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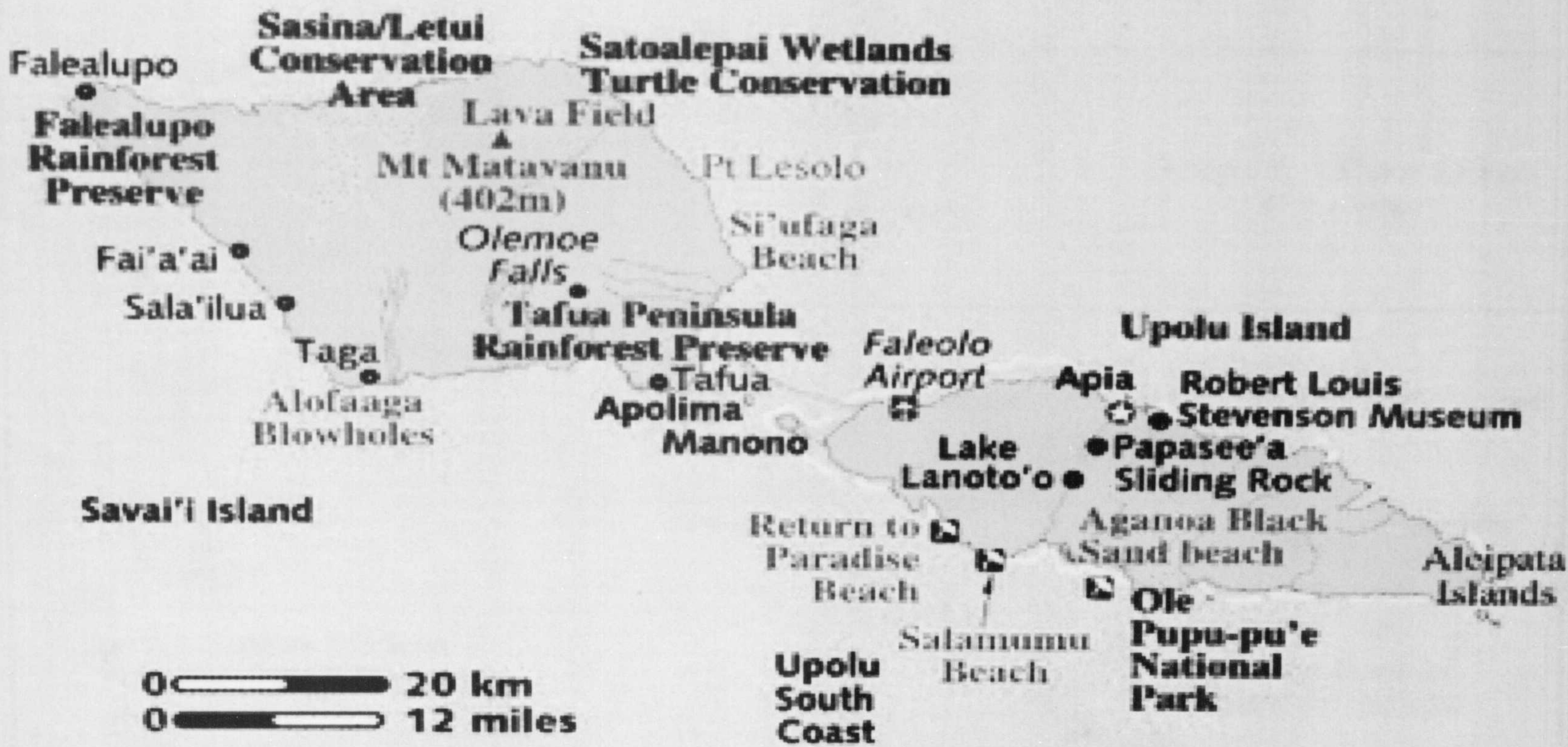


# SAMOA

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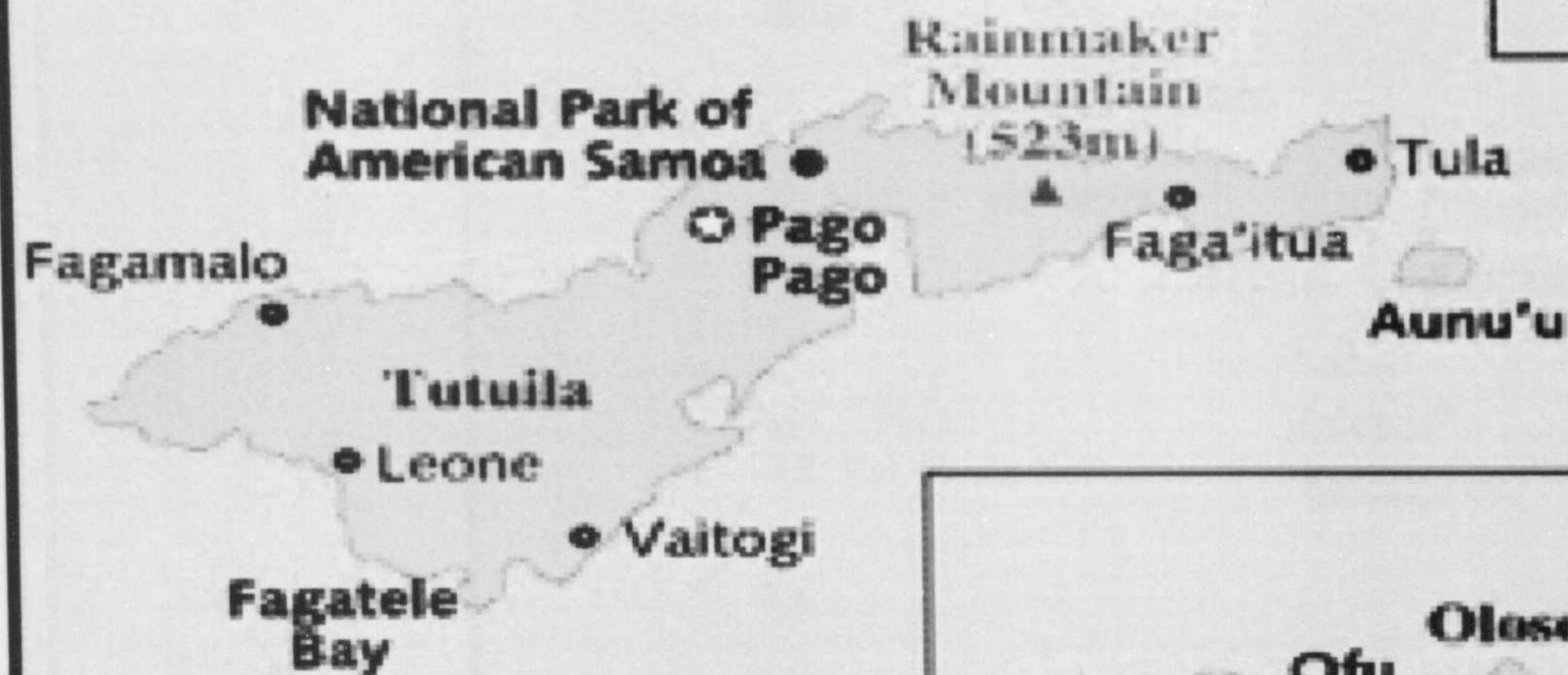
# AMERICAN SAMOA

## MANU'A GROUP

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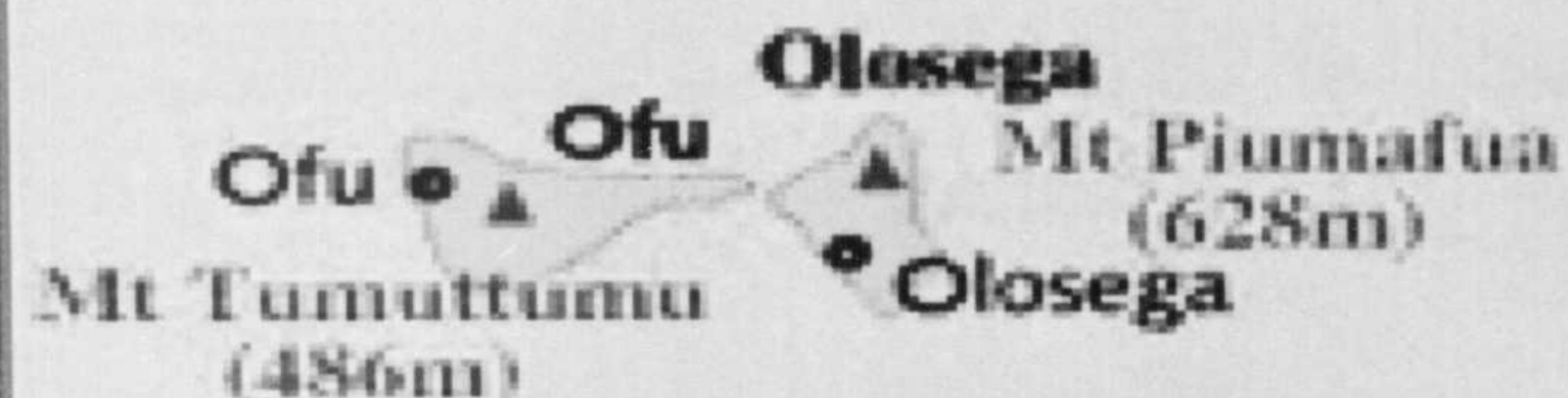
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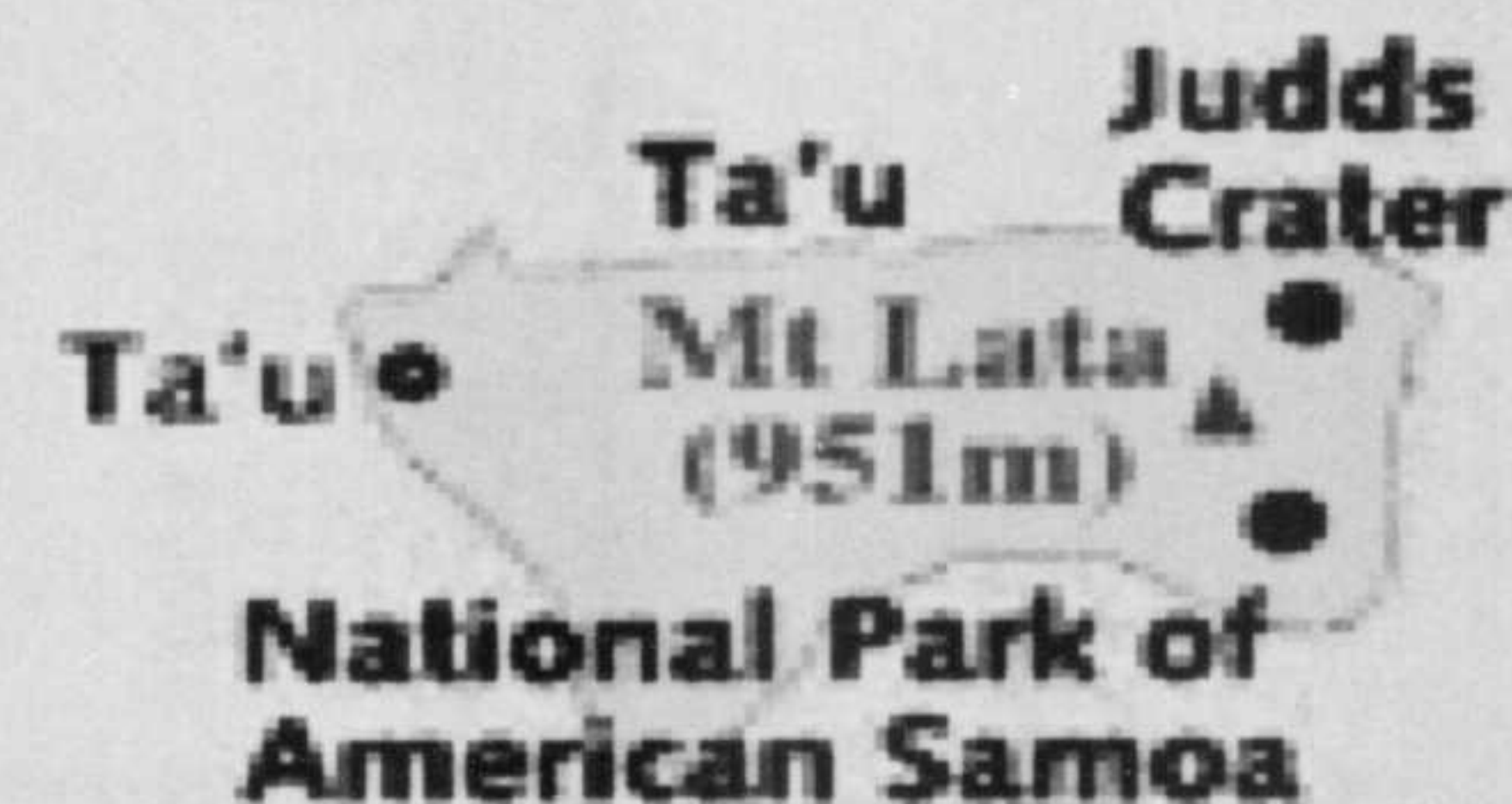
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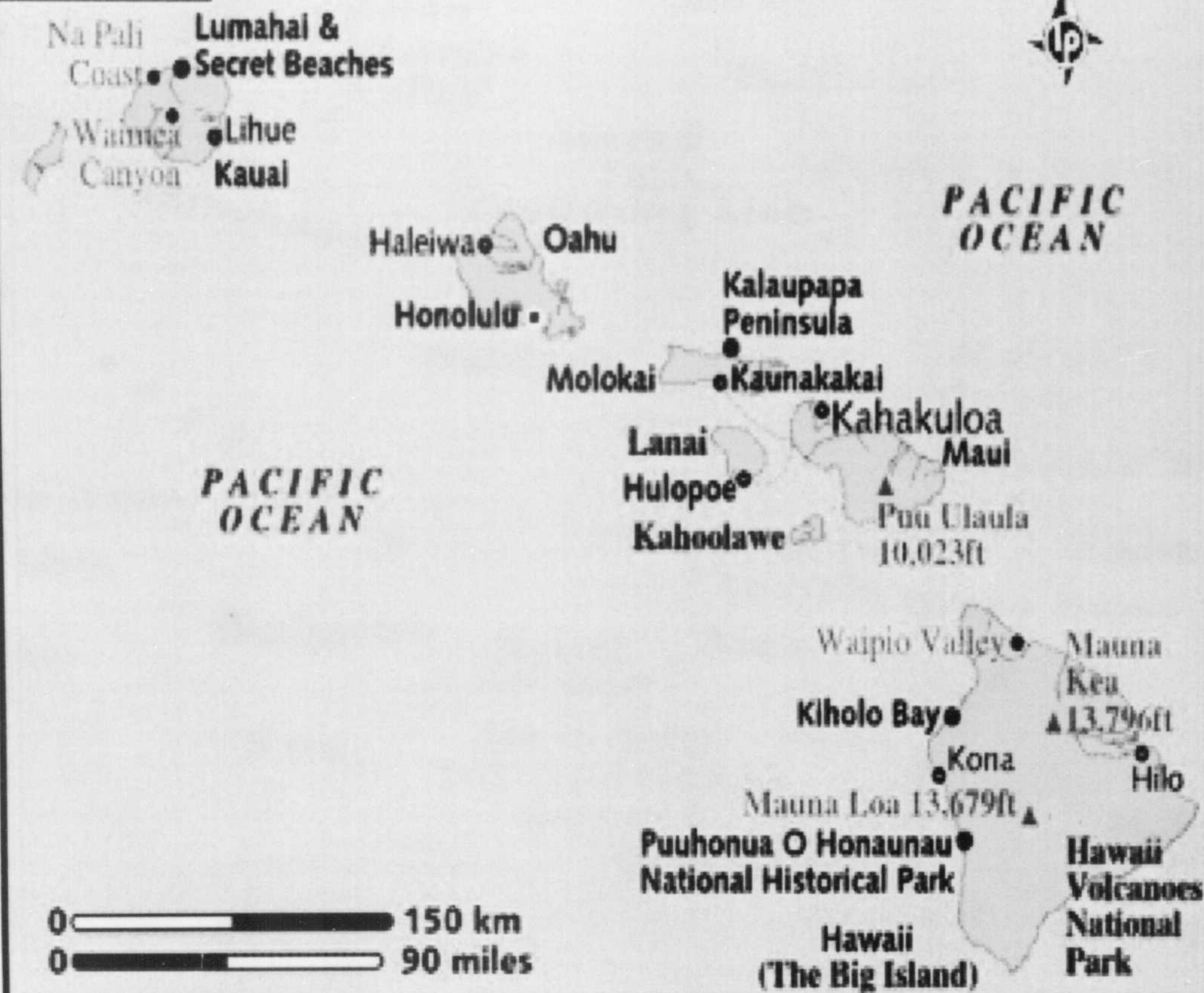


