

**MALUA THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE**

**A HISTORY OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH SAMOA IN  
MATAUTU LEFAGA.**

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of Malua Theological College, Apia, Samoa.

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Bachelor of Theology

By

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to Reverend Esaroma Fatilua and wife and all the people of *Matautu* in *Matautu* and around the world. The church has always been our unity and strength from generation to generation.

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this research paper is to research a history of the Congregational Christian Church Samoa (CCCS) in *Matautu*. There is a saying; “You can never fully understand yourself, until you understand your past.” That is, understanding one’s history is the key to knowing one’s true identity. This is absolutely true of CCCS *Matautu*’s members. They have reaped the fruits that their forefathers and the numerous servants of God had sowed in the past. Unfortunately, this history has not been recorded. It is therefore, absolutely necessary to trace and to tell this history, as a way to say thank you, and to help CCCS members to move forward.

This lack of historical information pertaining to CCCS *Matautu* has intrigued the author to investigate the origin of the CCCS in *Matautu*, because for a long time, CCCS was the only accepted Christian denomination in the village. Today, there are numerous other denominations and they have directly affected CCCS in many ways. This is the motivation behind this research; firstly to record CCCS’s history in *Matautu*, and secondly, to find ways for CCCS *Matautu* to continue in the future, despite the many changes that have impacted the church and the village.

As a theological student, it is also a way to say thank you to families and CCCS *Matautu* adherents for their support and prayers, for the last four years.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, all glory to God Almighty, for the guidance and strength to enable this task to be completed in due course. It is without doubt that God's ever-present Holy Spirit has encouraged the fulfillment of this difficult task. Praises be to The Everlasting God of Creation.

I will like to take this opportunity to thank my supervisor Rev. Dr. Aukilani Lance Tuiai for guiding and putting up with the complicated task at hand. It is surely acknowledged that without their guidance and encouragement this task will never have been completed. May God bless you abundantly.

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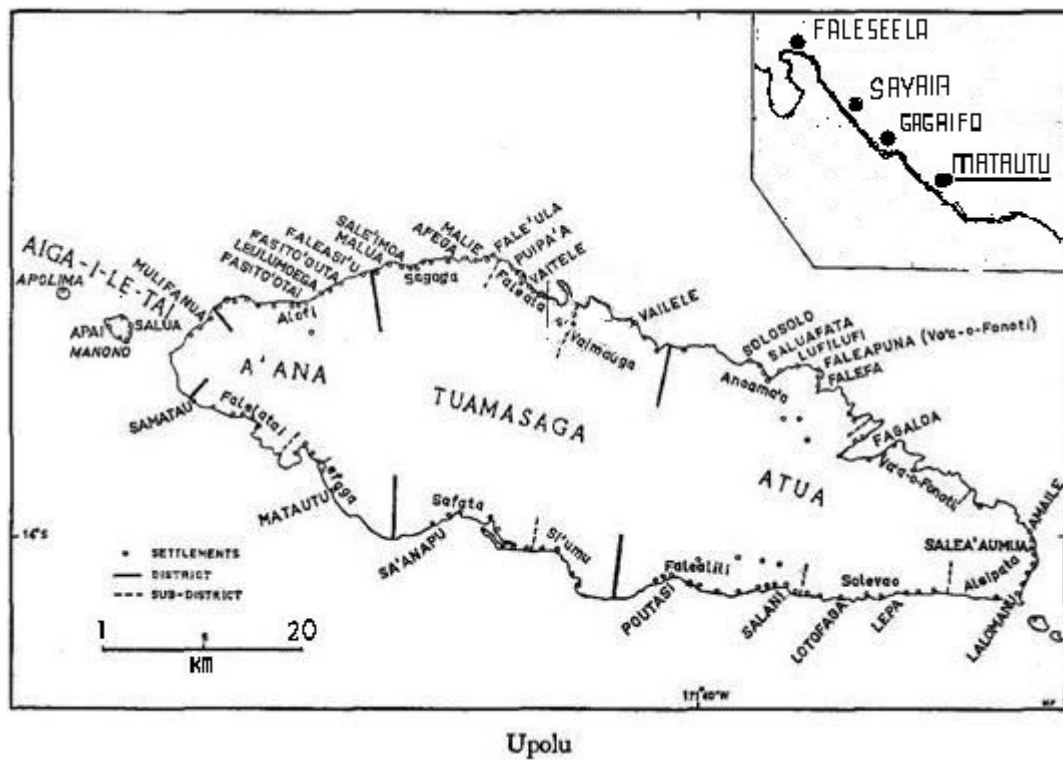
The encouragement and support of my mentor and minister, wife and family; Rev. Esaroma and Ruta Fatilua of the CCCS at *Matautu*, thank you for all the guidance and encouragement given me through my life journey. It is truly inspirational to watch your good work and tireless efforts to be a true servant of God. May God Bless you.

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Lastly but not least, I want to thank my wife *Niukini* and my son *Esfaaal Tua*. Thank you for your love and support and for putting up with me every day. Without you both none of this would have been possible. I love you dearly from the bottom of my heart.

