

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION THROUGH *AUTALAVOU* IN THE MINISTRY OF  
THE CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN SAMOA:  
A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE CURRICULUM

A Project  
Presented to  
the Faculty of Pacific Theological College

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Bachelor of Divinity

by  
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September 1993



# ABSTRACT

This project, "Christian Education through *Autalavou* in the Ministry of the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa: A Critical Evaluation of the Curriculum," is an attempt to review the youth curriculum in relation to the present situation of the people, and then to see what the Bible and Theology say about the necessity to relate the Gospel message to one's context. One of the major challenges confronting Congregationalists in Samoa today is the simplicity and attractiveness of the approaches used by the para-church and sectarian movements, many of whose members are former members of the Congregational Church. The question which this phenomenon brings to mind is "What do para-churches and sects have which we (C.C.C.S.) do not have, that makes their missions successful?" One of the aims of this project is to encourage the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa to adopt methodologies that have been used by some of these newer churches and organisations which are relevant to our present needs.



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#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Rev. Dr. Jovili Meo, and to my assistant supervisor, Rev. Dr. Lydia Johnson-Hill, who took over supervision when Dr. Meo was engaged with his E.E.D.A. programme commitments overseas. Without their insights and direction, this work would not have been in its present stage. I would also like to acknowledge the help of all other members of the P.T.C. faculty, particularly Mrs. Tilisi Bryce, for their help in various ways, directly or indirectly.

I am also very thankful for the spiritual, moral, and financial support of my Church, the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa, families, and friends during the years of study here at P.T.C.

Also I acknowledge the help of Rev. Elder Utufua Naseri, Rev. Elder Faigame Tagoilelagi, Rev. Alosina Vavae, Rev. Nove Vailaau, and Rev. Kuatemanu Ulutui in making my research possible and successful.

I also acknowledge the support of my fellow students, particularly the *Aiga Samoa*.

Finally, but not least, I acknowledge my indebtedness to my wife Tamara for her great support in every way; and to our children, Litara Vasati, Sarona Miriama, Esera Jr., and the two Fijian born Loloma-mai-Viti and Talei for their enduring of the pressure of the studies. This is our work together.



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## INTRODUCTION

Ever since the implementation of the *Autalavou* system in the early 1960s to enhance Christian Education among youth in the ministry of the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa, it does not appear that any serious review has been undertaken. The *Autalavou* constitution has been reviewed five times since the system was established, yet the curriculum, particularly the medium and methodologies, remains unchanged despite the fact that many other things since then have changed considerably.

The length of time is not necessarily the deciding point for a review to be carried out. Rather, it is the dynamic nature of the situation that urges adjustments to be made. The Congregational Christian Church in Samoa since the 1960s has been going through many changes, not only within the Church itself, but also in terms of cultural, political and social situations. For example, the Church is seen today to be much more involved with local politics than it was in the early years of the *Autalavou* system. Western Samoa only became an independent island nation in 1962, a few years after *Autalavou* was established.

In the Church itself, the *Autalavou* curriculum was designed when the Congregational Churches in the East (American Samoa) and the West were one. Now there are two separate Congregational Churches. Another major change which took place in the Church recently was the granting of the legal right to church ministers to vote in the General

Election. Other developments in the country in the economic, technical, religious and social spheres, have caused many changes in people's lives.

It is because of all these changes that the aim of this paper is to assess and evaluate the Church's Christian Education ministry through the *Autalavou* system. The primary question behind this task is, "Is the curriculum relevant to the people's situation?"

It is important to note that proper records related to this task were destroyed by fire when the Church's Office for Christian Education was burned in a fire accident several years ago. Hence, most of the information particular to *Autalavou* in this paper comes from oral sources.



## CHAPTER 1

### CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOR YOUTH IN THE CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN SAMOA

Exploring Christian Education for youth in the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa (C.C.C.S.) requires an understanding by educators of what Christian Education is. Only then can we compare and contrast the commonly understood definitions with what is generally practised in the church today.

This chapter will therefore begin by explaining some of the generally accepted views on what Christian Education is, and then proceed to describe Christian Education as practised in the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa.

#### Christian Education: Some Definitions

Randolph Crump Miller, quoted by Kenneth O. Gangel, has defined Christian Education as:

...the effort to make available for our generation - children, young people, and adults - the accumulated treasures of Christian life and thought, in such a way that God in Christ may carry on his redemptive work in each human soul and in the common life of man.<sup>1</sup>

Miller's definition, according to Kenneth Gangel, is a fairly traditional one, but it is good to compare the older definitions of Christian Education with more recent ones so that we may be able to understand Christian Education in its broadest terms, for our time and our own situation.



Howard Hendricks, who was a professor of Christian Education at Dallas Theological Seminary and who is regarded by many people as a fundamentalist, has defined Christian Education in this way:

Christian education is not an option, it is an order; it is not a luxury, it is a life. It is not something nice to have, it is something necessary to have. It is not a part of the work of the church, it is the work of the church. It is not extraneous, it is essential. It is our obligation, not merely an option.<sup>2</sup>

Jack L. Seymour has a slightly different way of describing Christian Education. Seymour has discussed Christian Education through its five different approaches or functions - religious instruction, faith community, spiritual development, liberation, and interpretation. In the first approach (religious instruction), the "teaching/learning transaction consists of the transmission of Christian religious beliefs, practices, feelings, knowledge, and effects to the learner, and the context is the church's educational programs."<sup>3</sup> Under 'faith community,' "Christian education becomes the natural process through which a community embodies its faith and passes it on from generation to generation."<sup>4</sup> From the 'spiritual development' perspective, Christian Education aims at the religious experience and religious journey of the individual.<sup>5</sup> Christian Education as liberation functions as an enabler, equipping people to be independent in life and church commitments.<sup>6</sup> In the last approach, interpretation, Christian Education is "interpretation of the Christian tradition and the person's present experience in relationship to each other."<sup>7</sup>



Finally, there is the recent focus on adult Christian Education, which is defined as:

(1) helping members make meaning of the world in which they live in the light of their faith by engaging them in a lifelong learning process; (2) learning about Christian belief and action, past and present, world-wide, responding appreciatively and critically; (3) modelling a way of teaching which shares power and responsibility; (4) providing education in beliefs, values and ethics; (5) promoting two-way traffic by pointing to a theological component in other disciplines and reflecting back to the Church discoveries from those disciplines.

The above definition or view of Christian Education, although, as stated, is restricted to adult education, is much wider than that proposed by Randolph Crump Miller. Miller's definition seems to be confined to Christian disciplines such as theology, Biblical studies and the like, while the latter definition, especially point number 5, recognises the values of other disciplines - for example, the social sciences. This definition is well suited to the era of modern scientific technological advances in which we now live.

Hendricks' view, on the other hand, even though it may sound absolutistic, reminds us that Christian Education is not so much an education in the mind but a life to live. Many churches are active with their Christian Education programmes, yet people in those churches are involved in un-Christian and unethical practices. This perhaps is due to our perceiving Christian Education as a learning course rather than as a course of life. Hendricks' view therefore is valuable in that sense.

Seymour's approach is in line with the new wholistic approach to adult education already highlighted, in the



sense that it is also broad, covering all aspects of an individual's life and his or her environment. In comparison with Miller's definition, both Seymour and the adult education model are comprehensive models for a concept of Christian Education which is intended to be taught, learned, and lived in our daily situations. All of these definitions, however, including Hendricks', do not reduce or restrict Christian Education as if it belongs to a particular ministry in the diversity of ministries within the Church. Rather, Christian Education is defined as including all ministries of the faith community.

Christian Education: How it is Practised in the Church

Traditionally and practically, Christian Education in the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa seems to be recognised as the *Aoga Aso Sa* (Sunday Schools) for children and *Autalavou* (Youth Groups) for the youth. Perhaps the establishing of a Church Office specifically to provide educational programmes for the *Aoga Aso Sa* and *Autalavou*, and its subsequent naming as the *Ofisa O A'oa'oga Kerisiano* (Office of Christian Education) has led people to identify Christian Education as synonymous with these two groups.

In my research, all the lay people in Upolu and Savaii islands whom I talked with about Christian Education questioned me about whether I was referring to the *Aoga Aso Sa* or to the *Autalavou*.<sup>9</sup> This shows that Christian Education is perceived as one or both of these groups. It also means that in a local parish which does not have an *Aoga Aso Sa* or an *Autalavou*, people see that parish as one without Christian Education.



Another possible reason which might have led people to regard *Aoga Aso Sa* and/or *Autalavou* as synonymous with Christian Education is the meaning of the word 'education' in Samoan, and subsequently the context in which the *Aoga Aso Sa* and *Autalavou* are conceived.

'Education' in Samoan is *a'oa'oga*, which in English means teaching, schooling, or learning. *A'oa'oga* implies teaching or learning, either in formal education (school) or in education in the wider sense of the word. But because the *Aoga Aso Sa* and *Autalavou* are being run in a context of schooling and are very much like school institutions, Christian Education in the Church context presupposes teaching and learning as schooling.

#### Christian Education for Youth

Christian Education for youth in the Church is then practically known as *Autalavou*. In the literal sense of the word, *Autalavou* means a team or a group of youth. But in the Church, the term is applied to a group of people which the group's constitution defines as being from the age of fourteen up to the age of thirty or more, married or single, who, under the leadership of a parish minister, have pooled together to live for Christ through Christian Education.<sup>10</sup>

*Autalavou* in the Church therefore is not necessarily a group of youth according to age, but a mixture of youth and adults. This is in fact the case in most, if not all, *Autalavou* in the Church. Christian Education for youth, therefore, in the context of the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa, is not strictly for youth only, but for

