

‘Running Away with Itself’: Missionaries, Islanders and the Reimagining of Cricket in Samoa, 1830–1939

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ABSTRACT

Missionaries were among the first and most influential bearers of European social practices in Oceania. While they sought to reshape the lives of Indigenous peoples, missionaries frequently found that Islanders reconfigured introduced practices in distinctive and sometimes disruptive ways. This essay explores this process using the example of sport and games, and particularly cricket, in Samoa. Despite initial reservations, by the late-19th century most missionaries considered European sports to be inoffensive and even useful in furthering their objectives. Samoan pastimes, however, were irremediably bound to ‘un-Christian’ practices such as lewd dancing, revelry and excess. This neat dichotomy was disrupted by the manner in which Samoans adapted *papalagi* (foreign) sports – principally cricket – in ways that obliterated their European character and instead catered to Samoan expectations of what recreation should be. After initial efforts to control and proscribe cricket, missionaries grew resigned to its place within increasingly ‘Samoanised’ churches.

Key words: Samoa, cricket, recreation, sport, missionaries, Christianity, empire, colonialism

In December 1887, Sir Albert Spicer and Revd Joseph King led a month-long deputation to Samoa to investigate the political and social factors that might have a bearing on religious life there. Upon their return they submitted a report to the directors of the London Missionary Society (LMS). Amidst discussion of local politics and Samoan social organisation, the authors paused to explain a peculiar development at the LMS mission. Owing to ‘the infantile weaknesses of Samoan character’, they wrote, missionaries of all denominations had been forced to introduce a strict disciplinary code that included the prohibition of cricket matches. Rather than keeping to the

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conventional rules of cricket, Samoans were playing month-long games featuring two hundred players per side. This Samoan adaptation of cricket, they concluded, had led to ‘very much that was distinctly heathenish’ and thus had to be curtailed.¹

This incongruous episode represents part of a wider contest over the meaning and practice of sporting recreation that took place in Samoa in the 19th and 20th centuries. While this essay focuses on the ways that missionaries sought to discipline Samoan recreation, the contest was more general; *papalagi* (foreigners) frequently expressed disquiet at customary Samoan forms of recreation, as well as the way that Samoans adopted and practised European sports and games.² For colonists and officials, disciplining Samoan recreation was part of a broader attempt to control their movement and labour. Missionaries often shared these concerns, but their efforts were rendered more urgent by the suggestive dancing, ‘gratuitous’ feasting and non-adherence of the Sabbath that accompanied large-scale Samoan social occasions. Instead, missionaries sought to direct Samoans towards European forms of physical recreation that were better aligned with their expectations of discipline, order and decorum.

As the ‘Imperial game’, cricket should have suited these purposes perfectly.³ Samoans had other ideas, however. In their hands cricket was recast as a distinctively Samoan game, replete with many of the elements that had raised missionary ire in the first place. While the LMS and other missionaries initially tried to proscribe such cricket, they were eventually forced to accept the game’s place in community life. This struggle to control the meaning of recreation is emblematic of broader contests that took place in 19th-century Samoa. The end result, moreover, hints at the more general ways that introduced social practices were frequently reconfigured in Samoa and throughout the region.

MISSIONARIES AND ‘RATIONAL’ RECREATION

The first envoys of Christianity in Samoa were not European missionaries at all, but beachcombers, Tongan Methodists and Samoans returning from neighbouring archipelagos. *Papalagi* missionary presence in Samoa began, however, with the arrival in 1830 of John Williams and Charles Barff of the LMS alongside six teachers from the Society Islands and two from Aitutaki in what are now the Cook Islands. Wesleyan Methodists arrived in 1835 – although white Wesleyan missionaries withdrew from Samoa from 1839 to 1857 in a contentious agreement with the LMS – and French

¹ B.A. Spicer and Joseph King, *London Missionary Society: deputation to the Samoan Islands* (London 1888), cited in Richard Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society, 1795–1895* (London 1899), 399.

² This broader subject is explored in Benjamin Sacks, “‘Purely of their own manufacture’”: the adoption and appropriation of cricket in Samoa, 1884–1939’, PhD dissertation (Perth 2017).

³ There is a substantial literature on sport and empire, with cricket a particular focus. Almost exclusively, however, it has centred on the ‘hot spots’ of the Caribbean, the Indian subcontinent and Australia. See, for example, J.A. Mangan (ed.), *The Cultural Bond: sport, empire, society* (London 1992); Brian Stoddart and Keith A. Sandiford (eds.), *The Imperial Game: cricket, culture and society* (Manchester 1998).

Marists entered Samoa in 1845. These three denominations were later joined by the Latter Day Saints (LDS, or Mormons) and in the 1890s by Seventh Day Adventists. Two Hawaiian men, Kimo Belio and Samuela Manoa, pioneered the LDS effort in the 1860s, but a Samoan mission was only formally established in 1888 with the arrival of the first white missionaries from the United States. These distinct beginnings point to the difficulty in making comprehensive statements about missionary attitudes. Individuals within each church viewed recreation – both European and Samoan – in different ways at various points in time.⁴

Several overarching observations can be made, however. Evangelical Anglicans and non-conformists – that is to say LMS and Wesleyan missionaries – were initially suspicious of athletic amusements and recreation more generally. The concept of leisure was an anathema to John Wesley himself, who in 1788 told his congregants that God would punish the frivolousness of the rich. ‘Laugh on; play on; sing on; dance on’, he warned, ‘but for all these things God will bring thee to judgement!’⁵ Similar views were commonplace among Evangelical missionary ranks in Oceania. According to Niel Gunson, the middle-class, almost Puritan convictions of early LMS and Wesleyan missionaries ‘bred an intolerance of all that savoured of excess or idleness’. The result was a general lack of interest in – and sometimes an outright antipathy towards – the arts, performance, and any pastime that did not have some clearly beneficial outcome within the narrow logic of the contemporary Evangelical worldview. As such sports were regarded as a waste of time.⁶

These views held sway until at least the mid-19th century. Over the course of the Victorian period, however, Evangelical opposition to leisure gradually subsided in response to broader changes in social attitudes and habits. This was certainly the case with regards to sport, and by 1870 Evangelicals increasingly recognised its potential as an adjunct to church life rather than a threat to it.⁷ More generally, Evangelicals, drawing inspiration from educators and reformists such as Thomas Hughes and Charles Kingsley, increasingly saw sport as a means of enforcing order and discipline and conveying ‘manly moral ideals’ such as teamwork, courage and toughness. Cricket was thought to perform these functions especially well, and Evangelicals – at home and abroad – frequently extolled the game’s value in developing physical

⁴ This historical outline is based on details from several histories of missionaries in Samoa and Oceania. See, e.g. Niel Gunson, *Messengers of Grace: evangelical missionaries in the South Seas, 1797–1860* (Melbourne 1978); John Garrett, *To Live Among the Stars: Christian origins in Oceania* (Suva 1982); John Garrett, *Footsteps in the Sea: Christianity in Oceania to World War II* (Suva 1992); and more recently Phyllis Herda, Michael Reilly and David Hilliard (eds), *Vision and Reality in Pacific Religion* (Canberra 2005).