## LIST OF MAPS

Map 1: Map of Matautu Lefaga in relation to other villages



Map 2: Current Church compound of Matautu village at Lefaga



## **APPREVIATIONS**

AOG	Assembly of God
CCCS	Congregational Christian Church Samoa
EFKS	Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa
LDS	Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints
LMS	London Missionary Society
MTC	Malua Theological College



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b>	1
<b>Chapter 1: The Village of Matautu Lefaga</b>	3
Introduction	3
1.1 Lefaga Subdistrict	3
1.2 Historical Background	5
1.2.1 Origin of the chiefly titles Lemalu and Le Mamea	5
1.2.2 Origin of name of <i>Matautu</i>	6
1.2.3 The <i>Faalupea</i> of <i>Matautu</i>	7
1.3 Present situation of the village	7
1.4 Summary	7
<b>Chapter 2: Samoan Ministers at Matautu at Lefaga</b>	8
Introduction	8
2.1 The prominence of <i>Falelatai</i> village	8
2.2 Samoan Ordained Ministers who worked in Matautu Tai	12
2.3 Summary	14
<b>Chapter 3: Other CCCS Churches within the <i>Falelua</i> of Matautu and Gagaifo</b>	
<b>Samoan Ministers</b>	15
Introduction	15
3.1 History of the Church in <i>Matautu Uta</i>	15
3.2 History of the Church in <i>Gagaifo-Uta</i> .	17
3.3 Summary	19
<b>Chapter 4: Conclusion</b>	20
<b>Appendices</b>	21
<b>Glossary</b>	23
<b>Bibliography</b>	24

## INTRODUCTION

The village of Matautu in Lefaga subdistrict has been established for some time now. There has been little recorded about the history of the Congregational Christian Church Samoa (CCCS), formerly known as the London Missionary Society (LMS) church, in the village of Matautu. A history of the CCCS in *Matautu* from its inception to our time has not been researched and, therefore, is very much unknown to my generation and most people in our congregation. The history of the CCCS in *Matautu* has intrigued me and is the motivation behind this investigation. This initiative might encourage others to develop this work further, for the benefit of all current CCCS members in *Matautu*, as well as for future generations.

The history of the CCCS in *Matautu* examines the origins and development of the church. There is an inherent problem with such a history is the lack of written sources. I have relied on personal interviews and archival material. The *Api o le Galuega Matautu* (parish log book), *Iugafono* (Minutes and Decisions of Committees), past issues of the CCCS monthly magazine, the Sulu Samoa, and the LMS archives, are also key sources. .

This research is divided into three main chapters; Chapter One includes background information such as the geographical and statistical information, the origin and significance of the village *Matautu*. Chapter Two examines the Samoan pastors that continued the work of LMS missionaries, who established the church in *Matautu*. These Samoan pastors, had carried the flame of faith within our church and their contributions to the village as well. It also traces the initial process of the establishment of LMS/CCCS in *Matautu*. Chapter Three looks at the development of other CCCS churches within the *Falelua* of *Matautu* and *Gagaifo*.

The scope of this work in terms of the period, time, term involved is enormous to say the least and a proper investigation is beyond the scope of this work. Nevertheless, it is hoped that this research work will lay the foundation for others to improve on, so that a complete history of CCCS *Matautu* can be developed for the benefits of the CCCS in *Matautu* and the village as well. As already stated, due to the scarcity of written secondary sources the thesis relies on heavily upon interviews, and primary sources such as the microfiche LMS archives. These sources, together with data from the Samoa's Bureau of Statistics, hopefully complement the information from personnel interviews and unofficial/unpublished documents in an attempt to put together a history of the CCCS in *Matautu*.

## CHAPTER ONE

### The Village of Matautu Lefaga and the EFKS

#### 1 Introduction

This chapter looks to identify the background of the village of Matautu in the subdistrict of Lefaga. It examines the demographics of the village and to discover the historical background; the arrival and establishment of the EFKS church: how the village accepted the church and why it was established in Matautu. It also looks at the EFKS itself in Matautu Lefaga in the light of Samoa Christianity as a whole.

#### 1.1 The Lefaga subdistrict

The village of Matautu is situated on the south west coast of Upolu island and lies within the political district of *A'ana* and the subdistrict of 'Lefaga'. (See Map 1). Lefaga lies at the border of the Aana and Tuamasaga districts in Upolu.<sup>1</sup> According to nineteenth century German anthropologist August Kramer, *Matautu* was part of a collection of villages in 'the bay of Lefaga' which included, the villages of *Faleseela*, *Safaato'a*, *Tafagamanu*, *Savaia*, and *Gagaifo*.<sup>2</sup> According to modern historian Asofou So'o the Lefaga subdistrict also included the northern villages of Nofoalii, Fasitoota, Satapuala and Faleasiu.<sup>3</sup> However these northern villages are on the other side of the island of Upolu and thus not associated with Lefaga subdistrict.

The subdistrict of Lefaga was traditionally settled by the *Sa Tuala* clan which can be traced back to the 1520's.<sup>4</sup> One of the descendents of the *Sa Tuala*, *Faumuinā*, held the paramount

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<sup>1</sup> Meleisea Malama, ed. *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa* (Suva: University of the South Pacific, 1987).

<sup>2</sup> August Kramer, *The Samoa Islands. An Outline of a Monograph with Particular Reference to German Samoa* (Auckland: Polynesian Press, 1994), 216.

