

**A HISTORY OF PETELEEMA FOU
CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH
SAMOA: FROM A PLANTATION CHURCH
AT TUANA'IMATO, TO AN ESTABLISHED
CHURCH AT VAITELE FOU**

A Thesis Presented to the
Faculty of the Malua Theological College

In Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Divinity with Honours

by

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July 2020

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a history of the Peteleema Fou CCCS Church in Vaitele Fou. It begins with its origin in a plantation community in Tuana'imato in the early 1940s to its relocation to Vaitele Fou in 1998. This history records the growth of a church from its humble beginnings in Tuana'imato to becoming one of the most thriving urban churches in Samoa. It's a story about the wives of Chinese labourers who founded the church. And it is also a story about the challenges faced by a church in unique and changing circumstances.

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DEDICATION

To my parents

Uta'ileuo Mano Mamona Ah Ching & Tautala Fepulea'i Ah Ching

This is to acknowledge God's blessing for your great service to the Church, *o le*

faaaogaina o le ola mo lona feau tala'i.

To my Church Minister, Reverend Iosefa Talouli Afutiti and his Good Lady Tina Afutiti and all the members of Peteleema Fou Church in Samoa and around the world.

The church has always been our unity and strength from generation to generation.

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Acknowledgments

First and foremost, to God be the Glory, now and forever more, Amen.

I take this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to the writing of this thesis. I would like to first of all acknowledge with sincere gratitude the intellectual guidance and assistance of my supervisor Rev. Dr. Latu Latai. His patience, constructive and expert advice have made this research an enjoyable journey.

I would also like to acknowledge the Principal Rev. Maafala Limā and members of the Staff of Malua Theological College for their support and assistance in many ways. The valuable feedbacks and words of encouragement during thesis seminars, have helped me greatly in the completion of this research.

Blessings, prayers and words of encouragement from my Spiritual Parents here in Malua, Tuto'atasi To'alima and Fetu To'alima, and children are not forgotten. You have made this task a fruitful and stress free experience. The support of my brothers and sisters in our *Auaiga* is much appreciated. Thank you so much! May God bless each and every one of you in all that you do to serve God.

I acknowledge the words of encouragement and support of my Church Minister, Reverend Iosefa Afutiti and his wife Tina Afutiti of the Peteleema Fou CCCS Church. I thank you for all the guidance and encouragement given me through my life journey. The interviews and personal accounts along with your prayers and words of encouragement have made this research possible.

Great heartfelt thanks, on behalf of me and my wife, to all our families in Samoa and afar. Thank you all for your continuous prayers and financial support, which brought hope and comfort at times when I needed to concentrate on my research.

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

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List of Abbreviations

PFCCS	Peteleema Fou Congregational Christian Church Samoa
CCCS	Congregational Christian Church Samoa
WSTEC	Western Samoa Trust Estate Corporation
STEC	Samoa Trust Estate Corporation
DHPG	Deutsche Handel und Plantagen Gesellschaft der Sudsee Inselnzu Hamburg
WST	Western Samoa Tala
AOG	Assembly of God
EFKS	Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano i Samoa
MTC	Malua Theological College

Introduction

This thesis is a history of the Peteleema Fou Congregational Christian Church Samoa in Vaitele Fou. It begins with its origin at Tuana'imato, in a German plantation that was operated during the colonial period of Samoa in the early 20th century. It looks at the development of a community of plantation labourers who lived on this plantation and who formed this church community. Throughout the early 20th century until Samoa became independent in 1962, the church continued to provide spiritual support for those who worked in the plantation. However, in the latter part of the 20th century, the Samoan government decided to close this plantation to make way for the construction of a sports complex. The community of plantation workers was thus dispersed and the church was relocated to Vaitele Fou. This shift to Vaitele Fou was challenging to the church. However, it also provided them with new opportunities that would see the church grow to become one of the most thriving churches in this urban area.

Inspiration:

I wanted to write this history because first and foremost, I am a member of this church. Church life has always been an integral part of my life, and the story of the Peteleema Fou Church has shaped me in many ways. My family is the only original family left from those who brought the church from Tuana'imato. So in many ways, my family has an important connection to that early period in the history of the Church. Members of my family especially my parents can provide valuable information in my attempt to write this thesis. The Peteleema Fou Church is also the first church in Vaitele Fou and it has played an important role in the lives of people in this community. I also believe that this history will be useful for future generations of this church, to know part of their identity as members of this church.

