

THE CCCS 'GIVING MINISTRY': A PASTORAL MINISTRY CONCERN FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

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By

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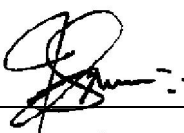
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Abstract

This research seeks to remind the Congregational Christian Church Samoa (CCCS) to review the practice of her 'giving ministry'. The Mission Statement clearly underscores that the role of the church is to serve the people not only by preaching the Gospel but more importantly, by action. The church is only focusing on the spiritual dimension of her 'giving ministry'. As a result, the people are migrating towards other New Religious Movements such as the Latter-Day Saints (LDS).

As a solution, it is proposed herein for the CCCS to adopt, where possible, some of the strategy employed by the LDS church. Namely her passion for quality education, time frame for monetary contributions, and the funds offered to support youth programmes. Financially, the CCCS is not supported by world-wide organizations such as Coca-Cola, which LDS has affiliation with. However, what makes the CCCS financially stronger than the LDS is the amount of contributions donated by her members. For the people, especially the older generation, giving to the church is giving to God.

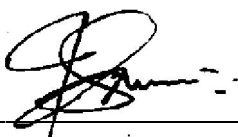
In the 21st century, due to the impact of Globalization and technology, people no longer gave enthusiastically as per usual. The church therefore cannot insist on spiritual gifts while the members are leaving, she needs to give back to her members by developing areas such as education, and ease the burden on monetary activities. The ministry of giving therefore should be a holistic approach which caters for the spiritual, mental and physical dimensions of the people's lives.

DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP OF RESEARCH PAPER

I, Kara Siaosi Ipinu

hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at Malua Theological College or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in thesis. Any contribution made to the research by colleagues with whom I have worked at Malua Theological College or elsewhere during my candidature is fully acknowledged.

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Introduction

Giving has two possible connotations; firstly, giving without expecting anything in return, and secondly, giving while anticipating reward. The former comes in the form of gifts, generosity, or charity while the latter is a two-fold approach; giving with the intension of receiving something in return.

The ‘ministry of giving’ according to Abraham Obadare, a minister at the Christ Apostolic Church of America, is a practice that needs to be constantly functioning; a responsibility that must be carried out. Furthermore, giving is a ministry because the bible calls it so in 2 Corinthians 9:11 – 13:¹

You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God. Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing, with them and with all other. (NRSV)

This passage is referring to Paul’s commendation of the members of the church at ‘Achaia’² as signified by the pronoun ‘you’, and can also be applied to the church of today. The ‘ministry of giving’ is described as having three significant elements. (1) The main belief behind giving, which is an indication of thanksgiving to God through ‘us’, referring to Paul and his companions. In today’s context ‘us’ may refer to the clergy or ministers who are often designated as the ‘*sui vaaia ole Atua*’ (representatives of God). (2) What giving implies to other people like the saints whose needs are supplied by the generosity of the laity. (3) What giving ultimately means to God; a token of appreciation and gratitude for God’s fundamental gift for all humankind in Jesus Christ (John 3:16).

¹Abraham Obadare, "The Way for You," <http://www.thewayforyou.com/the-ministry-of-giving>.(August 4, 2015)

² According to the Britannica and Columbia encyclopaedias, Achaia or Achaea is a region in West Greece, her capital is Patras

In the CCCS, such an approach towards giving is reminiscent of the older generation's understanding. For them, it is a theological obligation; giving to the church or clergy is basically giving to God. Fulfilling such a responsibility to the church will perpetually bless their families and the future of their children.³ Therefore, the notion of giving that will be used in this research will be that of exchange and recompense, or what the author calls a 'give-get' approach. Giving that takes into account the monetary gifts from the laity in return for the church's spiritual blessings.

Such mentality affected the laity's giving before the 21st century. Members from all economic classes gave endlessly to the church. According to Iosefa Afutiti, a CCCS ordained minister, they provided in the form of *taulaga* (annual offering), *lafolafoga* (weekly monetary donation), *alofa* (minister's wage), *atina'e* (development fund), *sene* (weekly offering), *tali lauga* (monetary gift for someone who preaches in a church who is not the minister), *talo mua* (first fruits), and more.⁴ The church responded by continuously blessing and praising the laity for their generous giving. She uses scriptural bases, sermons, and prayers to convince members that their giving is a way of offering thanksgiving and glorification to God for his boundless love and protection.

In the '21st century',⁵ gone are the days when church-goers gave to the *ekalesia*⁶ for merely spiritual rewards. Globalization and technology has improved areas like communication, trade, education, and has communized the needs and wants of the global community.⁷ In effect, the cost of living was amplified; overseas importers controlled the prices of their goods, and small developing countries like Samoa have no say but to follow suit.

³ Amuia Seuata, interview at Papa Sataua, July 25 2014.

⁴ Iosefa Afutiti, interview at Peteleema Fou parish, March 13 2015.

⁵ The 21st century began on January 1st, 2001 and will end on December 31st, 2100 in accordance to the Gregorian calendar.

⁶ A CCCS term for congregation, *aulotu* is also another term.

⁷ Robert Schreiter, *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local* (New York: Orbis Books, 1999), 8.

The church members, especially those with low economic incomes, felt the financial effects, and no longer gave as they were use to. In some cases people gave nothing at all while others choose to leave altogether. Migrating overseas is one common cause of departure for most CCCS members. However, another major reason for leaving the CCCS was religious conversion towards the New Religious Groups (NRGs) such as the Latter-Day Saints (LDS).

Low income earners found refuge in such religious movements from excessive monetary donations practised by their former church, as argued by nine interviewees. An additional twenty five former CCCS members, who were interviewed, mentioned other reasons for leaving: educational benefits, lesser *faaSamoa* or cultural affiliation, extra job opportunities, and more. As a result, these responses somehow reflect the effectiveness of the ‘giving ministry’ employed by the CCCS.

Scope and Limitations of Discussion

Due to the allocated word limit and the regulated time frame, it is difficult to include all the New Religious Movements within this research. This is why the Latter-day Saints (LDS) has been selected. In terms of membership, the LDS has numerically overtaken the Methodist Church of Samoa – the 3rd largest mainline church.⁸

The availability of data for example that which reports the class of people leaving the CCCS, and whether the members leaving migrate directly to the LDS church. The research mainly relied on questionnaires, interviews and case studies to obtain such data.

The scope of the research is also another limitation in itself. Interviews and questionnaires were distributed only to 20 former LDS, and 34 former CCCS members.

⁸ Samoa Bureau of Statistics SBS, "Population and Housing Census 2011 Analytical Report," (Apia: Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2011), 52.

Their views and opinions do not necessarily reflect that of the two respective churches' as a whole.

Aim of research

This research seeks to explore whether the 'ministry of giving' carried out by the CCCS is solely 'spiritual' based on her Mission Statement and other documents of faith. If yes, then why are members leaving? If no, what needs to be done to address such issues?

On a non-implementation basis, the paper then proposes to utilize some important elements of the LDS church's ministry of giving. For example, the LDS Church's strong zeal for education, building of chapels for each 'ward'⁹, relief aid given to support victims of natural and accidental disasters. Further will be the estimated amount of SAT\$30,000.00¹⁰ distributed as a youth promotional fund.