## MANU'A GROUP

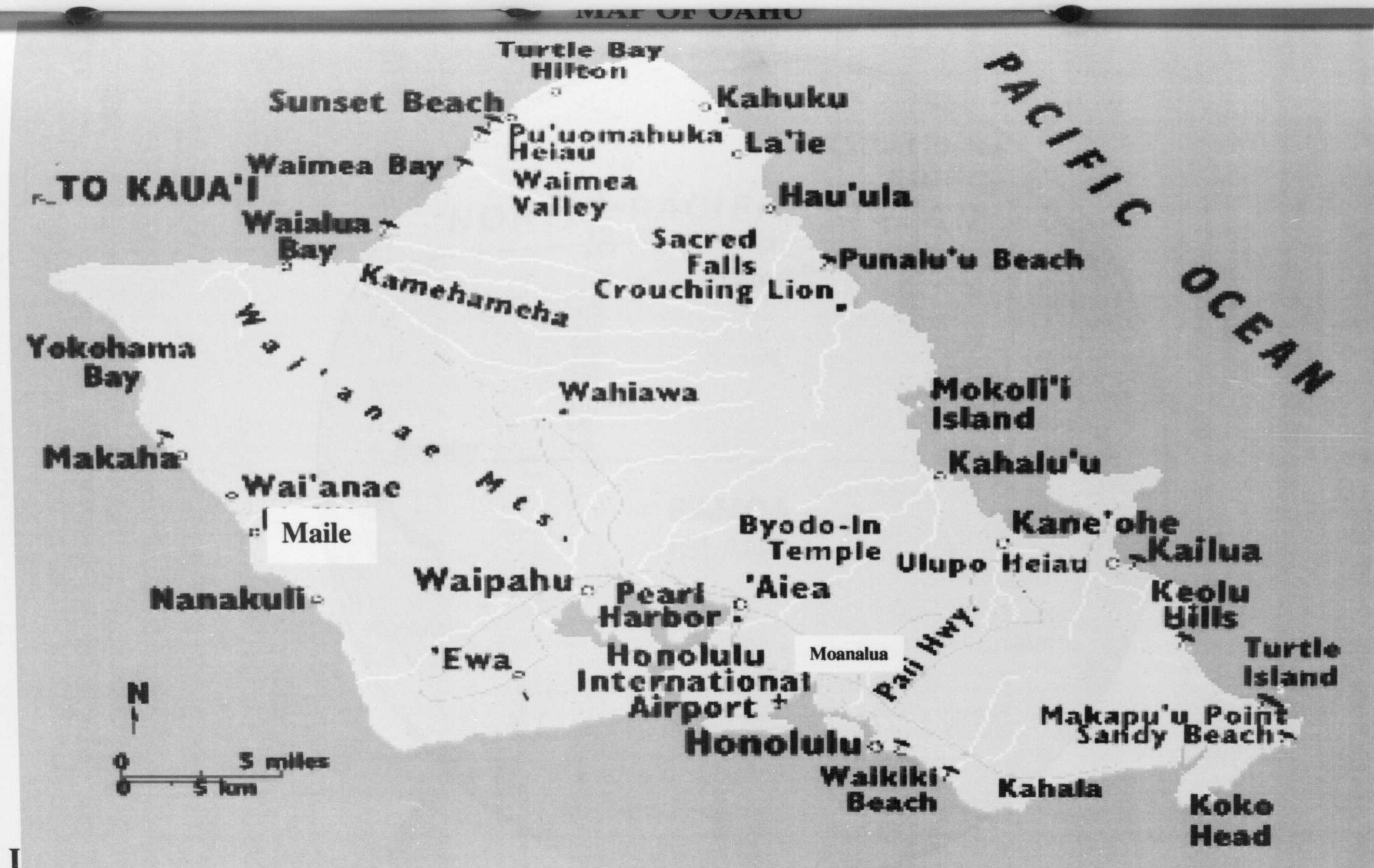




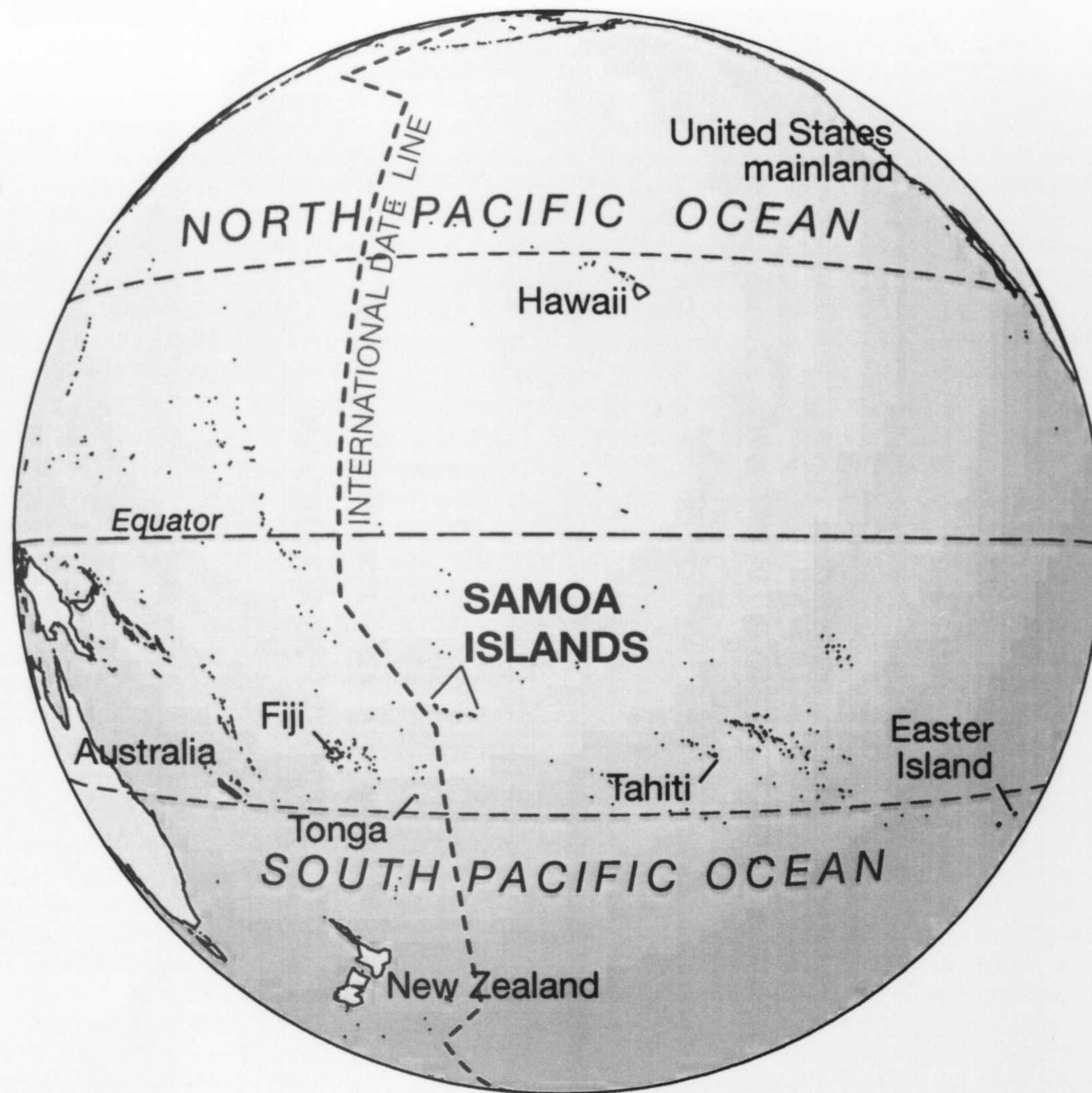
# HAWAII













TO SING THE LORD'S SONG IN A FOREIGN LAND:  
A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SAMOAN (LMS)  
CHURCH IN HAWAII, 1950 - 1970

A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the  
Malua Theological College

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
BACHELOR OF DIVINITY

By

Filo Tauaivale [Dip.Th. (MTC)]

September 2005



# ABSTRACT

This is an attempt to tell a brief history of the birth of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Hawaii. It was born out of a desire to affirm their Samoan identity, to maintain their Samoan culture, customs and traditions, and to maintain solidarity as a foreign land. The establishment of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Hawaii was at the heart of this desire. The beginning of the church was a story of problems and setbacks.

This Project is Dedicated to my

Wife and Children

and

In Memory of my Late Mother

Lua'ipouomalo Tauaivale



## ABSTRACT

This is an attempt to tell a brief history of the birth of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Hawaii. It was born out of a desire to affirm their Samoan identity, to maintain their Samoan culture, customs and traditions, and to maintain solidarity in a foreign land. The establishment of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Hawaii was at the heart of this desire. The beginning of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Hawaii encountered problems and setbacks. But, these setbacks were dealt with as the Samoan community persisted in their efforts to establish a church they can call their own - their effort was truly inspirational. It is a story of passion and courage; a story of struggle and humility to sing the Lord's song in a foreign land.

I would like to thank my church members, Rev. Joseph and Tassie Tui, and the Congregational Christian Church of "Vapua Ole Ole" in Honolulu, Hawaii. I am also indebted to Rev. Elder Salaria and Esia Salaria, and the CCCAS of Jerusalem Poo, Honolulu, Hawaii; Rev. Elder Iona Tule of the CCCS in Waikiki, Hawaii; Rev. Elder Miki Sapiola of the CCCAS in Maui, Hawaii; Rev. Elder Sapiola Tule, Rev. Eha Tule, and Rev. Son Puanani Jr., for their support in material gifts and prayers. Special mention also to Mrs. Silika Tulefua Paagan and Mrs. Puanani Tule, for valuable information they were able to contribute for this book.

I would also like to acknowledge the support and encouragement of my family - my grandmother, Dr. Sarama Tule, for words of advice and encouragement; my father, Apapua Puanani Tule, for his support and prayers; and my mother, Iva Puanani Tule, who passed away in 1988, who desired that one of her children would go to Miki Theological College one day. Thank you also to Puanani and Puanani Tule, and Alex and Sarama Tule for their support, advice, and prayers. I would also like to thank my friends, Puanani and Puanani Tule, and my mother and



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aunties in Samoa, New Zealand, Hawaii, American Samoa, and the United States of America.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Samoan (LMS)<sup>1</sup> Church in Hawaii was the second Samoan (LMS) Church to be established outside of Samoa in the early 1950s.<sup>2</sup> Its establishment came before the Samoan (LMS) Church became independent in 1962 as the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (CCCS). It differed from the establishment of the Samoan (LMS) Churches in New Zealand and Australia, which were inaugurated in the late 1960s and 1980s.<sup>3</sup> The problems they faced in the early stages of establishing the Samoan (LMS) Church in Hawaii were mainly dealt with by the European missionaries and the Elders' Committee of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa. But despite the difficulties and, at times struggling to survive, the Samoan (LMS) Church in Hawaii managed to overcome their difficulties and moved on to become one of the Districts of the CCCS.

In 2004 the CCCS churches in Hawaii celebrated 50 years since its official inauguration. However, the outcome of my present research suggested otherwise. The actual date of the establishment of the first Samoan (LMS) Church in Hawaii is an important point to pursue; just as the question of why a Samoan (LMS) Church was set up in Hawaii in the first place is equally important. This is more so when churches under the Hawaiian Evangelical Association (HEA), the counterpart of the LMS in Samoa, were already well established and would have catered for any spiritual needs of the Samoan community in Hawaii.

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<sup>1</sup> The LMS or the London Missionary Society was the official name of the Samoan Church before it gain independence in 1962.

<sup>2</sup> The Samoan (LMS) Church in Fiji was the first. For full discussion, see Danny Ioka, "Origin and Beginnings of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa [CCCS] in Aotearoa New Zealand." Ph. D. Thesis. Otago University, n.d., 129-131

<sup>3</sup> Leulu Felise Vaa. *Saili Matagi: Samoan Migrants in Australia*. University of the South Pacific and National University of Samoa, Suva and Apia, 2001, 108; see also Ioka, 181



There are also questions that need to be answered as to the relationship between the LMS and HEA. There are questions that need addressing as to the establishment of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Hawaii and its relationship to Samoan identity in foreign countries. There is a question of how much the independent movement in Samoa, especially with the political independence movement prevalent in Samoa at the time, had influence the establishment of a Samoan (LMS) Church in Hawaii. It is with these issues in mind, and the passion that I have to record a brief history of the CCCS in Hawaii, that has prompted this research.

Chapter One is a review of the socio-political and religious circumstances in Hawaii, which contributed to the background in which the Samoan (LMS) Church took root. The emergence of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Hawaii was not only for spiritual edification, but a place for fellowship and a sanctuary to find ways to cope with the new environment and changes in Hawaii.

Chapter Two looks at the migration of Samoans to Hawaii and the establishment of the first Samoan (LMS) Church in Hawaii. It focuses on leadership issues between the laity and the ordained Ministry, as well as looking at the conflict between members, the involvement of the HEA in the affairs of the Samoan (LMS) churches in Hawaii, and the schisms as a result of such conflicts.

Chapter Three focuses on the development of the Samoan (LMS) churches after the first Samoan (LMS) Church in Moanalua split. It discusses the decision of the deputation from Samoa, and the role played by both HEA and the Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa. The chapter also looks at the establishment of other Samoan congregations.

The Conclusion brings together the findings of this research and offer some answers to the questions posed in the Introduction. It also provides an avenue to discuss



the negatives and positives of establishing the Samoan (LMS) Church in Hawaii. There is also a critique on the roles played by the HEA and the Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa in the problems faced by the Samoan (LMS) churches in Hawaii. There is also some suggestions and insights as to how I see the role of the Samoan (LMS) churches in Hawaii in the future, especially with the Hawaiian community as a whole, and its relationship with the CCCS worldwide.

Research for this project was not easy. Many of the founding members of the first established church in Hawaii have passed away. Some have moved to the mainland USA. Much of the resources were obtained from interviews with families and children of those who founded the churches in Hawaii. Interviews were also conducted in American Samoa with senior pastors who had information about the churches in Hawaii.

The lack of written materials and recorded sources in relation to this topic, meant I had to rely heavily on personal recollection of the founding members, even though I am well aware that their recollections could be biased and does not reflect a full account of the history of the Samoan (LMS) churches in Hawaii. Nevertheless, these personal recollections still provided some information on the beginning of the Samoan (LMS) Church (later CCCS) in Hawaii.

The other sources that I have used were found at the Hawaii National Archives, Hawaii Public Library, University of Hawaii Library, Hawaii State Department of Consumer Affairs, Congregational Christian Church of American Samoa (CCCAS) in American Samoa, CCCS Archives in Apia, Malua Theological College Library in Samoa, and the Nelson Library in Apia. The sources used for this task, directly or indirectly, are listed in the Bibliography.



## CHAPTER ONE

### SAMOA – HAWAII CONNECTION

Archeological evidence indicates that the ancestors of the Polynesian people moved out of Southeast Asia many thousands of years ago on an eastward migration that passed through Fiji and Tonga, and reached Samoa around 1500 B.C. There they settled and developed their distinctive language culture, and physical characteristics, before they dispersed to other islands of the Pacific such as Marquesas, Tahiti and Hawaii.<sup>4</sup> The Polynesian re-creation of their homelands back in Samoa, upon their arrival in Eastern Polynesian islands, has led to the commonalities in place names such as Savaii (Samoa), Hawaii (Hawaii and Tahiti), Upolu (Samoa and Hawaii), Uporu (Tahiti), Samoa (Samoa), and Hamoa (Maui, Hawaii). The new islands were named as such to create connection and to remember their island back home in Samoa.<sup>5</sup>

The Europeans became aware of the Hawaiian Islands late in the eighteenth century.<sup>6</sup> Ferdinand Magellan was the first European explorer to enter the Pacific, in the sixteenth century. He sailed from Cape Horn to the Philippines without encountering a single island. Among the explorers who followed him were Spanish, Dutch, French and English. Many made useful discoveries, but others spent years at a time sailing and failing to discover any islands due to the vastness of the Pacific Ocean. The Hawaii Islands was of considerable size, but not as large as other islands in the Pacific, such as the Bismarck Archipelago, New Caledonia and Aotearoa (New Zealand).