Methodology:

This thesis uses both textual and oral sources. Textual sources include Church documents such as, letters, personal diaries, and *Api o le Galuega* or the Church Record Book held by the current Church Minister. There are gaps in the written sources of Peteleema Fou, so oral history is vital. I have conducted interviews. Those interviewed included surviving members of the Church at Tuana'imato as well as descendants of those who have passed away. For the development of the church at Vaitele Fou, I interviewed Church Ministers, Lay Preachers, Deacons, Elders, as well as young people of the church. Central to the gathering of information for this research is the use of appropriate respectful language or *gagana faaaloalo*. This also involves the Talanoa approach which emphasizes the importance of properly addressing the cultural ground rules of respect when working with communities and sharing of important information.¹

Outline of Chapters

This thesis is divided into three chapters.

Chapter one is titled Humble Beginnings: Origins of a Plantation Church. This chapter attempts to trace the origin of the church in Tuana'imato. It focuses on the community of labourers who established the church and how it developed in the latter 20th century. The chapter ends with the closure of the Tuana'imato Plantation and the relocation of the church community to Vaitele Fou in 1998.

Chapter two is titled, New Beginnings: the Church at Vaitele Fou. This chapter focuses on the church when it was relocated. It observes a new phase in the church as it

¹Timoteo Vaiioleti, *Talanoa Research Methodology: A Developing position on Pacific Research*, in *Waikato Journal of Education*, 12,(Hamilton: University of Waikato, 2006), 23.

tried to continue as a community of faith. It also looks at how the church settled into a new environment and the new challenges that it provided for its members.

Chapter three is titled Growth of the Church: New Developments. This chapter focuses on the physical developments of the Church. This included its major building projects such a new Church and a Minister's house. It highlights the main achievements of church while at the same time analysing its growth spiritually.

The thesis ends with a conclusion in which an analysis is given of the history of the Peteleema Fou Church. Most importantly is a discussion on the significant lessons that can be drawn from this piece of church history on the mission of the CCCS in Samoa.

Chapter 1

Humble Beginnings: Origin of a Plantation Church

1.1 A History of the Tuana'imato Plantation

The German colonial administration of Samoa from 1900-1914 had a huge influence on the development of Samoa's economy in the early 20th century. The Germans first came to Samoa in the latter half of the 19th century with great interest in the cocoa and copra trade. Soon the German representatives of the renowned Johann Cesar Godeffroy and Son Company, thought that it would be much more satisfactory if land could be bought so that the firm could own plantations and employ labourers to work and prepare copra, cocoa bean etc. Much land was bought all over Upolu and Savaii and many experimental crops were grown.¹ In the late 19th century and early 20th century, over 7,000 Melanesian workers were brought to Samoa. The German company which was now called Deutsche Handel und Plantagen Gesellschaft der Sudsee Inseln zu Hamburg or DHPG² also began to import Chinese labourers.³

There were three main plantations at the beginning of this company. These include Mulifanua, Vaitele, and Vaialele, all situated along the north coast of Upolu. Tuana'imato was part of the larger Vaitele plantation. The Melanesian labourers who worked on these plantations were under privileged compared to the Chinese, who became indentured from 1903 onward.⁴ The Chinese had their Consul to make sure the Chinese were treated fairly and paid regularly. In 1912 the legal status of the Chinese was changed from native to

¹ Sylvia Masterman M.A, *An Outline of Samoa History*, (Apia: Commercial Printer Limited, 1980), 55.

² DHPG- English translation: German Trading and Plantation Co. Of the South Sea Islands.

³ Featunai Liuaana, "Dragons in little paradise: Chinese (Mis-) Fortunes in Samoa, 1900 – 1950," *The Journal of Pacific History*, Volume 32, Issue 1, 1997, pp. 29 – 48.

⁴ Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga a Short History of Samoa*, (Suva: Oceania Printing Press, 1987), 88.