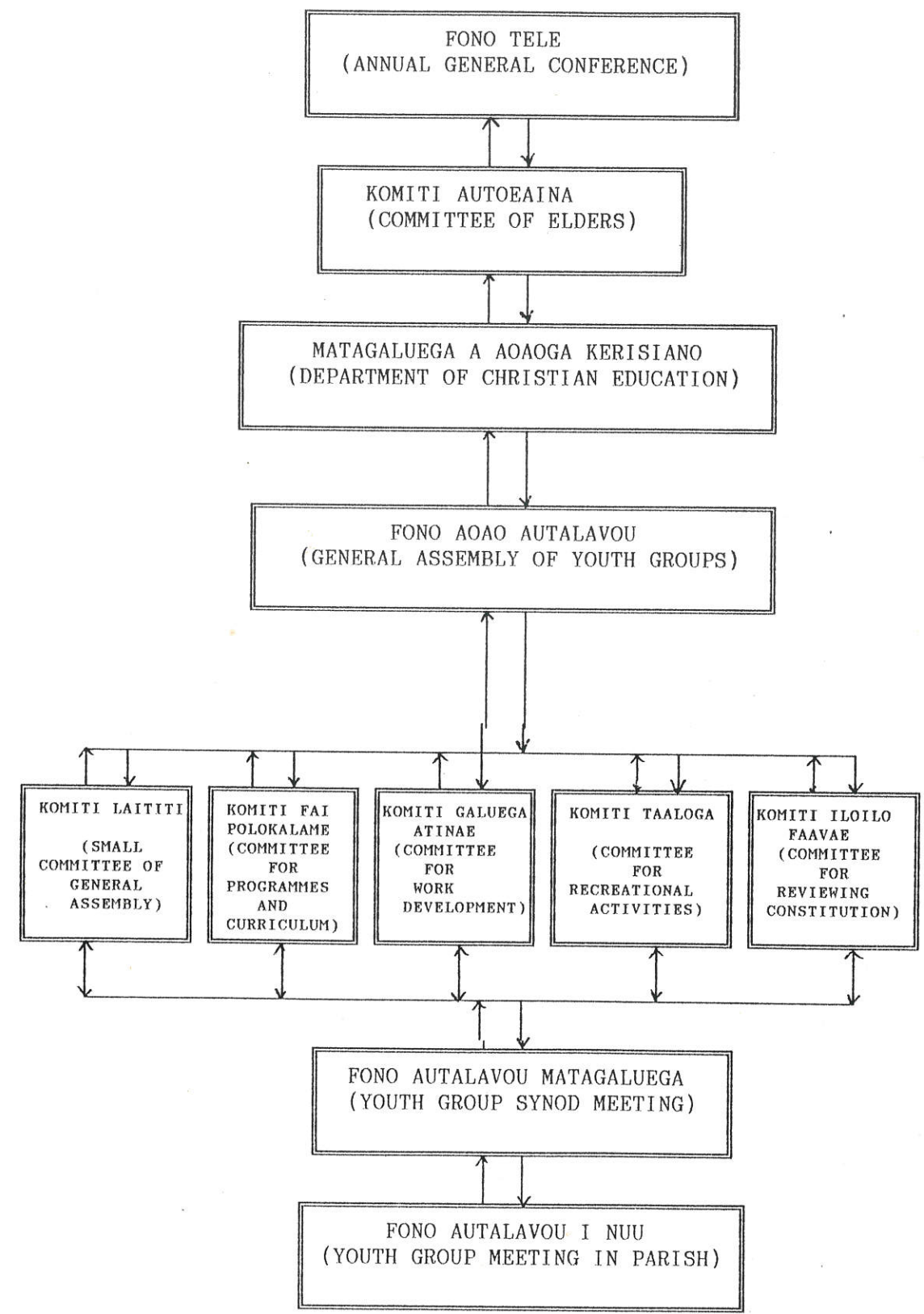
youth, adults, and all those who are members of an *Autalavou*. Thus, Christian Education for youth - young men and women who have outgrown the level of Sunday School - is the same education for everybody in *Autalavou*, regardless of their different backgrounds, levels of maturity and different spiritual needs.

Christian Education in the *Autalavou* system is under the supervision of the Church's committee of elders. However, programmes and curriculum are planned by the Department of Christian Education. *Autalavou* is a fairly recent system implemented for youth Christian Education. It is not compulsory for local churches to establish an *Autalavou*. The chart below shows how Christian Education through *Autalavou* is run.



TABLE 1

THE CONSTITUTIONAL DESIGN FOR THE CHRISTIAN YOUTH GROUP  
(AUTALAVOU) OF THE CHURCH<sup>11</sup>





History: The Beginnings of the New System - Autalavou

It is unfortunate that all records which were held by the Office of Christian Education were destroyed in a fire several years ago.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, through reliable oral sources, it is possible to trace the history of *Autalavou* and its developments. These sources include the Reverend elder Faigame Tagoilelagi, who was one of the pioneer workers and later was appointed the first Director for the then new system; Reverend Bruce J. Deverell, who succeeded Faigame and became the Director in 1964 and in subsequent years; and Asi Alekana, who joined the Office in 1964 and now is the Deputy Director.

*Autalavou* began in 1958 with a pilot project at the village of Utualii under the direction of Misi Peretiso (The Reverend J. Bradshaw), the London Missionary Society missionary who came to Samoa in 1955 and worked as a lecturer and eventually became the principal of Malua Theological College. In the same year, Misipele, a graduate of Malua Theological College, was appointed to continue with the pilot project's activities while Faigame was sent to Westfield Training College in Britain to train in Christian Education. Faigame returned at the end of 1961 and began setting up *Autalavou* and *Aoga Aso Sa* at Tutuila. In 1962 he was shifted to Apia to carry on with the work which Misipele had started. Faigame was appointed the first Director for the new system of Christian Education - *Aoga Aso Sa* and *Autalavou* - in that same year. Also in 1962, youth officers for the *Matagaluega* (district or Synod) were appointed.<sup>13</sup>

Since the beginning of *Autalavou* and *Aoga Aso Sa* as the new system, Christian Education was under the responsibility of the *Komiti O Feau Esee* (General Purpose Committee). Later, however, it was moved under the control of the *Komiti O A'oga* (Education Committee), in the belief that Christian Education was part of education in general.

It became an independent department for a time, until 1991, when it became under the watchful eyes of the *Komiti Au Toeaina* (Committee of Elders), on the understanding that Christian Education deals with the spiritual life and should therefore be under the direction of the Church elders.

One of the resolutions of the *Komiti Au Toeaina* regarding the continuity of *Autalavou*, and also for the *Aoga Aso Sa*, is that the youth officers in districts would continue on for the time being. In the future, however, the *Matagaluega* would be responsible for the continuing of Christian Education in their areas and also for preparing their own programmes. This resolution, which has not yet eventuated, follows the system used by the Samoan churches in New Zealand.<sup>14</sup>

Although Christian Education, then, is under the responsibility of the elders of the Church, the curriculum, or written programme, is prepared by the Director and the Christian Education officers.

#### A Summary of the Curriculum - the Printed Programmes

In practice, the Department of Christian Education uses the term 'curriculum' to mean the printed programmes which the Department provides for *Autalavou* and for *Aoga*



*Aso Sa.*

In an interview with the Deputy Director of Christian Education, it was revealed that the curriculum in the early years after the Department was set up in 1962 was composed mainly of Bible studies. Lessons on culture and traditions were later added on, with studies on other denominations and new religious movements being added in 1965.<sup>15</sup> The current curriculum repeats the same topics, with lessons on social issues as a later addition.

Bible study lessons include studying the background of selected Biblical books, exegesis, and questions and answers on Biblical stories. The programmes appear to be designed for youth to know the Bible as a book rather than to understand the Bible as the message of God speaking to the lives of the people.

The programmes on culture are mainly on issues connected with the *matai* (chiefly) system, cultural practices such as the *Kava* ceremony and oratory, and exploring past traditions such as a 'Samoan Wedding.' The emphasis of the cultural programmes appears to be on the preservation of past values and traditions, and on teaching the younger generations about present cultural practices.

In the area of other faiths, other religions and new religious movements, which are also known as para-churches, the programmes are designed to provide an understanding of their respective doctrines and teachings. Perhaps the purpose is to make members of *Autalavou* aware of other faiths and other religions' teachings - how inferior and unbiblical they are - so that the *Autalavou* members will



not leave the Church so as to become members of other churches or movements.

The printed programmes in the last five years have shown no variation in discussion topics nor in the style of planning lessons. Any person who studies past programmes and those of recent years is likely to draw the conclusion that there is an element of repetition in the programmes, and that Christian Education for *Autalavou* is out of step with the present life-style of the youths. Perhaps the reason for this is because the curriculum plan and/or the curriculum design are not being followed when the curriculum for the year is prepared, or that both the plan and the design are so obscure that the *Autalavou* programme officers just follow what has been inherited from the past.

It is thus important to attempt to ascertain how the *curriculum plan* and the *curriculum design* are generally understood, so that we can assess how they function in the youth curriculum of the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa.

#### The Curriculum Plan and Design

A curriculum plan and a curriculum design are defined and/or described by Leroy Ford as follows:

The difference between a curriculum and curriculum plan is the difference between a race completed and a race planned...A curriculum plan is a detailed blueprint or system for implementing a design. A curriculum plan resides in instructional departments, particularly in course descriptions. In the Church school, the curriculum plan resides in instructional periodicals and the individual 'lessons' which incorporate goals and objectives, elaborate the meanings, and describe learning activities and evaluation approaches...<sup>16</sup>



As for the curriculum design, Ford writes:

[It] is a statement of and elaboration of the institutional purpose, institutional goals and objectives for learners, scope, contexts, methodology, and instructional and administrative models involved in an educational effort...<sup>17</sup>

Furthermore, Ford adds that:

A curriculum design helps ensure that 'scope' (what we teach) finds expression in teaching methods appropriate for given groups and cultures (how we teach). It sees that educational goals and objectives (why we teach) influence appropriately the determination of what *may* be taught (scope). The design sees that the methods of education reflect learning activity appropriate to learner characteristics and differences (methodology). It sees that the contexts (where we teach and the circumstances surrounding our teaching) influence appropriately all other elements, and that the total design is appropriately tailored<sup>18</sup> to needs in the light of contextual influences.

From Ford's definition of curriculum plan and curriculum design, it is clear that the curriculum plan is carried out by instructions and individual lessons which incorporate goals and objectives, elaborate the meanings and describe learning activities and evaluation approaches.

However, in the programmes for 1991 (third quarter) and 1992 (second and third quarters) of the *Autalavou*, the goals and objectives of all lessons are not stated, and thus the curriculum plan is not clear. Perhaps the curriculum officers assume that the motto 'To live for Christ,' which is printed in the monogram on the front cover of the programme magazines, is clear and sufficient as the goal and objective of all lessons. But according to Ford's definition, the goals and objectives of individual lessons must be made explicit.

The curriculum design, moreover, must help learners to



know not only the goals and objectives but also the scope, contexts, methodology and instructional and administrative models involved in the educational programmes. But again, the programmes under study repeat the same pattern and the same style with no indication of what the objectives and goals are. Furthermore, the methods of teaching have remained unchanged since the beginning of *Autalavou*.

The current curriculum is prepared from the *matagaluega* (district) youth group officers' reports. Each *matagaluega* youth officer is asked to visit all *Autalavou* in the *matagaluega* and furnish the Christian Education Office with reports of their visits. The reports, then, are intended to be incorporated into the programmes which are then understood as the curriculum.

The youth officers who work in *matagaluega*, unfortunately, are usually not graduates of a theological school and therefore do not have the confidence to carry out their duties. When they are asked by a parish minister to give a talk or to conduct a Bible study for the *Autalavou*, the officer goes with the preconceived idea that the minister knows more about the Bible than he does.

On the other hand, the youth officers in the Christian Education Office are usually graduates of theological colleges who have never been parish ministers. Therefore, they lack pastoral experience and do not really know what kind of education is required by the laity, nor what kind of approaches to take in educating the laity.

In an interview with one of the elders of the Church, he shared that much of the curriculum especially the



printed programmes and some of the lessons are not relevant to the situation of the lay people in villages. One of the reasons for this, he believed, was the lack of confidence among the district youth officers and the lack of pastoral experience among the officers in the Christian Education Office who actually prepare the programmes.<sup>19</sup>

The present curriculum design and plan implies that the emphasis is more on intellectual learning rather than on practical learning. For example, Bible study lessons concentrate on teaching the backgrounds of the selected Biblical books as well as other information, rather than giving opportunities to the laity to share their views on how the message of the Bible speaks to them in their life situations.

The Constitution pamphlet, which I believe is not being referred to when lessons are discussed in *Autalavou* meetings, lists the goals and objectives of *Autalavou*. The main goal which is taken as the motto for *Autalavou* is "*Ia ola ia Keriso*" ("To live in or for Christ") through education, fellowship, worship, works, and recreation or entertainment; it also states that youths should be taught the Bible so that they may grow up accordingly.<sup>20</sup>

But even if these goals and objectives were being remembered every time *Autalavou* discusses a lesson, they are too general and they are not comprehensive. The goals and objectives need to be stated clearly in every lesson and they must be comprehensive. Having a clear goal and objective in mind can give the *Autalavou* leaders and members confidence and freedom to discuss or act out the

lesson. Using a variety of methods, eventually all would arrive at the same goal and achieve the desired objectives.

#### Methodologies Being Employed

The most commonly used method in *Autalavou* education is direct teaching or lecturing by the leader. In this method members of the *Autalavou* are often treated and thought of by the leader as students in a classroom, and their part is seen as just to receive without question what is being taught.