⁵ John Wesley, ‘Sermon CXIII – On Riches’, in *The Works of the Reverend John Wesley, A.M.*, ed. John Emory, 7 vols (New York 1831), II, 399.

⁶ Gunson, *Messengers of Grace*, 181–182.

⁷ For further discussion of these developments, see David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: a history from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London 1989), 130–132.

and moral strength.⁸ Evangelical attitudes evolved along similar lines in Australia, whose branch of the Methodist Missionary Society assumed responsibility for the mission in Oceania in 1855 and soon re-established its presence in Samoa. As late as 1863 the Methodist Conference fulminated against 'such public amusements, games and entertainments, as cannot be used to the glory of God'.⁹ This opposition ebbed away, however; within a decade or two 'rational recreational activities' – with cricket holding pride of place – were actively encouraged in Australia.¹⁰

For all their newfound acceptance of sporting recreation and athletic pursuits, Evangelicals' support for leisure was subject to certain conditions: gambling was abhorred; singing and dancing, which led to vice, were tightly regulated; Sabbatarianism was non-negotiable; and perceived idleness was still frowned upon. In an article appearing in the monthly *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* in 1900, for instance, Alfred Vine wrote approvingly of 'rational' recreation such as cricket, tennis and cycling. He reminded his readers, however, that even the most salubrious recreation was strictly diversionary – 'games and sports, after they have refreshed us a little, do not leave much advantage behind them'.¹¹

By the last quarter of the 19th century Evangelical missions were actively promoting athletic recreation in Samoa. This effort was exemplified by the LMS's William Goward, a domineering and energetic man who served in Samoa from 1887 until 1900. Aside from the usual missionary work, Goward and his wife were determined to provide 'acceptable' recreational outlets for Samoan men and boys. They established a Young Men's Institute that included a yard for gymnastics and provided sports including tennis, cricket, football and fencing.¹² European sports continued to occupy an important place in church life in the first half of the 20th century, and in the 1920s LMS mission schools encouraged cricket and held swimming sports and athletics carnivals.¹³ Evangelical missionaries also promoted the Boys Brigade and Scouts movements, whose combination of Christian values and athletic pursuits neatly aligned with their aims.¹⁴

⁸ Keith A. Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians* (Aldershot 1994), esp. 34–52; J.A. Mangan, 'Christ and the imperial playing fields: Thomas Hughes's ideological heirs in empire', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 23:5 (2006), 777–804.

⁹ *Minutes of Several Conversations between the Ministers of the Australasian Methodist Church at their Ninth Annual Conference, begun in Hobart Town, Jan. 20, 1863* (Hobart 1863), 33.

¹⁰ Denis Molyneux, 'Disciplining recreation in colonial South Australia: constraints, controls and conventions', PhD dissertation (Adelaide 2009), 98–99.

¹¹ Alfred H. Vine, 'Holidays or idle days', *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*, Aug. 1900, 626–628.

¹² 'South Seas', *The Chronicle of the LMS* (Feb. 1897), 48; 'New methods of work – Apia, Samoa', *The Chronicle of the LMS* (May 1897), 112–113; 'Local and general news', *Samoa Weekly Herald*, 1 Aug. 1896, 2.

¹³ 'Thirty ninth annual report of the Boys' High School', 1928, Pacific Manuscripts Bureau (hereinafter PMB) 1278: LMS Samoan District Administrative Records, 1851–1873, Australian National University, [microfilm].

¹⁴ See, e.g. 'The Boy Scouts', *Samoa Times*, 5 June 1920, 6; Reginald Bartlett, *A Man like Bati: the Rev. Reginald Bartlett*, ed. T. Wemyss Reid (London 1960), 194.

Non-Evangelical missionaries were generally less concerned with disciplining leisure time, although they too objected to any activity that was liable to encourage ‘un-Christian’ behaviour. Catholic missionaries were notably less censorious. The Samoan mission was assigned to the French-based Society of Mary (Marists), for whom sporting recreation did not assume the same significance – either positive or negative – as it did for Evangelicals. Games and some dancing were tolerated so long as they did not interfere unduly with education, family and church life. Consequently in Oceania and elsewhere, accusations of laxity were a staple of anti-Catholic propaganda.¹⁵ Evangelicals were particularly perturbed when Catholic sports were held after Mass on Sunday afternoons. As late as 1925, Revd G.S. Shinkfield of the Samoan Methodist mission made a complaint against Catholic children who were playing cricket on Sunday. The Secretary of Native Affairs, a former member of the LMS, fined the children and their teacher \$30 for their troubles.¹⁶ Sport also featured prominently at Catholic schools in the 20th century. The Marist school at Mulivai held a popular annual athletic meeting with events including the 100 yards dash and tug-of-war.¹⁷ During the New Zealand military occupation from 1914–1920 there was even a Catholic cricket club, which played its games next to the mission itself. In the 1930s, Br Bernardine McCormack, the school’s first New Zealand-born director, introduced rugby and soccer to the students and among the old boys.¹⁸

Mormon missionaries were even more sanguine in their attitudes towards leisure. From around 1890, the LDS used intra-church sport and recreation as a means of teaching ‘Mormon morals’ and behaviours to youth – particularly boys – and keeping them engaged with the church.¹⁹ Sport was also understood as a valuable instrument in ‘selling’ their message to potential converts, and Mormons therefore actively encouraged social and recreational activities within their churches.²⁰ In 1898, for example, Edwin Hezekiah Smart and his colleagues devoted an afternoon to games and sports at the local Mormon school. Free admission meant that most of the village watched on, and Smart reported that the games ‘had a tendency to bring us much nearer together, and after they were over a better spirit existed among us’.²¹

¹⁵ See, e.g. Paul van der Grijp, ‘Catholic proselytizing of a Protestant mission in Oceania’, *Anthropos*, 88:1 (1993), 135–152.

¹⁶ ‘Samoa bars Sunday playing of cricket’, *Washington Post*, 28 Aug. 1925, 11.