Many legends have been passed down through generations, which have linked the Polynesian islands and their people, especially Western Polynesian traditions of the god

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<sup>4</sup> Peter Bellwood, *The Polynesian Prehistory of an Island People*. Revised Edition, Thomas and Hudson, London, 1987, 44. See also, J. A. C. Gray, *Amerika Samoa: A History of Amerika Samoa and its United States Naval Administration*. Arno Press, New York, 1980, 9

<sup>5</sup> The early European explorers did the same thing when naming newly discovered lands after places in Europe. See Peter Leiataua Ah Ching, *Polynesian Interconnections: Dwayne Johnson and King Kamehameha in Culture and Science*. University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 2004, 9

<sup>6</sup> Gavan Daws, *Shoal of Time: A History of Hawaiian Islands*. University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1974, xi



Tagaloa ruling in Samoa, and Kanaloa in Hawaii.<sup>7</sup> Hawaiian legends and genealogies have also sought to clarify understanding of early distant voyages, and connection of Hawaiians to people of other islands. Along the way stories have changed but the ideas have remained intact with a familiar story of migration from Savaii (Samoa) to Hawaii. Polynesians of old Hawaii called far away islands, and other foreign lands, *kahiki* (any island beyond the horizon). Many of the people mentioned in Hawaiian genealogy are said to have hailed from the *kahiki* of Upolu and Savaii, Samoa.<sup>8</sup>

Captain James Cook chanced upon the Hawaii Islands in 1778. He encountered a people with a high standard of living. Cook found a Hawaiian society that was composed of *ali'i*, (ruling class), *kahuna* (priest or expert), *maka'ainana* (commoners) and *kauwa* (slaves).<sup>9</sup> Hawaiian society was very strict and united under a *kapu* (restriction, separation or forbidden) system which dictated daily activities among the various classes, between people and the gods, and between people and nature. There were even periods for environmental control that provided for a balance in nature and the maintenance of a subsistence economy. Thus, the culture remained undamaged and rules were never confused. In many ways, Cook observed a people whose habits were in harmony with the land upon which they dwelt when Cook first met them. The economy of the Hawaii Islands, at the time, could sustain a population of a quarter million people, a tenth or more of all the Polynesians, Micronesians, and Melanesians.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Bellwood, 44

<sup>8</sup> Note: In the latest declaration of the Kamehameha Trust for the Hawaiian native people in the 1800-1900s, it tried to exclude Samoan and Tahitian people from the Characteristics of native Hawaiians. The new Hawaiian government needed to separate their people's native lineage from the ancient people (Samoans, Marquises, and Tahitians) who came to old Hawaii many years earlier and populated the Hawaii Islands. This was done for the sole purpose of appropriating Hawaiian government money for the descendants of those born on Hawaii soil since 1778. This was the year Captain Cook and his crew reached Hawaii. See Ah Ching, 24 & 40

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Kemper Hitch, *Islands in Transition: The Past, Present, and Future of Hawaii's Economy*. University of Hawaii, Honolulu, 1992, 3. See also Daws, 5

<sup>10</sup> John F McDermott, et al. *People and Culture of Hawaii. A Psychocultral Profile*. University of Hawaii. Honolulu, 1980, 8. See also, Hitch, 3



In 1810, Kamehameha I became king of all the Hawaii Islands. King Kamehameha I had great ties with the Samoans. Hawaiian traditions mentioned that the first ruler of Hawaii was a Samoan named Pilikaeae or Piliaoao. According to the tradition,

Pao was a kahuna (la'una) priest who came from Upolu, Samoa. He came to Hawaii and saw that the island was being corrupted and the old chiefs began intermixing with the commoners, so he brought the Alii chief Pilikaeae from Samoa who is the direct royal ancestor of King Kamehameha or Tamaahmaah.<sup>11</sup>

The *kapu* system was still intact under Kamehameha I. However, upon his death, his wife Kaahumanu used considerable pressure on Kamehameha II to end the *kapu*.<sup>12</sup> The elimination of the *kapu* threatened to wipe out a way of life for a people who had few resources at that time to cope with the impending changes.<sup>13</sup> The people who used to rely mostly on the land for resources were not getting what they needed. The sharing and caring for one another was threatned to be wiped out because of the more 'civilized' and vibrant culture of the new foreign rulers.<sup>14</sup> Only Hawaiians who had money stood to benefit from foreign resources.<sup>15</sup> The Hawaiian culture and language was heading towards extinction, while most of their land fell into the hands of foreigners. Unfortunately, no satisfactory substitutions were provided and the Hawaiians, after centuries of living under a system of submission to the gods and to nature, lived in confusion for decades. With the emphasis on change, and the great advantages provided by the new foreign cultures, Hawaiian culture was destined for extinction. Hawaii was a

<sup>11</sup> Brother Fred Henry Lafai, *O se Talaaga o Samoa*. Translated by Moega Lutu, American Samoa, n.p., 1980, 19; Bellwood, 97

<sup>12</sup> The *kapu* system was an idea to prohibit and restrict Hawaiians from exploiting Hawaiian resources such as land and sea.

<sup>13</sup> Hitch, 12

<sup>14</sup> The foreign rulers were the wealthy and powerful white men from England, America, and Germany, who benefit from the exploitation of Hawaiian resources. See Daws, 59

<sup>15</sup> Hitch, 12



tiny kingdom and could not defend itself against world powers like America, France, England and Germany. The power of the Hawaiian rulers soon disappeared as foreigners gained control.<sup>16</sup>

The family is the center of relationship in Hawaiian society. The concept of *ohana* (extended family) linked members of the family through blood and its members expect warmth and support from each other. This support system was not expected or commanded, it was simply there. *Ohana* taught youngsters their duties, outline their behavior, maintain their needs, and teach them to respect their *kupuna* (elders). In the practice of *ohana* the true meaning of the word *aloha* is found, that is, the love for one another. From birth to death, responsibilities were understood and these were part of a code of ethics shouldered by each extended family member. Thus, *aloha* and *ohana* not only maintained strong family links through blood ties, but it also gave family members additional meaning of involvement, responsibilities, and unity of purpose. Furthermore, *aloha* and *ohana* bound together extended family members to find strength of purpose and meaning of existence.<sup>17</sup>

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) Christianized Hawaii. The first known Hawaiian to accept Christianity was Opukahaia. He was born before the turn of the nineteenth century. In 1809 an American ship captain offered him passage to America with another Hawaiian youth, named Hopu. On the same ship was a Yale academic who taught Opukahaia English, and when the young Hawaiian went ashore he enquired for more instruction at Yale.<sup>18</sup>

Samuel J. Mills, one of the leaders in the growing movements to send American Protestant missionaries overseas, heard about Opukahaia and promoted the idea of training Opukahaia and sending him home as a Christian teacher. Opukahaia was an

<sup>16</sup> McDermott, 11

<sup>17</sup> McDermott, 12

<sup>18</sup> Daws, 61



excellent convert. He enjoyed praying in public and privately, and wherever he went he exhorted people in the name of God. He kept a Christian journal, translated the book of Genesis into the Hawaiian language, and completed a Hawaiian grammar, dictionary, and spelling book.<sup>19</sup> However, the desire of the ABCFM to send Opukahaia back to Hawaii as a missionary to his own people never eventuated with the sudden passing away of Opukahaia.

The death of Opukahaia only made the supporters of the ABCFM more eager to see the Hawaiian Islands evangelized. The first ABCFM teachers to land in Hawaii in 1819 were two Americans, Hiram Bingham of Vermont and Asa Thurston of Massachusetts.<sup>20</sup> Four Hawaiians educated at the ABCFM Mission School were also chosen to accompany Bingham and Thurston. They were Thomas Hopu, William Kanui, John Honolii, and George Kaumualii.<sup>21</sup> The group also included several lay specialists. They were Daniel Chamberlain, a farmer in his late thirties, his wife and five children; Elisha Loomis, a printer and teacher who set up the first printing press in Honolulu; Samuel Ruggles and Samuel Whitney, both teachers; and Thomas Holman, a physician.<sup>22</sup>

The group prepared themselves for the worst scenario that could happen, especially with the stories of the vicious death of James Cook in the hands of the Hawaiian people still circulating at the time. When the missionaries saw the beach of Hawaii, Bingham wrote:

The appearance of destitution, degradation, and barbarism, among the chattering, and almost naked savages, whose heads and feet, and much of their sun burnt, swarthy skins, were bare, was appalling. Some of our number, with gushing tears, turned away from the spectacles. Others with firmer nerve, continued their gaze, but were ready to exclaim, Can these be

<sup>19</sup> Daws, 61

<sup>20</sup> Daws, 62

<sup>21</sup> Note: George Kaumualii was the son of the ruling chief of Maui. He returned to his father's island, and went back to his old way of life. See Daws, 63

<sup>22</sup> John Garrett, *To Live Among the Stars: Christian Origin in Oceania*. World Council of Churches and University of the South Pacific, Geneva and Suva, 1982, 43; Also see Daws, 63



human beings? Can we throw ourselves upon these rude shores, and take up our abode, for life, among such a people for the purpose of training them for heaven?<sup>23</sup>

The missionaries felt scared and worried, but they had a promise to fulfill – to Christianize the Hawaiian people. The initial period was not easy, especially trying to cope with the language and the culture. The mission also had to deal with stubborn chiefs, such as Kaumualii, the ruler of Kauai and father of George Kaumualii, who not only refused to give land to the ABCFM, but failed to provide protection for the mission. There was also Boki in Oahu who gave the missionaries a hard time as to where they could build their houses. He was very uncooperative and did not have a good relationship with the missionaries. At times, he was very friendly, and at times he would just go his own strange way. He went to church whenever he felt like it. But mostly, on the Sabbath day, he would either be on a sandalwood cutting expedition, be sailing between islands, or just spending time drinking at hula parties.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, the spoke person for King Kamehameha I, Kalanimoku, who had been baptized by the Catholic priest, Abbe de Quelen, rejected the establishment of any other new religion except for the Catholic faith.<sup>25</sup>

But despite the missionaries facing many difficulties and having problems eradicating the pagan way of life of the Hawaiian people, they did their best to protect the Hawaiian people against white exploitation. It earned Bingham the great affection of the Hawaiians years later within the church. The Hawaiian church, under the ABCFM, later sent Hawaiian missionaries to Micronesia and Marquesas. In the later years, the Hawaiian church fought for and received independence from ABCFM in 1863. The church organization was called the Hawaiian Evangelical Association (HEA), which later

<sup>23</sup> Daws, 64

<sup>24</sup> A *Hula* party is where ladies entertained while men were drinking alcohol. The ladies perform the Hawaiian traditional dance (hula). They wear mini skirt and use the coconut shells to cover their breasts.

See Daws, 82

<sup>25</sup> Garrett, 46



became known as the United Church of Christ (UCC).<sup>26</sup> The UCC today comprise of Protestant churches, Congregational churches, and Pentecostal churches. They all play a significant role in continuing to spread the Gospel in Hawaii.

It was not until the early 1900s that another wave of Samoan migration would once again head eastward to Hawaii. The United States of America (USA) first showed interest in American Samoa prior to 1900 because of its harbour in Pago Pago and its strategic location in the Pacific Ocean. It provided a refueling station for its merchant ships and its naval fleet ships in the Pacific. In the 1870's, America also showed interest in the western islands of Samoa through a representative of the USA named Albert Steinberger. He arrived with gifts and a letter from the President of the USA, which the Samoan government accepted with great joy. The Samoans felt a relationship with the USA would help counter British and German demands, especially on land issues, and provide a peaceful solution to the see-saw battle over who controlled the western islands of Samoa. The Samoans expected to be made an American protectorate. However, the great expectations came to nothing and eventually the USA had to settle with the eastern islands of Samoa when Samoa was partitioned in 1900. In 1900, the western islands of Samoa came under German rule, but the Samoans continued to seek relations with the USA, especially after the great epidemic of 1918, and later World War II (WWII).<sup>27</sup> The rise of the USA as a world power, and the impact of its wealth on Samoans during the war years, made the USA a favourable alternative to Germany and New Zealand.

The migration of Samoans to Hawaii began about 1920. Mormon missionaries had been active in Samoa for many years, and with the completion of the new Mormon Temple at Laie, Honolulu, in 1919, opportunities for Samoans to move to Hawaii

<sup>26</sup> John Garrett, *Footsteps in the Sea: Christianity in the Oceania to World War II*. World Council of Churches and University of the South Pacific, Geneva and Suva, 1992, 230. See also Daws, 105

<sup>27</sup> For a full discussion on these issues, see Featunai Ben Liuaana, *Samoa Tulai: Ecclesiastical and Political Face of Samoa's Independence, 1900-1962*. Malua Press, Apia, 2004



increased. The new Mormon Temple provided jobs for Samoans especially as missionaries working for the Mormon Church. By 1925 there were six families, numbering 33 people, in Laie village. In 1929 the numbers reached 125. In 1930 Samoans made up twenty five percent of Laie village. A census in 1950 showed that there were 463 people of Samoan descent living in Hawaii.<sup>28</sup> World War II halted migration temporarily, but it led to the induction of young Samoans into the USA Armed Forces especially those living in Hawaii.

During World War II thousands of servicemen stationed in American Samoa Americanized the Samoans considerably.<sup>29</sup> When the economic problems of the post-war years descended upon American Samoa, many Samoans took advantage of their status as American nationals to move north to Honolulu. Some went on to San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego. In January 1946, after the war, the ship *Cat's Paw* had 31 Samoans on board bound for Honolulu. Most were students planning to attend school in Hawaii.<sup>30</sup>

Another influx of migrants from American Samoa began in 1951, with the transfer of the administration of American Samoa from the Department of the Navy to the Department of the Interior. In that year, 117 Samoan Naval personnel were transferred to Pearl Harbor, and with them went 257 dependents. In July 1952, the *USS President Jackson* was made available for transporting the remaining dependents of Samoan Naval personnel to Honolulu. They numbered 369, and out of that number, 200 had passages as military enlisted men. The rest, not connected with the military, were sponsored by Samoans already in Hawaii.<sup>31</sup> Many Samoans migrated to Hawaii for a better education,

<sup>28</sup> "Ship Coming From Pago Pago to Reunite Samoan Families." *Honolulu Advertiser*. Jan 10, 1946. 2 column 2, Hawaii National Archives

<sup>29</sup> J. Robert Shaffer, *American Samoa: 100 Years Under the United States Flag*. Island Heritage, Honolulu, 2000, 159

<sup>30</sup> Young, 22

<sup>31</sup> Young, 22



greater employment opportunity, and to escape the restrictive social structure of Samoan culture and religious obligations. Others simply followed their relatives to Hawaii. David B. Eyde, an anthropologist made this point more succinct;

The results of the Navy withdrawal were sudden and terrible. Without the income from the naval station, the economy of American Samoa reverted to a nearly subsistence level. Samoan who had become used to imported goods found themselves no longer able to afford them. Unemployment resulted for many of those Samoans who had become dependent upon the community at Pago Pago. Skilled and semi skilled persons found no market for their talents. Civil status was discontinued, bringing hardship to many Samoans with only a few more years to retirement and pension. Therefore, when the navy offered passenger space aboard the *U S S President Jackson*, many Samoans seized the opportunity to migrate to Hawaii.<sup>32</sup>

Eyde blamed the mass migration of Samoans to Hawaii in the 1950's on the Navy Administration. Eyde saw the Naval shift to Hawaii as a negative move, because it displaced many Samoan families from their homeland and from the environment they were familiar with to a foreign environment. But many Samoans saw the opportunity to move to Hawaii as a blessing because it opened up opportunities for a better life. Naval services, and the prospect of well paid job, enticed Samoans away from American Samoa in an exodus that double by 1960.<sup>33</sup>

The Samoans took to Hawaii their culture, customs and traditions. The Samoans have always demonstrated creativity and craftsmanship in their use of natural resources, such as wood, coconut shells, and the art of weaving. It was, therefore, not surprised that they took to Hawaii their skills in making shell leis, *tapa* cloths, woven fans, handbags and mats, and coconut shell ornaments and jewelry.

