tonga</i> . 2	1851 Vea, Paul, <i>Rewa</i> . 0
1851 Mamafuino, Moses,	1852 Vi, Peter, <i>Haabai</i> . 4
<i>Lakemba</i> . 2	

(EXTRACT FROM *AUSTRALASIAN WESLEYAN METHODIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY 1856*)

GENERAL RETURNS: FRIENDLY ISLANDS DISTRICT, 1855.

CIRCUITS.	Number of Chapels.	Other Preaching Places.	Missionaries.	Native Assistant Missionaries.	Catechists.	Day School Teachers.	Sunday School Teachers.	Local Preachers.	Full and accredited Church Members.		On Trial for Membership.	Number of Sabbath Schools.	Sabbath Scholars of both sexes.	Number of Day Schools.	Number of Day Scholars, both sexes.	Total Number of Scholars, deducting for those who attend both Sabbath and Day Schools.		
									Sub-paid Agents.	Unpaid Agents.						Males.	Females.	Total.
Tonga.....	37	..	2	2	..	60	2094	60	37	740	45	2120	955	1164	2120	
Haabai.....	21	..	2	2	..	50	2033	..	22	440	54	2066	848	1157	2000	
Vavau.....	32	..	2	1	..	70	1661	300	32	640	70	1800	746	1054	1800	
Nuiatobutabu.....	5	15	208	..	5	100	8	300	146	154	300	
Nuafoou.....	9	1	..	13	514	..	9	180	25	891	404	487	891	
Total	104	..	6	6	..	208	6500	360	105	2100	202	7111	3095	4016	7111	

(Extract from Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society 1856)

APPENDIX 2

Extract from the minutes of a meeting of the Friendly Islands District, begun at Lifuka, Habai, March 23 1841

The subject of Native assistant Missionaries having been carefully considered, it was resolved,

- (1) That there be an Institution for the training of Native Assistant Missionaries to be called “The Friendly Isles Wesleyan Academy, for the training of Native Assistant Missionaries”
- (1) That the Academy be at Vava'u [Vava'u].
- (2) That the candidates be selected from the list of Local Preachers on the different Stations, and carefully examined by the Missionaries as to their conversion, present state of Christian experience, their acquaintance with the Sacred Scriptures, their views of our doctrines, attachment to our discipline, their ability to communicate what they know, and their willingness to go to any Island where God and his Church may direct.
- (3) That the Candidates be placed under the supervision of the Rev.F Wilson, who shall instruct them in the great principles of Wesleyan Theology, as embodied in our standard works, also in the English Language, Geography, Writing, Arithmetic, and other branches of useful knowledge.
- (4) That King George be requested to free the Candidate's from all tributary labour and give to the Mission such a portion of land for their cultivation, from time to time, as may support them and their families while in the Institution. We suppose this will not occupy more than four hours of their time each day.
- (5) That every Superintendent shall furnish a character in writing of each person he recommends, and shall hold himself responsible to the District Meeting for the character so sent, which shall be entered into the Journal of the Institution, after the manner of entry in the Conference Journal.
- (6) That the Superintendent of Vava'u [Vava'u] and his colleague, be required to visit the academy at least once a month, and assist in any other way Bro Wilson may desire and that on each visit, they shall make an entry in the Journal, of the progress made by the Candidates, to which they shall add their signatures.

- (7) That the said Journal with a written report shall be presented at the Annual District Meeting, which report shall be regularly forwarded to the Committee.
- (8) That a Library of English Books be provided for the use of the Academy. The General Superintendent has kindly engaged to use his influence in the Colonies for that purpose.
- (9) That the Committee be respectfully requested to use their influence with the friends at home, to procure a supply of slates, paper, ink, pens, pencils &c &c and any useful elementary Books for the use of the Candidates. A pair of Globes are exceedingly desirable to give them a correct idea of the shape of the earth.
- (10) That ordinarily none be received into the Academy under the age of 20, nor above 30, and as few married as possible.
- (11) That in the event of Brother Wilson finding any incapable of learning, irregular in their health, or if any should become immoral in their conduct, he shall report such to the Preachers on the Station, who shall examine the case, and decide according to the best of their judgement.
- (12) That the missionaries in regular rotation shall be required to have one of the Candidate to preach at least once a fortnight, and report on the sermon at the weekly meeting of the missionaries.
- (13) That the Committee be respectfully requested to allow an annual grant of £20 in support of the said Academy should such an amount be needed.
- (14) That a building be erected contiguous to the Mission premises, costing not more than £10 in trade from the Store, and the Institutions commenced as soon as practicable, the state of the distant Islands requiring an improved order of Teachers.
- (15) That the time of the Candidates continuing in the academy shall be not less than 2 years, unless the wants of the District be so urgent, as to forbid their remaining so long.
- (16) That every Candidate having satisfactorily passed the above training shall be allowed when employed on any Station, a sum not less than £10 per annum, for himself and family: the people to whom he is sent supplying him with Native food.
- (17) That the District Meeting of 1842 shall examine the Candidates, and recommend to the Committee any of whom they may judge eligible to be immediately employed, stating their age, whether married, and if married, the character of the wife, their personal experience, and qualifications for the work, and the terms on which they are willing to be employed.

N.B The meeting gratefully accepts the contribution of a paper Globe from Brother Tucker, for the use of the Academy Item number (19) was actioned and

the Committee in London responded positively and the approval was minited during the District Meeting held at Nuku'alofa in May 1844. Under Agenda item XVII (information from the Committee) it was noted that correspondence had been received expressing approbation of our Native Institution. (MINUTES AND REPORTS* FIDM MINUTES, 13/05/1844)

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