¹⁷ ‘Marist Brothers’ school sports’, *Samoa Times*, 24 July 1915, 4.

¹⁸ John Hazelman, ‘Brief History of Marist Brothers Primary School Mulivai’. Available online at <http://www.maristoldpupils.ws/brief-history-of-marist-brothers-primary-school-mulivai.html> (accessed 26 Apr. 2017).

¹⁹ For a wide discussion, see Richard Ian Kimball, *Sports in Zion: Mormon recreation, 1890–1940* (Urbana 2003).

²⁰ Norman Douglas, *Latter Day Saints and missionaries in Polynesia, 1844–1960*, PhD dissertation (Canberra 1974), 298.

²¹ Edwin Hezekiah Smart, *Diary* (vol. 3), *Mormon Missionary Diaries* (hereinafter MMD), 1898, MSS SC 1608, L. Tom Perry Special Collections Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

The Seventh Day Adventists, conversely, were even more concerned with regulating recreation than were the Evangelicals. Adventist missionaries strongly objected to sports alongside most music, and all dancing and gambling. Sport was seen as a protracted waste of time with several unsavoury collateral effects: it fostered an overly competitive spirit, encouraged association with 'unbelievers', and was liable to excite the emotions of young adherents. Until at least 1945, therefore, there was little sporting recreation at Adventist centres in Samoa.²² The Adventists were very much the exception, however. By the end of the 19th century 'rational' – that is, European – sporting pastimes were seen by almost all *papalagi* missionaries as not only harmless, but a valuable means of engaging with Samoans and ultimately furthering their proselytising objectives.

RECREATION FA'Ā SAMOA

Samoans understood and practised athletic recreation in very different ways. It is no coincidence that the rise of organised sports and dedicated recreation in the West coincided with the Industrial Revolution. Due to higher real wages and fewer working hours, opportunities for recreation increased dramatically in the 19th century in Great Britain and other European nations. In the context of individually waged, increasingly industrial societies, the distinction between 'work' and 'non-work' was clear and significant. Modern sports, which Allen Guttman has influentially argued can be distinguished from folk game antecedents by several criteria, were born out of this distinctive social and economic context.²³ For Samoans, conversely, both recreation and production were communal affairs bound up in the broader political economy.²⁴ In Samoa's decentralised system of political authority, *nu'u* (local polities, or villages) comprising 200 to 500 people were the basic unit of social organisation. Each *nu'u* was governed by a council of *matai* (chiefs) representing the '*aiga* (kinship groups) who collectively made up the polity. *Matai* were custodians of their '*aiga* estates and organised cultivation thereon, but much work – hunting, clearing, organising feasts – was performed communally in corporate groups under the direction of the council. According to Malama Meleisea, goods were then redistributed by *matai* in a process that 'reinforced chiefly authority and encouraged the wide distribution of resources'.²⁵ Games similarly served to reaffirm social belonging to one's social group within the *nu'u*, and to the polity itself.

Available online at: <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/MMD/id/3678> (accessed 25 Mar. 2016).

²² Dennis Steley, 'Unfinished: The Seventh-day Adventist mission in the South Pacific, excluding Papua New Guinea', 1886–1986, PhD dissertation (Auckland 1990), 222.

²³ Allen Guttman, *From Ritual to Record: the nature of modern sport* (New York 1978).

²⁴ This discussion is based on the account of the Samoan political economy offered in Malama Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa: traditional authority and colonial administration in the history of Western Samoa* (Suva 1987), 5–8.

²⁵ Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, 9.

Whether or not these contests constituted ‘sport’ or ‘recreation’ by Guttman’s definition, they were a prominent feature of Samoan life before contact with *papalagi*. Writing in the 1830s, John Williams found that Samoans devoted ‘a considerable portion of their time and attention’ to games and pastimes.²⁶ This ludic spirit – and attendant accusations of laziness – became a recurring feature of *papalagi* accounts throughout the 19th century. Robert Louis Stevenson famously described Samoans as ‘the gayest and the best entertained inhabitants of our planet’; their lives were spent in ‘perpetual song and dance, perpetual games, journeys and pleasures’.²⁷ While these games were frequently undertaken within *nu’u*, they were also deeply embedded in the traditional exchange and *malaga* (ritual journeys) that served to maintain the connections between Samoan villages and kinship groups.²⁸ *Malaga* was an indispensable part of the customary Samoan political economy: visits were used to build and reaffirm alliances, to arrange and celebrate marriages and to redistribute surplus food and specialist products. More generally, *malaga* provided opportunities to honour guests and hosts, and to engage in feasting, dancing, games, oratory, political intrigue and courtship.²⁹ Within the context of *malaga*, inter-village sporting contests thus provided an outlet for local rivalries in a festive setting, as well as reaffirming the Samoan political economy and its attendant social institutions of kin, *nu’u* and customary authority.

Among the games contested between villages in the 19th century were *seuga lufe* (pigeon netting), *tagati’a* (dart throwing), *taloga* (spear throwing) and physical contests such as *aigofie* (club matches) and wrestling. Both pigeon netting and *tagati’a* contests were important fixtures in Samoan life, as indicated by their frequent appearance in idioms and their incorporation into legends, songs and stories.³⁰ Although pigeons were at first hunted solely for food, the practice was later monopolised by chiefs and became a highly stylised and ceremonial pursuit that could last for months. *Matai* sat atop purpose-built earth platforms and used trained decoy birds to lure wild pigeons into their nets. Entire villages could be mobilised to prepare for an expedition and to provide and partake in festivities during the intervals between netting.³¹ *Tagati’a* was a similarly communal affair. Contemporaneous accounts indicate that large

²⁶ John Williams, *A Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands* (London 1865), 138.

²⁷ Robert Louis Stevenson, *In the South Seas* (New York 1896), 33.

²⁸ Damon Salesa briefly alludes to the place of customary sports – including *kirikiti* – in *malaga*, and their subsequent socio-political significance. This study builds on his arguments. T. Damon I. Salesa, “‘Travel-happy’ Samoa: colonialism, Samoan migration and a “Brown Pacific””, *New Zealand Journal of History*, 37:2 (2003), 171–188.

²⁹ Penelope Schoeffel, ‘Daughters of Sina: a study of gender, status and power in Western Samoa’, PhD dissertation (Canberra 1979), 328–329; see also Salesa, “‘Travel Happy’ Samoa”.

³⁰ Te Rangi Hiroa (P. H. Buck), *Samoan Material Culture* (Honolulu 1930), 542–544, 566–570; Richard Moyle, ‘An account of the game of *tagati’a*’, *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 79:2 (1970), 233–244.