Europeans, meaning that they were given the legal privileges of European. Both the Chinese and the Melanesians were forbidden to mix with Samoans. This was because of racial prejudices among Samoan leaders and Europeans.⁵ Because the Chinese had the freedom to work for any employment they chose, and to travel around without restrictions, they were more easily able to ignore these rules and to get Samoan wives. The Melanesians were able to marry the Samoans when the New Zealand administration began. Nevertheless, intermarriage between Samoans and the Melanesians, and the Samoans and Chinese were quite common.⁶

When the Germans ended its colonial administration of Samoa in 1914, the New Zealand administration took over the governing of Samoa. New Zealand after the turmoil years of the Mau resistance in the 1920s finally began to prepare Samoa for independence.⁷ When Samoa finally gained its independence in 1962, the German plantations of DHPG became government owned under what was known as Western Samoa Trust Estates Corporation or WSTEC.⁸ The plantations thus continued under the administration of the new independent government of Samoa. In 1971, a Samoan became manager of WSTEC for the first time. He was Tupuola Nuuausala.⁹ Currently, WSTEC is now called Samoa Trust Estate Corporation or STEC since 1993.

In December 1977, the Asian Development Bank approved a loan of US\$3.0 million for the rehabilitation of the six WSTEC estates on Upolu including Tuana'imato.

⁵ Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga a Short History of Samoa*, (Suva: Oceania Printing Press, 1987), 92.

⁶ Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga a Short History of Samoa*, (Suva: Oceania Printing Press, 1987), 110.

⁷ Patricia O'Brian, *Tautai: Samoa World History, and the LifeTa'isi.O. F.Nelson*, (University of Hawaii Press, 2017), 233.

⁸ Letaulau Pesaleli Poufa, *A History of the Congregation Christian Church Samoa in Vaitele Uta from 1988 to 2013*, (Apia, Samoa: Malua Printing Press, 2016), 19.

⁹ John W. Hart, Glen Wright, and Allan D. Patterson, *History of Samoa*, (Apia: Pesega Printing, 1971), 119.

The main aim of the project included the improvement of its infrastructure and management practices; establishment of an agriculture research station for tree crops research and many others for the development of the country.¹⁰



Figure 1. The Western Samoa Trust Estate Corporation building at Savalalo where the Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Building is now located. Download from Facebook Page, *Samoans with German Heritage*. www.facebook.com/groups/279463505493104. Accessed 5th July 2020



Figure 2. Chinese labourers working on a Cocoa plantation in Samoa. Image taken by the author of an original photograph held at the Museum of Samoa at Malifa, on the 8th July 2020.



Figure 3. Solomon Island workers on a Samoan copra plantation. Image taken by the author of an original photograph held at the Museum of Samoa at Malifa, on the 8th July 2020.

¹⁰ Dr Roland Bourdeix, *Western Samoa Agriculture Sector Study* (Asian Development Bank, 1985).

1.2 Tuana'imato and the Origin of the Tuana'imato Church

Tuana'imato is located in the district of Faleata, near the villages of Talimatau and north of Seese. This was one of the plantations that was developed by the Germans to plant cocoa and coconut for exports. Currently Tuana'imato is well known because it now hosts the biggest sports complex in Samoa. Built in the late 1990s the impressive sports complex was used to host the South Pacific Games in 2017 and 2019.



Figure 4: Faleata Sport Complex at Tuana'imato

Source: www.google.com/maps/place/Tuana'imato+Sports+Complex+Samoa.

Accessed on May 29th 2020

During its plantation years however, this was where a small community of plantation workers formed what became known as the Tuana'imato Church. As mentioned, in its early years there were Chinese indentured labourers who worked on this plantation. Later especially during the post independent years, Samoans from different districts of the country worked and lived on the plantation. These different people formed a parish for those who worked in the plantation.

According to a document¹¹ by Fugaipopoga Live Muagututia,¹² the Tuana'imato Church was established by wives of Chinese residents when the plantation was overseen by the New Zealand authorities. The names of these wives are recorded as Ula Hu Hng, Pao Ah Wa, Etelea Agugi, and Moto Aieni.

Unfortunately, not much is known of this early church except for the names given above. We note however that these women had Samoan names. The last two surnames are 'Agugi' and 'Aieni' are transliterations of Chinese names. 'Aieni' is Ah Yen while Agugi is Ah Choon. As mentioned, many of the early Chinese labourers married Samoan women despite restrictions. None of these original founders of the church are alive. However accounts by their descendants give us a glimpse into these women.

According to Amy Taylor Ah Yen- Sila, the daughter of Moto Aieni, her mother was one of those who married a Chinese labourer at Tuana'imato. She explained how her mother met her husband.