The other method used is group sharing. The members of the *Autalavou* are divided into small groups to discuss an issue or a topic and then report back their views and ideas or to share with the rest of the *Autalavou*.

A practical learning method is used mainly in lessons on culture, especially when demonstrating cultural traditions like the *kava* ceremony. Sometimes groups are asked to act out some Bible study lessons through the medium of drama, but this is very rare since it takes time for practice. Debate is one of the methods used, but also rarely.

The overall picture is that the methodologies employed are not radically different from the methods used in the classroom in formal education. Thus the Christian Education curriculum, which is meant to be much broader in scope than the curriculum of public schooling, is run as if it is a curriculum of schooling.

Other methods which are in tune with the present time and life-style, such as educational use of videos and musical instruments, are not used, even though they would



be ideal because they are being used and understood by the present generation.

We have now shown how Christian Education in the *Autalavou* is practised, how it evolved, and how its curriculum functions. But it is equally important to know the attitudes, viewpoints and mentality of the people towards *Autalavou*.

The Perceptions and Attitudes of Church Members  
towards Autalavou

The only people who are eligible to join *Autalavou* and who are considered to be deserving recipients of its Christian teachings are those who have shown themselves to the community as well mannered and obedient to the norms and values of the community. This is the tacit opinion of the conservative Church members concerning who should be a member of the *Autalavou*. The majority of the conservative church members cannot tolerate seeing those who are known for their unethical or unconventional behaviour trying to associate themselves with what they (the conservatives) regard as sacred.

To these conservative Church members, those who are associated with Godly things are people with a good record in the community. In cultural practices and traditions, heavy fines are imposed on people who misbehave, especially at the minister's house, all because of the belief that no bad people should draw near to what is believed to be sacred. This belief seems to be common in the Pacific. The Marshall Islands Protestant Church, for example, identifies people who smoke or drink alcohol or *kava*, or those

associated with certain kinds of social activities, such as gambling or dancing, as unworthy to be accepted as full members of the Church.<sup>21</sup> This is also the general view of the Church of Tonga,<sup>22</sup> and likewise is the general belief of the lay people of the Methodist Church in Fiji.<sup>23</sup>

So in villages in Samoa, there is present among Church members a mentality which believes that an *Autalavou* should be a group of 'good' and righteous people who are then worthy to be recipients of Christian Education.

One of the attitudes of some Church people against *Autalavou* is that it is a meeting place for young men and women. Christian Education being synonymous with *Autalavou* thus suffers the same accusation. This attitude or perception of some people against *Autalavou* has weakened the enthusiasm in some local churches to establish an *Autalavou*. This attitude can also be taken as an excuse by ministers who do not want to take the time to establish an *Autalavou*.

But a more recent and perhaps the current perception of *Autalavou* is that it is a money-making machine of the minister which assists him in providing finance for projects such as a church building, brass bands, church halls, or any kind of project the minister wishes to undertake. The involvement of *Autalavou* today with fund raising activities often breaks some of the rules of the Church, such as, 'no dancing,' 'no gambling,' etcetera. But because of the 'good' aim of financing a Church building or a minister's house, or assisting with Church offerings, breaking of the rules seems to be justified and thus the



Church seems to condone gambling and dancing, and other things forbidden by the Church.

With the involvement of *Autalavou* in pursuing projects, there is a tendency among ministers and *Autalavou* members to evaluate the growth and success of their groups in terms of money-making projects which *Autalavou* have completed.

Despite these weaknesses of the *Autalavou*, it can be an effective way for the Church to reach out to its youths and all those who are in *Autalavou*, whose voices are never heard in Church meetings.

To summarise , *Autalavou* is a fairly recent system which the Church has established in an attempt to improve its outreach to its youth in her Christian Education ministry. It has encountered problems and difficulties, yet it is still surviving. For the *Autalavou* to be an effective means of Christian Education and a vital part of the Church in her ministry, its curriculum has to be relevant to the situation of the people. Thus it is important that the curriculum be evaluated accordingly.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Kenneth O. Gangel, "What Christian Education Is," in Christian Education: Foundations for the future, eds. Robert E. Clark, Lin Johnson and Allyn K. Sloat (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 14.

<sup>2</sup>Robert E. Clark, Lin Johnson and Allyn K. Sloat, eds., Christian Education: Foundations for the Future, 11.

<sup>3</sup>Jack L. Seymour and Donald E. Miller, Contemporary Approaches to Christian Education, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1982), 16.

<sup>4</sup>Seymour and Miller, 21-22.

<sup>5</sup>Seymour and Miller, 22.

<sup>6</sup>Seymour and Miller, 25-28.

<sup>7</sup>Seymour and Miller, 28.

<sup>8</sup>Yvonne Craig, "Education, Adult Christian," in Dictionary Of The Ecumenical Movement, (Geneva: World Council of Churches Publications, 1991), 346.

<sup>9</sup>Informal discussions and interviews between the author and members of *Autalavou* in Vailoa Palauli, Luatuanuu Upolu, December 1992 and January 1993.

<sup>10</sup>Ekalesia Fa'apotopotoga Kerisiano I Samoa, O le Fa'avae O Autalavou Kerisiano (Apia: Malua Printing Press, 1991), 6.

<sup>11</sup>Ekalesia Fa'apotopotoga Kerisiano I Samoa, 1.

<sup>12</sup>Asi Alekana, interview with author at the Christian Education Office, Tamaligi, Apia, 16 December 1992. Alekana has been the Deputy Director of the Christian Education Office since 1964.

<sup>13</sup>Faigame Tagoilelagi, recorded interview with Reverend Alosina Vavae, Mangere, Auckland, New Zealand, 25 March 1993. Tape in the possession of the author. Also from an interview of Reverend Bruce J. Deverell by the author, Pacific Theological College, Suva, Fiji, 10 March 1993.

<sup>14</sup>Faigame Tagoilelagi, interview.

<sup>15</sup>Asi Alekana, interview.

<sup>16</sup>Leroy Ford, A Curriculum Design Manual for Theological Education (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1991), 34.

<sup>17</sup>Ford, 34.



<sup>18</sup>Ford, 38.

<sup>19</sup>Reverend Utufua Naseri, personal interview with author, Savaii, 11-13 December 1992. Naseri is an elder minister of the Church who is serving in an area far from the city. His *Autalavou* is one of the biggest in the island.

<sup>20</sup>Ekalesia Fa'apotopotoga Kerisiano I Samoa, 5.

<sup>21</sup>Rensiper Lalimo, sharing on 18 June 1993, Pacific Theological College, Suva. Lalimo is a theological student from the Marshall Islands in the final year of the Bachelor of Divinity programme.

<sup>22</sup>Fololeni Tafokitau, sharing on 18 June 1993, Pacific Theological College, Suva. Tafokitau is a theological student from the Church of Tonga, Tonga, in the final year of the Bachelor of Divinity programme.

<sup>23</sup>Joeli Qionivoka, sharing on 21 June 1993, Pacific Theological College, Suva. Qionivoka is an ordained minister of the Methodist Church, Fiji, in the final year of the Bachelor of Divinity programme.

## CHAPTER 2

### ASSESSING AND EVALUATING THE PRESENT CURRICULUM

Traditional approaches to evaluating the present Christian Education curriculum for *Autalavou* usually begins by either criticising or praising it without analysing to discover the reality of the situation. Obviously such approaches are not pragmatic. An analytical survey of the present curriculum, focusing on the question of relevancy, is thus long overdue. In this chapter I will examine the problem with *Autalavou* Christian Education and members' views about it, compare it with two other selected youth programmes, and then assess and evaluate some of the lessons from the curriculum.

#### The Problem

##### Attitudes

The perception among some Church people is that the Christian Education curriculum for *Autalavou* is irrelevant. The real problem in my view is the nostalgic and conservative attitude of the Church which eventually leads to producing a curriculum that is not relevant to the present situation.

In addition, the Church does not encourage scholarly training in Christian Education, and thus its Christian Education curriculum is designed by people who have had training in other areas. Moreover, and more importantly,



people are approaching Christian Education with the mentality of a school curriculum when it should be that of a church curriculum.

The nostalgic and conservative attitude of the Church still prevails despite the fact that people have experienced major social, political and cultural changes in recent years. This attitude hinders the incorporation of new ideas and new approaches, as well as the inclusion of current political, social, sexual, economic and environmental issues, in its Christian Education curriculum. These are the important issues of the present era, and the concern of this generation, which would constitute a relevant curriculum.

The other factor that contributes to producing an unchanging curriculum is the lack of motivation by the Church to provide scholarships for theological studies in the area of Ministry, which includes Christian Education. There is a wrong conception among the educated class of the Church that knowledge of Theology or Biblical Studies is quite sufficient for a person to be able to do or to teach the disciplines of Ministry such as Christian Education. It is thus very unusual for the Church scholarships to be offered to students majoring in any Ministry discipline, particularly Christian Education. Hence the Church's Christian Education Department is run by officers who have not had proper training in this field. The result is likely to be a curriculum adopting traditional styles and designs, and failing to address the present situation.

### Lack of Understanding

Initially these problems seem to be directly associated with the attitudes of people toward the Church's Christian Education curriculum. But theoretically and practically, 'curriculum' is an obscure phenomenon to the Church's laity, and perhaps to the clergy as well. Hence the confusion among Church people as to the distinction between Church curriculum and school curriculum also contributes to the present problem.

Comparatively, the way in which the Church's Christian Education curriculum for *Autalavou* is practised is similar to that of a Formal Education curriculum which takes place in a school. But Christian Education curriculum is by nature much broader and more extensive than that of a school curriculum. School curriculum is basically confined to the form of a printed text, and practically, learning takes place mainly from a monologue approach. Church curriculum, on the other hand, which is referred to as Christian Education curriculum in this paper, should include and equally value other forms of learning such as "worship, proclamation, community, and service."<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, the printed curriculum which is predominantly used in *Autalavou* is to present Christian life and values as intellectual knowledge rather than praxis (practice, action or experience). Further, by approaching this curriculum as a school curriculum, the chance of excluding vital contemporary issues increases, since one is confined to the printed text, which does not change. For example, the introduction of universal suffrage



to Western Samoa was so sudden that there was no time for the issue to be included in the *Autalavou* printed curriculum to prepare people for moral decision making in the political arena. If areas such as community life and service were incorporated into our understanding of curriculum, issues such as voting would have been covered.

Equipped with an obscure knowledge of what curriculum is, and not being clear on the distinction between church and school curriculum, the Christian Education curriculum for *Autalavou* may continue to be experienced by the Church people as irrelevant. Since the focus of this project, and especially this chapter, is the evaluation of the Christian Education curriculum for *Autalavou*, it is therefore necessary to define "curriculum" clearly and, 'more importantly, to analyse how curriculum should be understood in a church context.

#### Curriculum: Its Definition in General

##### and in Christian Education

##### What is Curriculum?

"Curriculum" is generally defined in The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary as "subjects included in a course of study or taught at a particular school, college, etc."<sup>2</sup> Howard P. Colson and Raymond M. Rigdon have defined curriculum as "a noun derived from the [Latin] verb *curere*, which means to run. Literally, a curriculum is a running or a race course."<sup>3</sup> Further, Colson and Rigdon state that "The common conception of curriculum is that it is a course of study in an educational institution - or the whole body of

courses offered by such an institution."<sup>4</sup> But in a more general sense, curriculum as a concept "exists only where true learning experiences take place."<sup>5</sup>

Colson and Rigdon's view of curriculum centres around the idea of experience. But others have explained curriculum by emphasizing the idea of process. D. Campbell Wyckoff, quoted by Maria Harris, writes of curriculum as "a carefully devised channel of communication used by the church in its teaching ministry in order that the Christian faith and the Christian life may be known, accepted and lived."<sup>6</sup> Others have emphasized the aspect of environment in defining curriculum. Gordon MacKenzie has referred to curriculum as "the learner's engagements with various aspects of the environment which have been planned under the direction of the school."<sup>7</sup>

The above definitions point to what curriculum is in general, although Wyckoff's view is made with reference to the church. Regarding curriculum in the church, Colson and Rigdon state that it is "the sum of all learning experiences resulting from a curriculum plan used under church guidance and directed toward a church's objective."