³¹ For an account of pigeon netting, see William B. Churchward, *My Consulate in Samoa: a record of four years’ sojourn in the Navigators Islands ...* (London 1887), 139–141; Te Rangi Hiroa, *Samoan Material Culture*, 542–544.

inter-village matches known as *tavasaga* could frequently exceed 100 players a side. According to Richard Moyle, who conducted fieldwork in Samoa in the 1970s, ‘modern informants claim that even this figure was small in some cases’.³² Although Te Rangi Hiroa refers to the game as ‘dart throwing’ to distinguish it from other Samoan throwing sports,³³ the game was actually played with crafted wooden javelins (*ti’a*) ranging between 20 inches and five feet long. Samoans played *tagati’a* in both formal and informal settings. For example, Augustin Krämer recounted games in which boys would ‘simply cut themselves a couple of sticks ... and start to compete’.³⁴ In its formal expression, however, the game was played on a cleared area 100–150 feet long, at the ends of which sloped ramps were built. These ramps were constructed so as to provide a solid, smooth surface off which to glance the *ti’a*. An ideal throw would carry a trajectory that allowed the *ti’a* to glance the ramp and fly straight on, imparting maximum distance.³⁵ An important feature of the game – as in many Samoan contests – was the payment of a forfeit by the losing side.

In contrast to their growing acceptance of ‘rational’ sporting recreation, missionaries were frustrated and occasionally alarmed by large-scale Samoan pastimes throughout the 19th century. Their opposition reflected an underlying concern with *malaga* and Samoan festivities: missionaries decried the sheer scale and frequency of these occasions, as well as their association with ‘heathen’ customs such as large stakes, dancing and revelry. In 1882, for instance, *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* published an account of Samoan life by the painter and travel writer Constance Gordon-Cumming. Gordon-Cumming, whose report was strongly informed by her conversations with Evangelical missionaries,³⁶ was unconcerned by the small ‘party of lads’ she saw practising *tagati’a* on the village green. She was less enamoured with pigeon netting, however. While this might sound like an ‘innocent’ amusement, she warned, it ‘was indulged in to such excess that the teachers found it necessary to discourage it, as it led to the schools being deserted, and all work at a standstill, for months at a time’.³⁷

This was not the missionaries’ only complaint. George Brown, a Methodist who spent 14 years in Samoa from 1860, recalled that inter-village pigeon netting contests aroused great fervour among participants and spectators alike. According to Brown, ‘the old Samoan who told him about it all would get into a paroxysm, almost, as he described the keenness of the sport and the intense absorption of

³² Moyle, ‘An account of the game of *tagati’a*’, 233.

³³ Te Rangi Hiroa, *Samoan Material Culture*, 566–570.

³⁴ Augustin Krämer, *The Samoa Islands*, vol. 2: *material culture*, Theodore Verhaaren (trans.) (Auckland 1995), 382.

³⁵ For an account of *tāgāti’a*, see Lauili Willis, *The Story of Lauili* (San Francisco 1889), 145; Te Rangi Hiroa, *Samoan Material Culture*, 566–570; and especially Moyle, ‘An account of the game of *tagati’a*’.

³⁶ Hugh Laracy, *Watriama and Co.* (Canberra 2013), 69–92.

³⁷ C.F. Gordon-Cumming, ‘A glimpse at Samoa’, *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*, July 1882, 540–542.

everybody engaged in it'.³⁸ This exuberance was not limited to the contest itself, or indeed to the post-match feasting that followed – the 'fever heat' excitement resulted in unnamed 'subsequent happenings' that offended missionaries' sense of propriety. Indeed, missionaries frequently expressed consternation at the festivities that took place after feasts during sporting *malaga*. They were particularly mortified by the *poula* ('night dance'), which involved men and women dancing naked together and often led to 'obscene' behaviour. As such, the game was regarded 'as a snare, not only for pigeons, but for men's souls' and was prohibited by the 1870s.³⁹ In 1904 Revd Ernest Neil, a Methodist from South Australia, listed many of the same grievances with regards to Samoan social occasions. *Malaga* was 'a curse to their country', while dances were 'semi-barbarian recreations' that were 'degrading rather than elevating' due to their sexual character.⁴⁰

Catholic and Mormon missionaries were generally less averse to Samoan pastimes than were their Wesleyan and LMS counterparts. The Catholic missionary Louis Violette described non-violent Samoan games as 'innocent amusements' and even lamented that 'Wesleyan intolerance' had seen many unobjectionable dances disappear from village life.⁴¹ Nevertheless, Catholics shared Evangelical concerns regarding night dances, whose continued presence they attributed to 'the painful ineffectiveness of Protestantism to correct morals'.⁴² *Malaga*, meanwhile, was regarded as a noxious parasitism that impeded missionary work and improvement projects.⁴³ Mormons were similarly accepting of Samoan games in principle, but they too found the associated travelling and dancing disturbing. In 1891, for example, Br Jesse Bennett ruefully reported that school was cancelled on account of a *malaga* to play *tagati'a* against a neighbouring village.⁴⁴

By the late 19th century, therefore, a clear dichotomy had emerged in *papalagi* missionaries' attitudes towards sport and recreation. On the one hand, 'rational' sporting recreation was acceptable and could even be mobilised as part of the proselytising effort. Samoan pastimes, conversely, were time-consuming nuisances that were irremediably bound to 'un-Christian' practices such as lewd dancing, revelry and excess. Consequently, they were at best tolerated and more frequently disciplined and controlled.

³⁸ C. Brunson Fletcher, *The Black Knight of the Pacific* (Sydney 1944), 100–101.

³⁹ Fletcher, *The Black Knight of the Pacific*, 101.

⁴⁰ Ernest George Neil, diary entries for 1 Jan. 1903 and 7 Jan. 1903, PMB 1198: Samoa Journal, 1902–1918.

⁴¹ P. L. Violette, 'Notes d'un missionnaire sur l'archipel de Samoa (Océanie centrale)', *Les Missions Catholiques* (1870), 174–176.

⁴² A. Monfat, *Les Samoa, ou, Archipel des Navigateurs: etude historique & religieuse* (Lyon 1890), 99.

⁴³ Violette, 'Notes d'un missionnaire', 176; see also Andrew Hamilton, 'Nineteenth-century French missionaries and "fa'a Samoa"', *The Journal of Pacific History*, 33:2 (1998), 172.

⁴⁴ Jesse J. Bennett, diary entry for 9 Nov. 1891, MSS 1406, MMD. Available online at <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/MMD/id/11241> (accessed 25 Mar. 2016).