<sup>32</sup> David B. Eyde. *A Preliminary Study of a Group of Samoan Migrants in Hawaii*. Undergraduate Research, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, 1954, 3

<sup>33</sup> See full discussion of this issue in Eyde, 3. See also, Captain T. F. Darden. *Historical Sketch of the Naval Administration of the Government of American Samoa. April 17, 1900-July 1, 1951*. U.S Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C, 1951, 4. See also, Frederick Harris Olsen. *"The Navy and the White Man's Burden: Naval Administration of Samoa."* Ph.D Thesis, Washington University, 1976, 4



In Hawaii, Samoans value the extended family concept and live accordingly under the leadership of a *matai* (chief).<sup>34</sup> Marriages, funerals, births, and other important events, were often commemorated in Hawaii with emphasis on Samoan customs and traditions. In such commemoration, chiefs, pastors, and visiting dignitaries, were held in high esteem and honored appropriately through the *ava* (kava) ceremony. They were often presented with gifts, such as fine mats, shell leis, and baskets of cooked food. Samoan customs, traditions and culture, has added color and interest to Hawaii's multi ethnic community.

The Samoans also love dancing and music. In any social, political and religious event, singing and dancing were an integral part of the celebrations. The variety of music and dances reflected traditions and tell stories of past events. The songs and dances of Samoa have contributed significantly to the Hawaiian community. Many Polynesian entertainments in Hawaii always include some aspect of Samoan music and dance, especially, the knife and fire dance. Many well-known professional entertainers in Hawaii were of Samoan ancestry.<sup>35</sup>

Sport has become a very important and influential component of Samoan way of life in Hawaii. The Samoans love for different sports has motivated them to be very active in volleyball, wrestling, football and athletics. Many have reached the top in their respective sports and have become household names in Hawaii and in the USA.<sup>36</sup>

Each year in Honolulu, and in other areas where large numbers of Samoan people were found, Samoans celebrate Flag Day. This event commemorates the raising of the

<sup>34</sup> *Matai* in Samoa is the chief of the family. He is the head of a household. He/She leads the family physically and spiritually. All important matters relating to the family such as land and *matai* titles are under his/her control. He/She teaches the family to respect each other and to abide with village rules and regulations. A *matai* also represents his/her family in the village council when the village council discusses village matters

<sup>35</sup> These well known entertainers include Steve Laulu, Sielu Avea and So'o Fune. They have their own entertainment groups, which perform at various hotels and resorts in Hawaii. Avea is a well-known fire knife dancer. Fune is also a fire knife dancer at the Pacific Culture Centre at Laie

<sup>36</sup> For example, Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson and Peter Maivia (wrestling), Fonoimoana (beach volleyball), represented the USA in the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia, where he won a gold medal, Ben Agbayani (baseball), Jessie Sapolu, Junior Seau, Mark Tuinei, and Mark Tanuvasa (American Football)



American Flag on April 17, 1900, when the Eastern Islands of Samoa became a USA territory. The program for the day includes feasting, playing games, hearing speeches, and participating in song and dance competitions. Often groups travelled to Hawaii from Samoa and other parts of the USA to compete with Samoan groups. The American Samoa Flag day celebration has become a very colorful addition to the list of Hawaiian festivities.

Finally, no sketch of Samoa and Samoans would be completed without some consideration of the role of Christianity. Like every other immigrant groups who migrated to Hawaii, Samoa also took their religion with them.<sup>37</sup> The Chinese and Japanese took Buddhism, Taoism and Shintoism, while Jews and Christians from the continent of Europe took their Faith and built their distinctive houses of worship in Hawaii. These ethnic groups were recruited to Hawaii between the early 1800s and early 1900s to work on pineapple and sugar plantations. Some returned home when their contracts expired, while others moved on to the USA. However, many married Hawaiians, settled, and started families.<sup>38</sup> These immigrants, the Filipinos, Japanese, and Chinese, became very successful business people and hold high ranking positions in the government of Hawaii.

The Samoans imitated these earlier migrants and began to develop religiously, culturally and economically. As Samoans deepen their roots in Hawaii, and receive a better education, their skills and services in various occupations and administrative roles began to receive the recognitions it deserve. For instance, in November 2004, a Samoan was elected Mayor of Honolulu. It was the pinnacle of all that Samoans had achieved in Hawaii over the years.<sup>39</sup> The Samoans believed their successful integration into the Hawaiian community, and their continuous development in all aspects of Hawaiian way

<sup>37</sup> Senja C Antilla. *The Role of the Church/Minister in the Samoan Community in Hawaii, as Compared with that in a Samoan Village*. B.Sc. Thesis, University of Hawaii, 1980, 12

<sup>38</sup> McDermott, 55

<sup>39</sup> Mufi Hannemann became the first Samoan to be elected Mayor by the citizens of the City of Honolulu



of life, can only be attributed to the bountiful blessings from God. Thus, Christianity is not only an integral part of the Samoan way of life but is life itself.



## CHAPTER TWO

## ORIGIN OF THE SAMOAN (LMS) CHURCH IN HAWAII

The Manu'a Islands is home to one of the oldest Samoan family known as Tuimanu'a. The Tuimanu'a ruled these islands for thousands of years before finally accepting USA sovereignty in 1904, and became part of American Samoa. In the 1820s, during the reign of Tuimanu'a Mamana, a party of Christian preachers from Tahiti landed on the island of Tau, at the residence of the Tuimanu'a. They were cordially accepted and began to teach the Tuimanu'a and his people about the new faith in Jesus Christ.<sup>40</sup>

American Samoan traditions tells a story of Malietoa Vaiinupo arriving at Malaetele,<sup>41</sup> Tau, to inform the Tuimanu'a of Samoa's new found faith in Jesus Christ. Instead, Malietoa found that the Tuimanu'a had already become a Christian. Malietoa and Tuimanu'a then made a covenant to accept the new faith in Jesus Christ as the official religion of all of Samoa, and to honor the preachers and teachers of the new faith. They also agreed to work together with them, and for both to remain loyal as servants of Jesus Christ in their respective islands.<sup>42</sup>

In 1900, the USA Congress appointed the USA Navy to administer government affairs in American Samoa. By 1950, the Navy began to send American Samoans to Hawaii primarily for enlistment in the Navy. In 1951 a contingent of the *Fitafta* Guards (Samoan soldiers) left American Samoa for Hawaii after a memorable church service officiated by the Reverend Fiti Sunia in Fagatogo. This historical service brought together traditional leaders of American Samoa, church officials, missionaries, and government dignitaries.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Gray, 33

<sup>41</sup> Malaetele is the name of the land where Tuimanu'a lives

<sup>42</sup> Gray, 33

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Fua Tu'u Ala, Honolulu, Hawaii. Jan. 15, 2005. He went to church when he settled in Hawaii in 1955. He is from Malaeloa, Tutuila. A retired navy man, who is currently residing in Honolulu



The *Fitafita* Guards were brought before God in prayer and exhortation, before departing with the blessings and good wishes of those present. A most notable member of the group leaving for Hawaii was a lay preacher from Manu'a named Pita Malae. He was charged with the responsibility of leading worship services on the ship and to provide spiritual nourishment for the group.<sup>44</sup> They arrived with their families and lived in close proximity to the location of the McBraun family, who had been conducting family worship at their own family home for some time.

In proximity to the McBraun's family were the Airport Housing complex, the Naval Housing Area, Civilian Housing, and John Rogers and Halawa Veteran Housings. Located further out were Barbers' Point Marine Air Base Housing and Manana Veteran's Housing.<sup>45</sup> Many of the new arrivals attended McBraun's family worship, including lay-preachers of the LMS in American Samoa, such as Pita Malae (Manu'a), Suitonu Suitonu (Manu'a), Lokeni Logo (Aoa), Sipunu Li'o (Aoloau) and Samuelu Fuimaono (Fagatogo).<sup>46</sup>

Aimeamiti McBraun and her American husband were responsible for the remarkable but humble beginnings of the first Samoan (LMS) church in Hawaii. Aimeamiti McBraun was the daughter of Umu Peni of Aoloau in American Samoa. She and her husband had set up their home at 3137 Age Rd, Damon Tract, a location near the Airport Housing complex. It is not known when the McBraun's arrived in Hawaii, but they had been residence in Hawaii for quite some time before the arrival of the *Fitafita* Guards. The McBraun family became the point of arrival for many American Samoans

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Fuimaono Asueru Fuimaono. Aoloau, American Samoa. Dec 16, 2004. Also see, *O se Talaaga Puupuu o le Amataga o le Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano i Hawaii, 1986* (A Brief History of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa in Hawaii, 1986), Congregational Christian Church in Samoa (henceforth CCCS) Archive. Apia, Samoa

<sup>45</sup> Robert W. Franco. *Samoans in Hawaii: A Demographic Profile*. East-West Population Institute, East-West Centre, Honolulu Hawaii, 1987, 8. Also see, Eyde, 4

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Silika Tulafono. Tafuna, American Samoa. Dec 16, 2004. Also see, *O se Talaaga Puupuu o le Amataga o le Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano i Hawaii, 1986* (A Brief History of the Congregational Christian Church in Hawaii), CCCS Archive. Apia, Samoa



migrating to Hawaii. The McBraun created an environment that reflected the way of life in American Samoa, such as family functions, *fa'alavelave fa'a Samoa*,<sup>47</sup> and religious gatherings.

Pita Tamaligi Leasau had arrived in Hawaii in 1949, before Malae and Suitonu, and took over the leadership of the services at the McBraun resident in 1950. Leasau was an ordained minister from Manu'a. He had entered Malua Theological College in 1944 and had graduated in 1948.<sup>48</sup> He had migrated from Manu'a, and was just one of many American Samoa migrants who found the transition into Hawaiian society easier with the help of Aimeamiti McBraun.

Leasau conducted the services in the Samoan language and used the same liturgical structure used by the Samoa (LMS) Churches in American Samoa. Samoan people from the surrounding areas began to attend the worship services when news spread of its existence. A tent on the McBraun's family land had to be erected to accommodate the swelling congregation. Leasau commented on Aimeamiti McBraun:

E moni, e ui lava ina taase le Iuta, ae e manatua pea e ia lona nuu o Ierusalem, e pei o lenei Tamaitai, loto nuu, alofa moni ia Iesu<sup>49</sup>

(Author's Literal Translation):

Truly, even though a Judaen wanders aimlessly, but still remembers Jerusalem, like this lady, loyalty, and truly loves Jesus.

Leasau was quite surprised that even though Aimeamiti had lived in Hawaii for a very long time, she still upheld her identity as a Samoan. She also had the love, loyalty and steadfast respect for Jesus Christ.

<sup>47</sup> Fa'alavelave Fa'asamoa included family weddings, funerals, and anything that involved the support and help of the whole family.

<sup>48</sup> Malua Theological College Record Book. Record Book kept at the office of the Principal of Malua Theological College, Malua, Samoa

<sup>49</sup> "O le Tala i le Lotu Samoa i Hawaii." *O le Sulu Samoa*. May 1953, CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa



The first service conducted by Leasau was held on February 6, 1950. This was the inaugural year for the establishment of the first Samoan Church congregation. The new congregation came under the umbrella of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa. The new congregation was called 'O le Lotu Samoa (LMS) i Honolulu' [The Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu].<sup>50</sup>

The increase in members raised the question of whether a church should be built to cater for the growing numbers of Samoans wishing to attend the worship services. The total number of people that attended the worship services in 1950 numbered eighty-five, mostly relatives of the McBraun family and their friends. In 1951, it increased to one hundred and seventy five people, and by 1952 there were about four hundred and sixty members.

The idea of building a church had possibilities, as it would provide the Samoan people in Hawaii with a center where they could meet and fellowship. A church would remind them of worship back in American Samoa and also provide an avenue for Samoans to preserve their culture and language for the sake of their children growing up in Hawaii. The decision was made to build a church once confirmation was received from the Samoa (LMS) Church in Samoa.

In September 1952, Leasau requested the Samoa (LMS) Church, through the Tutuila and Manu'a District, for a deputation to travel to Hawaii to, firstly, thank the McBraun family for their hospitality and loyalty to the Samoan people, and for the use of their home for worship services, and secondly, to rule on their request to build a church for the newly established Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu. Leasau also believed that the purchasing of land in Hawaii would give the Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa a valuable asset, while providing a place of worship for Samoans in Hawaii. Unfortunately, the

<sup>50</sup>"O le Lotu Samoa i Honolulu" *O le Sulu Samoa*. Feb 1950. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa



request for a deputation was turned down by the Elders' Committee of the Samoa (LMS) Church in Samoa. They felt it was not the right time for a deputation to visit.<sup>51</sup>

On February 8, 1953, the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu celebrated its third anniversary. The worship program for the Anniversary started at 10.00 am and finished at 12.30 pm. Leasau led the service. Lay preachers Pita Malae and Sipunu Li'o led the congregation in prayer. Suitonu was present but did not take part in the service.<sup>52</sup> Deacons, Lili'o and Foisia, representatives from the Women's Fellowship, Elisa Lefotu, Tagatanuu Ti'a and Tauamo Lili'o, and representatives from the Young Men's group, Sese and Peni Pomere, delivered the speeches of the day. The final sermon was preached by Leasau from the Book of Genesis, Chapter 28: 22, which read, "And this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that you give me I will surely give one-tenth to you." The sermon was followed by a very patriotic hymn in the Samoan Hymn Book entitled, "Lo ta nuu ua ou fanau ai" (My nation in which I was born). The Benediction was said to conclude the service. Afterwards, Leasau offered words of encouragement to those present.<sup>53</sup>

La'u pele Samoa, o le ola ma le tino o le lotu LMS i Honolulu ua tupu. E ui ina matou le iloa le lumanai o lenei lotu, ae ua matou taumafai i le mea e gata ai, i le fesoasoani mai o le Agaga Paia.<sup>54</sup>

(Author's Literal Translation):

My beloved Samoa, the body and the life of the LMS church in Honolulu has grown. Even though we do not know the future of this church, but we do the best we can, with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Three months after the celebration, Leasau passed away. Leasau's death was a blow to the new church in Hawaii. But despite this great loss, Leasau had set the

<sup>51</sup> "Pita Tamaligi Leasau to K.T Faletose," letter, Mar 6, 1953. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa

<sup>52</sup> There was no conflict or personal tension between Leasau and Suitonu. It was Leasau's own decision of using Malae and Li'o in the service

<sup>53</sup> "O le Tala i le Lotu Samoa i Hawaii," *O le Sulu Samoa*, May, 1953. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa

<sup>54</sup> "O le Tala i le Lotu Samoa i Honolulu," *O le Sulu Samoa*, May 1953. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa



foundation for the Samoa (LMS) Church in Honolulu to help it develop in the future. At the time of Leasau's death, he was closely pursued by the HEA to have the new Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu under its umbrella.<sup>55</sup> The HEA had requested Leasau and a delegation from his congregation to meet with the HEA. Leasau responded that the congregation was not yet at a stage to fulfill this request. He felt that the HEA had no authority on the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu for it was under the supervision of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa. Leasau wanted to keep things as they were.<sup>56</sup> There was still no representative of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu to the HEA at the time of Leasau's death.