Chinese labourers worked and lived in the plantation. When it was payday, they would buy groceries in bulk in town, then bring it back to their houses in the plantation to sell to their co-workers and neighbouring villagers. My mother was from the neighbouring village of Lotopa, and she used to go and buy from the Chinese pop up shops. This was how my mother met my father. They got married and then lived in the plantation.¹³

Amy also stated that her mother was not alone. There were other Samoan women who stayed with Chinese labourers, and they were the ones that established the church.¹⁴

Si'u Agugi, the son of Etelea Agugi also related how his mother Etelea was one of the women who married a Chinese labourer at Tuana'imato. He said that her mother also

¹¹ The letter was prepared by Fugaipaogo Live Muagututia to request the government for a land to continue the church.

¹² It was noted that he was the last Lay Preacher to see the church in the plantation before the plantation was removed in 1997. He was also the manager of the plantation in that time before it was close.

¹³ Personal interview with Amy Taylor Ah Yen- Sila, Lotopa, 24th July 2020.

¹⁴ Personal interview with Amy Taylor Ah Yen- Sila, Lotopa, 24th July 2020.

met his father at the plantation and got married in 1945. Two years later in 1947, he was born in the plantation. Si'u also mentioned that his father was also one of the Chinese labourers who fled at the time when the New Zealand administration forced Chinese labourers to return to China.¹⁵

Accounts by descendants of these Samoan women give us a glimpse into how they became members of this plantation community. These women were Samoans, and like many young Samoan women at the time, they were raised and were involved in the Churches in their own villages. Hence when they married these Chinese workers, they wanted to establish a church where they could continue to worship.

Based on the accounts by these descendants, the Tuana'imato Church must have been established in the 1940s. However, there is a possibility that it had existed earlier than that. As mentioned, very little is known of the church at this early stage. However according to Fugaipopogo Live Muagututia who was member of the church in the 1970s, he had heard stories that the services were held at the balcony of one of the Chinese member's residence. He also stated that the Parish leader at the time was Vaitolo Fata, a Lay Preacher from Afega.¹⁶

Later however, the church underwent a challenging period. According to Muagututia, the Tuana'imato church struggled to survive and maintain its services when the wives of Chinese labourers left the plantation. This was because the Samoan women who were the founders of the church left the plantation with their Chinese husbands. Amy mentioned that a major influence on her parents leaving the plantation was because they

¹⁵ In 1919 the New Zealand Administration passed a policy to deport many of the Chinese back to China. There was even a law passed by the New Zealand Administration, forbidding Chinese from marrying local girls because that would contaminate the Samoan blood.

¹⁶ Letter by Fugaipopogo Live Muagututia.

had purchased land and wanted to start a business.¹⁷ In an interview with Maluseu Eteuati, who started working at the plantation in 1959, he stated that during this time, there was no longer a church.¹⁸ It was not until the early 1970s that the was revived.

Revival of the Church in the 1970s

According to Muagututia, the Tuana'imato Church was revived in 1972 by Ioane O'Brian who was a Lay Preacher from Elise. According to Ioane O'Brian's daughter Moana O'Brian, her family originally came from the Solomon Islands and worked in the cocoa plantation. She mentioned that they lived in Elise but her father travelled to Tuana'imato for work. Although she did not know the exact years her father had worked in the plantation, she recalled that he was there for many years. He was also in charge of the church.¹⁹ The Tuana'imato Plantation however was managed by Auapaau Esau Fruean who oversaw the running of the plantation.²⁰ According to his son Su'a Henry Fruean, he was 12 years old when his father was in charge of the plantation at Tuana'imato until 1977.²¹ He also stated that the church was re-established in 1972.²²

In the revival of the church in 1972, Etelei Akuini and Moto Aieni who were the original founders of the church but later left, re-joined the church.²³ In an interview with Etelea Agugi's son Si'u Agugi, he stated that his mother went back to attending the Tuana'imato church after hearing about its re-establishment. At the time they were living

¹⁷ Personal interview with Amy Taylor Ah Yen- Sila, Lotopa, 24th July 2020.

¹⁸ Personal interview with Maluseu Eteuati, Siusega, 5th June 2020.

¹⁹ Personal interview with Moana O'Brian, Elise Fou, 24th July 2020.

²⁰ Letter by Fugaipopogo Live Muagututia.

²¹ In 1977, their family left the plantation because his father's contract had finished.

²² Personal interview with Sua Henry Fruean, Siusega, 20th July 2020.