By this they mean that

the denominational publishing house does not provide the curriculum! The curriculum is what happens to the learner in the local situation. The publisher only furnishes a curriculum plan and curriculum materials... The curriculum plan is embodied in the printed materials and resources, whereas the curriculum is what occurs in the teaching-learning situation.

Maria Harris also describes curriculum in a church context in this way:



A fuller and more extensive curriculum is already present in the church's life: in teaching, worship, community, proclamation, and outreach. Printed resources that serve this wider curriculum are in the treasury of the church, ... These, however, are not the curriculum. The curriculum is both more basic and more profound. It is the entire course of the church's life, found in the fundamental forms of that life. It is the priestly, prophetic, and political work of didache, leiturgia, koinonia, kerygma and diakonia. Where education is the fashioning and refashioning of these forms in interplay, curriculum is the subject matter and processes that make them to be what they are. Where education is the living and the fashioning, curriculum is the life, the substance that is fashioned.

It is clear from the above views on church curriculum that the actual curriculum is not necessarily the printed materials. Rather, the printed materials and other forms through which education is being promulgated are only agents or vehicles. The curriculum is 'the entire course of the church's life,' which includes all the various activities, beliefs, and living out of the Christian faith.

#### Church versus School Curriculum

Harris also suggests several principles upon which the church's curriculum is to be designed:

- I. As church people, we must consistently distinguish between the curriculum of education and the curriculum of schooling;
- II. The curriculum of educational ministry is multiple;
- III. Subject matter has many layers;
- IV. The curriculum must be priestly, prophetic, and political;
- V. The curriculum must take into account three forms: the explicit curriculum, the implicit curriculum, and the null curriculum.

The five principles are equally important, but reference is



made particularly to the first one, in the light of the problem with the C.C.C.S.'s Christian Education curriculum for *Autalavou*. As we have pointed out, part of the problem is the confusion over curriculum in school and in church contexts. Harris' first principle stresses the significance of distinguishing a church curriculum (which she refers to as a 'curriculum of education') from the curriculum of schooling. Harris points out that although the actual meaning of curriculum points to "life's experiences as part of curricular work, the implicit assumption is almost everything written and taught about curriculum is that, like education, it is in practice limited to what adults do to and with children in a place called a school."<sup>11</sup> Because of this tendency, Harris stresses that "Making a distinction between a curriculum of education and a curriculum of schooling, however, could enable us to break out of this limited and limiting meaning of curriculum."<sup>12</sup>

According to Harris, the distinction is that

A curriculum of education will refer to the interplay of the several forms through which education occurs - it will refer to education in, to, and by service, community, proclamation, worship, and teaching. In contrast, a curriculum of schooling will be a reference to only one of the many valuable forms through which education occurs, that form which generally happens in a place called a school, a form focused on processes of instruction, reading of texts, conceptual knowledge, and study.<sup>13</sup>

Curriculum as it is practised and understood in the C.C.C.S.'s Christian Education for *Autalavou* is almost synonymous with the quarterly printed programmes. This is so because the printed text is the exclusive form being continuously employed since Christian Education for youth



was initiated through the *Autalavou* system.

Briefly, then, the way curriculum is understood in Christian Education for *Autalavou* is obviously school oriented and thus very narrow. It is true that Colson's, Rigdon's and Harris' views were formulated in the context of the church in the United States. Nevertheless, a Christian church context is transcultural in nature and therefore their insights can be relevant to the context of the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa in her Christian Education curriculum for *Autalavou*.

#### Field Research Regarding *Autalavou* Curriculum

It became necessary in this study to undertake research in order to do a proper evaluation of the Church's Christian Education curriculum for *Autalavou*. Accordingly, a Questionnaire was designed for distribution to members of several different *Autalavou*, as representative examples of *Autalavou* in general. Attention was focused on differences in views and opinions between *Autalavou* in the rural areas, including the island of Savaii, and those around the city of Apia and its periphery.

#### Collection of Data

There were one hundred copies of the Questionnaire (see Appendix A) distributed: fifty copies among three *Autalavou* in the rural areas (one in Upolu, and two in Savaii), and the other fifty among two *Autalavou* around Apia city.

I was aware of the diverse nature of *Autalavou*, since we have returning families from New Zealand and other countries whose members joining *Autalavou* have different

backgrounds. Also, we have people from the rural areas who were brought up under the village chiefs' customs and traditions but now have moved onto freehold pieces of land in and around the city. In addition, in the *Autalavou* in the rural areas there are youths who stay in the city for schooling and have been exposed to the city life. Moreover, in the *Autalavou* there are adolescents, adults, singles and married, chiefs and untitled people, and males and females debating on the issue of women's ordination in the Church. All of these different backgrounds need to be taken into account in evaluating the curriculum. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, this particular research was only able to focus on differences between youths and adults, and between rural and urban.

I conducted the research in Savaii, and around the city. The research in one *Autalavou* in the rural area of Upolu and one around the city were conducted by the ministers of each *Autalavou*, after my briefing them about the Questionnaire. The research which I conducted was carried out in December 1992, and the ones conducted by the two ministers were carried out in February 1993.

Of the one hundred copies of the Questionnaire being distributed, sixty-two were returned: thirty-six from the rural area, and twenty-six from the urban.

Questions 1 - 5 are closed questions concerned with the nature of the current curriculum and whether it is relevant or not. The answers were analysed statistically (see Appendix B), under two categories of 'rural' and 'urban,' noting the opinions of youths and adults.



Questions 6 - 8 are open questions requesting written opinions from the respondents. Unlike Questions 1 - 5, the opinions were not analysed statistically, but their conclusions are incorporated into our evaluation.

### The Results

Question 1: The Autalavou educational programme in our local church is: Of the sixty-two answers received on this question, forty-seven (76%) chose 'very strong, interesting, and people enjoy it,' fourteen (22%) said 'not quite strong but is still going,' and one (2%) selected the last choice - 'not making any progress at all.' The majority, therefore, state that they are enjoying the *Autalavou* programme. But does this mean that we can conclude the Christian Education curriculum for *Autalavou* is in fact relevant? We should keep this question in mind as we move on to other questions.

Question 2: The quarterly educational programmes (pamphlets) which we receive from the Church's Christian Education Department for our Autalavou education consist mainly of: Two (3%) said that programmes consist mainly of 'lessons from the Bible;' seventeen (27%) said 'lessons from the Bible and Culture;' while forty-three (70%) claimed that the programmes consist of materials from the Bible, culture, and social problems. The indication therefore is that the programmes (pamphlets) do include materials from culture and social problems, in addition to Biblical materials.

Question 3: For our Autalavou educational programmes, we follow: The majority (fifty-one, or 83%) picked the



second choice, 'the quarterly pamphlets plus our own created lessons.' This question indicates that local *Autalavou* mix programmes from the Office with their own created programmes. The point here is that not all lessons in the programmes (pamphlets) from the Office are related to the situation of the people; otherwise, *Autalavou* would have followed programmes from the Office only.

Question 4: The educational programmes (quarterly pamphlets) set out by the Christian Education Department are: The expected answer following the result in question three (that *Autalavou* do not follow exclusively the programmes prepared by the Office) would be that, they are not entirely relevant. However, thirty-one (50%) claimed that the programmes set out by the Christian Education Office have some relevance for their situation; twenty-seven (44%) said that not all things in the programmes are relevant; and four (6%) said that the programmes are not relevant at all. The interesting result is shown in the difference of opinions between youths in the rural area and those in the urban area: while the majority of youths in the rural area claimed that programmes are relevant (sixteen out of twenty-five), most of the youths in the urban area claimed that not all things in the programmes are relevant (ten out of eighteen).

Question 5: Who do you think should design and plan the Christian Education programmes for *Autalavou*? The expected answer was 'the people (ministers and *Autalavou* members),' because then the curriculum would reflect the interests of the people, since they would suggest topics



for the curriculum. However, the dominant answer was 'the church's Christian Education Department,' with twenty-two of the total answers (35%); twenty (32%) said 'the people (ministers and *Autalavou* members);' nineteen (31%) said 'the elders of the Church;' and one (2%) called for an 'International Youth Organization.'

The overall result in Questions 1 - 5, despite some contradictions, is that *Autalavou* have themselves provided for some changes, by including their own materials not provided in the programme from the Office. The initiation of changes come from the local *Autalavou*, not from the Office. This is one indication that the curriculum is not quite relevant and therefore evaluation is long overdue.

Question 6: What important change(s) would you like to see happen in the *Autalavou* programmes? The majority of the answers urge reviving the spiritual life of *Autalavou* as well as their active involvement in doing projects for the benefit of the community, such as agricultural and commercial activities. A new suggestion has come from the youth age-group, stating that the *Autalavou* programme should include or emphasize evangelization work, and also be involved in the counseling of youths.

Question 7: Do you think the methodologies that are in use for teaching and educating in the *Autalavou* educational programme are still relevant to the changing situation we are now experiencing? Why or why not? Of the sixty-two answers received, sixteen - mainly from the youth age group - say "No," claiming that the methodologies are too much like a school classroom setting. Some of them have



emphasized that methodologies should include the use of videos, dramas and outdoor work activities.

Thirty-eight said "Yes;" however, their reasons seemed to refer to the relevancy of some of the content of the lessons and programmes, but not the methodologies. Of the remaining eight, no answers were given.

Question 8: If you were asked to design and plan a curriculum for Autalavou, what kinds of materials would you include, and how would you do it? Of the sixty-two, only fifty-seven answered this question, all of whom mentioned lessons from the Bible, culture, and the need to have more social and sporting activities.

In running the curriculum, all have suggested the use of quarterly written materials. Less than half of those who answered the question suggested the use of workshops and *Autalavou* gatherings on a *Matagaluega* (Synod) level. A few recommended the use of video tapes to be distributed by the Christian Education Department to all *Autalavou*.

In summary, in analysing the results of the Questionnaire the overall picture is that the curriculum needs to accomodate some new methods and new ideas, and especially the interests and the concerns of the people involved. This means that the curriculum has to be evaluated accordingly, considering not only lessons from the Bible but also issues and methodologies that are related to and speak to people.

#### Comparing Autalavou with Two Other Youth Programmes

The Youth for Christ movement (Y.F.C.) and Mormonism - better known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day



Saints - also have programmes for youths in Samoa. These two youth programmes, in comparison with the *Autalavou* programmes, have grown rapidly in numbers. We will examine the Y.F.C. and Mormon youth programme approaches and methods in an effort to strengthen the growth of the *Autalavou* curriculum to be more interesting and appealing to youth today.