In terms of financial support, the paper is aware of the incomparable differences that exists between the 'global' LDS church and the 'local' mainline denominations such as the CCCS. For example, the LDS has affiliations with multi-million dollar companies such as Coca-Cola and other world-wide corporations.¹¹ The local mainline churches do not have these kinds of world-wide affiliations.

However, a common practice amongst LDS and CCCS is that they both collect monetary contributions from their members. For example, tithing, fast offering, *taulaga* (offering), and *alofa* (the minister's free will wages), just to name a few. It is the way these monies, large or small, is effectively and efficiently utilized to develop primary resources such as education for member's engagement that is of considerable concern.

⁹ A ward is similar to a congregation or *aulotu*

¹⁰ Amuia Seuala, interview at Papa Sataua parish, July 25 2014. Amuia and his wife Tiresa are currently working as parish minister in Papa Sataua, Savaii. He is a former LDS member, and still has contacts within the LDS church.

¹¹ John Ankerberg and John Weldon, *Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Mormonism* (California: Harvest House Publishers, 1992), 12-19.

The paper hopes to generously remind the CCCS the importance of giving back to the laity.

In doing so, chapter one will focus on the Giving Ministry of the CCCS. Chapter two will concentrate on the comparative study of the CCCS and LDS churches and their different approaches towards giving. Finally, chapter 3 will aim at suggesting a ‘way forward for the CCCS giving ministry’.

Literature Review

Scholars such as John Ankerberg & John Weldon in *Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Mormonism* provides details of why the LDS church is giving comfortably to her members.¹² This will help reveal the strategy and the ministry of giving employed by the Mormon Church.

Manfred Ernst, a well known historian and scholar, provided reports issued in 1994 and 2006 that highlights the LDS church’s increase in numbers within the Pacific. For Ernst, membership is the key to determine the success (or lack thereof) of a church.

A report from the Samoa Bureau of Statistics which relates to the increase of the new religious groups, including the Mormon Church, in the Pacific and Samoa was also used.

In contrast to Ernst argument, Laurene Bowers, a Congregationalist minister and writer, in her book *Invitational Ministry*, she argues that ‘discipleship’ is a more appropriate measurement of the church’s success, not membership.¹³ Pacific Island scholars such as Tavita Pagaialii¹⁴ and Malua Theological College (MTC) lecturers

¹² Weldon, *Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Mormonism*, 445-446.

¹³ Laurene Bowers, *Invitational Ministry: Move Your Church from Membership to Discipleship* (Missouri: Chalice Press, 2013), 5-8.

¹⁴ Tavita Pagaialii, "The Pentecostal Movement in Samoa: Reaching the Uttermost," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* (2004): 1-3

(current and former) will also be exploited to compare and contrast the Mormon Church with other new religious groups in Samoa.

Methodology

Quantitative and qualitative interviews and questionnaires were conducted and distributed to the ‘lay members’¹⁵ and other leaders of the LDS church and CCCS. They have a thorough understanding of how the redistribution of funds are handled, and also provided feedback as to why they chose to leave their former belief.

Books, newspaper, articles, thesis, journals, doctrinal documents, the internet, and other related sources were utilized as well.

¹⁵ Un-paid members of the LDS church who are chosen as regional and local officers.

Chapter 1

THE GIVING MINISTRY OF THE CCCS

“(1) The Church represents God to humanity in its testimony and loving **service** to people, and all its **words** and **actions** should be a way to draw God’s Holy Love to people. (2) The church also represents the world before God through its **prayers** of confession, intercession and thanksgiving.”¹⁶ (CCCS Mission Statement)

For the purpose of this research, four critical terms (**in bold**) in the mission statement of the CCCS deserve explanation. Firstly, the church represents the loving **service** of God through her **words** and **action** to the people. The task of the church is to give by serving the people, not only by preaching and praying, but more importantly, by action. The second is more on the spiritual task of the church which is to **pray** before God on behalf of the people. Furthermore, the CCCS often preach about the doctrine of ‘Salvation by faith through good works’.¹⁷ The rising concern, however, is the CCCS practicing both these underlying aspects of her mission statement and doctrine of belief?

1.1 A Spiritual Approach

To further develop the CCCS’ emphasis on the spiritual giving, a document called the *The Statement of Doctrines of the Samoan Church, LMS* insists that giving spiritually is her main priority. The nurturing of the sacred lives of her members starts from the primary level to adulthood.¹⁸

Such spiritual emphasis is manifested in her ecclesiastical upbringing of members. For example, in the Sunday school, the church teaches the young generation the basics of spiritual life. As teenagers they attend the Youth groups where spiritual living is

¹⁶ EFKS, O Le Faavae Ole Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa (the Constitution of the Congregational Christian Church Samoa). (Malua: EFKS, 2011), 48.

¹⁷ Ekalesia Samoa L.M.S, The Statement of Doctrine of the Samoan Church (L.M.S) (O Mataupu Silisili Ole Faavae Faa-Le-Agaga Ole Ekalesia Samoa (L.M.S). (Malua Printing Press: CCCS, 1995), 10.

¹⁸ LMS, The Statement of Doctrine of the Samoan Church (LMS), 6-12.

further developed. When they grow into matured and old adults they are members of groups such as the women's fellowship, Christian endeavour, and the watcher's prayer union where they actively participate in prayers, preaching, and teaching to the younger generations. The trend, therefore, continues in a cycle where children are taught at an early age, and when they are adults they transmit this same practice to the younger generation of the church.

In effect, these theological factors motivate her members to give endless monetary donations to the church. The CCCS is very much dependent on the monetary giving from her members by means of annual offering, minister's wages (*alofa*), weekly donations (*atina'e*), daily offering (*sene*) and more. In most individual congregations, the *lafolafoga* and *sene* are done every Sundays. The *alofa* is donated to the minister every fortnight. These monies stay within each respective congregation, and some are paid indirectly to the CCCS through its sub-district and district channels. The most significant source of money for the CCCS would have to be the *taulaga*, this monetary offering is implemented twice a year; *Taulaga ole Talalelei* and the *Taulaga Samoa*. These donations are done by the laity and clergy. Such monies, collected from the *taulaga*, are directly given to responsible officers of the church.¹⁹

Thus, the CCCS gives 'invisible' gifts of the spirit to her members, while expecting 'visible' gifts such as money from the laity. The important question here is, if the church relies heavily on the laity for monetary gifts so that it can survive, will the spiritual gifts she gives back to the laity help the members and their families suffice?

Faalepo Tuisugaletaua, a Practical theologian at Malua Theological College (MTC), suggests that the CCCS needs to practice a 'balanced approach' to the way giving is conducted; it should be practiced in such a way that it does not contradict its

¹⁹ EFKS, ed. *O Le Iloiloga O I'ugafono Tumau.*, 10th ed. (Apia, Samoa: Malua Printing Press, 2013), 103.

theological and missiological messages.²⁰ Such balance directly refers back to the mission statement highlighted in the outset of this chapter. The CCCS seems to be practicing only the spiritual side, but neglecting the practical side of her ministry.