²³ Personal interview with Maluseu Eteuati, Siusega, 5th June 2020.

at Talimatau and were attending the Methodist Church.²⁴ His mother however wanted to go back to the church she helped established. According to Si'u however, his father never attended church.²⁵ After O'Brian, then Henry Peterson, a Lay Preacher from the village of Sinamoga, led the Parish.²⁶ During this time, members of the Tuana'imato Church also approached the Elder of the Faleata West Sub-District, Reverend Poasa Ioapo to officially have their church a member of the Faleata West Sub-District.

In 1976, a timber building was erected not far from the centre of the plantation for their worship services. Muagututia explained that this was the first time that worship was carried out in an actual building. It was situated beside the house of the plantation Manager, with eight families²⁷ attending including Fruean, the Manager of the plantation.²⁸ According to Eteuati, when workers sign their monthly wages at the Manager's office, they would often upon exiting, come across someone with a bowl waiting for donations for the church. The amount given was voluntary. Eteuati worked at Tuana'imato for over 40 years.²⁹ He also became the *ovasia*³⁰ or overseer at Faleasiu plantation compound for a number of years.³¹ In 1977, the Elder of the Faleata West Sub-District appointed Tapaleao Vaalele, a Lay Preacher from the village of Toamua to look

²⁴ Their attendance to the Methodist church based in Talimatau was due to the absence of the church in Tuanaimato and living in close proximity to the Methodist church.

²⁵ Personal interview with Siu Agugi, Talimatau, 24th July 2020.

²⁶ Letter by Fugaipopogo Live Muagututia.

²⁷ Maluseu and wife Meripa, Eteuati and wife Pa'i, Mafulu and wife Filifili, Saitaua and wife Meapusi, Etelea Agugi, Moto Aieni and Nifo and family.

²⁸ Personal interview with Maluseu Eteuati, Siusega, 5th June 2020.

²⁹ He started working as a *togiaso* or payday; he has to receive his pay after the day. They work on planting the cocoa and nursery the cocoa. Due to his hard works he was promote to be a *fomeni* or foreman, follow by the *ovasia* or overseer.

³⁰ responsible with looking after a part of the plantation

³¹ Personal interview with Maluseu Eteuati, Siusega, 5th June 2020.

after the parish when Peterson resigned.³² In 1978, a proper Church building was erected replacing the timber building that was used for worship. At this time Tialino Treviranus was Head of the Plantation when Aumua Ioane who was the General Manager of WSTEC approved the building of the church. Vaalele led the project of building the church.³³ Eteuati stated that Treviranus supported the church and wanted all the other eight WSTEC plantations to attend church services on Sunday.³⁴ These included Lafi, Kolea, Vaipoto, Aeale, Olosega, Nuufou, Tafaigata and Tuanaimato. Lafi was located inland of Afega village, Olosega is currently the working land of Malie, Kolea is now call Falelauniu, and Vaipoto is located in Vaitele Fou.³⁵ In 1979, the church carried out a census. From this gathering they recorded all the names of the families who attended the church. There were forty families recorded including Moto Aieni and Etelei Anuni. It was not compulsory for them to give offering, but what they can get.

³² This is because Peterson no longer lived in Sinamoga. He had land in Vaoala which was very far from church.

³³ Letter by Fugaipopogo Live Muagututia.

³⁴ Personal interview with Maluseu Eteuati, Siusega, 5th June 2020.

³⁵ Personal interview with Maluseu Eteuati, Siusega, 5th June 2020.