FROM CRICKET TO KIRIKITI

This neat contradistinction was disrupted by the way that Samoans adopted and practised ostensibly 'rational' sporting forms. In their hands, European recreational forms were reimagined with elements of *fa'a Samoa* (the Samoan way) embedded within them. The most notable example was cricket, which British colonists and sailors had brought to the islands by 1879.⁴⁵ Cricket should have represented the definitive 'rational' recreation. Contemporaries thought it imbued an exaggerated respect for authority, personal restraint in favour of collective success and a sense of 'fair play'. These lessons were certainly aligned with missionary teaching more generally. Cricket also served as a vehicle for transferring English morals to colonised peoples, making it a favourite pastime among British missionaries across the globe.

According to William Churchward, who served as the British consul to the islands from March 1882 until November 1885, Samoans largely ignored the game until around 1883. Their interest was only aroused after a group of visitors from neighbouring Tonga 'twitted them on the subject of their ignorance of so grand an amusement'. Churchward and his colleagues set out to show them the game, but their adherence to cricketing orthodoxy was short-lived:

For a time all went on very smoothly, but the quiet and serious English style did not suit them long. One by one, innovations of their own and Tongan manufacture crept into the game, until soon nothing remained of cricket, *pur et simple*, but the practice of one man bowling a ball to another man trying to hit it. All the rest of the proceedings were purely of their own manufacture.⁴⁶

'The rest of the proceedings' constituted changes that were both general and profound. Whereas cricket was conventionally played eleven a side, teams in *kirikiti* – the Samoan form of the game – were assembled according to social affiliation and had no limit in size.⁴⁷ In the largest matches the participants could include every man, woman and child from one village or district against those of another. As a result, games could endure for days and weeks on end. Other changes included the adoption of a distinctive three-sided bat made from a light local wood and replacing the leather cricket ball with one made by bleeding a rubber tree and winding, layer after layer, the coagulated juice to make a sphere. These and other innovations resulted in a game that was significantly faster and more dynamic than its English forebear.

Just as striking were the addition of several features of customary Samoan athletic contests. Matches featured singing and dancing during and after the game,

⁴⁵ The first recorded match took place when officers from the British warship *Cormorant* challenged Apia's expatriate British residents to a match. 'Cricket', *Samoa Times and South Sea Gazette*, 30 Aug. 1879, 2.

⁴⁶ Churchward, *My Consulate in Samoa*, 142–143.

⁴⁷ *Kirikiti* (latterly *kilikiti*) is simply the Samoan word for cricket. I use it here as shorthand to distinguish between the English and Samoan forms of the game.

including by the fielding side at the fall of a wicket. They were led in these endeavours by an individual variously described in *papalagi* accounts as a ‘captain’, ‘choir master’ or ‘clown’, as had been the case in large *tagati’a* contests.⁴⁸ Dancing and singing also featured prominently in the post-match festivities. Large matches between *nu’u* concluded in feasts replete with ceremony, speeches and copious quantities of food. Finally, the losing side was also expected to pay a forfeit to their opponents in the form of performing chores, ridiculous tasks and providing a substantial ‘food fine’. In effect, therefore, *kirikiti* rapidly displaced *tagati’a* and pigeon netting as the ludic centrepiece of *malaga*. The same feasting, revelry and disruption that had irked missionaries in customary Samoan contests were thus transposed into this most ‘rational’ of *papalagi* sporting pastimes. In effect, the game described by Churchward and played by Samoans was no longer English cricket, but *kirikiti fa’a Samoa*.

Missionaries of all denominations soon determined that this new amusement was incongruent with their proselytising and ‘civilising’ project. It may have nominally been based on English cricket, but this was a recognisably Samoan game. Some enjoyed watching – and in a few instances even playing – the game, but they quickly grew exasperated by the sheer length of time taken and the concomitant opportunity cost in terms of undertaking productive work and receiving religious and secular education. Missionaries also worried that *kirikiti* led to disorder, as well as ‘sinful’ behaviour such as breaking the Sabbath and immoral dancing. This disapproval figured more generally among *papalagi* officials and colonists; every government after 1888 passed laws restricting the game in Samoa.

The diaries of Mormon missionaries in the 1890s are testament to these frustrations. Abinadi Olsen, a Utah native who served in Samoa from 1894 to 1898, was clearly troubled by *kirikiti*’s raucousness and association with ‘uncivilised’ conduct. Writing in March 1896, he reported that several hundred Samoans had gathered to play cricket across the bay, with the associated festivities including ‘dancing, feasting and making as much noise as a band of howling wolves’.⁴⁹ A few months later he was dismayed when a large match between the young women of the district descended into a fight.⁵⁰ Olsen and his companions were also disturbed when they received word that an upcoming *kirikiti* match was to feature nude dancing. Day to day, however, *kirikiti* was a source of missionary opprobrium simply because it precluded Samoans from doing anything else. The game’s full obstructive potential was documented by Joseph Carpenter, an LDS missionary who initially served in Samoa from 1890 to 1893. After a relatively quiet Christmas period in 1891, Carpenter’s work was halted for a full three weeks by a series of *kirikiti* matches associated with *malaga*.

⁴⁸ Indeed, such ‘clowning’ figures frequently throughout the region at sporting contests, dances and other social occasions as entertainment, competition and a means of critiquing authority figures. See, e.g. Vilsoni Hereniko, ‘Clowning as political commentary: Polynesia, then and now’, *Contemporary Pacific* 6:1 (1994), 1–28; Kalissa Alexeyeff, *Dancing from the Heart: movement, gender, and Cook Islands globalization* (Honolulu 2009).

⁴⁹ Abinadi Olsen, diary entry for 6 Mar. 1896, MSS 1454, MMD. Available online at <http://cdm15999.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/MMD/id/10051> (accessed 22 Mar. 2016).

⁵⁰ Olsen, diary entry for 10 Apr. 1896.

The festivities began in earnest on 31 December with speeches, gift exchange, feasting and dancing. A *kirikiti* match commenced during the afternoon against the visiting party and continued for several days.⁵¹ After a brief hiatus the *kirikiti* resumed in full force. At first, Carpenter saw no harm in the game itself – he described the spectacle of 40 children in search of a lost ball as ‘quite a sight’ and wrote approvingly of ‘some pretty good hits’.