Former members of the CCCS whom were interviewed echoed this concern by stating that;

the church [CCCS] is all about words and no actions, she speaks about giving to those in need, but actually takes more than what she gives...this is why we left the EFKS²¹

This response reflects two critical concerns on the part of the CCCS. Firstly, the non-implementation of the ‘service’ and ‘action’ that she is to give to her members as highlighted by the first clause of the mission statement. Secondly, the participants (age group 30-50 years) no longer think that the spiritual gifts received from the church’s teachings and prayers are sufficient to cater for the global issues people face today. Issues such as unemployment, poverty, inflation, health related ones, and many other issues that people need money to address. Why is there a sudden shift in emphasis? Why are spiritual gifts no longer applicable to the people’s contexts and contemporary situations?

1.1.1 Shift in Perspective

Before the 21st century, members faithfully gave to the church because they have learned from childhood that she represents God on earth. The more they gave the more blessings they would receive from God through the church. This thought was stressed by Amuia Seuala, a former LDS member and current elder minister of the *Itu-o-Tane* district, Savaii. For Seuala, this view is still upheld by the older generation, but the

²⁰ Faalepo Tuisugaletaua, "Christian Samoa: Cultural Theological Praxis," (MTC: Malua Theological College, 2015). 60.

²¹ Participants B and D, interview, March 3 2015.

younger members are causing huge concerns for the CCCS. They do not possess the enthusiasm in giving to the church as their grandparents and ancestors did.²²

In the 21st century, the older generation have either passed away, migrated overseas, or are no longer the financial providers of the families. The increased impacts of globalization and higher learning have diminished the people's reliance on traditional food, methods, and thought. Their dependence was shifted to overseas products and services. The laity no longer practiced subsistence fishing and farming; rice and potatoes substituted *taro*, canned fish and overseas meat replaced the traditional *moa Samoa* (Samoan chicken), *pua'a* (pig) and fresh fish. After exposure to higher learning in secular education their mindset was more critical, the utilization of money collected by the church members was often questioned.²³ In essence, people could not afford to perform the traditional monetary giving to the church while simultaneously coping with the cost of living.

As a result, members with 'low economic stability' began to leave the CCCS. There is no information known to the author that highlights the migration of different class of people according to economic income. However, the continuous increase in the *taulaga* every year, according to its annual financial reports presented during the Fono Tele can provide a fair idea of which class is leaving. The continuous increase in *taulaga* suggests that the people who continue to donate to the CCCS are probably the middle class. They can cope with the high cost of living while donating to the church. The people with lower financial incomes are the ones leaving the CCCS. Very soon, one might label the CCCS as a 'church for the rich'.

²² Seuala, interview at the Papa Sataua Parish, July 25 2014.

²³ Lanuola Tupufia, "Reverend Questions Decision," *Samoa Observer*, March 15 2015.

While the CCCS experiences a decline in membership, the New Religious Movements such as the LDS Church increased. This can be observed in statistics provided by the SBS mentioned in section 1.3.

1.2 LDS Ministry of Giving – A Humanitarian Approach

Mormons believe that obtaining salvation is earned by works; this is highlighted by Bruce McConkie, a former member of the ‘Quorum of the Twelve Apostles’²⁴ of the LDS church, in his book *Mormon Doctrine*. He states that;

Mormonism teaches that personal salvation is never a free gift secured by grace through faith alone as the Bible teaches. Rather, it is secured by personal merit through zealous good works and impeccable law keeping[...]The Gospel is not having one’s sins forgiven though exercising faith in Christ’s atonement; it is earning salvation by good works [...]²⁵

The Christian doctrine of salvation by grace through ‘faith alone’ or ‘justification by faith’²⁶ is not accepted by the Mormon Church. On the contrary, their ministry of giving always feature ‘good works’ as highlighted by McConkie. Such works are primarily physical and humanitarian in nature, and it is exchanged amongst the church and her members.

The term gift, for the Mormons, is not something freely given; it is something that must be earned.²⁷ In other words, in order for members and non-members to receive salvation, or any other material blessings they must become members of the LDS.

According to Rimoni Wright, a former stake²⁸ president of the LDS church and the current treasurer of the CCCS, the giving emphasized by the LDS church is arguably the most significant aspect of her ministry. This has prompted most traditional mainline

²⁴ This is the second highest governing body of the LDS church with the First Presidency being the first.

²⁵ Bruce McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*. (Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1958), 644.

²⁶ Alister McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 5th ed. (UK: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2011), 358-60.

²⁷ Weldon, Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Mormonism, 163-65.

²⁸ Stake is equivalent to the *pulega* in CCCS terms

members to join them.²⁹ Thus, the Mormons strategy of giving is mainly humanitarian; she strives in gifting not only her associates but non-members as well with material gifts.

1.2.1 Ministry of Giving and ‘membership’

Laurene Bowers, in her book *Invitational Ministry: Move your church from Membership to Discipleship* emphasized that the numbers does not necessarily imitate the success or failure of the church. Instead, she argues, the more significant aspect of today’s ministry is that of ‘Discipleship’. As such, the church’s work should provide an “opportunity for individuals to share and discover the significance of their perhaps very dimly practiced spiritual objectives”.³⁰ Accordingly, Bowers is referring to a ‘ministry in dialogue’ with each other. This is one main goal of ‘ecumenism’ which is described by most dictionaries as the ‘interdenominational initiative focused at better cooperation amid Christian churches’. Fundamentally, the spiritual and doctrinal differences are put aside while focus is placed on discipleship as an integral survival aid in a multi-socio religious world.

However the issue with such claim is that of ‘authority’. Historically, this has been a major setback with various religious ecumenical dialogues faced by the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the National Council of Churches (NCC). The question of who will lead, who will make the decisions, and whose doctrines are more biblically based are the issues faced by such organizations. Consensus amongst the participating members is rare.³¹ Therefore, although Bowers makes a strong point, at the end of the day it is difficult, or perhaps impossible, to implement it. This based on the

²⁹ Rimoni Wright, interview at the Public Trust office, February 15 2015.

³⁰ Bowers, *Invitational Ministry: Move Your Church from Membership to Discipleship*, 4-5.

³¹ Jeffrey Gros and Thomas Best, eds., *Growth in Agreement 3: International Dialogue Texts and Agreed Statements (1998-2005)* (Switzerland: WCC Publications, 2007), 12-22.

fact that differences outweigh the similarities in views, doctrines, interpretations, and opinions.

Manfred Ernst³² argued that the success and failure of a particular church or denomination is basically determined by membership. For Samoa, Ernst utilized data from the ‘SBS census report’³³ to further demonstrate his argument.