<sup>3</sup> Asofou So'o, *Democracy and Custom in Samoa. An Uneasy Alliance* (Suva: IPS Publications, 2008), 211.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-7.

chiefly titles Tui Aana and Tui Atua. Faumuinās son Fonoti succeeded his father after an internal conflict with his siblings. Fonoti's son Muāgututi'a succeeded thus leading to the tradition that the Sa Tuala family must be consulted upon conferral of the Tui Aana or the Tupua title.<sup>5</sup>

Salamasina a famous female chief from approximately the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>6</sup> When *Salamasina* (1520s) was holding the *Tuiaana* chiefly title, she gave two of the founding members of *Lefaga* subdistrict to be its leading *tulafale*. In recognition of this designation, *Lefaga* has since been given the third opening speech in the district meeting. The designation of the two *tulafale* have been respected to this day.<sup>7</sup>

The earliest mention of Lefaga in secondary sources is 1836 and 1837 by London Missionary Society and Wesleyan missionaries.<sup>8</sup> Lefaga was considered a major centre of the Siovili cult and may have been a place where Siovili himself resided. Siovili was a native of Eva in the Atua district. Siovili travelled first to Tonga then to Tahiti in the 1820s requesting teachers for Samoa.<sup>9</sup> Instead Siovili became a 'teacher' and seems to have begun his career as a religious leader after 1830, with a large following in the Aana region.<sup>10</sup> LMS missionaries were initially not welcomed in Lefaga, unlike the Methodists who were welcomed. Gilson believes that since Siovili visited Tonga people in the Lefaga subdistrict were familiar with the Methodists.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Penelope Schoeffel, "Rank, Gender and Politics in Ancient Samoa. The Genealogy of Salamasina O le Tafatifa" *Journal of Pacific History*, 117

<sup>7</sup> So'o, *Democracy and Custom in Samoa. An Uneasy Alliance*, 219.

<sup>8</sup> Richard Gilson, *Samoa 1830 to 1900 the Politics of a Multi-Cultural Community* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1970), 88.

<sup>9</sup> Ronald Crawford, "The Lotu and the Fa'asamoa: Church and Society in Samoa 1830-1880" (PhD, University of Otago, 1977), 69.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>11</sup> Gilson, *Samoa 1830 to 1900 the Politics of a Multi-Cultural Community*, 88.

## 1.2 Historical Background

Before the start of written records with the arrival of Europeans and Christianity, Samoan ‘history’ was passed from generation to generation, through songs, games, stories and dramas. Oral recitations are problematic as many different versions of an event or tradition can occur. The origin of the name *Matautu* is subject to variation depending on the sources and the tradition. The origin of the name *Matautu* as recorded here is a commonly accepted version as explained by *Mamea Pito* one of *Matautu*’s high chiefs.

### 1.2.1 Origin of the chiefly titles *Lemalu* and *Lemamea*.<sup>12</sup>

*Laautuivanu* and *Leaufueloloa* were two men who were kicked out from the district of *Aana* and settled in the border region in the village of *Nofoalii*. This was where they built their house and is the origin of an important phrase the “*Fale na to ese*” (FALETOESE or ‘the isolated house’). An orator from the *Lefaga* subdistrict *Tuisavailuu* requested to the high chief *Muagututi’a* for assistance concerning the border between *Tuamasaga* and *Aana*. *Muagututi’a* responded by sending both *Laautuivanu* and *Leaufueloloa* for the purpose of restoring this boundary to *Aana*. *Muagututi’a* knew that *Laautuivanu* and *Leaufueloloa* were strong and fierce warriors. As a result of the involvement of these two famous warriors, *Tuisavailuu* and other *Aana* members said “*Mea manu tama nei ua **malu** ai Aana*” (translation: with the help of these men they will provide security and protection for *Aana* ) Thus the origin of the two high chiefly titles *Le Mamea* and *Lemalu* in *Matautu* arose from *Tuisavailuu* and people of *Aana* observation of *Laautuivanu* and *Leaufueloloa* contribution to the *Aana* cause.

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<sup>12</sup> These are the names of the 2 high chiefs (Ali’i) in *Matautu*

### 1.2.2 Origin of the Name *Matautu*

The meaning of the *Matautu* is derived from the name of the *maota* (house) of *Lemalu* and *Lemamea*. This name originates from another war between these two chiefs and the district of *Tuamasaga*. This battle began on the border between the district of *Tuamasaga* and *Aana* which is called *Matavai*.

*Lemalu* and *Lemamea* went to *Matavai* and sat at the border, The people of *Tuamasaga* were in disbelief that two chiefs were at the border between *Tuamasaga* and *Aana* districts. Many people went to see if they were sitting at the border. This caused uproar and led to the war involving an alliance between *Lemalu* and *Lemamea* and the people of *Aana* against the district of *Tuamasaga*. *Lemalu* and *Lemamea* defeated the people of *Tuamasaga* and led to great slaughter of these people from *Tuamasaga*. The battle between the two districts progressed eastwards to a location now called *O le Afe*<sup>13</sup> which is in the subdistrict of *Safata*. (See map 1). The *malae* or field of *Lemalu* *Lemamea* is called the *Malae o le Toto* (Field of Blood) which was given because of this war. The *malae*, or *marae* as it is sometimes called is a large open space reserved for public assemblies, around which the representatives sit in little groups, each group having its proper position assigned to it, and also the precedence it took in addressing the meeting, in which it was strictly adhered to.<sup>14</sup>

Therefore, if the two names of the *maota* (house) and *malae* (field) are joined then you get the name – *O Matautu o le Malae o le Toto*. The meaning of the name *Matautu* comes from this very war because it was here that the blood of both the people of *Aana* and *Tuamasaga* was *utu* (spilled). The result of the war was the shift of the border between *Aana* and

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<sup>13</sup> The word *Afe* in the Samoan language means to pull over to the side. Although in this case it was the place where the people of *Tuamasaga* ran/pulled over for safety.