By the 11th of January, however, his patience was increasingly frayed. He lamented that the anti-cricket laws were being overridden with impunity, and his mood was not improved when *kirikiti* continued until nightfall and resulted in only five Samoans attending prayers.⁵² Matters only worsened the following day:

I did usual translations & had a little peace until 11 am, when the cricket began again. Matautu [a nearby village] came streaming down & a big feast was made some 50 pigs killed. I then had no peace until end of the day with peeping children & bothering visitors [...]. I could not have school because of cricket which upsets everything.⁵³

The next day the missionaries were forced to postpone their regular meeting on account of the match, which by dusk appeared to be entering its final throes. Amidst the roister – ‘such cricket, such talking and speechmaking I never saw’ – Carpenter felt ‘virtually a prisoner’.⁵⁴ He awoke the following morning to find the Samoans at another feast, after which the last innings of the *kirikiti* match took place. The last wicket was taken at around 5.30pm, 14 January, whereupon representatives from both teams made their concluding speeches and the losing side had to perform various forfeits. After one final meal the *kirikiti* storm finally seemed to have abated, much to Carpenter’s relief:

Thus ended a memorable 5 days cricket match. Saturday they exhausted a pile of fish. Monday 100 chickens killed. T[uesday] 14 pigs. Wed[nesday] 50 pigs T[hursday] 12 pigs & a pile of bread-fruit. Such is *fa’a Samoa*, & nothing to show for it. In [the] evening had usual 5 & had dictation for we could not hold school while cricket was going on. I retired by 9.30, with my patience somewhat tired.⁵⁵

These sentiments attest to broader missionary concerns regarding *kirikiti*. As well as impeding missionary work, the game embodied ‘heathen’ behaviours such as idleness and a total lack of moderation in play, feasting and social intercourse. To proselytising eyes, the time and resources expended through *kirikiti* were entirely without value;

⁵¹ Joseph Hatten Carpenter, diary entry for 31 Dec. 1891, MSS 349, MMD. Available at <http://cdm15999.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/MMD/id/9738> (accessed 23 Mar. 2016).

⁵² Carpenter, diary entry for 11 Jan. 1892.

⁵³ Carpenter, diary entry for 12 Jan. 1892.

⁵⁴ Carpenter, diary entry for 13 Jan. 1892.

⁵⁵ Carpenter, diary entry for 14 Jan. 1892.

Samoans never seemed further from *papalagi* missionaries than while playing the game.

Carpenter's account speaks to contemporaneous missionaries' more general exasperation with *kirikiti*. It was this disquiet that led Evangelical missionaries to prohibit the game, as was reported by Spicer and King after their 1887 visit. Missionary opposition continued through the 1890s, particularly after the *Samoa Weekly Herald* reported that cricket was interfering with Samoans' observance of the Sabbath.⁵⁶ In 1897 an LMS missionary visiting Auckland told an audience that he had 'administered medicine to the players' after a fortnight-long match resulted in starvation and exhaustion. 'In consequence of this excess', he continued, 'the Church is obliged to condemn cricket'.⁵⁷ LMS missionary feeling against *kirikiti* ran so deep, in fact, that details of its prohibition even appeared in Richard Lovett's history of the Society in 1900.⁵⁸ If Lovett's recount shows the depths of missionary feeling against *kirikiti*, however, it also captures this sentiment at its zenith. After Samoa was partitioned in 1900 their opposition was gradually tempered and *papalagi* missionaries increasingly accepted the game. Indeed, the final day of the LMS centenary celebrations in 1930 was devoted to a sports meeting, the centrepiece of which was 'a mighty cricket match, played between teams 100 strong, all batting, all fielding' and – crucially – 'finished before sundown'.⁵⁹

ADAPTING RECREATION, NEGOTIATING CHANGE

This eventual acceptance of *kirikiti* is instructive in understanding broader patterns of change in Samoa and Oceania. Missionaries were among the first *papalagi* to encounter Islanders, and they hence represented a pivotal conduit for the transmission of European ideas and practices. The first *papalagi* missionaries were struck by the distinctive ways that Christian practices were woven into existing belief systems and social hierarchies. When John Williams returned to Samoa in 1832 after a two-year hiatus, for instance, he found that Christian practices had already been affected by local custom. Most troublingly, Samoan women had taken the tunes of hymns and were using them for their provocative night dances.⁶⁰ Samoan chiefs also exploited Christianity as a new source of 'sacred power'; their authority remained unshaken, but was now sanctioned by the new God rather than their own deity. Similarly, the *faiife'au* (pastor) assumed the elevated status of priests in the pre-Christian religion as mediators with the spiritual world.⁶¹ More generally, John Garrett points out that over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries, the inner life of the churches 'was increasingly of Samoa for Samoans'. This progressive Indigenisation of the church

⁵⁶ 'Local and general news', *Samoa Weekly Herald*, 25 Mar. 1893, 2.

⁵⁷ 'Cricket in Samoa', *Auckland Star*, 23 Sept. 1897, 2.

⁵⁸ Lovett, *The History of the LMS*, 399.

⁵⁹ Bartlett, *A Man like Bati*, 170–171.

⁶⁰ Garrett, *To Live Amongst the Stars*, 121–122.

⁶¹ Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, 13, 18.

cut across denominational divides. Christianity, Garrett argues, ‘was absorbed into existing village patterns of giving, widespread family relationships and styles of deference. Traditional exchange of fine mats and the presentation of live pigs to important guests on great occasions entered into the life of the churches’.⁶²

For Garrett and others, Christianity’s influence on Samoan life therefore fell well short of replacing *fa’a Samoa* configurations. Instead, it is best conceived in terms of bidirectional exchange, ongoing negotiation and *mutual* reorientation. This should not be any surprise – visitors to the Islands have frequently stressed what one long-term official called ‘this peculiar Samoan genius for modification’.⁶³ Social change in Samoa was negotiated rather than enforced, and what emerged invariably reflected local understandings and practices as well as foreign ones.

This pattern of negotiation was clearly evidenced in *kirikiti*’s rehabilitation into church life. The game’s eventual acceptance in missionary eyes can be explained by three principal factors. Missionaries quickly recognised that *kirikiti* could be useful in furthering their broader proselytising aims in the community. The obverse was also true: some of its most objectionable features could be – and increasingly were – rendered less pronounced or even eliminated entirely. Even so, missionary acceptance of the game was frequently begrudging: ultimately their about-face can be seen as belated recognition that Samoans could not be coaxed to renounce ‘their’ sport in favour of more ‘rational’ pursuits.