1.3 Statistics

Figure 1: Membership Statistics of major churches (1981-2011)

Table 7e: Percent distribution of major churches for census 2001, 2006, 2011 and 1981

Name of Church	Census 2011	Percent %	Census 2006	Percent %	Census 2001	Percent %	Census 1981	Percent %
Total population 5+	160961	100	156004	100	150682	100	132552	100
EFKS	51131	31.8	52664	33.8	52787	35.0	62972	47.5
Roman Catholic	31221	19.4	30499	19.6	29726	19.7	28839	21.8
Methodist	22079	13.7	22384	14.3	22572	15.0	21341	16.1
Latter Day Saints	24350	15.1	20788	13.3	18822	12.5	10841	8.2
Assembly of God	12868	8.0	10840	6.9	9898	6.6	-	-
Seven Days Adventists	6215	3.9	5482	3.5	5232	3.5	3062	2.3
Others	12756	7.9	10225	6.6	11453	7.6	4891	3.7
ns	341	0.2	3122	2.0	192	0.1	606	0.5

Source: Samoa Bureau of Statistics, Population and Housing Census 2011

As indicated by statistics (figure 1) from 2001 – 2011, in particular, the CCCS members declined from about 35% of the ‘total population’³⁴ to about 32%; a drop of approximately 3% (~1,656 members). Such a decline could be attributed to migration overseas via the Government’s Quota Scheme or the seasonal work programmes in Australia and New Zealand. In retrospect, the decline could also be recognized as inter-religious migration. This could possibly explain why in the midst of the decline of CCCS members, the LDS church has experienced growth from about 12% in 2001 to 15% in 2011; an increase of 5,528 (3%) members.

³² Manfred Ernst is a veteran historian. He compiled membership statistics for countries in the South Pacific which was published in 1994 and updated in 2006.

³³ SBS, "Population and Housing Census 2011 Analytical Report," 52.

³⁴ Excluding those under 5 years old and under.

The SBS data does not, however, pinpoint whether the members who leave the CCCS sign up directly with the LDS. The paper suggests that if such data was available, than it would be easier to track the inter-religious migration routes of the CCCS members. In trying to grasp a fair idea of whether or not the CCCS members migrated to the LDS church, a minor survey was conducted with the CCCS church at Satalo, Falealili. This is where the author served before attending MTC.

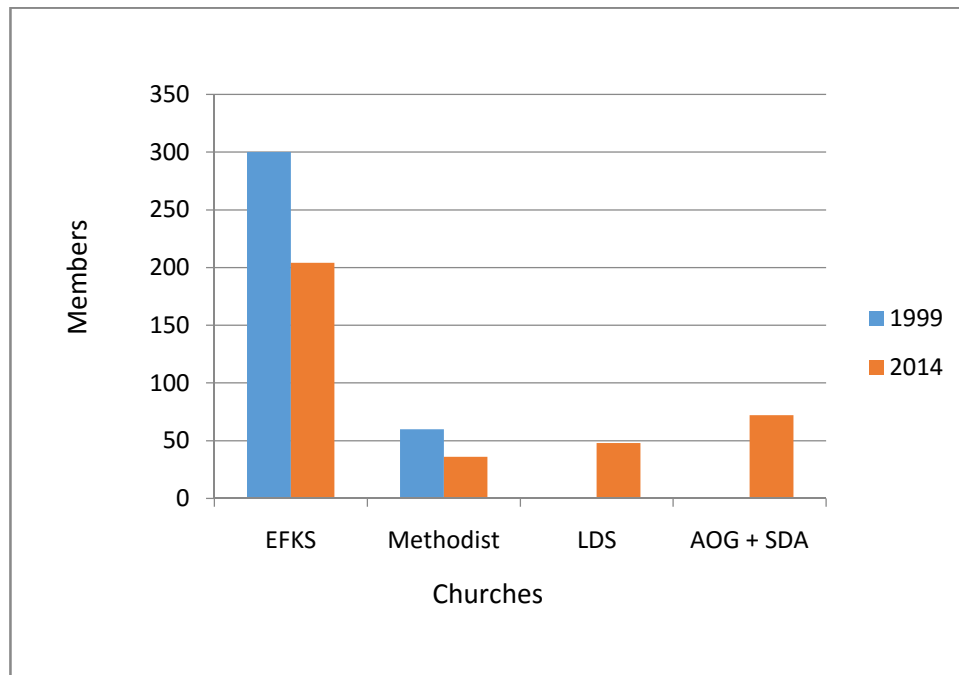
Case Study: Satalo, Falealili.

Satalo parish is an example of a CCCS member church whose members have migrated to the LDS. The '*api ole galuega*'³⁵ (records of the minister's work) provided by Fuata'i Simanu, the current minister of this parish, recorded that the village only had two churches in the past; Methodist and the CCCS. In 1999, there were 30 extended families (average of 12 members per family) in the village. 5 families attending the Methodist church while the other 25 families went to the CCCS.

The establishment of LDS church in the neighbouring Sapunaoa village in the early 2000s saw a decline in CCCS membership (figure 2). Some members who converted were interviewed and their main response was that the LDS church, in particular, basically gave to them more than what they received from their former church. This is explained in figure 2.

³⁵ Records of the minister's work

Figure 2: Satalo Falealili CCCS Inter-religious migration



Notice that 4 families from the CCCS now attend the LDS church. The CCCS, therefore, decreased from approximately 300 to about 204 members from 1999 to 2014. There was no LDS church in 1999, but since 2014 they have gained members from both mainline churches in the village. This case perhaps portrays a small but realistic picture of the increase in LDS members at the expense of the CCCS laity as reported by the national SBS census.

1.4 CCCS response to Statistics

In saying this, the general attitude from CCCS leaders is that those figures are exaggerated due to overstated membership records of various LDS wards. This is yet another weakness of the SBS data which Ernst utilizes; there is always a question of integrity and precision.³⁶ However, with reference to case study 1, there seems to be a

³⁶ Featuna'i Liuaana, interview at Malua Theological College (MTC) during the Fono Tele, May19 2015.

glaring truth to the claim that CCCS numbers are declining in light of the rise in the LDS church.

Such matter was heavily discussed during various CCCS elder's committee meeting such as that documented in the tenth revision of the *Iloiloga o I'ugafono Tumau* or the Revision of General Assembly Standing Orders (2013). The issue of membership decline prompted the 'fathers of the church' to revisit and modify some of its doctrines, constitution, role of the CCCS as a whole, and its giving ministry.³⁷ Amongst the issues that were discussed was the 'prohibition of the giving of fine mats' (important in Samoan culture of *ta'igasua* (traditional Samoan gifts)) during ceremonies such as '*fa'aulufalega*' or dedication of a new church building³⁸. Furthermore, the document stated that "should the Samoan cultural protocol of gifting be observed as part of the ceremony, this must be done with the utmost wisdom and care."³⁹

Notice that only fine mats is prohibited, while the real problem of monetary gifts that are associated with such cultural protocols are not addressed or banned. As participant D expressed, the review is almost saying to stop the giving of fine mats, but increase the *teutusi* or monetary gift presented in an envelope.⁴⁰ As stated earlier, today, members are well educated and they criticize everything the church does. In essence, participant D is surfacing an issue that requires a total review of the CCCS' giving ministry. Not just focusing on one area while turning a blind eye to the majority of cases like funerals and weddings.

³⁷ EFKS, O Le Iloiloga O I'ugafono Tumau., 55.

³⁸ Dedication ceremony for a new building such as a Church.

³⁹ Ibid., 85.

⁴⁰ Participant D, interview, February 19 2015.