Maiafale							Tusi 9a190a
	11/3/79	6/5/79	15/7/79	12/8/79	9/9/79	21/10/79	1979
Tailupe	-	-	-	-	10.00	-	#
Tialino	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	360.00
Taialeao	44.50	40.00	30.00	40.00	50.00	50.00	254.50
Moio	30.00	40.00	40.00	70.00	63.00	50.00	293.00
Iio	20.00	22.00	10.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	112.00
Puni	15.20	20.00	15.00	20.00	12.00	15.00	97.20
fofoga	14.00	10.00	3.00	5.00	10.00	7.00	49.00
Mago	10.00	15.00	20.00	24.00	22.00	20.00	109.00
Ifoio	10.00	10.00	20.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	70.00
Leaia	10.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	29.00
Eteuati	10.00	11.00	15.00	15.00	16.00	20.00	87.00
Pule	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	-	50.00
Imoa	10.00	-	-	-	-	-	10.00
Nifo	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	60.00
Sola	10.00	10.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	10.00	54.00
Taea	10.00	8.00	5.00	4.00	5.00	3.00	35.00
Taisi	10.00	10.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	5.00	43.00
Vaiulu	8.00	6.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	34.00
Etelea	8.00	10.00	14.00	7.00	10.00	9.00	58.00
Qaosi	7.00	10.00	3.00	5.00	3.00	5.00	33.00
Amao	5.00	5.00	3.00	5.00	3.00	3.00	24.00
Matamua	5.00	5.00	4.00	5.00	-	3.00	22.00
Matua	5.00	6.00	6.00	4.00	6.00	4.00	31.00
Sipa	5.00	-	-	-	-	-	5.00
Iati	5.00	3.00	3.00	-	4.00	-	15.00
Lonise	4.00	-	-	-	-	-	4.00
Tuata	3.00	-	-	-	-	-	3.00
Lae	3.00	-	-	-	-	-	3.00
Mulama	1.00	2.00	-	-	3.00	2.00	8.00
Aulotu Aele	2.00	-	-	-	-	-	2.00
Lalaqi	10.00	-	-	-	-	-	10.00
Mose	-	3.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	-	11.00
foafua	-	1.00	-	-	-	-	1.00
Kalapu	-	-	2.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	9.00
ENELE	-	-	2.00	-	-	-	2.00
Elia	-	-	1.00	-	-	-	1.00
Amaile	-	-	-	-	-	1.00	1.00
Paleapa	-	-	-	3.00	-	-	3.00
Toavala	-	-	-	1.00	-	-	1.00
VAAlele	-	-	-	-	3.00	1.00	4.00
Mini	-	-	-	-	10.00	-	10.00
Talamelu	-	-	-	-	2.00	3.00	5.00

Figure 5: The names of families recorded by Eteuati on their first censer when he became the secretary of the Tuana'imato Church. Image taken by the author from Eteuati document on the 5th June 2020

In 1981 Eteuati was appointed to Faleasiu to oversee the plantation there.³⁶ In 1982 the Tuanaimato Church finally had its first Church Minister. His name was Reverend Euta Kupa.³⁷ He was voted in by the members of the church. This was historical as previously the church was led by Lay Preachers. At the time Reverend Kupa lived at Talimatau. He continued to commute from there because there was no Minister's House at the time. Rev Kupa attempted to build a Minister's House, however he was unsuccessful because the Head of Tuana'imato Plantation, Mika Wulf refused to allow the building of a Minister's House at the plantation.³⁸ Negotiations between Reverend Kupa and Faasootauloa Sam Saili, the General Manager of WSTEC at the time finally resulted in the request being granted, permittance to build a Minister's House.³⁹ The house was completed in 1983. Reverend Kupa and his good lady Fiapa'ipa'i then moved in and looked after the church. Later, the CCCS Faleseela Lefaga elected Reverend Kupa to be their Minister. He left leaving the church to be led by Lay Preacher Te'o Uli. Uli was also the overseer of the plantation.⁴⁰

Once again the church was left to the leadership of Lay Preachers. When Uli retired from his work as an overseer, he was replaced with another Lay Preacher Muliau Lata who soon left the parish in November of the same year. Lata was sick and he left to seek medical help in New Zealand. In 1986, Elder Poasa then appointed Muagututia who was a Lay Preacher to lead the church. Muagututia was also the Manager of the Plantation since 1985. It was Muagututia who continued to lead the church until 1998 when the plantation was closed and the church was shifted to Vaitele Fou.

³⁶ He also became the overseer at Faleasiu plantation compound for a number of years'.

³⁷ Letter by Fugaipopogo Live Muagututia

³⁸ Letter by Fugaipopogo Live Muagututia.

³⁹ Telephone interview with Fugaipopogo Live Muagututia, New Zealand 18th January 2020.

⁴⁰ Letter by Fugaipopogo Live Muagututia.

1.3 Tuana'imato Church Community

Members of the Tuana'imato Church were made up of people from different villages and backgrounds around Samoa. In 1974, at the age of 14, a young man by the name of Mano Mamona started to work in the plantation.⁴¹ He would walk a distance to work as his family lived in Talimatau. Upon his first arrival at his new job, he had noticed a congregation of people at the plantation gathered inside a church. He paid no attention to this as he was set focused on getting his job done. He knew this would extensively help his family out so he had to ensure the job was done right. He was from a family who attended the Mormon church and therefore was not interested in joining this church. His role required him to cut down cocoa plants, gather the crop and send them to the main centre of WSTEC in Apia. In a week's work, he would make WST3. He was paid fortnightly.