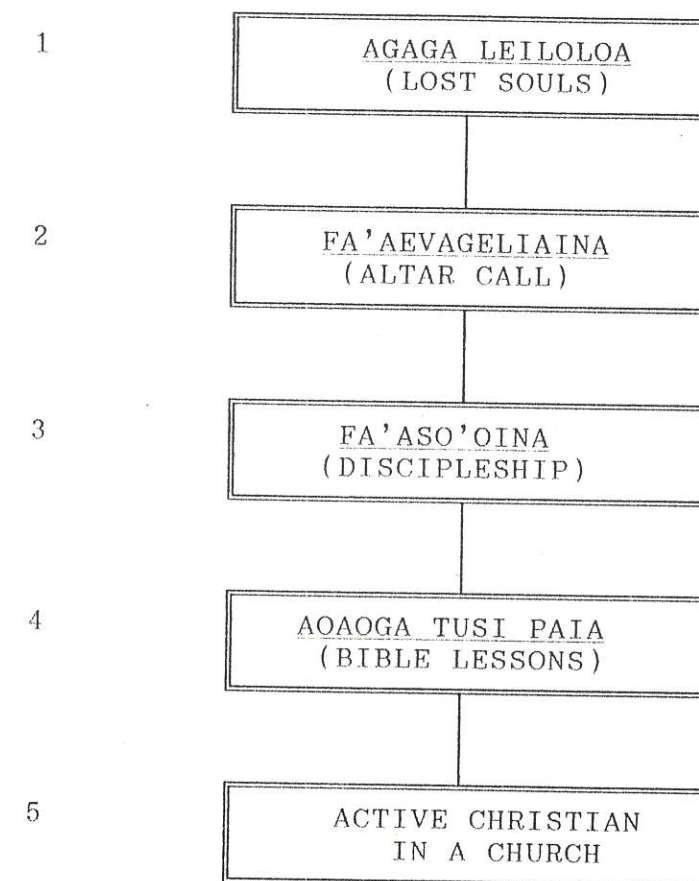
#### Youth for Christ

The Youth for Christ movement in Samoa claims to be an inter-denominational Christian church organization, engaged in evangelization and making its believers disciples of Christ.<sup>14</sup> It does not see itself as a church. But if the word "ministry" is understood in the light of the Lima Document (1982), as "the service to which the whole people of God is called, whether as individuals, as a local community, or as the universal Church,"<sup>15</sup> then the work of the Y.F.C. movement should be given some recognition by Christian churches, including the C.C.C.S. Unfortunately, however, the Y.F.C. mission is regarded by the vast majority of the Congregational Christian Church ministers as a heretical movement. They therefore treat anyone associated with the movement with a discriminatory attitude.

Despite this unfriendly attitude, the Y.F.C. organization continues to grow in numbers, winning people from Christian churches. Armed with their motto of "Geared to the time, but stick to the Rock (Jesus),"<sup>16</sup> together with a very flexible curriculum plan, the Y.F.C.'s approach is very up-to-date. It is thus very attractive and

interesting to contemporary youth.

Y.F.C. Bible study programmes<sup>17</sup> are very simple, such that its members find them easy to follow. The chart<sup>18</sup> sketched below is a picture of the framework adopted by the Y.F.C. in educational ministry.



There is no planned curriculum for the year as programmes are designed to respond to changes and any crucial event that may happen during the year. The methodologies used in evangelization are appealing to modern youth, such as the use of musical instruments like guitars, and a casual style of communication which attracts people who have been suppressed by the too formal and too institutionalised style of the *Autalavou* curriculum. Open air evangelism, which is typical of the Y.F.C. movement, provides



opportunities to develop talents of people who are not given this chance in *Autalavou* programmes.

Y.F.C. programmes, in short, are "planned together with the people and are mindful of the fact that people are changing and therefore programmes ought to be changed in their approaches to suit the situation."<sup>19</sup> In comparison to the *Autalavou* programme, the Y.F.C. curriculum is the product of the time and the people. The curriculum is practically recognized as both written guidelines and the actual evangelization work of the organization.

#### Mormonism

Similarly, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons) is also gaining in numbers compared to the mainline churches. It is regarded as a sectarian church by the mainline churches. Nevertheless, its educational programmes for its people - from children to adults - continue to draw people from the mainline churches.

Youth programmes in the Mormon church are designed to meet the needs of youths and to prepare them for adulthood. Programmes are varied according to age levels and separate special programmes are set for men and women as they prepare to enter married life.<sup>20</sup>

Programmes on the Scriptures in Mormonism and those which explore the challenges of everyday life are made available both in magazines (mainly through narratives about real life experiences) and in video tapes. Social and physical activities are constant throughout the year. Teachings on worship life, doctrines, and other practices are all incorporated into the programmes which church

members begin learning and practising from childhood to adulthood.<sup>21</sup>

#### Assessment and Evaluation

In order to be relevant, a curriculum must be related to the context, and its content must be meaningful to the people. For what is the value of relevant issues or topics if people do not understand their significance in relation to their life situation? The relevancy of a topic has to be judged from the perspective of the people to whom the topic is taught, not from the opinion of outside observers.

The most important aspect, therefore, of the notion of 'relevancy' is the relating of the issue, idea, or concept to the learner. That is, the learner has to find what is taught meaningful to his or her situation. With this understanding of relevancy in mind, some actual lesson plans from the present curriculum of *Autalavou* can be assessed. We will describe two such lesson outlines, and then provide our own assessment.

#### The Lessons

The first lesson plan concerns social problems which threaten the harmonious life of fellowship in families, villages and in the Church in Samoa today.<sup>22</sup>

Week 10      December 15 - 21

Lesson : Problems facing youths in villages and churches.  
Objective : This is not clearly stated but it is implied that the objective is to find solutions to problems.  
Introduction: Every *Autalavou* has its own problems. Therefore all *Autalavou* are asked to discuss problems threatening themselves. Yet, there are problems which are common with



youth today and which need to be addressed:

1. DRUGS and ALCOHOL  
(AVA OONA & FUALAAU FAASAINA)  
A growing number of people are involved with taking drugs, especially marijuana, and alcohol. This has become a problem in society. The escalation of the problem is due to the following:
  - i) Drugs and alcohol are available everywhere in Samoa.
  - ii) people enjoy the taste of drugs and alcohol.
  - iii) They are a good source of income to many families, and village councils are becoming less strict in banning them.
2. SUICIDE (PULE I LE OLA)  
This is a long-standing problem which is still growing. Reasons for growth:
  - i) Lack of spirit of fellowship within the community.
  - ii) Life is too individualistic and too reserved with problems.
  - iii) There is not enough education.
3. UNPREPARED FAMILY LIFE  
(FAI AIGA AE LEI SAUNIA LELEI)  
A problem resulting from lack of preparation for married and family life. Very common in such families are:
  - They are poor financially and not hygienic.
  - Children are often absent from school.
  - Parents often fight.
  - There is divorce, and deserted children.
4. UNDISCIPLINED BEHAVIOUR (AMIO LE PULEA)  
Lack of discipline and lack of respect for others results when evil takes control of the heart. An undisciplined heart:
  - has no respect for others;
  - does not value culture and customs as it should;
  - is very arrogant.
5. DISUNITY (O LE LE AUAI / FEVAEVAEAI)  
This springs forth from:
  - lack of cooperation in a society.
  - selfishness.

Any society or *Autalavou* that lacks the spirit of fellowship and cooperation does not last long. The solution therefore to problems facing youths is the shared responsibility of all people and the church.

Is there any use of problems then to Youths?

(The *Autalavou* are asked to share their views on the above question on the advantages and the disadvantages of problems facing youths).

The second lesson for assessment is a Bible study lesson:<sup>23</sup>

Week 8      July 14 - 20

- Text : MATTHEW 16:1-28
- Objective : Nothing is stated but it appears to be a straightforward exegesis of the text.
- Verses 1-4 : THE DEMAND FOR A SIGN:  
Pharisees and Saducees look for something with which to lay a charge against Jesus because he would not give a sign to them. What is the value of an additional sign? The word of God need no sign; it is a sign in itself.
- Verses 5-12 : THE YEAST OF THE PHARISEES:  
When the disciples reached the other side, they had forgotten to bring any bread. Jesus said to them, "Watch out, and beware of the yeast of the Pharisees."
- Verses 13-20 : PETER'S DECLARATION ABOUT JESUS:  
On the way to Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" They answered "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets" He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah..." Jesus ordered them not to tell anyone that He was the Messiah.



Verses 21-28 : ABOUT SUFFERINGS OF THE MESSIAH:  
 Jesus from time to time told his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering. But Peter rebuked Jesus, and Jesus taught Peter.

Instructions : Divide the *Autalavou* into groups to discuss and answer questions on the text.

Questions :

1. 'No sign except that of Jonah the prophet': What does this mean?
2. What is the 'yeast of the Pharisees'?
3. Why did Jesus charge his disciples not to tell anyone that he is the Messiah?
4. How did Jesus know the Will of God?
5. Why did Jesus teach Peter strongly against his confession?

#### An Assessment

The first lesson does not state what its aim, desire or objective is. Therefore, while the problems stated are in general related to the situation of the youth, their presentation or discussion may not go very far simply because there is no objective. In fact, the problems are only listed. The writer of the programmes must have assumed that people know the solutions. The lesson only states the problems but it does not suggest a method for relating the problems to specific youth groups or moving towards finding solutions.

Like the first lesson, the second is aimless. The lesson is just a straight translation of the Revised Standard Version Bible, and it does not transfer what the text says to the context of the people. That is to say, what does the 'yeast of the Pharisees,' or Peter's confession mean to urban young people whose main concern is the problem of unemployment and who are continually

threatened by problems like robbery and assault with violence? Similarly, what do these texts mean to people who live in rural areas, those who are victimized by the financial demands of cultural and church obligations?

One of the noticeable weaknesses of these two lessons is that the language used is not specific - for example, a lesson on sex or Aids uses words which are respectable to elders rather than using precise terms which would make the discussion clear and understandable. The reason for this is because issues such as sex or the mention of sexual organs are taboo in Samoan society.<sup>24</sup> At the same time, youth today must understand the facts clearly if they are to develop a Christian sexual ethic. Moreover, in most cases, Bible study lessons are too academic in their approach, and this is difficult for lay people, especially youth, to understand.

The methodologies that are used in teaching the lessons are discussion and debate. But the printed programme of lessons is the only mode that is used to shape this discussion, and thus the whole *Autalavou* programme has become identified with the printed text. Workshops are done but very rarely. The physical aspect of the curriculum is executed once a year, through a games competition amongst *Autalavou*, under church district teams. This has become a very serious competition and the spirit of fellowship, which is the aim of the programme, has been defeated by competitiveness.

#### Conclusion

An assessment of the *Autalavou* curriculum should begin



by analysing the actual programme, both on its own merits and in comparison with other youth programmes, to determine its real strengths and weaknesses. We have seen that the understanding of the word 'curriculum' is important before evaluating people's views of what curriculum should it be.

In assessing and evaluating *Autalavou* Christian Education curriculum, it is important that the problem is clearly identified. Equally important also is our attempt to avoid the traditional practice of regarding curriculum as the printed text only. It is important also to be open to other youth programmes, and to use their approaches or methodologies, where helpful, to enrich our own *Autalavou* curriculum. Having laid the groundwork for this evaluative process, we now move to the next stage - establishing a curriculum relevant for *Autalavou*.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Maria Harris, Fashion me a People (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989), 17.

<sup>2</sup>"Curriculum," The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 4th ed.

<sup>3</sup>Howard P. Colson and Raymond M. Rigdon, Understanding Your Church's Curriculum, rev. ed. (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1981), 40.

<sup>4</sup>Colson and Rigdon, 40.

<sup>5</sup>Colson and Rigdon, 40.

<sup>6</sup>Harris, 56.

<sup>7</sup>Harris, 56.

<sup>8</sup>Colson and Rigdon, 40.

<sup>9</sup>Harris, 63-64.

<sup>10</sup>Harris, 64-70.

<sup>11</sup>Harris, 64.

<sup>12</sup>Harris, 64.

<sup>13</sup>Harris, 64-65.