Missionaries’ attitudinal shift was partly informed by recognition that while *kirikiti* was incongruent with some aspects of their endeavours, it was entirely consonant with others. Even as Lovett recirculated warnings about the perils of *kirikiti*, Samoans were using the game to raise funds for an LMS church at Apia. At first the game was limited to LMS adherents, with players from the losing side – several hundred of them – being made to subscribe a shilling towards the construction costs. Soon these monies were augmented by contributions from participants outside the church, who could bat for an innings upon payment of a shilling. Foreign missionaries felt obliged to discourage the fundraiser after local *papalagi* inhabitants complained about the noise and nuisance.⁶⁴

While this example was exceptional, *kirikiti* did align with the missionary project in more quotidian ways. Being involved in *kirikiti* – whether as players or spectators – helped *papalagi* missionaries interact with Samoans and build goodwill. From the early 20th century, moreover, missionaries increasingly recognised that if the *kirikiti* pitch was a space in which village and communal ties were affirmed, then it was a space where the church should be active. In 1913, for instance, Jean Edouard Bellwald, a Catholic missionary from Luxembourg, wrote to the German authorities asking for clarification regarding the latest anti-*kirikiti* law. The congregation’s young men and school children wanted to play the game on Sunday, which was

⁶² Garrett, *Footsteps in the Sea*, 406.

⁶³ F.J.H. Grattan, *An Introduction to Samoan Custom* (Apia 1948), 115.

⁶⁴ ‘Local and general news’, *Samoa Weekly Herald*, 25 Sept. 1897, 2.

technically in violation of the ordinance.⁶⁵ The following year the LDS missionary Earl Stanley Paul led efforts to clear space for a new *kirikiti* pitch away from the front of the village meeting house, which was ‘looking like a pig pen’ due to relentless games in poor weather.⁶⁶ Facilitating the game in this way signified a striking departure from earlier missionary responses, even among his Mormon brethren.

Kirikiti also became firmly entrenched in Evangelical schools and training colleges. Victor Barradale, who taught at the LMS theological college for three years at the turn of the 20th century, recalled participating in half-day matches with students.⁶⁷ By 1928, the LMS high school reported that as well as ‘English cricket’ and Swedish Drill, students were encouraged to play *kirikiti*. Matches were organised between picked sides and with the nearby Theological College.⁶⁸ The principal of Piula Theological College, a Methodist training institution on Upolu’s north coast, similarly recalled that *kirikiti* was often played and could end in ‘a prayer meeting, or a feast, or by the losing team gradually vanishing into the bush’.⁶⁹ Large matches also became a recurring feature of annual visits by *papalagi* missionaries to the villages in their district in what was in essence their own *malaga*. When Revd Reginald Bartlett visited an LMS church on Manono Island as part of his official duties in November 1929, he happily noted that the occasion was concluded by a *kirikiti* match between ‘thirty-seven students from the college and thirty-seven Samoans from Manono’. The ‘Mission boys’ shaded a close contest, and their opponents were compelled to feed, dance and perform menial tasks for them.⁷⁰

Kirikiti’s rehabilitation was also aided by the declining prevalence of those elements that missionaries had found most objectionable. After partition in 1900, the establishment of a German colonial administration in the western islands and an American naval administration in the east meant that the state could more effectively – though still only partially – limit the kinds of month-long, village-wide *malaga* with which *kirikiti* was associated. Under such circumstances the game was less inimical to missionary aims. Where matches could not be contained within these temporal strictures, however, they continued to attract the ire of missionaries. As such, while Barradale enthused that an afternoon match was ‘great fun to play’, he cautioned ‘it is a serious thing in many ways when matches are prolonged for several weeks’.⁷¹ Even Earl Stanley Paul, who had earlier helped clear a playing field for

⁶⁵ Bellwald of Catholic Mission to Schultz, 7 Nov. 1913 (Memo #40), PMB 479: Western Samoa: English Summaries of Papers Relating to the German Administration, 1900–1914 (XVII.A.I: Government and Administration of Justice, vol. 6).

⁶⁶ Earl Stanley Paul, diary entry for 2 Mar. 1914, MSS 1797, MMD. Available online at <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/MMD/id/7950> (accessed 23 Mar. 2016).

⁶⁷ V.A. Barradale, *Pearls of the Pacific: being sketches of missionary life and work in Samoa and other islands in the South Seas* (London 1907), 78–79.

⁶⁸ ‘Thirty Ninth Annual Report of the Boys’ High School’, PMB 1278.

⁶⁹ E. Brien Blake, ‘Why Samoa?’ by the Rev E. Brien Blake’, Grattan Papers, n.d. MS-Papers-4879-076, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

⁷⁰ Bartlett, *A Man like Bati*, 164.

⁷¹ Barradale, *Pearls of the Pacific*, 78–79.

kirikiti games, was troubled by its incessant demands on time. After the village's young men told him they had been challenged to attend a *kirikiti* match at their opponents' *malae*, Paul refused their request due to the disruption it would cause.⁷² These instances notwithstanding, missionaries were generally unperturbed by smaller-scale contests. Even though the movement away from prolonged games was only partial, it was important in the context of what missionaries perceived as broader, welcome changes in the nature of the game.

The most decisive of these changes came about as a result of the ongoing campaign against 'uncivilised' and 'heathenish' conduct. *Kirikiti*'s rehabilitation into the church coincided with the decline of 'immoral' dancing in the early 20th century. Samoan congregants and church leaders frequently took the lead in suppressing such dancing. In 1903, for instance, the Naval Commandant in American Samoa reported that several villages had 'voluntarily passed ordinances prohibiting *sivas* [dances] of an improper character'.⁷³ In 1911, moreover, Leota, the village chief of Pagopago, forced the district judge, Mauga Taufaaasau, to curtail a *siva* that was being performed at his home in Pago Pago. The high-ranking Mauga was furious, but Leota argued that such dancing was contrary to the laws of the church and therefore had to be stopped.⁷⁴ When elements of sexual expression did emerge, they continued to vex missionaries. Jennie Hill Leavitt Smith, who served the Mormon mission in Samoa and Tonga from 1918 to 1920, reported seeing Samoan women playing *kirikiti*, after which she returned to her quarters 'disgusted with their conduct'.⁷⁵ Smith's experience was generally the exception, however, and such complaints about 'immoral' conduct during matches were unusual after the turn of the 20th century. By successfully framing such customary dances as 'immoral', therefore, sporting *malaga* were rendered significantly less threatening to missionaries' moral sensibilities.