<sup>14</sup> John Stair, *Old Samoa* (London 1897), 84.

*Tuamasaga* from *Matavai* in *Savaia* westward the village of *Saasnapu* to the *vai sua toto* (spilled blood) or otherwise known as *vai sua mumu*.

### 1.2.3 The *Faalupega* of *Matautu*

The *faalupega* is the cultural honorific designation for most villages in Samoa.<sup>15</sup> According to Crawford the *faalupega* defines the village titleholders who have authority within the village area.<sup>16</sup> Thus the *faalupega* is the formal reiteration of the rank of titles made at any significant occasion which outlines the hierarchical structural of titles within the village. *Matautu* is like most other villages of Samoa which have their own councils and traditions to maintain the safety and the well being of the village. The *faalupega* for *Matautu* village states:

(1) *Afio Lemalu ma Le Mamea ma lo oulua fale na to ese*

(2) *Susu Usoalii ma le mamalu ia Saleleaalii.*

(1) Honorable Lemalu and Le Mamea with your house that is set apart.

(2) Honorable Usoalii and the respect of Saleleaalii.

The structure of this *Faalupega* is hierarchical, highlighting the titles of *Lemalu* and *Le Mamea* as the two paramount chiefs of *Matautu*. They both possess the same authority to make decisions and find solutions for any issues within the village. *Lemalu* and *Le Mamea* are thus the two main families in *Matautu* are known as the *Aiga Sa Lemalu* and *Aiga Sa Le Mamea* (Lemalu family and Le Mamea family). During the village meetings (fono) *Lemalu* and *Le Mamea* both sit facing each other from both sides (*matuatala side*) of the Samoan fale. They are acknowledged by their *fale na to ese* (house that was set apart), that indicates

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<sup>15</sup> Derek Freeman, *Margaret Mead and Samoa the Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth*. (Canberra: Australia National University, 1983), 122-23.

<sup>16</sup> Crawford, "The Lotu and the Fa'asamoa: Church and Society in Samoa 1830-1880," 24.



that their house they built in the border of the village of *Nofoalii* when they were kicked out from *Aana*.

These two families gives the impression that the village has two distinctive sides. Despite these two main families in the village, this does not mean there are two separate councils and is not a source of division within in the village.

The designation *usoalii* (*brothers of chiefs*) refers to the chiefs that are associated with the high chiefs of *Lemalu* and *Le Mamea*. These chiefs included *Taimalieutu*, *Aualiitia* and *Togia* titleholders and they are next in prominence to *Lemalu* and *Le Mamea*. The designation *Saleleaalii* refers to chiefs with lowest rank in the hierarchy of the village and also included the chiefly titles *Leofo*, *Iputau* and *Logologalii*. *These chiefs serve as the taulelea (untitled men) when the senior chiefs have their own meeting or any occasion if the taulelea of the village are not present.* These ‘lesser’ chiefs are involved in the *ava* ceremony, serving and other duties if needed.

### **1.3 Present situation of *Matautu***

In 2011 Matautu had a population of 879 and accounted for 22 percent of the total population of the Lefaga Faleseela subdistrict which comprised four other villages with a total population of 4005.<sup>17</sup> The 2011 national census had shown an increase of 17 people from the 2006 census and an increase of 156 from the 1991 census.<sup>18</sup>

According to the 2011 census, of the adult population of 386, there were 178 of those who worked in various paid employments, 59 were involved in agriculture, fishery and forestry, while 149, were unemployed including the elderly.

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<sup>17</sup> Samoa Bureau of Statistics, *Population and Housing Census 2011 Analytical Report* (Apia, Samoa: Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2011), 233.

<sup>18</sup> *Population and Housing Statistics 2006 and 2011* (Apia, Samoa: Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2011).; So'o, *Democracy and Custom in Samoa. An Uneasy Alliance*, 211.

In terms of religious preference of the ‘mainline’ churches, the CCCS had the majority with 367 followers, followed by the Latter Day Saints (LDS) with 118, the Catholics at 51, and the Methodists 40. Of the newer denominations, the largest is Nasereta with 91 adherents, followed by the Assembly of God with 67 followers, the Seventh Day Adventist 14, Jehovah’s Witness 11, Bahai 7, Nasareta 91 and Anglican 1. It quite clear that in 2011 41 percent of the Matautu population belongs to the Congregational Christian Church Samoa. This numerical dominance is nearly twice the numbers of the Mormon church at 13 percent.

*Matatutu* once had an old law that prohibited any new denomination in the village apart from the current denominations such as the; EFKS, LDS, Catholic, Assembly of God (AOG), Seventh Day Adventist and Nazareth<sup>19</sup>. Those who were not attending these denominations have the freedom to go to a nearby village or the outskirts of *Matautu* to attend their chosen denominations.<sup>20</sup> This village law is still enforced and the villagers are showing their compliance to the law.