<sup>14</sup>Viliamu Mafo'e, recorded interview with author, Apia, 14th January 1993. Mafo'e is the Director of the Y.F.C. in Samoa. Tape in the possession of the author.

<sup>15</sup>World Council of Churches, Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, Faith and Order Paper, 111 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982), 21.

<sup>16</sup>Mafo'e, interview.

<sup>17</sup>"Interesting Testimonies for Beginners," for example, a simple reading in pamphlet form, "How to Pass from Curse to Blessing" by Derek Prince, 1986. Also a series of lessons from 1 to 10, all in different pamphlets, titled "Lou Olaga Fou" ("Your New Life"). At the completion of lessons, certificates are awarded to people. All pamphlets are in the possession of the author.

<sup>18</sup>A copy of a sketch chart from the Director of Y.F.C. in Samoa is in the possession of the author.

<sup>19</sup>Mafo'e, interview.



<sup>20</sup>Young Women Leadership Handbook, a magazine published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1988. Also "Continue to Minister," videotape (Salt Lake City, Corporation of the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1988). Also "Young Women Leadership," videotape (Salt Lake City, Corporation of the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1991).

<sup>21</sup>For example, see "Ositaulaga," a series of lessons in magazines published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1988. Also, "Continue to Minister" and "Young Women Leadership."

<sup>22</sup>Ekalesia Fa'apopotoga Kerisiano Samoa, Polokalame Autalavou: Kuata Tolu (Apia: Malua Printing Press, 1991), 10-12.

<sup>23</sup>Ekalesia Fa'apopotoga Kerisiano Samoa, 20-21.

<sup>24</sup>Rev. Nove Vailaau, interview with author, Apia, 23rd December 1992. Vailaau is the present General Secretary of the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa.

### CHAPTER 3

#### ESTABLISHING A CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CURRICULUM RELEVANT FOR *AUTALAVOU*

Relevancy and contextualization remain the objectives of this project, which sets out to assess and evaluate the present Christian Education curriculum for *Autalavou*. Already in the previous chapters the practical understanding and contents of the *Autalavou* curriculum have been critically discussed and analysed in relation to the situation of the people. Furthermore, two other religious education programmes - Mormonism and Youth for Christ - which undoubtedly have challenged the so-called 'orthodox stand' of the mainline Churches - Congregational, Methodist and Roman Catholic - were also examined in comparison with *Autalavou* curriculum.

The result of this assessment indicates that the situation of the people demands a review of the present curriculum. Quite significant in the relationship of the situation and the curriculum is the point that the situation should decide the curriculum. Therefore, establishing a curriculum relevant to *Autalavou* requires an analysis of the situation or context.



A General Survey of the Changing Society of

Western Samoa

We live in a changing society in which new knowledge is constantly discovered and in which old knowledge sometimes proves no longer relevant. Through exposure to the Western world via migration, immigration, education, communication, industrialization and other forms of contact, Western Samoa is embarking on a never-ending process of transformation.

The following statistical information shows international migration to Western Samoa from 1987-1990.

TABLE 2<sup>1</sup>

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

ARRIVALS BY AGE AND SEX

YEAR	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	UNDER 15	UNDER 30	UNDER 45	OVER 45	NOT STATED
1987	93,212	53,536	39,676	12,362	24,835	28,109	26,539	1,367
1988	91,517	51,793	39,724	12,034	26,265	26,956	24,496	1,766
1989	102,592	57,307	45,285	13,064	29,560	30,925	26,472	2,571
1990	103,972	59,174	44,798	13,409	26,822	33,345	30,332	64

It is quite clear from the table above that the number of people arriving in Western Samoa to stay or visit continues to increase. Our point of concern is that returning immigrants and visitors contribute to the bringing in of new ideas, new values, and modern ways of

doing things in Samoa. Some of the returning immigrants include those who went overseas for further education; but even in education within the country people are learning new ideas and values, as they adapt to the ongoing process of modernisation.

Developments within the country have also helped to speed up changes in culture and have impacted on the total way of life of Samoans. These include the following:

#### The Use of Electricity

Statistics show that the number of people using electricity in the main island has increased steadily from 1987 to 1991.<sup>2</sup> Installation of electric power continues to expand across the whole country. With the supply of electricity, videos have become the fastest growing acquisition in individual households.<sup>3</sup> This has had a great impact on the culture. The *matais* (chiefs), who share their insights on culture in the chiefly tradition when they meet, are now talking about video movies instead. Youths and even children now have access to movies which value violence, greed and lust.

Apart from the influence of videos, people in the rural areas have changed their diet from the fish they once got from the sea to the imported refrigerated meat now available in trading stores. This new mentality is creating new health problems.

In short, this form of modernisation had brought unforeseen changes to the lifestyles of Samoans, negative as well as positive. Some of these changes have directly or indirectly had a great impact on their spiritual lives. For



example, evening family devotion time and Sunday worship time are now being used by some people as a suitable time for watching videos.

#### Foreign Aid

One of the fastest, yet often unnoticeable agents of change within the Samoan culture is the aid programme that Samoa receives from wealthy nations. Western Samoa's economy is a highly dependent one,<sup>4</sup> backed up by aid in various forms, particularly in development projects and infrastructures. Because of the near total destruction caused by two major cyclones in the last three years, Western Samoa continues to welcome the assistance of the donor agencies.

The ready availability of financial assistance from these wealthy nations has led Western Samoa to think that it can survive without relying on its agricultural exports, the traditional backbone of the economy. This is yet to be proved statistically but, at present, Western Samoa is still receiving aid for cyclone damage, and thus people are encouraged to rely on the aid rather than on local resources.

In the development of human resources, Western Samoa has received a great deal of aid, especially in funded scholarships from various overseas countries. Graduates from these countries' universities bring home with them ideas which eventually become part of the development schemes in their fields of expertise.<sup>5</sup>

#### Political Developments

The most radical recent change, as far as the church

in Samoa is concerned, is the legal right of church ministers to vote in general elections of parliamentarians. This change has been made possible since the introduction of universal suffrage in the 1990 General Election, and up to now there is still an ongoing debate among the people about the involvement of church ministers in politics. Traditionally, people believed that ministers should not be involved in political activities; they should be seen as ministers for all people, regardless of political persuasion. People now fear that ministers' involvement in politics may split church members into opposing factions.<sup>6</sup> This involvement of ministers in the political arena is a change which people are not yet ready to accept.

In short, Western Samoa is being transformed by many changes imposed by the Western world and the process of modernisation. People have been brainwashed into believing that in order to achieve development, they must transform their traditional way of doing things to new technologies: the old must make way for the new. This phenomenon of modernisation should be considered by our curriculum designers. A serious consideration of the changes that are affecting the life of the people should result in a curriculum that is geared for life, but not just for examining knowledge, as is the case in the present curriculum.

#### Religious Movements

The other very important factor in Samoa today is the growth of new religious movements, sects, para-churches, and their forceful evangelization activities. Two groups



have been selected for discussion, Youth for Christ, a para-church, and the Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints (Mormons), a sect. These two groups are the fastest growing movements in the country.<sup>7</sup>

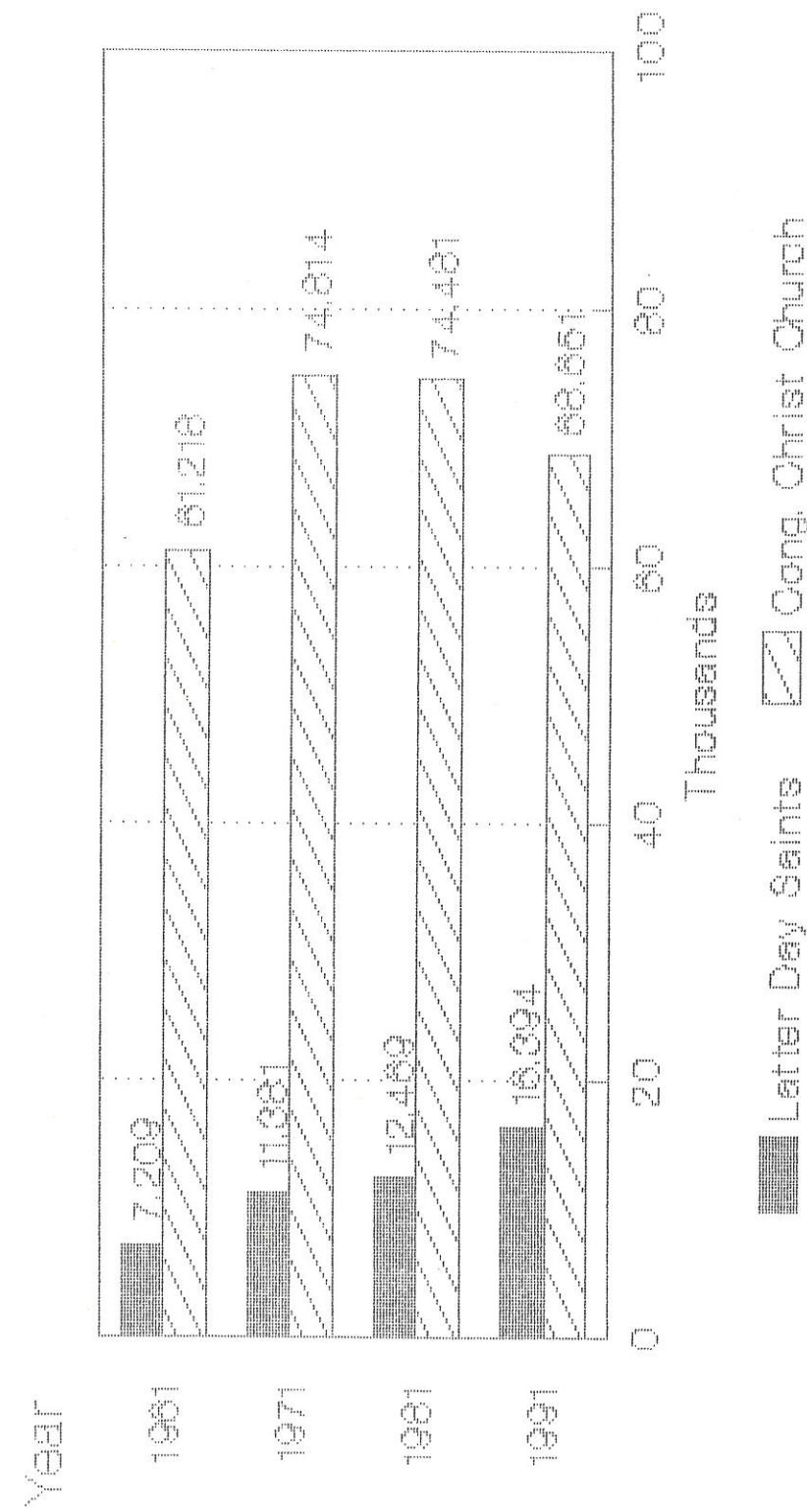
Research carried out by Manfred Ernst, a researcher into sects and para-churches based at Pacific Theological College, reveals that the Mormon Church has grown steadily in numbers in recent years, compared to the Congregational Christian Church.<sup>8</sup>

TABLE 3

## Relative Percentages of Congregationalists and Mormons

Year	CCCS	% TOTAL POP.	LDS	% TOTAL POP.	TOTAL POP.
1961	61,218	53.5%	7,209	6.3%	114,427
1971	74,814	51.0%	11,381	7.8%	146,627
1981	74,481	47.6%	12,249	8.0%	156,349
1991	68,651	42.6%	16,394	10.2%	161,298

TABLE 4  
**Western Samoa Church Growth**  
**Congregational Christian Church versus**  
**Church of Latter Day Saints**





In 1961, Mormons accounted for about 6.3% of the total population, while the Congregational Christian Church had about 53.5%. In 1991, the Mormons have increased to about 10.2% of the total population, while the Congregational Christian Church has decreased to about 42.6%.