The involvement of the HEA with the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu was a coincidence. During a visitation by the Foreign Secretary of the LMS, Reverend C. Stuart Craig, to Samoa, Reverend Hoadley<sup>57</sup> (an LMS missionary in Samoa) asked Craig to visit the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu. In 1953, Craig visited Hawaii and after visiting the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu, he recommended that affiliation to the HEA for financial and administrative advantages. Craig wrote to Hoadley to confirm that the Samoan (LMS) church in Honolulu should affiliate with the HEA.<sup>58</sup>

Hoadley accepted Craig's suggestion, and started negotiation with the Board of the HEA. It was made clear that the relationship between the HEA and the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu did not terminate the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu being under the supervision of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa – the parent body.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>55</sup> The HEA (Hawaiian Evangelical Association) was a church organization which included the Protestant church and Congregational Churches under its control. Today it is known as the United Church of Christ (UCC)

<sup>56</sup> "Pita Tamaligi Leasau to K.T. Faletese," letter, Mar 6, 1953. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa

<sup>57</sup> The LMS Missionary, Rev. Jack Hoadley, was stationed in Tutuila in 1953

<sup>58</sup> "Rev. Elder Tapeni Ioelu to Vavae Toma," letter, Sept 2, 1953. CCCS Archive, Apia Samoa; "O.J. Leslie Dunstan to Missionary Brame, Chairman of the (LMS) in Samoa," letter, Sept 18, 1953. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa; "Wilma F. Hillmer to Missionary Jack Hoadley," letter, Oct 19, 1954. CCCS Archive, Apia Samoa

<sup>59</sup> "Rev. Elder Tapeni Ioelu to Vavae Toma," letter, Sept 2, 1953. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa



The HEA accepted this arrangement and offered their support to the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu. J. Leslie Dunstan, the General Secretary of the HEA, was selected by the Board of the HEA to see to the needs of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu.<sup>60</sup>

After the death of Leasau, many problems began to surface in the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu. For instance, in June 1953, the church sought a replacement for Leasau. The disagreement between members led to the formation of two opposing groups. The majority of members followed Suitonu Suitonu, who also had the support of Dunstan. They continued to worship at the home of Aimeamiti McBraun. Suitonu was related to Leasau, and the majority of the members felt that he was the right person to take over the leadership. Suitonu was a lay preacher of the Samoan (LMS) Church. The other group, led by Reverend Uatimani and assisted by Pita Malae, held their worship services in the Community Hall near the Airport. The group worshipping at the Community Hall believed Uatimani was the right choice, because he had graduated from the Malua Theological College in 1941.<sup>61</sup> He had served as a Minister to the Samoan (LMS) Church in Fiji; and at the Samoa (LMS) Church in Olosega, one of the islands of the Manu'a Islands.<sup>62</sup>

Uatimani wrote to the Elders' Committee of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa, stating that Suitonu should not be looking after a parish as he was only a lay preacher. Uatimani pointed out that the rules and policies of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa, disallowed people with no theological education to be a Minister of a Samoan (LMS) Church. Uatimani felt Suitonu was incapable of performing other duties pertaining to the Holy Communion, Baptism, Funerals, and Marriages. According to Uatimani, having a

<sup>60</sup> "O. J Leslie Stuart to Missionary Brame, Chairman of the Samoan LMS church," letter, 18, 1953. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa

<sup>61</sup> Malua record Book. Record kept at the office of the Principal of Malua Theological College, Malua, Samoa

<sup>62</sup> "Suitonu Suitonu to the Elders' Committee," letter, Oct 26, 1953. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa



proper ordain minister to look after the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu was also in line with the policies of other Protestant Churches in Hawaii<sup>63</sup>.

Uatimani's plea had a sympathetic hearing among the Elders' Committee. He was confirmed as the rightful person to lead the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu. The Secretary of the General Assembly in Samoa, Reverend Vavae Toma, wrote to the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu to express the reasons for the Elders' Committee's decision. Toma wrote to Uatimani:

Ona ua tofia nei au e fai ma failautusi o le Ekalesia i le Fono tele nei, ua mafia ai ona ou tusi atu ai i lau susuga. O le suafa o le Ekalesia Samoa ou te ofo alofa atu ai. Talofa lava. Ou te momoli atu le alofa tele o le au uso i Samoa i lau susuga ma le aiga, e faapea foi le au uso Samoa uma i Honolulu o e ua fiafia e tapuai faatasi faa-Samoa i le Atua iina. Ia manuia outou uma i le alofa o le Atua. Ou te momoli atu foi i lau susuga ma le au uso iina, le iuga a le Komiti a le Au Toeaina. Iuga fono e 88, a le Komiti a le Au Toeaina: Ia tusi atu le failautusi ia Uatimani I Honolulu, ia na tausia le lotu Samoa i Honolulu ina ua maliu Leasau. Ma ia na aumaia se tala atoa e aoga i le Komiti mo faatatau uma e tatau mo le galuega. Ioe o le iuga a le Au Toeaina ua ou avatu ia te outou ina ia outou silafia ai le tofia o le susuga a Uatimani e tausi le aulotu Samoa iina. Ua faamoemoe o le a mafai ona tatou faia mea uma i le matagofie e tusa ma le finagalo paia o le Atua o le ua tatou auauna i ai.<sup>64</sup>

(Author's Literal Translation):

In my position as the Secretary of the General Assembly, I write to you. In the name of the Samoan Church, I greet you. I send warm greetings from the people of Samoa, to you and your family, as well as all the Samoa people in Honolulu who are happy to worship God in our traditional Samoan way. May you all be blessed with the love of God. I write to you and the brethren to express the outcome of the Meeting of the Elder Committee. Resolution 88 of the Elders' Committee. The General Secretary must write to inform Uatimani in Honolulu, to take the position of minister of the Samoan congregation in Honolulu after the passing away of Leasau. And he should submit a report to the Elders' Committee of the needs of the church. Yes, that is the outcome of the Elders' Committee that I pass onto you, that all may know that Uatimani has been selected to minister to the Samoan parish there. We trust and hope that all can be achieved with the divine will of God who we serve.

<sup>63</sup> "Uatimani to the Elders' Committee of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa," letter, Dec 28, 1953. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa

<sup>64</sup> "Vavae Toma to Uatimani," letter, June 9, 1953. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa



The decision in favour of Uatimani was strongly opposed by Suitoanu and his supporters. Suitoanu wrote to Toma and voiced his concern regarding the character of Uatimani and his ministry in Samoa and Fiji. Suitoanu claimed Uatimani was unsuccessful in both ministries because of his immoral character. Suitoanu claimed that Uatimani had tried to force himself onto a Samoan female doctor whilst on board the vessel *Manu'a Tele*. Uatimani was also charged with having an affair with a woman in Fagatogo, American Samoa. Both women were members of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu. Uatimani was also labeled an alcoholic, and was known to be intoxicated on Sundays. Suitoanu further claimed that under Uatimani, all funds of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu were transferred to his personal control, including funds of the Men's group which was US\$2904.67, and funds for the Women's group which was US\$1,200.63, a total of US\$4,105.30.<sup>65</sup>

Suitoanu also pointed out that Uatimani rarely attended church worship and other church activities while in Hawaii. He did not even attend the funeral of Leasau, even though he was the only ordained Samoan Minister who could have performed the funeral service. A chaplain of the USA Army performed the funeral service of Leasau.<sup>66</sup> According to the church members with Suitoanu, Uatimani was the catalyst for the split in their church. It took the death of Leasau for Uatimani to even take an interest in the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu. Prior to that, he had shown no interest at all.<sup>67</sup> It is alleged that while Pita Leasau was Minister of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu, Uatimani tried to persuade members of the congregation to form a new parish. He was not interested in working together with Leasau. Since the death of Leasau, Uatimani stopped attending church services altogether.

<sup>65</sup> "Suitoanu to the Elders' Committee," letter, Oct 26, 1953. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa

<sup>66</sup> "Suitoanu to the Elders' Committee," letter, Oct 26, 1953. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa

<sup>67</sup> "Suitoanu to the Elders' Committee," letter, Oct 26, 1953. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa



These charges reflected not only Suitonu's rejection of Uatimani as the new pastor of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu, but also reflected the disappointment of the church members over the Elders' Committee's decision.

The church members felt that they should have been informed of Uatimani's letter and also be given a voice in the appointment of a new minister for their church. The church members felt they should have made the decision as they were the ones attending the church, and were more aware of what was happening. They were unhappy that the General Assembly of the Samoa (LMS) Church in Samoa had requested a report from Uatimani, but not one from the members of the parish.

The church members were also unhappy that the letter Toma wrote was sent directly to Uatimani, and not to the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu. The church members felt that Toma's action showed favoritism towards Uatimani and, therefore, had also contributed to the conflict within their church. It is not known if there was any previous contact between Toma and Uatimani that may have influenced the decision made, or whether it was purely a decision of the General Assembly. The fact that Uatimani was the only ordained minister in Honolulu at the time may have strengthened his case.<sup>68</sup>

In relation to favoritism within the Elders' Committee, Suitonu also pointed out that Reverend Alesana<sup>69</sup> had influenced the decision, as Alesana's daughter, Mine, was married to Uatimani. In any case, the church member's threatened to break away from the Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa, and joined the HEA, if Uatimani continued to be the Minister of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>68</sup> "Suitonu to the Elders' Committee," letter, Oct 26, 1953. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa

<sup>69</sup> Alesana was a members of the Elders' Committee of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa. He was a lecturer at Malua Theological College from 1937 – 1955. See "150 Years Commemoration Monument of Malua Theological College," Malua, Samoa; see also Kenape T Faletese. *A History of the Samoan Church [LMS]*. Malua Press, Apia, 1959, 82-83

<sup>70</sup> "Members of Suitonu's Group to Vavae Toma," letter, Oct 30, 1953. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa



Tusi Faiivae, a founding member of the church in 1950, also wrote to Toma to express his dissatisfaction with Uatimani. He sided with Suitonu in rejecting Uatimani as Minister of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu.<sup>71</sup> He stated that Uatimani's wife, Mine, had arrived first in Hawaii with their children and attended the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu. But on the arrival of Uatimani, Mine and her children stop attending the church services. When the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu asked Uatimani to preach, he refused, although Uatimani found time to preach in the European churches in Hawaii.

The dissatisfaction and rejection of the Elders' Committee's decision by the majority of the members of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu greatly angered Uatimani. On Sunday, August 2, 1953, the Church members met to elect a new pastor, but the outcome was not good. There was a fight between Se'e, a deacon from Pago Pago, who sided with Uatimani, and Iese, a deacon from Manu'a, who sided with Suitonu. A second meeting was called on the following Sunday. Uatimani was asked not to attend to avoid any confrontation, but Uatimani still attended and remarked that he was the only authority and there was no other.<sup>72</sup> It resulted in another physical confrontation between the two sides. The two sides decided to meet again for the third time on August 9, 1953. During the meeting Uatimani angrily told the church members that:

Ua aumai e le Ekalesia le taitaiga ma le pule ia te au. E amata atu nei ona taitai faafitafita la tatou galuega. A ou fai atu e alu, ona alu lea, a ou fai atu foi e nofo, ona usitai lea ma nofo i lalo. E tasi le taitai e leai foi se tasi e sili atu, o lea ua ou uuina le pule.<sup>73</sup>

(Author's Literal Translation):

The Church has given me the leadership and authority. From this day onward I lead the church in a military style. If I say go, then obey and go,

<sup>71</sup> Tusi is related to Vavae Toma's wife, Vaia. Tusi was 47 years old at the time, and had been in Hawaii before the *Fitafita* Guards and their families had arrived in 1951. He had spent 24 years in the Navy. See

"Tusi Faiivae to Vavae Toma," letter, Nov 8, 1953. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa

<sup>72</sup> "Tusi Faiivae to Vavae Toma," letter, Nov 8, 1953. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa

<sup>73</sup> "Tusi Faiivae to Vavae Toma," letter, Nov 8, 1953. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa



if I say sit down, then sit down. There is one leader, no one is above me, I hold all the power.

Uatimani's comments shocked and silenced many of the church members, especially those with Suitonu. It gave Uatimani the opportunity to outline some of the things he had in mind for the church. Firstly, Uatimani corrected a misunderstanding among some of the church members that the churches in Tutuila and Manu'a had authority over the affairs of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu. Uatimani told the members that the churches in Tutuila and Manu'a were also under the jurisdiction of the Samoa (LMS) Church in Samoa. Secondly, Uatimani told the members that he had received USD\$20,000.00 from the Samoa (LMS) Church in Samoa to buy land and to build a church. He stated again that all the support for the Samoa (LMS) Church in Honolulu would come from the Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa, rather than the Samoa (LMS) churches in Tutuila and Manu'a. Uatimani also pointed out that as Minister of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu, he would be paid a stipend by the (LMS) Church in Samoa, in the same way the Samoa (LMS) Church in Samoa supports its missionaries in other countries.<sup>74</sup>

Those who oppose Uatimani did not believe him, because Toma had not mentioned any money in his letter. However, many felt if Toma had sent the money to Uatimani without their knowledge, it proved again the close friendship between Uatimani and Toma. Thus, it added more weight to the belief that Toma had influenced the selection of Uatimani as the new Minister for the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu. But, despite Uatimani's forceful speech, the church members with Suitonu remained unmoved as they continued to reject Uatimani as their pastor. The split between the two

<sup>74</sup> "Suitonu on Behalf of the Samoan Congregation in Hawaii Responding to Vavae Toma's Letter in Appointing Uatimani to be Their Minister," letter, Oct 27, 1953. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa; "Tusi Faiivae to Vavae Toma," letter, Nov 8, 1953. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa



groups widened as both groups continued to write to the Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa with their various versions of the conflict at hand.

Suitonu began to implement by-laws to consolidate his group and to function as an organized body, even though there was still no final word over the conflict between Suitonu and Uatimani. One of the by-laws stated that the Minister would be the Chairman of the Samoa (LMS) Church in Honolulu, while the Secretary and the Treasurer would be elected from the members of the church.<sup>75</sup> Those elected would serve a term of one year. However, if any one of the members was unable to fulfill his/her duties then the Minister has the authority to select other persons in their place.<sup>76</sup>

The position of the Treasurer was given to a person who had the necessary qualifications to carry out the necessary requirements of the State laws concerning monetary funds. The link to the State laws reduced the temptation of church members and the Minister misusing church funds. The Secretary's duty involved the taking of minutes of meetings and looking after the general running of the church. Apart from these positions, a Church Council was also set up comprising of heads of each household.<sup>77</sup>

Toma relayed to the two groups the decision of the Elders' Committee. The Elders' Committee deferred the issue at hand to the General Assembly, in May 1954, for a final decision. But, meanwhile, the Elders' Committee called upon the two groups to reconcile and work on a compromise. Toma wrote:

I le ua lagona tele e le Komiti le faanoanoa tele ona ua outou le talia le tusi a le failautusi, na ou faaalua atu ai ia te outou le tofia o Uatimani e tausi la outou aulotu, talu ai ona ua maliu Leasau. Ua matou lagona le faanoanoa tele, ona ua aliali mai ia te outou se itu e faigata ona mafaufau i ai, o le teena lea o le iuga a le Ekalesia Samoa ma le Fono Tele. Ae ui i lea, ua matou onosai pea, ma ua tuu nei le mataupu atoa, o le a toe iloiloaina i le fono ia Ianuari 1954. O lea ua matou tuuina atu ia te outou uma pe mafai ona outou fesootai lelei, a outou vaega e lua, ina ia outou faalelei ma

<sup>75</sup> Samoa (LMS) Church in Honolulu. "The BY-Laws," Oct 5, 1953. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa

<sup>76</sup> Samoa (LMS) Church in Honolulu. "The BY-Laws," Oct 5, 1953. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa

<sup>77</sup> Samoa (LMS) Church in Honolulu. "The BY-Laws," Oct 5, 1953. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa



nonofo faatasi ma le fiafia. Afai e mafai, o le mea sili lava lea ma le matagofie e tusa ma le finagalo o le Atua.<sup>78</sup>

(Author's Literal Translation):

The Committee feels very sad because you rejected the letter by the Secretary, which I reveal to you the appointment of Uatimani to look after the church after the death of Leasau. We are saddened because of your wishes are not easy to follow, the rejections of the decision of the Samoan church and the General Assembly. However, in our patience, we forward this issue to be discussed in the meeting in January 1954. We therefore leave it up to you to continue to communicate with one another and reconcile with one another. If this will be possible, then I believe this is what matters according to God's will.