Summary

The mission statement of the CCCS emphasizes two aspects; service not only with the word of God but also with work and action. The second aspect is the spiritual aspect of praying for the people before God. The first question, therefore, is been answered. The CCCS practices the spiritual giving; the second clause of the mission statement regarding ‘action’ is not implemented. Before the 21st century, the laity, especially the older generation, embraced such spiritual giving because of the associated theological implications. However, as globalization and technology took hold of the cost of living, the members with lower financial income felt that spiritual gifts from the church will not help them meet their physical needs and wants. The SBS statistics and the Satalo case study reflect the ineffectiveness of the spiritual ministry employed by the CCCS.

In contrast, the LDS church employs a giving ministry that is humanitarian in nature and gives her members material gifts. This is predetermined by her doctrine of ‘salvation by good works’. Such theological reflection pushes her to actively practice good works for her members.

Chapter 2

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CCCS AND LDS 'GIVING MINISTRY'

This chapter will utilize information collected from interviews and questionnaires. The response that relates to each church's giving ministry will be discussed. The feedback includes less monetary commitments, welfare assistance, youth promotional funds, and educational benefits.

Interviews and questionnaires were conducted and distributed to 20 converts from LDS to CCCS and 34 CCCS to LDS members. The LDS participants were from 4 wards, and EFKS interviewees were selected from 5 *ekalesia*. There were two participants from New Zealand, and the rest currently live in Samoa.

For former CCCS members, the majority mentioned the following reasons for their move to the LDS church (listed according to rate of recurrence);

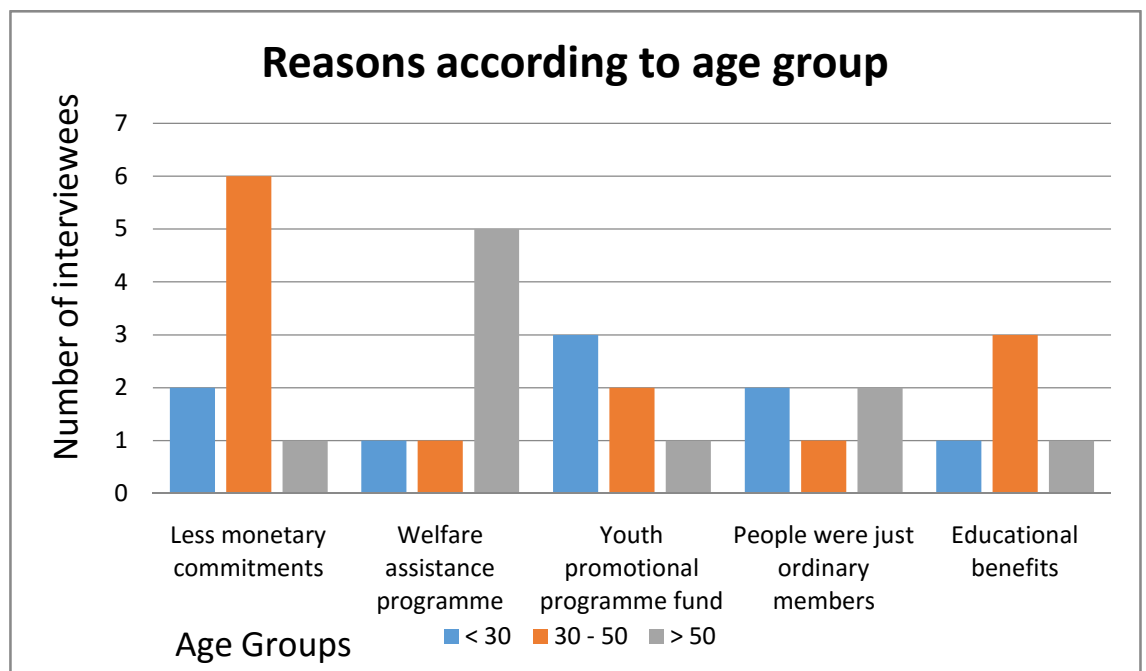
Figure 3: Summary of reasons provided by interviewees

1. Less monetary commitments for LDS church (tithing, fast offering) compared to CCCS (taulaga, alofa, atina'e, sene, lafoga autalavou (youth)/mafutaga tina (women's committee) /tama (men)/autalavou (youth) /aoga Aso Sa (Sunday School), faamati (yearly inspections))	9
2. Welfare assistance programme	7
3. Youth promotional programme fund	6
4. People were just ordinary members (they were not given leadership or other important roles in church)	5
5. Educational benefits	5
6. Others	2

Notice that only one reason (no. 4) is indirectly related to the LDS church' giving of financial funds; people were just ordinary members. However, the other four causes

(1, 2, 3, and 5) are matters that are directly connected to money. Thus, it is possible to say that most of these members migrated because of the financial aid they received from the LDS. To further breakdown the aforementioned results, they were categorized into three age groups (figure 4).

Figure 4: Breakdown per age group.



There are two interesting factors here; firstly, the second age group (30 – 50 yrs) are the ones claiming that there are less monetary commitments and more educational benefits in the LDS church compared to the CCCS. This age group are considered the working class which contributes a lot into the financial necessities of the family, whilst donating to the church.

Secondly, the first age group (>30) reported that they were ‘bored’ and ‘unhappy’ with the pastoral care of youth, and that they were “just ordinary members”. Such result brings into the fore a contributing aspect to the LDS Church’ increased membership; she embraces the youth by funding their activities.

For those who were LDS members, two reasons frequently stood out; (1) 13 members that the doctrines and especially the temple ritual were not in accordance with Christian standards. (2) 6 members were in conflict with stake leaders of the church.

Note that there are some members who disagreed with certain doctrines and rituals of the LDS church. This is an indication that, to some extent, the spiritual giving or teaching emphasized by the CCCS encouraged 13 members to convert (3 members) or return (10) to the CCCS. An example of some of the LDS doctrines was mentioned in chapter one regarding the ‘salvation by works’ which is an influential practice in the LDS’ giving ministry.

2.1 Monetary Commitments

For nine respondents, the only financial commitment LDS church faithful have to provide is, ‘tithing’¹ and ‘fast offering’². As Ernst discovered, the returns from tithing are submitted to the headquarters in Utah while ‘fast offering’ income goes to a special welfare fund. It is ‘redistributed’ based on the needs of each mission and in times of disasters.³ Current LDS members commented during interviews that tithing and fast offering is handed to the leader of the ward in an enclosed envelope; no one knows the amount except for the leader.

Furthermore, the church buildings are fully funded by the mother church when a new or renovated building is built. The LDS Church has a worldwide insurance company and all its buildings are insured.⁴ Such effective utilization of such funds was

¹ One tenth of each member’s earning is given to the church.

² Members fast (2-3 meals) every first Sunday of the month, the financial equivalent of these meals are given to the church.

³ Manfred Ernst, ed. *Winds of Change: Rapidly Growing Religious Groups in the South Pacific* (Suva: Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC), 1994), 173.

⁴ Laila Leauanae, interview, April 2 2015. Leauanae is the current principal of the Pesega College.

evident when the 20-year-old temple at Pesega was destroyed by fire on the 9th of July 2003, and a few months later the new temple was built.