The current holder of the *Le Mamea* title, *Le Mamea Pito*, was a former member of CCCS Church in *Matautu*, but he has now become a member of the Nazareth church.<sup>21</sup> The change from CCCS to Nazareth did not lead to conflict with anyone within the village but was simply his own choice. It certainly is easy for *Le Mamea Pito* as he is the high chief of *Matautu*. Pito believed that at the beginning of the mission work of the London Missionary Society (LMS), the LMS was the only denomination in the village of *Matautu*. However, the introduction of other denominations like those that are currently in the village were established with the approval of the high chiefs of *Lemalu and Le Mamea*. It is the general consensus among the high chiefs that the current denominations within *Matautu* is enough for the spiritual life of the village. The majority of the villages as the statistics show are

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<sup>19</sup> Interview with *Mamea Pito*, 5 May 2015.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with *Mamea Pito*, 5 May 2015

<sup>21</sup> Interview with *Mamea Pito*, 5 May 2015.

supporters of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa according to Samoa Bureau of Statistics. However, the Latter Day Saints is gaining recognition and popularity as indicated by the second most popular denomination.

Analysis of interviews seems to highlight the decline in CCCS membership in *Matautu*. The decline is attributed to the burden of monetary contributions to the CCCS church. This is an issue that the CCCS in general and especially ministers must be well aware of and seriously consider, as it affects not only the membership but the worship life of our church. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to analyse this trend in *Matautu*.

#### **1.4 Summary**

Chapter one has highlighted some of the unique features and cultural background information that forms the foundation of this work, from the origin of village and its development, the acceptance of CCCS as the first established denomination for the two villages of *Matautu* and *Gagaifo* or the *falelua* (a term that combines the two village, which means the two houses) to the rise of numerous new denominations which exist nowadays. These changes have affected CCCS greatly and will be dealt with in the following chapters.

## CHAPTER TWO

### SAMOAN MINISTERS in Matautu AT LEFAGA

This chapter examines those Samoa ministers who faithfully continued the work started by LMS missionaries in the village of *Matautu*. It also attempts to briefly cover the impact of the London Missionary Society in Lefaga and *Matautu*. It was a historical moment for Samoan ministers who had been trained at Malua Theological College (MTC), to continue the work of the LMS. Malua Theological College was established in 1844 by Reverend George Turner and Reverend Charles Hardie of the LMS<sup>22</sup> According to Turner, the sole purpose of establishing this institution was to train minister for each congregation in Samoa, and in other island communities of the Pacific<sup>23</sup>.

#### 2.1 The prominence of *Falelatai* village

The history of Christianity in the Lefaga subdistrict and *Matautu* was centred on the village of *Falelatai*, in the adjacent subdistrict . The prominence of *Falelatai* had a big impact on the district of *Aana* which would eventually be a stronghold of the London Missionary Society.<sup>24</sup> By 1836 and 1837 the large village of *Falelatai* had been totally under the auspices of the London Missionary Society.<sup>25</sup> In fact the chief of *Falelatai* To'oa when he was baptised by the LMS kept Wesleyans from his large village by force.<sup>26</sup> *Falelatai* became a mission station in which the LMS missionary would be based for the Aana district.<sup>27</sup>

Since *Falelatai* was in close proximity to Lefaga subdistrict, there was no resident missionary based in *Matautu* village. In 1880, there were European missionaries in the Lefaga subdistrict

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<sup>22</sup> *Malua Theological College Handbook 2014*, (Apia: Malua Printing Press, 2014), 5.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Crawford, "The Lotu and the Fa'asamoa: Church and Society in Samoa 1830-1880," 135.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>27</sup> Gilson, *Samoa 1830 to 1900 the Politics of a Multi-Cultural Community*, 90.

but there were based in the village of *Savaia*.<sup>28</sup> From *Savaia* the missionary would head out to individual parishes every Sunday. The European missionaries, would work closely with the Samoan ministers to conduct worship within the Lefaga subdistrict.

## **2.2 Samoan Ordained Ministers who worked in Matautu Tai.**

According to the church records or “*api o le galuega*”, the first ever Samoan minister for the *Matautu* parish was Rev Ieremia.<sup>29</sup> The church log book did not record Ieremia’s surname but he started his ministry in 1880. Reverend Ieremia worked closely with missionaries based in the village of *Savaia* and had the authority to sign birth certificates, which was the case in 1883.

Reverend Ieremia ministered in *Matautu* for fifteen years and was later succeeded by Reverend Ioramo in 1895. Ioramo remained in *Matautu* for only five years and was succeeded by Reverend Sopoaga in 1900.

Reverend Sopoaga ministered in *Matautu* for eight years and was succeeded by Reverend Manase in 1908.<sup>30</sup> Reverend Manase was succeeded by Reverend Perelini Afamasaga and his wife Laumata Afamasaga in 1914.<sup>31</sup> Reverend Perelini is the first minister in which the surname is recorded on the parish book of the church.

Perelini Afamasaga became the longest serving minister in *Matautu*’s history, serving until 1957. Afamasaga’s longevity can be attributed to the troubled state of the ministry which was devastated in the 1918 flu epidemic which wiped out nearly a quarter of Samoa’s

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<sup>28</sup> "Api O Galuega Matautu Lefaga," (Matautu).

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Oka Fauolo, *O Vavega O Le Alofa Laveai, O Le Tala Faasolopito O Le Ekalesia Kerisiano I Samoa* (Apia Malua Printing Press, 2005), 655-56.

<sup>31</sup> "Api O Galuega Matautu Lefaga."

population.<sup>32</sup> Perelini Afamasaga and Laumata were from the village of *Fasitoo* and were one of the 117 pastors that survived out of 220 in that period.<sup>33</sup> In 1957 they left *Matautu* due to a life threatening illness that affected Perelini ministry and effectively ended the pastor's service to the village. However Afamasaga and Laumata still hold the record for the longest service in the village of Matautu of 43 years. They left Matautu while holding the position of Reverend Elder and passed away at his family residence at the village of *Fasitoo* in 1964.