Youth for Christ has no statistical information, but according to Ernst it has about 20-30 cell groups, each consisting of small groups showing a marked increase in numbers.<sup>9</sup>

The growth of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and YFC cannot be attributed simply to the effectiveness of their evangelization programmes, or to the ineffective and traditional teachings of the Congregational Christian Church. Actual data as to the number and ages of people who have moved from the Congregational Christian Church to YFC or to the Mormons is required to reach such a conclusion. But the fact that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints appears to be peopled mainly with converts from the Congregational Christian Church, more than from any of the other mainline churches, is significant. The YFC also attracts many youths from the Congregational Christian Church, as well as from other mainline churches.

The threat posed by these two and other similar organizations should not be ignored in planning the curriculum for *Autalavou*. The two movements have attracted many people from the *Autalavou* and from the church. The church, therefore, cannot just sit back and assume that it is still doing well in its ministry. The Church's



educational task needs to be re-examined to see if it is the cause of the loss of its members. Perhaps the spiritual needs of the lay people are not met by the teaching provided by the Church, and this includes the *Autalavou* programme.

If a general comparison can be made between the Congregational Church and the two groups mentioned in their educational programmes for lay members, the YFC and the Mormons are seen to be more active and more consistent. Both the Mormons and the YFC value door-to-door evangelization. For example, the Mormons have a mission of visitation to every household in a village, regardless of the different church denominational backgrounds. The YFC is well-known for its regular outreach mission to various schools and village organizations.

The spirit of caring and fellowship is also actively demonstrated in the two organizations, compared to the Congregational Church and its *Autalavou*. All of these approaches, including evangelization, outreach and mission, are not practised by the *Autalavou*; yet they have made the ministries of the YFC and the Mormons effective. These methods should be considered, drawing on much broader, deeper theologies of mission and evangelism, in establishing a curriculum which is relevant for *Autalavou*.

#### A Proposal for a Relevant Curriculum

Our general survey of the situation in Samoa shows that the process of transformation is a never-ending process and, therefore, a curriculum which was relevant to the *Autalavou* programme ten years ago may not be relevant



today because of the changing situation. Therefore, a curriculum that is relevant for the *Autalavou* is a curriculum which takes into consideration the changes that affect the lives of the people, and the concerns of the people, at a given time.

Furthermore, a curriculum that is relevant is one which relates the Gospel message meaningfully to their situation. My interviews with ministers, as stated in earlier chapters, give some indication of how Bible studies can be made effective and relevant to the people. What important aspects should the curriculum for Christian Education have, in order to be relevant? We need to keep this question in mind as we outline criteria for a sound and relevant curriculum.

#### Relevance through Biblical and Theological Foundations

A relevant curriculum for Christian Education must be theologically and biblically based. Theology can be defined as a critical study of, participation in, and reflection upon the Word of God.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, a theologian must be critical, not passive; he or she must have his or her "knowledge and presupposition of theology on the one hand, and on the other he or she is a social agent who belongs to a particular time, place, and particular context."<sup>11</sup>

Hence, theology is done in a particular context, and no theology is done out of context. Educating the laity with the Word of God is doing theology, and therefore, since theology must be done in or rooted in a context, Christian Education for the *Autalavou* must be theologising in relation to their context. For instance, some *Autalavou*

members, usually those in rural areas, are brought up under strict village traditions and customs, while others, especially those in urban areas, are exposed to a less rigid lifestyle. Each group's theologising must be done out of these experiences.

Secondly, the church as a community of faith, as God's Kingdom on earth, or as an agent of God proclaiming His Word to the world, is today actively involved in political, social, economic and cultural dialogues and confrontations. The church may not be 'of' the world, but it is definitely 'in' the world. In the area of Christian Education, therefore, the church must rediscover new ways and new approaches of teaching so that the message of the Gospel can reach people.

Parallel to this is the idea that all which the church does through its education and other forms of nurturing is the formation of God's people for mission. To ensure the accomplishment of this function, the church's educational curriculum must be constantly reviewed, in the light of its contribution to the ongoing mission of the church in the world.

A further point which can be used as a theological basis for providing a relevant curriculum for educating the people of God is one suggested by Colson and Rigdon in their analysing the forces which influenced changes in American life following World War II:

Thoughtful church and denominational leaders recognized a need for a complete reorganization of curriculum designs and the development of materials which would help to communicate the relevance of the Christian faith to the



contemporary needs and concerns of people.<sup>12</sup>

Providing a curriculum relevant for the Christian Education of church members like those in *Autalavou* is also Biblical, just as it is theological. In I Corinthians 3:2, Paul uses the metaphors of milk for infants and solid food for adults in referring to the different levels of teaching relevant for the various stages in the life of a Christian. The author of Hebrews also uses these same metaphors (Hebrews 5:12 ff.). In both references, it is quite clear that the emphasis is on providing the relevant subjects for the right people in the right situation.

The *Autalavou* Christian Education programme is generally designed for the age level of teenagers. Yet in practice *Autalavou* have different age groups. Hence 'age groups other than younger adolescents are not being given with the proper spiritual food required for their spiritual needs. Even in the youth age group, youths have different developmental needs; some are capable of receiving 'solid food,' while others still need 'milk.'

All these different backgrounds and levels of maturity must be considered in the *Autalavou* Christian Education curriculum. The teachings from St. Paul and the author of Hebrews speak to the necessity of Christian nurture that meets people where they are. What then should be the scope and content of the proposed curriculum?

#### A Curriculum that is True to Life

'Scope' in Christian Education is defined by Leroy Ford as "all that may be dealt with in a curriculum plan. [It] involves all of human relationships - in light of the



Gospel."<sup>13</sup> Ford's definition of the scope of a theological education echoes Maria Harris' rediscovery of church curriculum as "The [entire] course of the Church's Life."<sup>14</sup>

Building on Ford's and Harris' views, the scope of the proposed curriculum for *Autalavou* is one which should include the life of the church as the Body of Christ and the interactions of its members as Christians. This is not a new scope but, rather, an enlargement of the existing theme of the *Autalavou*, which in English can be explained as: "to live in Christ through education, fellowship, worship, activities and other aspects."<sup>15</sup>

The content of such a curriculum needs to be explained clearly to the lay members; moreover, members need to be reminded over and over again when the *Autalavou* meet; the scope should be addressed as the goal toward which the curriculum is leading.

The content of the proposed curriculum for *Autalavou* need not depart from those in the programmes which the Department of Christian Education continues to provide. However, the content of the present programmes needs to be designed so as to prepare people for the concrete meaning of life in Christ rather than for leading people to know the Bible as a book.

Likewise, the lessons on culture should focus on the present rather than on the past. There is a tendency in lessons on culture to speak of it as something practised and lived out by our forebearers. But culture is "the total way of life of a people - a living, dynamic and evergrowing entity."<sup>16</sup> Culture moves with the people and is exposed to



change, and thus it can never be lost entirely but rather modified. Culture is always in the process of becoming.

The content of the curriculum must also be of current interest, valuable and related to the pressing situations of the people. In the lessons we have examined and discussed as case studies in the last chapter, some ministers commented that they were not related to the actual situation of their *Autalavou*.<sup>17</sup> People need to be reminded that the printed programmes they receive from the Christian Education Department contain only part of the content of the curriculum, and other aspects include the total life and witness of the community and of the church.

Perhaps we can clarify this point if we think of the situation in the early church. There were no printed materials in use, but Christian Education took place through reciting the teachings of Jesus and through celebrating Holy Communion. 'Nurture' happened without the use of printed texts for some time, yet the curriculum was already in existence. The fellowship, sharing, worshipping and communal life of the early Christians, their singing and reciting the scriptures, and their practical witnessing were all forms of the curriculum.<sup>18</sup>

Finally, the content of the curriculum should teach people about their significance in the whole mission of God, and that this cannot be reduced or threatened by the responsibilities or authority of the clergy. The lay people in the *Autalavou* are inclined to think that their task in the Church is not as important as that of the ministers. Lessons in the curriculum should teach that, as the People

of God, lay people should work together with the minister in building up the Church as the Kingdom of God.

To conclude, it is important in establishing a Christian Education curriculum relevant for *Autalavou*, that the vision of a Catholic Church theologian William J. Rademacher be taken into consideration.

It is becoming clearer every day that in the future ministries will not be concentrated in the Church. More and more of the baptized will find themselves ministering in the workaday world of the business people, the bus drivers, the lawyers, and the labourers.<sup>19</sup>

If this comes to pass, the Church needs to prepare a curriculum which will speak to a different kind of world than was traditionally the case. One which involves the laity, is constantly revised and deals with the changing political, economic, social and cultural climate of Western Samoa.

#### Recommendations

It is in the light of what has been said, together with the impact of the ideas and insights of Christian contemporaries and the writings of various people whom I am unable to acknowledge individually, the following important recommendations are made:

#### Rediscovering an Understanding of 'Curriculum'

As we have seen, 'curriculum' is exclusively restricted to the use of the quarterly printed pamphlets, *Polokalame Autalavou: Kuata Muamua*, etc. Eventually this leads people to see Christian Education as all that which is printed in the pamphlets, and that is tantamount to ignoring education through worship, community life, and



praxis, all of which make Christian Education a reality.

It is therefore crucially important that 'curriculum' in Christian Education - whether for *Autalavou* or for Sunday School - be understood and practised in a way which includes the total life of the Church and of the community (praxis). We can be helped to achieve a rediscovery of 'curriculum' in the Church's Christian Education ministry if the suggestions by Maria Harris (see page 26 of this project) are noted. Gabriel Moran's view is also helpful in stressing the significance of rediscovering curriculum in a church context:

When this distinction [between education and school] is not clearly and consistently maintained, the religious life cannot get a fair hearing in education. If the school is the only place we turn to for the formation and development of a Christian (Jewish, Buddhist, Muslim) way of living, then the burden upon the school is intolerable, and the religious life suffers a reduction.<sup>20</sup>

To rectify the situation, it is recommended that other media be employed besides the use of the printed text so as to avoid the possibility of identifying curriculum with a particular medium. In this case, ministers of *Autalavou* can be asked to give their *Autalavou* chances to lead church community services at least once a month. Or, ministers can be asked to prepare creative programmes relevant to their situations. Alternatively, the use of video tapes can take the place of the printed text in one quarter, or personal representations from the Christian Education Department to all *Autalavou* can take place at least once a quarter.

Overall, we have seen that curriculum 'exists only where true learning experiences take place.' In a church

society, we learn Christian life not just by reading the text but also by hearing and seeing, as well as by living out the life of a Christian.

#### Involving the Whole Church in Education

Traditionally, only a few selected leaders are given the responsibility of teaching. For example, in *Autalavou* it is only the ministers and the office bearers, particularly the president and the leader, who teach. This practice has developed to such an extent that parents have neglected their task of nurturing and being first teachers of children.

Despite many changes affecting the lifestyles of Samoans, families remain the basic unit in village communities. Thus, parents continue to play their role as leaders. Ideally, then, Christian Education, whether for children in Sunday Schools or for youth and adults in *Autalavou*, can be taught through parents rather than putting the whole emphasis on formal *Autalavou* or Sunday Schools.

The use of parents as a medium for the Church in reaching out to people in Christian Education not only can be an effective approach, but would also alleviate the danger of identifying Christian Education with printed materials only. More importantly, through the committed involvement of parents teaching and educating in Christian life - through praxis - can be especially meaningful and thus relevant to people's situations, since parents understand better than anybody else the lives of their children.