When the two groups received the letters from Toma, Dunstan asked the two groups to meet to discuss the content of the letters. The meeting took place in October 20, 1953, at 7:15pm, in the Community Hall, Hickam Annex. There were seven representatives from each side, in addition to Uatimani and Reverend Lawrence W. Berry who was standing in for Dunstan. The meeting opened with a hymn, a prayer and a scripture reading. Berry assumed the role of Chairman and Arbitrator, and stated the purpose of the gathering as he understood it. Firstly, to decide if the funds on hand should be used for the purpose of erecting a new building for an LMS house of worship, and secondly, to make it clear that in May, 1954, the Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa would decide on the status of Uatimani.<sup>79</sup>

Suitonu's group pointed out they had not been informed that the meeting would confine itself to the two points raised by Berry. Furthermore, Suitonu's group questioned the neutrality of Berry as Chairman. Nevertheless, the meeting took place and the discussions were conducted in the Samoan language. An interpreter was provided for

<sup>78</sup> "Vavae Toma to The Two Groups in Hawaii," letter, Oct 10, 1953. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa

<sup>79</sup> "Uatimani to the Elders' Committee," letter, Dec 28, 1953. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa



Berry. The Suitonu group maintained opposition to Uatimani and called upon Uatimani to sacrifice his prestige as a Minister for the sake of harmony.<sup>80</sup>

However, Uatimani tried to remain calm and neutral, and stated that he had made the first effort to reconcile the two groups. He pointed out that he tried to set up meetings with Dunstan in his office, and also hiring a lawyer, Mr King, to draft an agreement for each side to meet and discuss the matters now before the two groups. Uatimani stated that he was willing to step down if it would unite them to work together. He agreed to abide by the decision of the General Assembly of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa.<sup>81</sup>

The two groups further agreed to withdraw the funds, and two trustees from each group were selected to be responsible for the money, and to make the payments for any piece of land that the congregation may negotiate. It was also agreed that any funds left over from the purchase of land would be re-deposited by the trustees for future projects. The four trustees were, Tauvaa N and Tualoina Sea from Uatimani's group, and Maninoa Thompson and Mile Lilio from Suitonu's group. The two groups agreed to worship separately until a decision was made by the General Assembly of the Samoa (LMS) Church in Samoa.<sup>82</sup>

It was unknown whether Uatimani's letter to the Elders' Committee in December 1953, a few months before a decision on Uatimani was made, was for the purpose of informing the Elders' Committee on the outcome of the meeting between the two groups, or whether it was a last minute effort to influence the Elders' Committee. For whatever reason, Uatimani's letter further enhanced his chances with the Elders' Committee. Uatimani wrote that he had refrained from confronting Suitonu, even though the words said by Suitonu and his group were callous. But for the sake of peace between the two

<sup>80</sup> "Uatimani to the Elders' Committee," letter, Dec 28, 1953. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa

<sup>81</sup> "Uatimani to the Elders' Committee," letter, Dec 28, 1953. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa

<sup>82</sup> "Uatimani to the Elders' Committee," letter, Dec 28, 1953. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa



groups, he did not respond in a callous way, because in order to work together, peace must be made by at least one party. Uatimani stated that it was very difficult for one person to try and go against a group of people. Uatimani admitted that what he had said about the money from Samoa for a church building and for the support of the pastor was said in the hope that people would support him, but there was no money.<sup>83</sup>

The 1954 General Assembly in Malua resolved that a visitation team to Hawaii was necessary in order to assess the magnitude of the conflict before a solution could be implemented. The visitation team would make the final decision. Reverend Elder Tapeni Ioelu, the Chairman of the General Assembly, and Elder Deacon Leiato Tuli from the District of Tutuila and Manu'a, were selected to carry out the wish of the General Assembly. In October 1954, the visitation team arrived in Hawaii and were greeted by representatives of the HEA. They held talks on the issues raised by the two groups.<sup>84</sup>

On October 23, 1954, both groups were present at the Church in Kawaiahao,<sup>85</sup> Honolulu, where the final decision was to be given by the visiting delegation. The church was selected because of its size and was able to accommodate the members of both groups.<sup>86</sup> A worship service was led by Ioelu. The service was bi-lingual for the sake of the representatives of the HEA. The hymns were sung by the two groups, as well as the choir of the HEA Kawaiahao parish. After the service, the final decision was announced. The visitation team told the two sides that there was a need to reconcile and become one congregation to be known as the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu. Pita Malae was appointed pastor over the congregation, with certain conditions. Malae would not perform any Funeral services, Holy Communions, Marriages, or Baptisms.

<sup>83</sup> "Uatimani to the Elders' Committee," letter, Dec 28, 1953. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa

<sup>84</sup> Interview with Liulama Tavete. Honolulu, Hawaii. Jan 15, 2005. He passed away on Feb. 4, 2005

<sup>85</sup> Kawaiahao Church is the Headquarters of the HEA. It is a place for meetings and conferences for the churches under the HEA at the time

<sup>86</sup> Interview with Liulama Tavete. Honolulu, Hawaii. Jan 15, 2005



Malae was just a care-taker Minister while the Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa looked for a new Minister for the congregation. Uatimani and Suitoanu were passed over as a way of compromise and probably a way to resolve the conflict. The Board of the HEA was given the task of appointing someone to perform the Holy Communion, Baptism, and other special services. The Board of the HEA was also asked to assist in finding a building for the worship services of the congregation, and to appoint a member of the Board of the HEA as Trustee for the funds of the congregation.

The congregation was given the task of appointing a member to keep track of the accounts (cash account and ledger) and to work with the auditors. No loans and no withdrawals could be made from the church's account unless a letter was signed by the congregation's representative, confirmed by the Minister in charge, and forwarded to the Trustee. The representative of the congregation was elected by members of the congregation, and would remain in that office until they relinquish their office or leave the congregation. On emergency cases, the HEA Board would appoint someone to take charge of the congregation, until an appointment was made by the Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa.<sup>87</sup>

Uatimani and his supporters questioned the decision made by the visitation team in choosing Malae, who was not an ordained minister, and not a graduate of the Malua Theological College. Uatimani's wife, Mine, also wrote to Ioelu, to air her disappointment over the decision. She stated that even though there was great distress and hurt on their part; they would obey the decision of the visitation team on behalf of the General Assembly and the Elders of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa.<sup>88</sup> Mine felt

<sup>87</sup> "The Final Decision of the Deputation from the Samoa (LMS) Church," Jan 23, 1954. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa

<sup>88</sup> "Mine Uatimani to Rev. Elder Tapeni Ioelu," letter, Jan 26, 1954. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa



that the final decision was influenced by Ioelu's relationship with Malae.<sup>89</sup> Uatimani left the Samoa (LMS) Church in Honolulu and joined a European Church in Pearl City, while Suitonu unhappily accepted the decision and migrated to mainland USA where he founded the first Samoan (LMS) Church in San Diego.<sup>90</sup>

families that had left under the leadership of Uatimani returned, uniting the congregation again as one. However, some members still found it difficult to accept Malae as the minister of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu. They felt his inability to perform the Holy Communion, Baptism, and Funeral services would eventually force people to leave the church. But, the members persevered and were optimistic for the future.

One of the first tasks for the congregation was to find a place they could use permanently. With the help of the HEA, a property to lease was found in Moanalua, close to Pearl Harbour. The objectives of the congregation to secure a property was also prompted by the need to build a Church to begin Youth Programs, Christian Endeavour, Women's Fellowship, Prayer Watchers' Group, and to provide a permanent place for Church practice, Sunday school, and other parish activities. The congregation began to flourish in order to make their vision a reality.

On December 18, 1954, changes took place within the HEA that were of interest to the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu. Dumas was replaced by Dr. Nelson Dumas. Dumas had served the HEA for ten years and had left to take up a teaching post at Alexander Newton Theological Seminary. In February 6, 1955, a service was held to

<sup>89</sup> "Mine Uatimani to Rev. Elder Tapeni Ioelu," letter, Jan 26, 1954. CCCS, Archive, Apia, Samoa; "Interview with Rev. Elia Taase. Nu'uuli, American Samoa. Dec 17, 2004. He pointed out that Pita

Malae's wife Fiapaipai Lutu was related to Tapeni's wife

<sup>90</sup> "Suitonu to Rev. Elder Tapeni Ioelu," letter, Jan 22, 1955. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa; see also "Faaulufalega Malumalu o le Atua Ekalesia. Faapotopotoga Kerisiano a Samoa I San Diego, o Lona Igoa o le Satauro Paia" *O le Sulu Samoa*. Feb. 1964



## CHAPTER THREE

### BEYOND THE SCHISM

Once the deputation from Samoa had made the final decision in 1954, the congregation looked to its future and began to plan work accordingly. The majority of the families that had left under the leadership of Uatimani returned; uniting the congregation again as one. However, some members still found it difficult to accept Malae as the Minister of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu. Many felt his inability to perform the Holy Communion, Baptism, and Funeral services, would eventually force people to leave the church. But, the members persevered and remain optimistic for the future.<sup>91</sup>

One of the first tasks for the congregation was to find a place they could use permanently. With the help of the HEA, a property to lease was found in Moanalua, close to Pearl Harbour. The eagerness of the congregation to secure a property was also prompted by the need to build a Church to begin Youth Programs, Christian Endeavor, Women's Fellowship, Prayer Watchers Union, and to provide a permanent place for Choir practice, Sunday school, and other parish activities. The congregation began to fundraise in order to make their vision a reality.

On December 18, 1954, changes took place within the HEA that was of interest to the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu. Dunstan was replaced by Dr. Nelson Dreier.<sup>92</sup> Dunstan had served the HEA for ten years and had left to take up a teaching post at Andover Newton Theological Seminary. In February 6, 1955, a service was held to welcome the new HEA Secretary, Dr Dreier, by the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu. The choir of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu sang the hymns. Malae and

<sup>91</sup> "Suitonu to Tapeni Ioelu," letter, Dec 18, 1954. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa

<sup>92</sup> Dr Dreier was a native of Ontario Canada. He graduated from North Central and Chicago Theological Seminary, which honored him a Doctor of Divinity degree. He was deeply interested in the Ecumenical movement. In Hawaii, he took on the role of spiritual leader and counselor to 114 Congregational Christian Churches, which included the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu. See, "The New General Secretary of the Hawaiian Evangelical Association." *The Honolulu Star Bulletin*, Dec 18, 1954, Hawaii National Archive



members of the congregation read the Scriptures, and the sermon was delivered by Dr Dreier. During the service the opportunity was given to Malae to give an account of the church's beginnings and subsequent development. The ordination of four new deacons for the work of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu followed.

This service also saw Baptism and Holy Communion resumed after it had ceased at the death of Leasau. After the service, the Samoan congregation held a meeting with Dr. Dreier to raise issues that needed to be addressed.<sup>93</sup> Dreier was a great asset for the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu. Dreier's experience and his background as a Congregationalist made relations easier with the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu. Most importantly, Dreier helped in the negotiations to buy the land at Moanalua, and also arranging finance to upgrade the existing facilities.

The task was not easy, because this was the first time Samoans had applied to purchase any land in Hawaii. The Banks were skeptic at how these new migrants were going to finance the loan. Again the help of the HEA was sought to act as guarantor for a loan. But all the hard work to purchase the land at Moanalua came to nothing as the Navy refused to sell as it had future plans for the site.<sup>94</sup> In the end, the congregation agreed to lease the property for 25 years, with payments fixed at \$1-00 per year, on the condition that the Navy would take back the land at anytime and the lease agreement would cease.

The heartfelt joy over the successful negotiation to lease the land turned to sadness in June 27, 1955, with the passing away of Malae's wife, Fiapaipai Lutu Malae. She was a woman full of inspiration and humility, and had helped Malae with the Sunday

<sup>93</sup> Interview with Fesilafai Pita Malae. Honolulu, Hawaii. Jan 4, 2005

<sup>94</sup> See "Nelson Dreier General Secretary of Hawaiian Evangelical Association to Rev. L. A. Brame, Missionary Secretary of Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa," letter, Apr 11, 1957. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa



school and with Junior Youth, as well as being an example of a strong leader in church activities. She was sorely missed by the congregation.<sup>95</sup>

Fundraising to repair the existing buildings at the Moanalua property was a priority. The Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu quickly raised a total of USD\$12,008-77, but a further USD\$18,000-00 was still needed for the repairs to begin. The Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu asked the Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa to help out with the USD\$18,000-00 loan, at an interest rate less than the 5.5 % interest rate offered by the HEA. The request was declined by the Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa due to a lack of Church funds. The HEA later donated USD\$10,000-00 to the project, and the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu borrowed the rest from the HEA at 5.5% interest rate.<sup>96</sup>

The repairs to the buildings to be used for church services cost USD\$42,026-03 including labour. About USD\$12,000-00 was saved in labour cost because members of the congregation helped with the renovations.<sup>97</sup> However, as the repairs continued, it dawned on the members that the money they have raised was only for the renovation of the existing building. There was no plan in place for a Minister's residence or a church hall. The congregation still had further fundraising to do for both of these projects.

The repairs to the buildings in Moanalua began in May 1957, and the work was difficult and slow due to a small number of laborers. The young men in the parish were sailors for the Navy, which meant the number of people available to help out with the restoration project was very limited. Those whose services were available daily included

<sup>95</sup> In 1957, Pita Malae remarried Fesilafai Utu. Interview with Taito Epenesa Viefu and his wife Maiva. Honolulu, Hawaii, Jan 21, 2005

<sup>96</sup> "Nelson Dreier General Secretary of Hawaiian Evangelical Association to Rev. L.A Brame, Missionary Secretary of Samoan Church LMS in Samoa," letter, Apr 11, 1957. CCCS Archive. Apia, Samoa; Interview with Rev. Failauga Uluao. Pago Pago, American Samoa. Dec 15, 2004

<sup>97</sup> "Nelson Dreier General Secretary of Hawaiian Evangelical Association to Rev. L.A Brame, Missionary Secretary of Samoan Church LMS in Samoa," letter, Apr 11, 1957. CCCS Archive. Apia, Samoa



Sautia A. Lutu, the head carpenter, and his children, a few young men, and women from the Women's' Fellowship.<sup>98</sup>

When the renovations were completed, the first Saturday of October 1957 was set apart for the dedication of the new Church. The Reverend Elder Tapeni Ioelu from Samoa led the service, and Malae gave a brief history of the Church. On the following Sunday, Holy Communion was held in the new church building in Moanalua. During the service, the name of the congregation was officially changed to the 'Samoaan (LMS) Church in Moanalua,' instead of Honolulu. The new church was put under the jurisdiction of the Tutuila and Manu'a District.<sup>99</sup>

Soon after the dedication, the HEA issued Malae with his ordination certificate. This confirmed, as far as the HEA was concern, Malae was the Minister of the Samoaan (LMS) Church in Moanalua. However, ordination by the HEA was annulled by the Samoaan (LMS) Church in Samoa, because the policy of the LMS Church in Samoa state that ordination of the Samoaan (LMS) Church in Samoa are given only to graduates of Malua Theological College or graduates of other equivalent theological seminaries. In this case, Malae did not qualify. The rejection caused anger among members in the Moanalua church, especially when Malae was chosen by the deputation to be the Minister of the Samoaan (LMS) Church in Moanalua.<sup>100</sup> It is more probable that the move by the Samoaan (LMS) Church in Samoa was a way of telling the HEA that they had no right to ordain a Minister who was under the jurisdiction of the Samoaan (LMS) Church.

Lavata'i, the Secretary of the Samoaan (LMS) Church in Moanalua, wrote to Ioelu to voice their congregation's disappointment and to point out that the rejection of Malae's ordination would lead to a further split in the church. Lavata'i urged the Samoaan (LMS)

<sup>98</sup> Sautia A Lutu and his children Faataulolou S. Lutu, Sealiitu S. Lutu, and Sealiinofo S. Lutu, were the first Samoaan carpenters to build a Church building in Hawaii. Interview with Tiresa Paogofie. Honolulu, Hawaii. Jan 11, 2005. Tiresa is the niece of Sautia Lutu.

<sup>99</sup> Interview with Taito Epenesa Viefu and his wife Maiva. Honolulu, Hawaii. Jan 21, 2005

<sup>100</sup> "Lavatai to Rev. Elder Tapeni Ioelu," letter, Jan 4, 1954. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa



Church in Samoa to provide a quality Minister as soon as possible to prevent an incident similar to that between Uatimani and Suitonu, which had lead to the first split.<sup>101</sup>

In 1959, Hawaii was officially named the 50<sup>th</sup> State of the USA, and Hawaii was no longer a 'Territory' of the USA.<sup>102</sup> This was also a significant year as it gave citizens of American Samoa the right to apply for American Citizenship. This led to an increase number of Samoan migrating to Hawaii and to the mainland USA. The new immigration laws made Hawaii a very popular destination for Samoans, and it also led to an increase of members in the Samoan (LMS) Churches in Hawaii.