It was nearly two years before *Matautu* chose Reverend Iona Levi and his wife Rosita Levi as the new pastor in 1959. The length of time before the choice of a new minister suggests that the village was still grieving for the loss of Afamasaga. Both Iona and Rosita came from Apia and they ministered until 1964. On the eighth of June 1964 Iona Levi was chosen by the annual General Assembly or *Fono Tele* to be the Treasurer for the CCCS.

Niu Sapolu and his wife Tafagamanu were the next minister for *Matautu* from 1964 until 1992 after Iona Levi. Sapolu served for twenty eight years as minister of *Matautu* the second longest serving minister after Perelini Afamasaga. Sapolu eventually became an Elder, and served until his retirement at the age of seventy in 1992<sup>34</sup>.

In 1993 Reverend Esaroma Fatilua from the village of *Salimu* in the subdistrict of *Fagaloa* and his wife Ruta Fagaese Fiu from the village of *Salelologa* in Savaii succeeded Reverend Elder Sapolu and Fafagamanu. Reverend Esaroma Fatilua is the current *faifeau* and has served *Matautu* for a period of twenty two years, making him the third longest serving minister in

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<sup>32</sup>; Michael Field, *Mau: Samoa's Struggle for Freedom*, Rev. ed. (Auckland, New Zealand: Polynesian Press, 1991), 49. A commission was appointed to investigate the causes of the epidemic. "Figures presented to the inquiry put the death toll at 7,542 people, or nineteen percent of the country's population...the commission said the final death toll was more likely to be in the area of 8,500 or twenty-two percent of the population, and in addition many people suffered the after-effects of the disease being totally or partially incapacitated."

<sup>33</sup> N Goodall, *A History of the London Missionary Society 1895 - 1945* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 361.

<sup>34</sup> "Api O Galuega Matautu Lefaga."

the history of the *Matautu* church. Since 1993 till present, the congregation of *Matautu* has also been known as *Matautu to Falelua* (two houses) of *Matautu* and *Gagaifo Tai* parish.

## **Summary**

It has been one hundred and thirty nine years since the LMS and later the CCCS has been in Matautu Lefaga from 1876 till the present. Within this long period of time, there have been only eight consecutive ministers who serve the will of God in the *Matautu*. A highlight and an unusual fact about the ministry of *Matautu*, is that all eight ministers that served never died or were buried in the church compound or even the village. This trend extends to their wives who never died during the ministry. There are many congregations in Samoa in which the minister or their spouse have died during their ministry and are often buried in the church grounds where they served.

Many elderly members of the church are equally proud to say that in the history of the church of *Matautu* none of the ministers were ever told to leave their parish. Certainly the longevity of the ministers is another highlight with at least three (including the current minister) serving for over twenty years. Two ministers (Niu Sapolu and Perelini Afamasaga) received the distinction of being Reverend Elders of their respective subdistricts. One minister Iona Levi became the treasurer of the newly formed CCCS when it received its independence from the London Missionary Society. The current minister of *Matautu tai* seems to continue this great tradition of the *Matautu* parish. It is certainly a unique history and one in which the congregation of *Matautu* should cherish and give praise to God for his loving kindness.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Other CCCS Churches within the *Falelua* of *Matautu* and *Gagaifo*

#### Introduction

This chapter attempts to explain which *Matautu* is often known as the *Falelua* (two houses) of *Matautu* and *Gagaifo*. It also highlights the development of two CCCS congregations within *Matautu* and next to *Matautu* in the village of *Gagaifo*. One congregation developed inland of *Matautu* and was established in the 1960's. This new congregation was known as *Matautu Uta*. In the 1980s another congregation was set up inland of *Gagaifo* village known as the *Gagaifo Uta*.

#### 3.1. History of the Church in *Matautu Uta*

From the beginning of the church in the village there was only one parish in what was then known as *Matautu*. Now it is known as *Matautu* and *Gagaifo*. But as early as the end of February 1961, some members of the congregation, voiced their opinion that there should be a new Parish in the other side of the village known as *Ala Malini* (marine road). This issue was very difficult to discuss but the village chiefs and leaders of the congregation decided not to vote against it, and let the new parish proceed. My research was unable to reveal the reason for this move, but if part of the congregation comes from the other side of the village, as known by the name *Matautu Uta* (*Matautu* inland), then the reason it was set up was for convenience. It is better to have a church close by for other members to go to than go to the *Matautu tai*.

On Sunday the 21st of April 1968, the newly formed parish held its first worship and was held at *Togia Avia's* house. The morning service was led by lay preacher *Sosoli Lemamea*,



and the afternoon service was led by another lay preacher *Faataui Sua*. On Sunday 28 April 1968, Reverend Elder *Alama* and Reverend *Niu* officially opened the new parish.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of May 1968, the new congregation began to discuss and plans for a church building. They asked *Kalala Vaivai* if the church could use some of his land to build the church, and he accepted their petition with joy and opened arms. That same year on the 19<sup>th</sup> of May, members of the church approached builder *Faitasia Lalogafau* and began to raise funds for this project. On the 14th of June 1968, they began to work on the foundation of the church. The church was completed on the 31st July 1968, and officially opened on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August 1968. The cost for the building of the church was \$1442.45. There were 14 *matafale* (families) and membership of the church was 190 people. In 26 July 1969, the church was brought before the sub district, in order to certify the church as a new member of the sub-district of Lefaga.