### Introducing New Methodologies

With the recent introduction of television in Samoa and the services of the two radio stations and local news papers, the Church can employ these as useful media, alongside the printed texts and parents' teaching, in proclaiming Christian faith to people. These media can provide an effective means of communication, and they are therefore recommended to be used in the Church's mission.

Equally important are open air services and rallies, which are proving very effective in the ministries of the para-churches and sects (particularly YFC, *Emanuelu*, and Assemblies of God), and can also be employed by the Church. Usually the Church regards these methodologies as associated with the Assemblies of God or YFC, and thus does not want to employ them in fear that the Church might be seen as Assemblies or YFC in nature. This is an arrogant attitude of the church which needs to be changed, if it is to be a Church of Jesus Christ. Adopting methodologies used by YFC and other sects or para-churches in their youth programmes, if they are proved effective and necessary, is recommended. Perhaps by doing so, we could answer the claim of those who move away from the Church to join sects and religious movements, that their spiritual needs are not being met.

Many recommendations and or suggestions can be made in a quest for a relevant curriculum for *Autalavou*. However, situations and context are the important criteria upon which all recommendations are to be evaluated. The bottom line argument of this paper is that a relevant curriculum

is one which acknowledges and accomodates the concerns and interests of people in their life situations.

The quest for a relevant curriculum in the ministry of the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa should be an ongoing process, as in any other church or public organisation. Just as the church must educate or it ceases to be a church, a curriculum must be relevant in order to be a curriculum.



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Western Samoa Department of Statistics, Annual Statistical Abstract 1991 (Apia: Government Printing Press, n.d.), 12.

<sup>2</sup>Department of Statistics, 31.

<sup>3</sup>This is yet to be confirmed statistically, but the reality is that people have acquired both the television and the video deck as a way of life - for communication as well as entertainment.

<sup>4</sup>Nove Vailaau, "Theology of Migration," (B.D. thesis, Pacific Theological College), 1988, 14.

<sup>5</sup>Ma'afala Limā, "A Theological Reflection on the Impact of Development Aid in Western Samoa," (B.D. project, Pacific Theological College), 1992, 31.

<sup>6</sup>Toailoa Siaosi, Public address on Radio 2AP Western Samoa, on the issue of church ministers' legal rights in the General Election. Toailoa is a well known orator for his insights on culture and is regarded in the country as one of the pillars of the Samoan Culture.

<sup>7</sup>Manfred Ernst, unpublished report, "The Religious Set-up in Western Samoa and Contemporary Developments," 1992, Table 20. Report in the possession of Ernst.

<sup>8</sup>Ernst.

<sup>9</sup>Manfred Ernst, unpublished report, a transcribed interview with Fitu Mau, assistant Director of YFC, Apia, 24 June 1992. Transcript in possession of Ernst.

<sup>10</sup>John Macquarrie, Principles of Christian Theology (Trowbridge: SCM Press Ltd., 1966), 1.

<sup>11</sup>Faitala Talapusi, Lecture on "Theology," Pacific Theological College, Suva, June 1991.

<sup>12</sup>Howard P. Colson and Raymond M. Rigdon, Understanding Your Church's Curriculum (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1981), 24.

<sup>13</sup>Leroy Ford, A Curriculum Design Manual for Theological Education (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1991), 66-67.

<sup>14</sup>Maria Harris, Fashion Me A People (Louisville: Westminster / John Knox Press, 1989), 55, 63.

<sup>15</sup>Ekalesia Fa'apotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa, O le Faavae o Autalavou Kerisiano (Apia: Malua Printing Press, 1991), 5.

<sup>16</sup>Sione Lātūkefu, "Tradition and Modernisation in the Pacific Islands," Journal of the South Pacific Social Sciences Association, 5 (1976): 19.

<sup>17</sup>Utufua Naseri, interview with author, Savaii, December 1993. Also Rev. Samuelu Samuelu interview with author, January 1993. Samuelu shared Naseri's view that some Biblical lessons are too academic in approach for his *Autalavou*.

<sup>18</sup>Harris, 57-59.

<sup>19</sup>William J. Rademacher, Lay Ministry, A Theological, Spiritual, and Pastoral Handbook, (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1991), 226.

<sup>20</sup>Gabriel Moran, Interplay: A Theory of Religion and Education, (Winona: St. Mary's Press, 1981), 65.



## CONCLUSION

Despite efforts to sustain a balanced discussion between the two aspects of curriculum - content and methodology - throughout this paper, it became clear in our exploration that attention needs to be focused on methodologies. In assessing the contents (see pages 37-42), what is needed is primarily to be more explicit in objectives and goals. Otherwise our main concern is for relevant methodologies.

It is not always easy to evaluate a living system, perhaps because it is difficult not to resist the changes that life brings about. The views and opinions of various people upon which this evaluation and recommendations are based were views and opinions based on their experiences - on what had happened already. Thus what this project suggests may be applicable and workable if presumably the situation continues as some have predicted. But since one of the objectives in this quest for a relevant curriculum is to be contextual, we must be flexible in terms of the shape of any future curriculum.

It is still my desire that Christian Educational programmes, particularly lessons in the printed texts, be able to meet the various needs and backgrounds of people in *Autalavou* groups. Since *Autalavou* members have ages ranging from adolescents to adults, and people have different life experiences (for example, married and singles, etc.) educational programmes need to be designed accordingly. Alternatively, regroupings according to experiences need to

take place within a given *Autalavou* group. This needs to be researched further, and it is my hope that additional studies will examine this concern in the future.

All of the suggestions in this project have been made in the hope and conviction that we in the church must take the nurture of our youth more seriously if we are to equip them to meet the many challenges of the present and future.



## APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EVALUATION OF THE CHURCH'S CHRISTIAN  
EDUCATION CURRICULUM FOR AUTALAVOU

INTRODUCTION

It is important that the Church's teaching and education ministry is relevant and meaningful to the situation of the people. Therefore, in an attempt to evaluate Christian Education curriculum for *Autalavou*, your help in answering the following questions honestly, and expressing your true opinions when asked, would help achieve this purpose.

INSTRUCTIONS

- a) Please answer all questions. There is no right or wrong answer but your true opinion is requested.
- b) Do not write your name.
- c) Tick (✓) the box where appropriate, and write expressing your opinions when asked for.

.....

YOUTH

☐

ADULT

☐STATUS / EXPERIENCE:
 PLANTER  
HOUSEWIFE
☐
 MATAI (Chief)  
OFFICE WORKER
☐RESIDENTIAL PLACE:

RURAL

☐

Village .....

URBAN

☐

Village .....

OTHER INFORMATION:

The number of people in our local church is about ....

I have been a member of the Church since birth:

Yes

☐

No

☐

If 'no,' please state your previous denomination  
 .....

My position in our local church is:

- |                            |                          |                 |                          |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| an <i>Autalavou</i> member | <input type="checkbox"/> | a deacon        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| an <i>Autalavou</i> leader | <input type="checkbox"/> | a deacon's wife | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| an lay person              | <input type="checkbox"/> | a lay preacher  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| a lay preacher's wife      | <input type="checkbox"/> | a deacon's wife | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| a church minister          | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                            |                          | (specify) ..... |                          |

The number of members in our *Autalavou* Group is .....

1. The *Autalavou* educational programme in our local church is:

- very strong, interesting, and people enjoy it ☐
- not quite strong but still going ☐
- not making any progress at all ☐

2. The quarterly educational programmes (Pamphlets) which we receive from the Church's Christian Education Department for our *Autalavou* education consist mainly of:

- lessons from the Bible ☐
- lessons from the Bible, and from culture ☐
- lessons from the Bible, culture, and, social problems ☐

3. For our *Autalavou* educational programmes, we follow

- the Christian Education Department's quarterly pamphlets ☐
- the quarterly pamphlets plus our own created lessons ☐
- the programmes we create by ourselves only ☐



4. The educational programmes (quarterly pamphlets) set out by the Christian Education Department are:

- good and relevant to our situation ☐
- not all things in them are relevant ☐
- not relevant at all ☐

5. Who do you think should design and plan the Church's Christian Education programmes for *Autalavou*?

- the elders of the Church ☐
- the Church's Christian Education Department ☐
- the people (ministers and *Autalavou* members) ☐
- any International Christian Youth Organisation overseas ☐

6. What important change(s) would you like to see happen in the *Autalavou* programme? .....

.....  
 .....  
 .....

7. Do you think the methodologies that are in use for teaching and educating in the *Autalavou* educational programme are still relevant to the changing situation we are now experiencing?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Why or why not? .....

.....  
 .....  
 .....

8. If you were asked to design and plan a curriculum for *Autalavou*, what kinds of materials would you include, and how would you do it? .....

.....  
 .....  
 .....

## APPENDIX B

ANALYSIS

	R U R A L			U R B A N			Grand	
	Youth	Adult	Total	Youth	Adult	Total	Total	%
<u>Question 1: The Autalavou educational programme in our local church is:</u>								
- very strong, interesting and people enjoy it	21	8	(29)	13	5	(18)	47	76%
- not quite strong but still going	4	3	( 7)	4	3	( 7)	14	22%
- not making any progress at all	-	-	-	1	-	( 1)	1	2%
TOTAL			36			26	62	100%

Question 2: The quarterly educational programmes (pamphlets) which we receive from the Church's Christian Education Department for our Autalavou education consist mainly of:

- lessons from the Bible	-	-	-	1	1	( 2)	2	3%
- lessons from the Bible, and from culture	4	5	( 9)	4	4	( 8)	17	27%
- lessons from the Bible, culture and social problems	21	6	(27)	13	3	(16)	43	70%
TOTAL			36			26	62	100%

Question 3: For our Autalavou educational programmes, we follow:

- the Christian Education Department's quarterly pamphlets	2	1	( 3)	2	1	( 3)	6	9%
- the quarterly pamphlets plus our own created lessons	23	9	(32)	12	7	(19)	51	83%
- the programmes we create by ourselves only	-	1	( 1)	4	-	( 4)	5	8%
TOTAL			36			26	62	100%



	R U R A L			U R B A N			Grand	
	Youth	Adult	Total	Youth	Adult	Total	Total	%

Question 4: The educational programmes (quarterly pamphlets) set out by the Christian Education Department are:

- good and relevant to our situation	16	6	(22)	7	2	( 9)	31	50%
- not all things in them are relevant	7	4	(11)	10	6	(16)	27	44%
- not relevant at all	2	1	( 3)	1	-	( 1)	4	6%
TOTAL	25		36	18		26	62	100%

Question 5: Who do you think should design and plan the Christian Education programmes for *Autalavou*?

- the elders of the Church	8	3	(11)	6	2	( 8)	19	31%
- the Church's Christian Education Department	10	5	(15)	3	4	( 7)	22	35%
- the people (Ministers and <i>Autalavou</i> members)	6	3	( 9)	9	2	(11)	20	32%
- Any International Christian Youth Organisation overseas	1	-	( 1)	-	-	-	1	2%
TOTAL			36			26	62	100%

## GLOSSARY

<i>Aiga Samoa</i>	Samoaan Family.
<i>A'oa'oga</i>	Education.
<i>Aoga Aso Sa</i>	Sunday school.
<i>Autalavou</i>	Youth groups.
<i>Emanuelu</i>	Emmanuel; a para-church movement in Samoa.
<i>Ia ola ia Keriso</i>	To live in or for Christ.
<i>Matagaluega</i>	District or synod.
<i>Matai</i>	Chief.
<i>Ofisa O A'oa'oga Kerisiano</i>	Office of Christian Education.
<i>Polokalame Autalavou</i>	Youth Group Programme.



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