In contrast to the CCCS, the individual contributions are announced for all to hear, this is embarrassing for the people who have limited incomes, and are sometimes forced to compete with financially well-off members. Furthermore, the CCCS require numerous financial commitments from her members. There is the *taulaga* (Talalelei and Samoa), *alofa ole faifeau*, *atina'e*, *sene*, *lafolafoga a tinā/tamā/autalavou/aoga Aso Sa*. On top of these obligations, when a church building or the minister's house is to be renovated or built, the members are asked to fund-raise or donate even more money to support it. As a result, the laity who struggle to make ends meet suffers, or as Seuala puts it, "*e tagi a i lima o nai tagata lotu*"⁵

In comparison, there is clearly a huge difference between what the CCCS requires from her members than that of the LDS. 'Timing' is the key here. On the one hand, the CCCS strategy of overloading some of her members with excessive contributions in a limited time frame is a burden for low income earners. On the other hand, the LDS church employs a strategy that does not require excessive monetary commitments in a short period of time. Instead, she invests the small amount that is collected over a longer period of time. When the need arises to build or renovate huge projects like constructing a church building, all financial needs are covered. In essence, this puts less stress on the laity to come up with the desired amount in an extended period of time as opposed to meeting larger sums of money in a shorter time frame.

⁵ Seuala, interview, July 25 2014.

2.2 Welfare System

The welfare initiative, which was supported by 6 interviewees, is one of many worldwide investment systems owned by the LDS church. It is mainly dependent on the ‘fast offering’ and donations from wealthy LDS business individuals and groups.⁶ As such, most committed LDS family has to have a store room; where food, drinks, first-aid equipment, utensils, and other necessary tools are stored. Officials (usually the missionaries) from each stake and ward carry out a monthly inspection to monitor the progress.

The LDS church does not provide its members with these basic necessities, but encourage them to invest and save for the future. The church’s welfare system is utilized only when families suffer from natural and accidental disasters⁷ and not randomly to meet every member’s daily necessities. Critically, it may be true that natural disasters do not frequently occur, but once it does the damages to lives, infrastructure, and emotions requires a life-time’s savings to rebuild the damages.

Pessimistically, former LDS members claim that the “store rooms” are meant for members only. Immediate family members who are non-LDS, such as parents, will not be eligible to these commodities. In the context of the CCCS who insist on working hand in hand with the *faaSamoa*. The concept of giving and sharing or *fetufaa’i* with one another especially within the *aiga* or family, is in jeopardy. Moreover, the bible speaks of love and giving to those in need on many occasions, and the practice of being selfish or unwilling to share and freely give to others, particularly to one’s own parents is seriously in question.⁸

⁶ Wright, interview, March 3 2015

⁷ Leauanae, interview, April 2 2015.

⁸ Reupena Maulolo, interview, August 3 2015. Maulolo is a Pastoral Ministry lecturer at MTC. His sister attends the LDS church in Sydney; when contributions are asked of her for family *faalavelaves* she always rejects it.

Despite the setback, the positive aspect is that of ‘preservation’ and being ‘well equipped’ for future disasters. Significantly, the aim of the welfare system is to give its members the sense of ‘preparedness’ for difficult situations during good times. Not to wait for last minute preparations that quite often falls short of the required outcome and might eventually cause the loss of lives during disasters.

2.3 Youth Support Programme

There is a rising popularity of CCCS youth that tend to move to the LDS church. In fact 90% of the youths interviewed think that they need something new. As Saunoa Sila, a former Piula Theological College student puts it:

“[...] developments really attracts the youth because it coincides with their interest and lifestyle of today. [It is] appropriate for the social situations experienced in Samoa at the present [...] Young people see the Mainline Church worship as boring and obsolete. [The worship] does not permit the freedom to express the feelings of the worshippers, for they maintain the value of silent worship. Because of this nature, the Mainline Churches are branded conservative.”⁹

The feeling of boredom and the sense of oppression amongst the youth is a growing problem for the mainline churches. This is why the LDS church target the youth, an underlying goal of their missionary work. This is evident with the missionaries that are sent to the public, most are young energetic youths. Youth are appointed ward and stake leaders, and are actively involved in the day-to-day operations of the church.¹⁰

Moreover, the LDS’ emphasis on giving to the youth was revealed by six respondents. The estimated amount of SAT30, 000.00 is given to each stake for the sole purpose of youth camps or what is known as the ‘fireside’. It also finances activities like sports, and other leisure programmes. The money is used to cater for transport, food, shelter, and other requirements for the abovementioned activities.¹¹ The grant is to be

⁹ Saunoa Sila, "An Image of a Samoan Youth in a Changing Society" (2001), 34.

¹⁰ Kalena Sootaga, interview, April 2 2015. Sootaga is a primary school teacher at Pesega.

¹¹ Wright, interview, March 3 2015.

properly reconciled and the stake leadership is responsible for submitting detailed reports to the main office in Pesega regarding the expenses. Many ward leaders have been terminated due to mistreatment of these funds.¹² Amuia Seuola and Rimoni Wright, former members of the LDS church and are now ordained ministers of the CCCS also confirmed this monetary donation.

In essence, the LDS church targets the youth generation whom we often designate as the “*malosi ole ekalesia*” (literally, the strength of the church), they are also the ones who are the “*lumana’i*” or future of the church. ‘Giving’ to the youth encourages them to be associated to the church and with each other. Together they can develop, with purpose, their families, their respective churches, and ultimately the whole community of Christ on earth.

Furthermore, the misuse of such funds is a priority for the LDS. As such, this is a growing concern raised by two respondents. It is becoming a frequent problem for churches in Samoa; the clergy are sacked for mistreatment of the church’s funds.¹³ More emphasis should be placed on integrity and transparency, so that members can be confident that their monetary contributions are in ‘good hands’.

2.3 Educational Benefits

Educational benefits were one of the reasons provided by five members during the research. A study was done with one of the LDS church’s top schools in Samoa, Pesega College, and two CCCS Colleges, Leulumoega Fou and Maluafofou. These colleges are arguably the best that both churches have to offer.

Aukilani Tuiai, a CCCS historian at Malua Theological College, in an article called *The church and the laity* states that it was easy for CCCS members to migrate

¹² Leauanae, interview, April 2 2015.

¹³ Participants F and G, interview, March 6 2015.

towards the LDS church because the standard of education was much higher there.¹⁴ In contrast to the CCCS schools, such as the Congregational Senior College (CSC) that accommodated the academic needs of 247 students in 2011. The CSC was closed in 2012, firstly, due to the inclusion of the 6th form for other colleges of the CCCS such as Leulumoeaga Fou and Maluafoa and there was no longer a need for CSC.¹⁵

Secondly, the financial expenses was supposed to be utilized for a new vocational school which, to date, has not yet been established.¹⁶ The closure led to the teachers being distributed to other CCCS schools. Members of the laity criticised this move and questioned why was the CSC set up in the first place when the financial support should have been given to upgrade and improve education with the existing schools? For Tuiai, this shows the CCCS abandoning the needs of the laity by ineffectively using the people's money.¹⁷

One interviewee stated that in the past, the CCCS was fully committed financially in supporting her Education system. For instance, the church (CCCS) spent a significant amount of money for bringing specialized teachers from overseas (Indians, Germans, English) to implement high quality education, especially in subjects such as Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics, Accounting, and others. Unfortunately for today, it is not happening—this basically means that only financial support can produce a successful education system.