The single most decisive reason for changing missionary attitudes, however, was a pragmatic acceptance that anti-*kirikiti* regulations were futile. *Kirikiti* associated with *malaga* was not limited to a few 'bad apples' among the faithful; often the entire congregation was involved. This was certainly the view of the senior LMS missionary in Upolu's A'ana District in the early 20th century. In his 1904 report, he lamented the effects of *malaga* and festivities on the Society's work. Poor school attendance, he argued, was largely attributable to *malaga* that took entire villages away for weeks on end. The visiting parties kept the villages they passed through 'in a constant state of ferment', further disrupting economic and church life. Worse still, even

⁷² Paul diary, 2 Mar. 1914.

⁷³ 1903 Annual Report on Government Affairs, 10 July 1903, reel 23 (series no. 5, Annual Reports on Government Affairs, 1902–1921 ...), T1182: Records of the Government of American Samoa, 1900–1958, National Archives and Records Administration (hereinafter NARA), San Francisco.

⁷⁴ Secretary of Native Affairs to Governor, 'Investigation of conduct of Pagopago Village Chief stopping *siva* at Pagopago', reel 9 (Village Affairs ...), T1182, NARA.

⁷⁵ Jennie Hill Leavitt Smith, diary entry for 17 Mar. 1920, MSS 2260, MMD. Available online at <http://cdm15999.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/MMD/id/10608> (accessed 24 Mar. 2016).

Samoan clergy partook in these expeditions: ‘Sad to say, pastors are not at all exempt from periodical attacks of this unrest, and their brethren along the route taken by them are expected to do the hospitable to them, whenever and wherever they may call’.⁷⁶

Indeed, Samoan clergy frequently participated in *kirikiti* matches. One eyewitness recalled that local pastors wearing ‘spotless white drill’ routinely kept the score in such contests, and he applauded ‘the accurate scoring of the Rev. John Charles Habbakkuk, the native teacher’ during one inter-village affair.⁷⁷ Samoan clergy even retransmitted *kirikiti* – complete with village-wide participation, feasting, singing and dancing – when they served in New Guinea missions in the late-19th and 20th centuries.⁷⁸ With senior *matai* also complicit in games, few Samoan congregants or leaders were above reproach. Under these circumstances effective church control was an impossibility.

It was this widespread disregard for proscription that was primarily responsible for the change in missionary attitudes. With censure no longer a viable position, missionaries instead focused on tempering *kirikiti*’s perceived excesses and using it to further entrench the church’s social importance. Their experience was a stark reminder that Samoans often chose to adopt *papalagi* practices in ways that undermined their underlying intentions. Revd Bartlett invoked this lesson when he proposed establishing a charter for the Boys Brigade in 1940. While he hoped that the initial company of 40 boys would ‘grow and expand’, he was also mindful that the combination of drill and recreational activities would ‘need great care lest it run away within itself, as cricket has done’.⁷⁹

CONCLUSION

In Samoa as elsewhere, European missionaries sought to shape the beliefs and behaviours of Indigenous peoples. If they expected Samoans to simply accept European understandings of athletic recreation, however, then they were to be sorely disappointed. Rather than renouncing customary practices and meanings, Samoans reimagined ‘rational’ recreation to align it with their own expectations of what a sporting contest should be. The transformation of cricket into *kirikiti* was the most striking example of this process and speaks to broader patterns of change and continuity in Samoa and Oceania more generally. In Samoa – as was the case in other locales at the periphery of empire – Indigenous peoples subverted established ways of understanding and performing introduced social practices. Indeed, the radical reimagining

⁷⁶ ‘Report of the A’ana District for the year ending December 31st, 1904’, PMB 1278.

⁷⁷ F.W. Christian, ‘Cricket as she is played in Samoa’, *The Star*, 15 May 1896.

⁷⁸ See, e.g. Ruta Sinclair, ‘Samoans in Papua’, in Ron and Marjorie Crocombe (eds), *Polynesian Missions in Melanesia* (Suva 1982), 17–38; Sione Latukefu, ‘Pacific Islander missionaries’, in Doug Munro and Andrew Thornley (eds), *The Covenant Makers: Island missionaries in the Pacific* (Suva 1996), 35.

⁷⁹ Bartlett, *A Man like Bati*, 194.

of cricket is a distinctive characteristic of the game in Oceania.⁸⁰ While they sought to alter the lives of Indigenous peoples, therefore, missionaries found that such changes were only ever partial and always subject to negotiation and contestation. It is in this light that we can make sense of the unlikely scenario of English missionaries forbidding Samoans from playing cricket.

Similarly, the shift in missionary attitudes to *kirikiti* reflects the more general 'Samoanisation' of Christianity in the islands. Scholars of Samoa have long recognised that the Samoan experience of Christianity is fundamentally one of mixing, with Indigenous and introduced elements coming together in what Damon Salesa calls 'a confluence of rivers, a meeting of the waters'.⁸¹ Indeed, pre-Christian modes of exchange and styles of deference persist within Samoan churches to the present day. The same is true of *kirikiti*, for which churches became the principal organising force both in the islands and the Samoan diaspora in New Zealand, Australia and the United States. In this context, *papalagi* missionaries' eventual acquiescence to *kirikiti* can be read as recognition of the limits of their influence over a game that was no longer English cricket, but *kirikiti fa'a Samoa*.

⁸⁰ Most famously, cricket in the Trobriand Islands includes spear-throwing bowling actions, war dances, gift exchange and the convention that the home-side always won, but not by so many runs as to cause offence. Similarly, Indigenous cricket is played in Tokelau, Niue and New Caledonia, amongst other places. See, for instance, Jerry W. Leach and Gary Kildea, *Trobriand cricket: an ingenious response to colonialism* [video recording] (Canberra 1976); Judith Huntsman, 'Concepts of kinship and categories of kinsmen in the Tokelau Islands', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 80:3 (1971), 325.

⁸¹ Toeolesulusulu Damon Ieremia, 'When the waters met: some shared histories of Christianity and ancestral Samoan spirituality', in M Suaalii-Sauni, M.A. Wendt, V. Mo'a, N. Fuamatu, U.L. Va'ai, R. Whaitiri and S.L. Filipo (eds), *Whispers and Vanities: Samoan Indigenous knowledge and religion* (Wellington 2014), 305. Richard Gilson, John Garrett, Sharon Tiffany – amongst many others – have discussed the 'Samoanisation' of Christianity at length. Richard Gilson, *Samoa 1830 to 1900: the politics of a multi-cultural community* (Melbourne 1970), esp. 115–137; Garrett, *To Live Amongst the Stars*; Sharon W. Tiffany, 'Introduction', in James A. Boutilier, Daniel T. Hughes and Sharon W. Tiffany (eds), *Mission, Church and Sect in Oceania* (Lanham, MD 1984), 301–305.

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