The evening of the first Sunday of September, Rev Elder *Alama* and Rev *Keriti*, with the support of the sub-district, advised the church that after 3 months, there will have to decide and vote for a minister for the new congregation of Matautu Uta. The second Sunday of September, Reverend *Meni Tanielu* made his way to the village in the capacity of a caretaker minister, until the ballot for a minister was finalised. Reverend Meni temporarily resided at one of the chiefs of the village house *Tuala Tepatasi's*.

On 14 October 1969, the village began work on the minister's house. It was completed on the 15 November 1969. It took 31 days to complete this project at a cost of \$1115.54. The congregation officially voted for Reverend *Meni Tanielu* to be the minister of their parish.

Reverend Meni retired in July 1981 when he reached seventy years of age which according to the CCCS constitution was the time to retire and became a pensioned minister.<sup>35</sup>

On September 1982, the Matautu Uta congregation officially welcomed Reverend *Setu* and his wife *Fili Mafuolo* as their ordained minister. Almost immediately the congregation set out to build a second church building in September 1982. Four years later in 1986, they built a new house for the minister to reside in. Rev. Setu Mafuolo served at the church until they reached the retirement age of seventy and become pensioned minister in 1998.

In January 1999, the Matautu Uta congregation officially welcomed their third minister, Reverend *Lauama* and *Elieta*. Since the inception of Matautu Uta in 1968, the church as increased from the 14 *matafale* and 190 members, to 33 *matafale* and 287 church members.

### **3.2. History of the Church in *Gagaifo-Uta*..<sup>36</sup>**

Before the establishment of the EFKS church in *Gagaifo uta*, there was only one EFKS for the two villages which is called the *falelua*, (two-houses) Matautu and Gagaifo. This was *Matautu Tai*. In the year 1980, a *matai* from the village of *Gagaifo uta* (moving inland from village of Gagaifo) made a petition to Rev *Niu Sapolu* who was the church minister at the that time, to establish a new parish for their own side which is *Gagaifo uta*. According to information provided by Rev *Ruperake Petaia*, the current minister for *Gagaifo uta*, the *matais* appealed to Rev *Sapolu* two times and until it was finally approved. The reason for the Rev *Sapolu* approved the appeal was to expand the ministry to those areas of the village which was far away from the main church. In other words it was accessibility that created the need for the church at Gagaifo Uta.

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<sup>35</sup> Interview with Rev. *Ruperake Petaia*, Current Minister of *Gagaifo-Uta*.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Rev *Ruperake Petaia*, Current Minister for *Gagaifo-Uta Parish*.

On Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> of March 1980, the first ceremony was conducted in order to start the new established congregation inland of *Gagaifo* village. Those who took part in this ceremony included Rev *Elder Tufue*, (leader), the former minister of *Matautu uta*, the retired Rev *Meni Tanielu* (prayer), Rev *Faasalafa* (Bible reading) and Rev *Urika Saifoloi* who gave the sermon with the theme, *Ia Tumau i le Talalelei*, (Be firm in the Gospel). The church was established and looked after by the retired Reverend *Tanielu Meni* at the time. Sunday services were held in the residence of one of the high chiefs of the village *Faumuina Vaelaa*.

Within the same year, members of the church were looking for a land to build the house of worship on and it was not an easy subject. With opened arms, *Pala'e Motusaga* and his wife offered a part of their land for the church building and this is the current location of the church.<sup>37</sup> On the 29<sup>th</sup> of November the same year, the foundation stone for the new church was laid and also a ceremony to bless the land given by the family of *Pala'e* and his family. The service was led by Rev *Niu Sapolu*, the issuing of the foundation stone was done by *Faumui Vaelaa* and *Levao Malifa* who represented the family that donated the land for the church.

The building of the church according to Rev *Petaia* was never without incident. On the 30<sup>th</sup> of December 1980, a bus crashed while carrying members of the church who went to Apia for an entertainment, to raise funds for the building of the new church building. Fortunately, no one died in this accident and members believed in the grace of God. A phrase recorded in the parish log book in memories of this accident says,

*Ua tafe toto ai ala o le fanau a le Atua i lenei aulotu aua le fausia o lona malumalu. A'o le toto foi o e na manunua o le toto aoga, ma manu'anu'a o le tautua mo le Atua.*

The ways of God's children from this congregational were filled with blood due to the building of the temple, and the blood of those injured is their sacrifice for serving the will of God).

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<sup>37</sup> [Interview with](#) Rev Ruperake Petaia, *Current Minister for Gagaifo-Uta Parish*.

On Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 1981 the new church building was opened for the new EFKS church at *Gagaifo uta* even though there were still some works needed to be done. The official opening of the church was held on the 23 December 1982 when everything was completed. The *Gagaifo uta* congregation welcomed their first minister, Rev *Aofaiga S Levi* and his wife Lolou. The founding congregation consisted of 25 families, with 18 deacons for a total of 150 members.<sup>38</sup>

### 3.3 Summary

The establishment of a second CCCS in *Matautu* further inland is based on convenience. It is easier for local villagers that live inland to attend a church closer to where they live. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to identify other factors involved in the decision making and acceptance of this significant move, to have two CCCS congregations within the same village. It is rare to hear of two CCCS in one village. However it is the belief of the author that the leaders of the church and the village chiefs gave this idea much thought. The establishment of *Matautu uta* would not divide the church but spread the CCCS to 'remote' inland areas of *Matautu*.