Meanwhile, the education system for the LDS church has been vastly improving in student academic achievement. This is reflected in statistics such as the number of University Preparatory Year (UPY) students compared with the CCCS schools.

¹⁴ Aukilani Tuiai, "Le EFKS ma Tagata Lautele (Laity) 1990-2001," *Malua Journal* 1, no. 1 (2013): 146.

¹⁵ Malua Latu, "Ripoti o A'oga E.F.K.S Me 2010 – Me 2011" in *Tusi l'ugafono Fono Tele* (Apia, Malua Printing Press, 2013), 4.

¹⁶ Latu, interview at Malua Theological College, June 7 2015. Malua is currently a third year faletua at Malua Theological College (MTC), she used to be the Director of Education for the CCCS before coming to MTC

¹⁷ Tuiai, interview at MTC, November 20 2014.

2.3.1 School Admission Fees

Prior to presenting the UPY data, affordable school fee was also a frequent response from interviewees. Figures 5 and 6 are the designated fees for Pesega¹⁸ and Leulumoega Fou Colleges¹⁹.

Figure 5: Admission fees for Pesega College

	LDS member	Non-member	Staff
Tuition	\$276.00	\$552.00	\$138.00
Book Fee	\$22.00	\$44.00	\$22.00
Activity Fee	\$22.00	\$44.00	\$22.00
Subscription	\$22.00	\$44.00	\$22.00
Year Book	\$19.00	\$38.00	\$19.00
Discounted Tuition	\$345.00	\$690.00	\$207.00
Total Fees	\$375.00	\$690.00	\$237.00

Figure 6: Leulumoega Fou College Admission Fees

Fees per term	member/non-member
Registration Fee (Yr 9)	\$20.00
School Fund/Fee (Yrs 9 – 11)	\$40.00
Years 12 & 13 (Term 1)	\$115.00
Years 12 & 13 (Term 2 & 3)	\$70.00
Total Fees	\$245.00

Notice that Leulumoega Fou College charges much cheaper fees for its students. For example, both members and non-members pay \$245.00 per annum at Leulumoega Fou, while giving \$690.00 to Pesega College.

Interestingly, the fees for students whose family members are ‘staff’ in the LDS colleges pay only \$237.00; this is lesser than the amount required by Leulumoega Fou. Critically analysing such difference, one would interpret this as a strategy used by the LDS church to target the teachers. If teachers’ children or family members are offered

¹⁸ LDS Church College, "Admission Fees," LDS Church, <http://pns22.is2.byuh.edu/it240-2123b/Project/admission.html>.(June 15, 2015)

¹⁹ Information provided by Fauolo, the Leulumoega Fou College Principal.

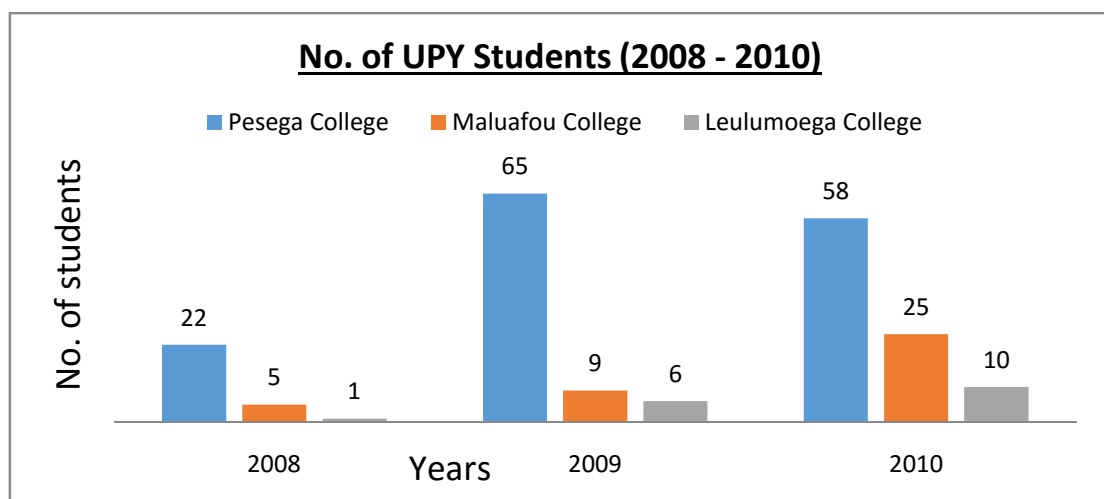
lower school fees they will be encouraged to stay in Pesega College. This probably explains why there are many qualified and experienced teachers in the ‘college’s staff list’²⁰. Such strategy attracts people from other churches to the LDS, because one cannot work in any LDS institution without becoming an active member.²¹

2.3.2 PSSC results

Figure 4 is based on the Year 13 students’ academic performance of 2008 to 2010. It shows a significant difference between the performances of students from Pesega College compared to the performance of their peers at Maluafofou and Leulumoeaga Fou.

For Pesega College, many of the graduates have satisfactorily met the admission requirements for pre-university programs of the National University of Samoa (NUS) such as the University Preparatory Year (UPY). The minimum entry requirement to the UPY is an ‘aggregate score’²² of 15 or less in English plus the best three subjects.

Figure 7: Number of UPY Students (2008-2010)



²⁰ Many teachers from Samoa College and other Church schools are now teaching at Pesega.

²¹ Leauanae, interview at Pesega College main office, April 3 2015.

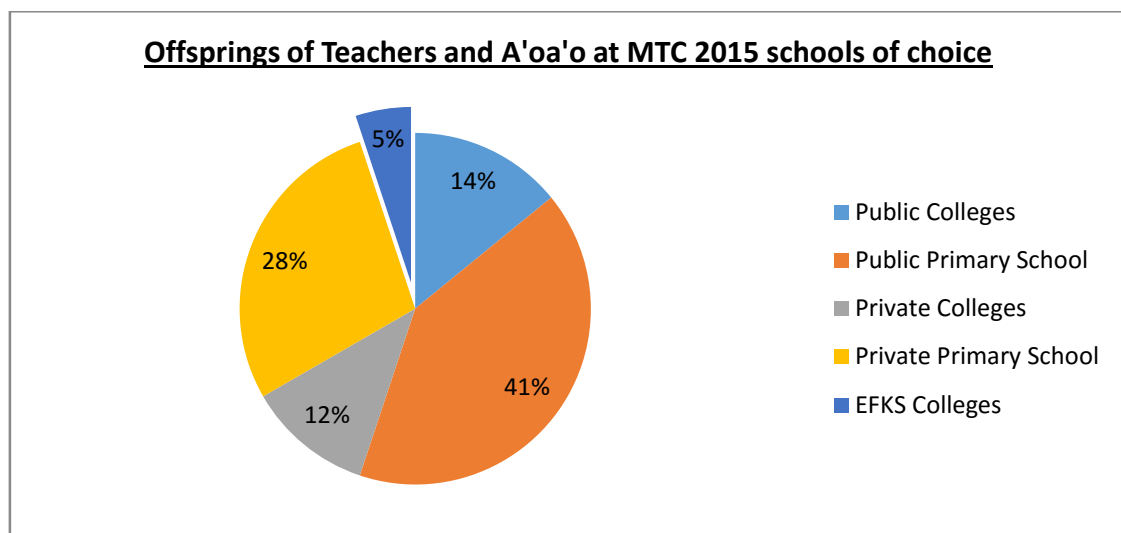
²² An Aggregate score is the total score of English plus the best three subjects. E.g. the total score of 1 in English and 1 in each of the 3 best subjects is 4: the top aggregate score.