The majority of the people that migrated to Hawaii were adherents of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa. The other churches in existence in Hawaii during the early 1950s, apart from the HEA, included the Congregational Christian Church of Jesus (CCCJ) and the Mormons, but both denominations had no real appeal to Samoan migrants. Perhaps, it was due to the loyalty of the Samoans to the LMS, and the Samoans finding the new Samoan (LMS) Church in Moanalua a home away from home. In any case, the Mormon temple and church location at Laie was too far from where many Samoans lived to have any real impact. The Samoan (LMS) Church in Moanalua grew in numbers and soon the church building became too small to accommodate members. In a letter to Ioelu, Malae mentioned how members had no hope of getting a seat in the church if they arrived late; it was standing room only.<sup>103</sup>

Soon there was talk of establishing another congregation. The fact that the majority of the church members lived a fair distance from Moanalua, together with the growing dissatisfaction of members over the question of Malae's status as an ordained Minister, made the idea of establishing a new church more feasible. But, Malae was totally against the suggestion. He felt it was too early in the development of the Samoan

<sup>101</sup> "Lavatai to Rev. Elder Tapeni Ioelu," letter, Jan 4, 1954. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa

<sup>102</sup> Daws, 391

<sup>103</sup> "Malae to Rev. Elder Tapeni Ioelu," letter, Nov 25, 1957. CCCS Archive. Apia, Samoa



(LMS) Church in Moanalua to establish another parish. Malae insisted that the congregation at Moanalua must be given time to settle and develop into a strong church before any plans for expansion.<sup>104</sup>

However, the idea gained momentum and a determined group insisted that a second Samoan (LMS) Church should be established on the western side of the island of Oahu, near Nanakuli, Maile, Waianae and Makaha. Malae and other members remained adamant that the congregation at Moanalua was sufficient. This led to members boycotting the church services at Moanalua; determining to start their own Church.

On November 5, 1961, members separated from the Moanalua congregation formed a new church and notified Malae and the Samoan (LMS) Church in Moanalua of their action. They told Malae it was necessary to form a new church because the distance travelled to church was a burden for many. It was pointed out that the closest of the families who have separated from Moanalua lived fifteen miles away. The other families lived a distance of thirty miles from Moanalua. The distance that members had to travelled posed many problems. Firstly, the roads were busy on Sundays with many Hawaiians crowding the roads to reach places for family outings and relaxations. This had led to many accidents and deaths on the roads. Long distance traveling was not a good option, especially when families traveled with children from Nanakuli, Maile, Waianae and Makaha. Secondly, the lack of transport for those who had large families meant many did not attend church at all. It was an expensive undertaking as well. But, most importantly, establishing a new church would be a big step in spreading the Samoan (LMS) Church throughout Hawaii.<sup>105</sup> These reasons seemed valid, although the new

<sup>104</sup> Interview with Fesilafai Pita Malae. Honolulu, Hawaii, Jan. 4, 2005

<sup>105</sup> "The Group who Wanted to Form a New Church to Pita Malae," letter, Nov 5, 1961. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa



group deliberately refrained mentioning their relationship with Malae, and his lack of diplomacy, as a contributing factor to their decision to establish a new church.<sup>106</sup>

On November 19, 1961 at 8.00 am, the new church was officially established. Ioelu, representing the Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa, led the service. Representatives from the HEA, Malae from the Samoan (LMS) Church in Moanalua, and the Minister of the CCCJ, were also present. The choirs of the Samoa (LMS) Church in Moanalua, the CCCJ, and of the newly established church, sang the hymns. The new church was called the 'First Samoan (LMS) Church in Waianae.'<sup>107</sup> The new church was placed under the District of Tutuila and Manu'a.

Reverend Isaako Poti, a graduate of the Malua Theological College, and his wife Ropeta, became the new minister. He was a strong supporter of Malae whilst at the congregation in Moanalua. The number of church members at the inauguration of the new church was 146, a figure which included the elderly as well as children.<sup>108</sup>

Although the new church was established in 1961, it was not officially registered with the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (DCCA) until Jan 4, 1984. It is possible that the congregation and the new minister, Poti, were not aware that the new church needed registration. It is also possible that the registration fee that was due annually, if they had registered, would have been a burden on the new congregation and, therefore, withheld registration. But, even if they did register, the non payment of the registration fee when due annually, would have given the DCCA the right to dissolve the new church.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>106</sup> Interview with Rev. Elder Mila Sapolu Jr. Honolulu, Hawaii, Feb 9, 2005

<sup>107</sup> "The Group who Wanted to Form a New Church to Pita Malae," letter, Nov 5, 1961. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa

<sup>108</sup> "The Group who Wanted to Form a New Church to Pita Malae" letter, Nov 5, 1961. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa

<sup>109</sup> Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, State of Hawaii. Charter of Incorporation. Nov 21, 1983, 4. Hawaii National Archive



The new church was registered by Solofa Su'esu'e, the second Minister, as an Incorporated Association, with its main aim stated as;

a non profit organization, the purpose of the corporation shall be to gather believers in Christ for worship, Bible Study, prayer and united Christian activity, to proclaim the Gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ in the Community, and to the world as God shall lead us, to carry on a Biblically centered Christian education for the salvation of souls and the spiritual growth of believers, to evangelize and support missions and furnish aid to the needy and sick, and to cooperate with other fellowships, agencies, and organization in the furtherance of this purpose.<sup>110</sup>

Poti spent one year as Minister of the Waianae congregation.<sup>111</sup> He was replaced by Solofa Su'esu'e Lutu and his wife, Vaitu'utu'u. Su'esu'e served as Minister from 1963 to 1992. He passed away in 1993, and was replaced by Gisa Timoteo and his wife Seirosa.<sup>112</sup>

In 1962, the Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa became independent and took the name *Ekalesia Fa'apotopotoga Kerisiano i Samoa* [Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (CCCS)].<sup>113</sup> The change of name for the controlling body saw many congregations under its umbrella follow suit. The Samoan congregations in Hawaii also changed their names accordingly.<sup>114</sup>

In 1962 another new congregation was established at Maile on the western side of the island of Oahu. Again, the new congregation was started by members of the Moanalua congregation who found the distance traveled to the Moanalua church a burden. There was also an increasing number of Samoans in the Maile area.

<sup>110</sup> Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, State of Hawaii. Charter of Incorporation. Nov 21, 1983, 4. Hawaii National Archive

<sup>111</sup> Solofa Su'esu'e replace Poti after he had left to look after the newly formed CCCS in Maile

<sup>112</sup> Interview with Tiresa Paogofie. Honolulu, Hawaii. Jan 11, 2005. She is the daughter of Solofa and Vaitu'utu'u. Tiresa and her husband Toolefua Paogofie is the minister of Congregational Christian Church of American Samoa in Nuuanu, Hawaii

<sup>113</sup> Liuaana, 3

<sup>114</sup> For instance, the Samoan (LMS) Church in Moanalua changed its name to 'CCCS in Moanalua, and the 'First Samoan (LMS) Church in Waianae' changed its name to CCCS in Waianae'



Malae was not notified of the establishment of the new church in Maile. Instead, Poti was asked to lead the service to inaugurate the new church in November, 1962. The selection of Poti over Malae was based on Poti being a graduate of Malua Theological College, as many still questioned Malae's rights to be a Minister. The Church was officially known as the 'First Samoan Congregational Christian Church of Maile, Hawaii.' (CCCS in Maile). Poti eventually resigned from the CCCS in Waianae congregation to be the first Minister of the Maile congregation.<sup>115</sup>

At registration, the DCCA recorded the main reason for the establishment of the new parish.

To try and achieve the best possible for truth, righteousness and God. To try to organize this church in an uncomplicated manner but within which there is joy of freedom to worship God and to witness before God and men in sincere love.<sup>116</sup>

In 1963, a new congregation was established at Waipahu. It was also made up of five families who left the Moanalua congregation. They named their new church 'The First Samoan Congregational Christian Church in Waipahu' (CCCS in Waipahu). But, it only lasted six years because many members of the church moved to Alaska.<sup>117</sup> Reverend Petaia Salanoa and wife Tumua, and their families, were left and they established a new church in Honolulu in 1970. The CCCS in Waipahu was dissolved.

In 1964, the CCCS in Moanalua requested the General Assembly of the CCCS in Samoa to ordain Malae as Minister of the CCCS in Moanalua. The request was granted

<sup>115</sup> There have been four ministers for the CCCS Maile since 1962: Rev. Isaako and Ropeta Poti, 1962-1968, Faatea and Taumaia Uli (lay preacher), 1969-1975, Faatali and Faamele Maui (lay preacher), 1976-1982, and Rev. Elder Mila and Mati Sapolu, 1982 - present. (Mati passed away in 1998 and Mila remarried Flo). Interview with Taatitia Iloilo. Honolulu, Hawaii. Feb 2, 2005. He is a founding member of the church

<sup>116</sup> Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, State of Hawaii. Charter of Incorporation. June 10, 1960

<sup>117</sup> Interview with Rev. Iosefa Tui and wife Tasele. Honolulu, Hawaii. Feb 12, 2005. Tasele is the daughter of Rev. Petaia Salanoa and Tumua. Rev. Petaia and Tumua Salanoa later established a new church in Honolulu called the 'Vaipuna o le Ola Church' (Spring of Life Church) in 1970



and in the General Assembly of 1965, Malae was ordained.<sup>118</sup> But, as Malae was seeking clarification of his status in 1964, another new parish was being established by members of the CCCS in Moanalua. This time personal differences between Malae and many of the Moanalua members initiated the split. Many felt Malae favoured his own people from Manu'a; as shown by the various church offices being given to people from Manu'a and not to those who could best do the job.<sup>119</sup> Thus, the chiefs from the island of Tutuila, such as Satoafaiga Ti'a, Peleseuma, Ta'amai, Tamai, Ioka Tauanuu, Liulama Tavete, Paulo Sitagata, and Leulusoo<sup>120</sup> opted to establish their own church. They found support among other Tutuila people who did not attend church.<sup>121</sup> A meeting was held at the residence of Satoafaiga Ti'a, and they agreed to inform Malae of their wishes. On Friday, May 7, 1965, Malae met with the new group and accepted their proposal. Malae was deeply moved by the initiative of the group to establish a new church. Malae stated that he had always wanted another church to be formed, but it was a case of someone with the heart to do it.<sup>122</sup>

Malae appointed Liua Afalava, a lay preacher, to conduct Sunday services. The new group would attend Holy Communion services with the Moanalua CCCS. On Sunday, May 9, 1965, the first service for the new group was conducted by Afalava but the group became bitter with Afalava's message, which seemed to attack the members for

<sup>118</sup> Pita Malae of Hawaii and later Suitonu of America were the first Lay Preachers in the history of the CCCS church to be ordained as pastors. Since then no other lay preacher has been ordained as a Minister of the CCCS. See "Iugafono a le Au Toeaina, 1952-1978," 22. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa

<sup>119</sup> Interview with Liulama Tavete. Honolulu, Hawaii. Jan 15, 2005; Interview with Fili Samifua, Honolulu, Hawaii. Jan 15, 2005. His parents, Samifua Fesootai and Vaialofi Samifua, were also founding members of this new church. Interview with Fua Tuu Ala. Honolulu, Hawaii. Jan 15, 2005

<sup>120</sup> Leuluso'o was a member of the Seventh-day Adventist church (SDA). He left the SDA church because he did not attend church on Saturdays but attended family functions and worked. He became a member of the Samoan Congregational Christian Church in Honolulu. Interview with Viliamu Talaimatai. Honolulu, Hawaii. Jan 15, 2005. See also the "Parish Book of the Samoan Congregational Christian Church in Honolulu, 1965-1982." Record kept at Ierusalem Fou Church in Honolulu. Interview with Viliamu Talaimatai. Honolulu, Hawaii. Jan 15, 2005

<sup>121</sup> "Parish Book of the Samoan Congregational Christian Church in Honolulu, 1965-1982." Record kept at Ierusalem Fou Church. Honolulu, Hawaii

<sup>122</sup> "Parish Book of the Samoan Congregational Christian Church in Honolulu, 1965-1982." Record kept at Ierusalem Fou Church, Honolulu, Hawaii



setting up the new church. They expected a message of encouragement and hope but got insulted instead.<sup>123</sup> This prompted the congregation to meet and elect their own Minister. The congregation unanimously elected Pausa Nomaaea and his wife Malaea. They informed Pita Malae of their decision and the date they wish for Nomaaea to start.

On June 6, 1965, the new group gathered together for a Holy Communion service at Moanalua. After the service, the new group met with the congregation at Moanalua, and Malae told the members of the new group that he had changed his mind and would not support the establishment of a new congregation. He told the members to return to Moanalua and unite to form one church.

The meeting dispersed with much unhappiness. The new group met soon after on the same day, and resolved that Malae could not stop them in their quest to form a new congregation. They decided to go ahead and form a new church. Malae was informed of their intention. They told Malae that by going back on his words, he had shown himself to be twofaced. They asked Poti, the minister of the congregation in Maile, to lead the service the following Sunday.

On Saturday July 17, 1965, the congregation established a contract with their new minister, Pausa Nomaaea and his wife Malaea. On the same day, the new church became officially known as the 'Samoan Congregational Christian Church in Honolulu' (CCCS in Honolulu).<sup>124</sup> The inauguration service was conducted by Poti and Salanoa. On March 8, 1966, the congregation was registered with the DCCA, and the purpose for the establishment of the new church was set out as;

The promotion and expansion of God's Gospel, and the encouragement of the Samoan people in Hawaii as well as the people of all races to participate therein, the Samoan people being especially named as this

<sup>123</sup> "Parisk Book of the Samoan Congregational Christian Church in Honolulu. 1965-1982." Record kept at Ierusalem Fou Church. Honolulu, Hawaii

<sup>124</sup> After the dedication of their new church building in July 1990, the CCCS in Honolulu renamed their church as the Ierusalem Fou Church (New Jerusalem Church). Interview with Rev. Elder Sataraka Sataraka and his wife Eseta. Honolulu, Hawaii. Jan 16, 2005



church shall continue to be in spiritual association with the Christian sect which has traditionally been the predominant Christian sect in the Islands of Samoa. To enable the members of this church and other persons so desiring to participate and cooperate in church activities and, as a church, to participate with other Christian churches in the religious life of Hawaii.<sup>125</sup>

As of 2005, four Ministers have looked after the CCCS in Honolulu since its inauguration in 1965.<sup>126</sup>

In 1966, the CCCS Elder's Committee in Samoa passed a resolution that no new parish could be established without its permission; a decision based entirely on the constant conflicts between the Samoan churches in Hawaii. It was also implemented to safeguard the churches breaking the CCCS's constitution, and to stop the schisms which had become much too common among the churches in Hawaii. The Elders' Committee also resolved that no new Minister would be called to a parish without the consent of the Elders' Committee. The Elders' Committee was concerned with the number of Ministers who had been excommunicated but had lied to churches regarding their status as Ministers. The Elders' Committee then appointed Malae to guide and supervise the CCCS Samoan Churches in Hawaii.<sup>127</sup>

In 1968, the CCCS General Assembly endorsed Hawaii as one of the Districts of the CCCS. Thus, the CCCS Churches in Hawaii were no longer part of the Tutuila and Manu'a District. In all, there were five parishes in the CCCS District of Hawaii.<sup>128</sup> On January 26, 1968, the Ministers and lay preachers of the churches of the District of

<sup>125</sup> Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, State of Hawaii. Charter of Incorporation. Mar 10, 1966

<sup>126</sup> From 1965 to the present time, there have been four ministers for the Parish. Rev. Pausa and Malaea Nomaaea, 1965-1968; Rev. Isaako and Ropeta Poti, 1968-1972 (Poti had left Maile to be the Minister of the CCCS in Honolulu, but later was reprimanded for working on Sundays and later excommunicated for infidelity); Rev. Paapaa and Lila Sapolu, 1973-July 1982; and Rev. Elder Sataraka and Eseta Sataraka, November 1982 – present. See the "Parish Book of the Samoan Congregational Christian Church in Honolulu, 1965-2005." Record kept at Ierusalem Fou Church. Honolulu, Hawaii

<sup>127</sup> Tusi Iugafono a le Au Toeaina 1952-1978, 95. CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa

<sup>128</sup> 1. Rev. Pita and Fesilafai Malae and CCCS in Moanalua. 2. Rev. Solofa and Vaitu'utu'u and the CCCS in Waianae. 3. Rev. Isaako and Ropeta Poti and the CCCS in Maile. 4. Rev. Petaia and Tumua Salanoa and the CCCS in Waipahu (lasted only six years). 5. Rev. Pausa and Malaea Nomaaea and the CCCS in Honolulu. See the "Parish Book of the Samoan Congregational Christian Church in Honolulu, 1965-1982." Record kept at Ierusalem Fou Church. Honolulu, Hawaii



Hawaii met to select an Elder Minister, a District Secretary, and a Treasurer, as new officials of the Hawaii District. Malae was unopposed and continued as Elder Minister, while Poti was elected Secretary, and Petaia Salanoa elected as Treasurer.<sup>129</sup>

On February 4, 1968, at 3:15pm, the CCCS District of Hawaii had its first official general meeting at Moanalua. The service and prayer was led by Malae.<sup>130</sup> The meeting began with the passing of minutes from the meeting of the Church Ministers and lay preachers earlier. The meeting concluded with the election of the Elder Deacon, where Satoafaiga Ti'a, a deacon from the congregation in Honolulu, was chosen.<sup>131</sup> The number of members for each congregation was recorded. The Samoan Congregation at Moanalua had about 400 members, with 42 deacons. The Samoan Congregation at Nanakuli had over 200 people with fourteen deacons. The Samoan Congregation at Honolulu had about 200 people, with 22 deacons, while the churches in Maile and Waipahu had memberships of just over 100 people.<sup>132</sup> Su'esu'e then stood to encourage the newly formed District of Hawaii, especially its office bearers, to serve the church with dignity, honesty and in truth and above all with the reverence to God. The meeting ended with the Samoan Hymn 166 (literally 'Come Brethrens Fight the Good Fight') followed by the Benediction. Malae's office as Elder of the District of Hawaii was confirmed at the 1969 CCCS General Assembly in Samoa.<sup>133</sup>

From 1950-1970, the Samoan (LMS) Churches in Hawaii (and later the CCCS in Hawaii) moved forward in their physical and spiritual development. There were ups and

<sup>129</sup> "Parish Book of the Samoan Congregational Christian Church in Honolulu, 1965-1982." Record kept at Ierusalem Fou Church. Honolulu, Hawaii

<sup>130</sup> The service and sermon was long. Hymn 110 (literally 'Come Holy Spirit, Save Us) from the Samoa Hymnbook was sung. See "Parish Book of the Samoan Congregational Christian Church in Honolulu, 1965-1982." Record kept at Ierusalem Fou Church. Honolulu, Hawaii

<sup>131</sup> "Parish Book of the Samoan Congregational Christian Church in Honolulu 1965-1982." Record kept at Ierusalem Fou Church. Honolulu, Hawaii

<sup>132</sup> "O le Lalelei o Hawaii, ma le Matagofie Ofoofogia ma le Matautia o Amerika" *O le Sulu Samoa*, Aug 1966, Malua Theological College Library, Samoa. See also the "Parish Book of the Samoan Congregational Christian Church in Honolulu, 1965-1982," Record kept at Ierusalem Fou Church, Honolulu, Hawaii

<sup>133</sup> "Iugafono a le Au Toeaina 1952-1978, 147." CCCS Archive, Apia, Samoa



downs in the beginning, especially the differences between members, but in the end, things were ironed out and good working relations endured. The pastors of the five parishes agreed to work together for the betterment of the Samoan (LMS) Churches in the Hawaii District.

The transfer of Pacific Quakers to Hawaii was the best and quickest way for Samoans, and their family members, to live in Hawaii. And as numbers increased, so did the demand to establish close knit church communities along the lines of village organization and family ties back in American Samoa. The establishment of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Hawaii was not easy, and along the way had to deal with many problems, especially trying to avoid schism. It was difficult because Samoans held different opinions on various issues, which at times reflected their own individual, family, village, and kinship biases.

The conflict that led to the first schism in the Samoan (LMS) Church in Hawaii was inevitable. There were just too many conflicting voices with the congregations, not only from church members, especially those with allegiance to Tafa'ifa or Mafu'a, some church leaders, such as Laitumua and Sisonu who fought for the leadership of the church, but also from church organizations, such as the Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa and the Hawaiian Evangelical Association (HEA). The Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa saw itself as the controlling authority over the Samoan (LMS) Church in Hawaii while, at the same time, the HEA also tried to assume a similar role with the same. It all added to the conflict.

Although there was some miscommunication between the HEA and the Samoan (LMS) Church, I do not believe there was any rivalry between the two organizations over the supervision of the Samoan (LMS) Churches in Hawaii before 1962. The relationship between the HEA and the Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa had always been cordial. The LMS missionaries in Samoa had every confidence in the HEA.



## CONCLUSION

Samoaan migration to Hawaii opened the door for many opportunities, not only for a better life, but also provided the opportunity to plant the Samoaan (LMS) Church on Hawaiian soil. The transfer of *Fitafta* Guards to Hawaii was the best and quickest way for Samoans, and later family members, to live in Hawaii. And as numbers increased, so did the demand to establish close knit church communities along the lines of village allegiance and family ties back in American Samoa. The establishment of the Samoaan (LMS) Church in Hawaii was not easy, and along the way it had to deal with many problems, especially trying to avoid schism. It was difficult because Samoans held different opinions on various issues, which at times reflected their own individual, family, village, and kinship biases.

The conflict that led to the first schism in the Samoaan (LMS) Church in Hawaii was inevitable. There were just too many conflicting voices with the congregation, not only from church members, especially those with allegiance to Tutuila or Manu'a, from church leaders, such as Uatimani and Suitonu who fought for the leadership of the church, but also from church organizations, such as the Samoaan (LMS) Church in Samoa and the Hawaiian Evangelical Association (HEA). The Samoaan (LMS) Church in Samoa saw itself as the controlling authority over the Samoaan (LMS) Church in Hawaii while, at the same time, the HEA also tried to assume a similar role with the same. It all added to the confusion.

Although there was some misunderstanding between the HEA and the Samoa (LMS) Church, I do not believe there was any rivalry between the two organizations over the supervision of the Samoaan (LMS) Churches in Hawaii before 1962. The relationship between the HEA and the Samoaan (LMS) Church in Samoa had always been cordial. The LMS missionaries in Samoa had every confidence in the HEA



supervising the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu and other Samoan congregations later on. The HEA knew more about the Samoan (LMS) Churches in Hawaii and the problems that they faced than the Elders' Committee in Samoa. The independence of the Samoa (LMS) Church as the CCCS, together with the growth of the CCCS in Hawaii, may have contributed to the Elders' Committee (mainly Samoan pastors) wanting full control, without interferences from the HEA, of all its congregations in Samoa and outside of Samoa.

This raises the question of affiliation; an important issue for the CCCS to address. I believe for the Samoan churches in any foreign countries to move forward and be well established, they should be allowed to affiliate with the church organizations of those countries, such as the HEA. Such organizations are more aware of the positive and negative issues regarding church planting and church development in their own environment. The recently established Congregational Christian Church of American Samoa (CCCAS) is a good example of such an affiliation. The CCCAS churches in Hawaii and USA are affiliated with the United Church of Christ (UCC) but the control is still with the CCCAS in American Samoa – the parent body. The CCCAS and UCC work together on issues regarding the roles, responsibilities and, especially, the doctrinal beliefs of each organization.

The conflict within the first Samoan (LMS) Church in Hawaii could have been handled better. The Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa only needed to make a thorough investigation before deciding on some of the important matters raised by the members in Hawaii. There should also have been communication with the HEA on the role that each body had to play in relation to the Samoan (LMS) Church in Hawaii. The inconsistency, and the lack of transparency, in the decisions made by



the Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa, also contributed to fanning the disagreements between the church members of the Samoan (LMS) Churches in Hawaii.

The fact that some of the decisions may have been influenced by close family ties and friendly relationships only fueled the conflict. There is no doubt that Uatimani's wife, Mine, was a daughter of Alesana, a member of the Elders' Committee. There is also a very likelihood that Uatimani and Toma, the Secretary of the Elders' Committee, were great friends, although the relationship between Tusi Faiivae and Toma's wife did not affect him airing his misgivings about Toma relationship with Uatimani. Ioelu also, the Chairman of the Elders' Committee was related to Malae; his wife being a cousin of Malae's first wife, Fiapa'ipa'i. Thus, there was always suspicion by the members of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Hawaii over the transparency of the decisions being made by the Elders' Committee.

This was very much reflected in the appointment of Malae to look after the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu. It was an appointment that should never have been made because it undermined the Samoa (LMS) Church constitution and regulations. If an ordained Minister was selected in the first instance, the HEA would not have offered ordination to Malae, which led to the souring of relations between the HEA and the Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa. A better solution would have been for the deputation from the Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa to appoint Malae as the Minister of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu, and then ordain him to perform Holy Communion, Baptism, Marriages and Funerals.

The fact that the HEA ordained Malae, and later annulled by the Elders' Committee, suggested either manipulation on the part of the HEA to entice the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu to come under its umbrella, or it was just a radical solution to curb some of the problems within the Samoan (LMS) Church in



Honolulu. Nevertheless, the Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa would have interpreted the move by the HEA as a take over bid.

Malae was eventually ordained, and became one of the first lay preachers to be ordained as a Minister of the Samoan (LMS) Church. But, the conflict taught the Samoan (LMS) Church and its members an important lesson. It re-emphasized the fact that a lay preacher (in Malae and Suitoanu's cases at least) did not have the ability and skills to look after a congregation and, most importantly, they lacked the theological training needed to provide sound bible teachings. In the end, Malae's poor performance, and together with the tension between the people of Manu'a and Tutuila, contributed to the conflict between members that eventually led to new churches being established. The fact that both Malae and Suitoanu were not graduates of Malua Theological College, also took away the honor and prestige people expected from their Ministers.

The leasing of the land from the Navy at Moanalua was ill-advised. The Samoan Church in Honolulu did not consider the consequences seriously. They should have persevere and waited for a better land deal. But, surprisingly, the HEA went with the Samoans (LMS) Church in Honolulu's decision. They were well aware of the limitations of the lease, but seemed unconcerned. Perhaps they just wanted the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu to have a place to settle, with the possibility of looking at other options later. But a lot of money was spent, including a loan from the HEA, on renovating the existing buildings (and later a hall and sports' fields were added), and yet the consequences seemed insignificant to HEA and much more to the members of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu.

The Navy took the land back in 1998. A lot of money, energy, and precious time had been wasted. The blame lied solely with members of the Samoan (LMS)



Church in Honolulu. The suggestion by the late Leasau to buy land probably returned to haunt the members; as there was now no place for worship, and definitely no asset for the Samoan (LMS) Church in Samoa – as was their dream. They had no vision of the future, and even if they did have a vision for the future, they certainly did not have a vision regarding land of their own. But, what could have prompted the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu to stay with the lease at Moanalua?

There are several suggestions. Firstly, and the most obvious, the lease was cheap and the members could afford it. Secondly, they probably relied on the expertise of the HEA who had suggested the Navy land, and after being given a loan and a donation from the HEA, the members would have felt obliged to take up the suggestion as they did not want to hurt the HEA if they refused – in short – Samoan pride. A third reason may have been the arrogant attitude and the mentality of the Samoans members themselves. In American Samoa, when land was given to build churches, it was given with the knowledge that the land does not belong to the church. But, as usual, once a church was built, there was no likelihood of the land being repossessed or taken away from the church. To do so, was deemed unchristian. It may have been this attitude that eventually stripped the Samoan (LMS) Church in Honolulu of its property at Moanalua. The members forgot that they were no longer in Samoa.

The lost of land at Moanalua also contributed to the schism among members. But on hindsight, it was a benevolent step for the Samoan (LMS) Church in Hawaii as a whole. It led to church growth and the development of the Samoan (LMS) Church in Hawaii.



The establishment of Samoan (LMS) Churches in Hawaii also showed the Samoan's attitude and mentality of *saili malo*<sup>134</sup> and *le fia toilalo*.<sup>135</sup> This kind of mentality was clearly highlighted in the split of the Moanalua church when people walked away when their views were not addressed. It was not easy to establish new churches and, at the same time, try to affirm one's own identity among people of different status and village mindsets. This state of mind continued to play a big part in church development (and setbacks) in Hawaii; it was also at the forefront of church independence from foreign missions. It was at the forefront of the CCCS schism between the American Samoa CCCS churches and the Samoa CCCS churches in 1980. The eastern churches walked away from the CCCS and formed their own organization – the CCCAS.<sup>136</sup> The issue of schism is no longer between members of the same denomination but between denominations of the same people - Samoans.

The CCCS (as well as the CCCAS) in Hawaii has played an important role in not only spreading the Gospel to the Samoan people in Hawaii, but has also provided a home away from home for Samoans traveling between the USA and the Samoa Islands. The CCCS's contribution to the Hawaiian community has been appreciated. They give donations and funds to charity and for the needy. The CCCS Ministers and church people have visitation programmes to hospitals, while youth programmes for Samoans, and other ethnic groups, are offered as part of their spiritual contribution to the Hawaiian society. The City of Honolulu and the State of Hawaii have over the years requested the CCCS Churches to participate in promoting and advertising important issues such as health, child and mother abuse,

<sup>134</sup> It means 'to try to win or to strive for victory'

<sup>135</sup> It means 'not to be defeated'

<sup>136</sup> Ekitoa M Sopoaga. "The Church in the New Testament as the Basis of the Church Today, with Special Reference to the Congregational Christian Church in American Samoa." B.D. Thesis, Pacific Theological College, Suva, 1986, 19 & 20.



youths and children programs on alcohol and drug issues, and other important matters.

In light of the present circumstances within the CCCS Churches in Hawaii, it is recommended that the CCCS in Samoa should consider handing over the administration to the CCCS Churches in Hawaii, and allow it to be part of the wider circle of churches and church organizations in Hawaii. Its affiliation would still be with the CCCS in Samoa. But, in order for the CCCS to be an authentic witness in Hawaii; it would need to respond to the environment it is in. It would then be able to continue doing its mission and making decisions according to the experiences and knowledge of local surroundings. I believe this is one of the reasons why other Samoan churches established in Hawaii and USA are independent churches and not affiliated to the CCCS in Samoa. They can make decisions that are relevant to their own context.

For example, the retirement age of the Ministers in the CCCS is seventy years of age. In Hawaii, the Ministers relate to their own parishes, not only by family ties but also village or district relationships. In many cases, the CCCS Churches in Hawaii do not want their Ministers to retire early. They see his service as a lifetime commitment, a commitment till death. This is what the congregations want but their voices are drowned not only by the Elders' Committee, but more so by the CCCS Constitution. Being an independent Church gives freedom to the churches to decide its own fate, and to fulfill its own calling according to God. The CCCS is called to learn from the past in order to move forward.

The CCCS in Hawaii is immersed in a multi-cultural society within a globalized world. It must remain faithful to the gospel message by adapting its mission to its multi-cultural environment. If not, its ministry will remain dormant in



light of the new wave of changes. In order to move with the changes, the mission of the CCCS in Hawaii must expand beyond its comfort zones, and its mission must touch and reach out to other ethnic groups in Hawaii.

The CCCS has been in Hawaii for fifty one years. And during that time there have been schisms, which have resulted in the establishment and development of the CCCS and, more recently, CCCAS churches. There are no doubts that more Samoan churches will be established because of such schisms. But, I believe that the time has come for both churches, the CCCS and CCCAS, to move forward and put away any differences they may be suppressing. In order to carry out the will of God, there is a need to be reminded once again of the motives behind the passion to establish a Samoan church in Hawaii in the first instance. It was to affirm Samoan identity, preserve Samoan culture, customs, and traditions, to provide fellowship and support for one another, and to spread the Gospel of Christ to all Samoans in Hawaii. The CCCS will achieve little if it maintains the same attitude and mentality. It only reveals a stagnant Ministry that is unable to move with the sign of the times. The ministry of the CCCS in Hawaii is no longer easy, and that is why in order to succeed in its journey and in God's mission in the future; the CCCS in Hawaii must allow the Holy Spirit to dwell within its soul.



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