The establishment of the *Matautu uta*, may have been a catalyst for the congregation of *Gagaifo uta*, in the 1980s. Time and space again does not permit this thesis to explore other possible motives. However the fact that *Matautu* is often referred to as *Falelua o Matautu ma Gagaifo*, strongly suggests that there are strong and close links between *Matautu* and *Gagaifo*. It is possible that members of the *Matautu uta* influence the village of *Gagaifo* to set up a church similar to *Matautu uta*.

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<sup>38</sup> "Api O Galuega Gagaifo Uta."

## CONCLUSION

This short history of the CCCS in the village of *Matautu* in Lefaga is an interesting story of stability and development. Initially there was one congregation in *Matautu Tai* (Matautu near the sea). The congregation is characterised by stability as evident in the long serving ministers such as Perelini Afamasaga (43 years), Niu Sapolu (28 years) and the current minister Reverend Esaroma Fatilua (22 years). These three ministers served at least 20 years in the ministry, which indicative of a certain amount of stability in the history of the congregation.

However with the passage of time this stability must have lead to expansion of the church membership. The development of *Matautu uta* in the 1960s is indicative that one church in *Matautu tai* could not cope with ministry of inland areas of *Matautu*. Nearly twenty years later the formation of the *Gagaifo uta* congregation again suggests an expanding church. Such a tactic by the CCCS leaders in *Matautu* to have two congregations only served to spread and consolidate the CCCS to inland areas of the respective villages.

The establishment of *Matautu uta* in 1961 and the first service in 1968 is an example of the leadership qualities of the minister and high chiefs who saw the benefits of setting up another CCCS church within the same village. Despite the profusion of other religious denominations not only the mainline denominations such as the Methodists or the LDS; but also the new religious denominations such as the Assembly of God and Nazareth denominations, the CCCS is still the dominant church in *Matautu*.

The history of the CCCS in *Matautu* is a lesson for the CCCS to follow. It is possible to have two congregations in a large village. Having two congregation within the village provides a safety net for the CCCS; if someone is not happy with one congregation they can go to the other CCCS congregation within the same village, instead of going to another denomination. It is not within the scope of this thesis to analyse this trend.

## APPENDICES

The table below records some of the known Samoan ministers, who continued the work of the LMS missionaries in *Matautu Lefaga*. All these *faiifeau* (ministers) were trained at MTC and called to serve *Matautu CCCS*.

**DISTRICT: AANA**

**SUB DISTRICT: LEFAGA**

**VILLAGE: MATAUTU**

NAME OF MINISTER	VILLAGE	YEAR	BRIEF HISTORY
<i>Ioramo</i>		1895	
<i>Sopoaga</i>		1890-1908	
<i>Perelini Afamasaga &amp;Laumata</i>	<i>Fasitoo-tai</i>	1914-1957	They retired as Perelini was unwell, but was still serving as reverend Elder. He passed away in the comfort of his family in 1964.
<i>Iona Levi &amp; Rosita</i>	<i>Apia</i>	1959-1964	The left the parish on the 8/6/1984 as the where called by the EFKS church council to serve as the Treasurer.
<i>Niu Sapolu &amp;TafagamanuAlama</i>		1964-1992	They served the parish until they become pensioners.
<i>Esaroma Fatilua &amp;Ruta</i>		1994 - present	Are currently still serving as ministers of the congregation (2005).

**DISTRICT: AANA**  
**SUB DISTRICT: LEFAGA**  
**VILLAGE: MATAUTU-UTA**

NAME OF MINISTER	VILLAGE	YEAR	BRIEF HISTORY
<i>Meni Tanielu &amp; Taumau</i>		1969-1981	First minister of this church and retired as pensioners on May 1981.  They served as ministers for 12 years in the village.
<i>Setu Mafuolo &amp; Fili</i>	<i>Fusi Safotulafai</i>	1981-1998	They retired as pensioners in May 1981.
<i>Lauama Fonotaga &amp; Elieta</i>		1999	They were officially welcomed on the 9 <sup>th</sup> of January and are currently still working as ministers of this parish (2005).

## GLOSSARY

<i><b>āiga</b></i>	The extended family.
<i>Api o le Galuega</i>	parish log book
<i>Alofa</i>	type of offering to the local minister
<i>ava</i>	kava
<i><b>faalupega</b></i>	The ceremonial address of a person, family, village of district. It is a traditional honourific designation of a village's chiefs.
<i>faaSamoa</i>	Samoaan customs and way of life
<i>faiga Me</i>	CCCS May gatherings for monetary donation to the mother church and its operation
<i>faifeau</i>	minister or pastor
<i>fale</i>	a Samoaan house
<i>iugafono</i>	Minutes and decisions of Committee
<i>lotu</i>	religion
<i>malae</i>	the grassed area in a village traditionally used for outdoors meetings.
<i>matai</i>	chief
<i>matuatala</i>	the side of the meeting house reserved for the high chief during village meetings.
<i>Nuu o Alii</i>	men's council
<i>Nuu o Tamaitai</i>	women's council
<i>poula</i>	night dancing
<i>Soalaupule</i>	discuss and resolve matters and disagreements
<i>taulaga</i>	offerings
<i>taulelea</i>	untitled men of the village.
<i>Tulafale</i>	orators or talking chiefs



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