The results show that Pesega students receiving an aggregate score of less than or equal to 15 more than doubled from 2008 to 2010 while Leulumoega Fou and Maluafofou have a very low number of UPY students. This shows the consistency in the steady academic improvement of year 13 students at Pesega College compared to the CCCS schools.

For the CCCS schools in general, Malua Latu, former director of the CCCS education board, argues that most of the CCCS clergy members do not send their children to the CCCS schools. Instead they attend other government and private schools.

To further explain Malua's stand point, a small survey was conducted to the children of the current teachers and *a'oa'o* at MTC 2015. Below is a graphical break down of schools most of the children attend.

Figure 8: Schools of choice: Teachers and Students at MTC



Notice that almost 54% of students attend public schools at the primary (41%) and college (14%) levels. About 40% attend other private schools, with only 5% of students attending CCCS schools such as Leulumoega Fou College.

In addition, this case study surfaced a problem that is a possible reason why the clergy's children do not attend CCCS schools; there is no primary level education. In most cases, when children are educated at a public school, they continue their college education at the same institution, whether private or government owned. In effect, they get to continue their school lives with their peers, and along the same standard of education they receive and are accustomed to.²³

The only students that are left in the CCCS schools in general, according to Latu, are students who have dropped out from private and public schools due to poor academic performance, and those who cannot afford the public and private schools. In addition to Latu's analysis, the system that the CCCS employs does not help; in particular is the method of recruiting MTC graduates to teach without teaching background.²⁴

Summary

In comparison, the CCCS members give more, in terms of monetary donation, than those in the LDS church. It seems that the LDS members give less in an extended period of time in contrast to the CCCS faithful. The welfare system, not found in the CCCS, encourages the LDS members to invest for future events, accidental or natural. The youth is also a prime target of the LDS church; this is evident in her donating \$30.000 to each ward for youth promotional programmes.

In terms of education, although fees are slightly expensive compared to CCCS schools, the PSSC results are evidence of the quality education systems offered at the LDS. Furthermore, the LDS offers benefits for her teachers who in turn give quality education to the children. Lastly, there is no primary level education in the CCCS.

²³ Afutiti, interview, March 3 2015.

²⁴ Maulolo, interview, August 3 2015.

Chapter 3

A WAY FORWARD FOR THE CCCS 'GIVING MINISTRY'

The CCCS spiritual ministry is clearly not working; it is not able to cater for the needs and wants of its members, especially the low economic earners who struggle to make ends meet in their immediate families while contributing to the church. Reason being, the CCCS is not fully implementing her mission statement requirements. This is why two solutions are proposed herein.

Firstly, the LDS church strategy of giving back to its laity is a proposed model for the CCCS to follow where possible. Secondly, lessons learnt from historical events, such as that in Education, can help provide solutions for the issues faced by the church today. How can this be achieved?

First and foremost, the paper wishes to propose a more holistic approach to the CCCS giving ministry. A holistic ministry of giving not just focuses on the spiritual component of the human construction but to incorporate both the physical and the mental aspects of people's lives. This is based on the fact that one cannot be spiritually secured, while the mental and physical features of the person are affected. Likewise, the mental and physical dimensions of the person cannot be completed without the spiritual wellbeing.

Such physical and mental dimensions can be practically met by emphasizing Education, youth promotional programmes, and Time Frame for monetary donations. In addition, the CCCS must educate her members to prepare in advance for *faalavelaves*, both natural and unintentional ones.

All these factors can be observed in the LDS' strategic giving ministry. Furthermore, the hiring of specialized teachers in areas like Physics and Chemistry,

practiced before by the CCCS, can be revisited. At the outset of such proposal it may seem that giving to the laity may increase the financial cost to the church as a result of implementing such activities. However, it may cost the CCCS in the meantime, but on the long run she will reap from the fruits of her investments.

3.1 A Way Forward for the Education System

It is proposed that we should target qualified teachers from overseas, or enhance the knowledge of current teachers in areas such as Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics and other subjects. This can be done by raising salaries, and allowances of the teachers to a competitive rate with other private and public education institutions.

As a result, we can offer the children of the CCCS quality education that can be found in other institutions. In this regard, the clergy will have confidence in sending their off-springs to CCCS schools such as the Leulumoega Fou and Maluafofou. In addition, a primary level education is obligatory; education that starts from the primary level up to the College level. The pre-school level should be provided for all parishes. In essence, the Church nurtures not only the spiritual dimensions through her existing practices but also develops her members physical and mental needs while still being part of the church.

3.2 Time Frame for Monetary Commitments

The existing strategy employed by the CCCS is putting pressure on her members, especially low economic earners, by having too much to offer in a short period of time. In the process, they have their families to look after and provide for. The church can adopt the strategy engaged by the LDS in terms of contributing small amounts over an extended time frame. This way, the *taulaga* can be held every two to three years, while

members have sufficient time to collect and build up their contribution. Furthermore, the CCCS members need to be educated about the theological significance of ‘giving’. That is to please God for his incomparable gift in Jesus Christ, not to dwell on cultural and traditional mindset, such as giving to compete with others.

3.3 Preparedness and Investment

The CCCS can also adopt the positive goals of the welfare system used by the LDS. In doing so, her members can prepare in advance for *faalavelave* or family affairs, whether it be natural or unintentional ones. Teach and encourage her people make store rooms for storage of necessary equipments and food for times of natural and common *faalavelave* like funerals. This is to avoid last minute reactions while being proactive to such situations.

Conclusion

The ministry of giving employed by the CCCS is mainly focused on the spiritual giving through prayer, preaching and other forms of spiritual gifts. The LDS emphasizes the humanitarian and physical giving in her ministry. Interestingly, the two systems have weaknesses; together they can be a force to be reckoned with.

The physical giving is not something new to the CCCS; in fact it is clearly stipulated in her mission statement. The problem is that the church is not practicing it. This is evident in the inter-religious migration of her members to the LDS. If the CCCS re-visits her mission statement she will realize the importance of giving back to the laity by improving education, youth, and easing the burden in their monetary activities – action.

This is the key to achieving the ‘holistic ministry of giving’ which already exists in her doctrines; the challenge is to practice it. The preaching and teaching of the Gospel should go hand in hand with works and good deeds. That is the total accomplishment of the ‘holistic ministry of giving’.

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