According to Lay Preacher Muagututia who arrived at the plantation in 1985, those who worked at the plantation came from different areas of Samoa. He described the church as a well-established congregation with a church and home for the Minister.⁴² He stated that he would cross paths with many different personalities and people living in far-away villages.

Italia Gasolo who joined the plantation in 1983 told her story of her time in the plantation. She was one of the women who had been given the opportunity to work there. She made quite the trip from Siumu in search for work in the hope of feeding and clothing her family.⁴³ She related how she discovered many of those who worked there had come from the opposite side of the island. She stated that many of the workers who had been

⁴¹ Personal interview with Mano Mamona, Vaitele, 11th November 2019.

⁴² Telephone interview with Fugaipopogo Live Muagututia, New Zealand 18th January 2020.

⁴³ Personal interview with Itagia Gasolo, Siumu, 23rd December 2019.

working at the plantation for countless years hailed from villages in the farther regions of Aleipata, Safata, Savaii as well as Faleata.⁴⁴ They found that the church was a place of unity and peace which helped in strengthening one another to come together. The workers may have been from different villages, upbringings and denominations however, bound by the homely feel of the church - they felt safe enough around one another to work toward a common goal of getting their jobs done. It resulted in easier communication and knowing each and every one of them received the same amount of pay of \$3 weekly.⁴⁵

Due to the nature of their work as labourers, there was no place for hierarchy or competition. The jobs included the gathering of cocoa beans by the women and cutting of cocoa plants by the men and transporting them to the main office of the WSTEC at Savalalo for the purposes of exporting and selling them at the markets.⁴⁶ These people worked tirelessly as they never wanted to miss the chance of sending money home. They wished for nothing but a prosperous life ahead for their families who were anticipating their return with more than just money to bring home but a life filled with opportunities ahead.⁴⁷

When Muagututia arrived in 1985, there were already fourteen families attending the church. Church members felt the urge to give and had given as they had received from their hard labour. All was well with the programmes that had been put into place. On the first Sunday of each month, which was the Holy Communion, they would trek to Tulaele, where Reverend Faauuga Matautia and his good lady Maima had been serving to partake in this monthly ritual.⁴⁸ Church members gave wholeheartedly to any Sunday donations

⁴⁴ Personal interview with Itagia Gasolo, Siumu, 23rd December 2019.

⁴⁵ Personal interview with Maluseu Eteuati, Siusega, 5th June 2020.

⁴⁶ Personal interview with Itagia Gasolo, Siumu, 23rd December 2019.

⁴⁷ Telephone interview with Fugaipopogo Live Muagututia, New Zealand 18th January 2020.

⁴⁸ Personal interview with Mano Mamona, Vaitele, 11th November 2019.

not only for Muagututia who was looking after the congregation, but for the offering of the Church. Although their donations had been notably lesser than that of other churches, that did not take away the vision they had which was to see the church grow and ultimately flourish in the Word of God.⁴⁹ They did not take advantage of being a small community of workers on a plantation; they were more than just that. Since Muagututia arrived, he had seen all sorts of growth, spiritually, mentally and on a personal level. This warmed him knowing God's blessings were visualised in their small and humble abode. However, what was to strike them was something that would change their outlook and shook their faith with might stronger than ever before.⁵⁰ Mamona mentioned that in 1989, when WSTEC became independent they had offered a discounted price of \$5,000 for quarter acre lands at Vaitele. This was for families that were able to purchase their own land. It was a gift for their services in the plantation.⁵¹ Those who had come after this offer, the government had given them the opportunity to lease the land. They had no idea on the intentions of the government, only the feeling of joy because of the land they had received.

1.4 Turbulent Times and the Closure of the Tuana'imato Church

In the year 1990, Samoa was hit with Cyclone Ofa. According to the *Samoa Observer*, "Cyclone Ofa pounded Western Samoa for three days ... causing indescribable devastation, homelessness and many people to break down and cry bitter tears of frustration and despair."⁵² The cyclone destroyed almost all the plantation in Tuana'imato

⁴⁹Personal interview with Itagia Gasolo, Siumu, 23rd December 2019.

⁵⁰Telephone interview with Fugaipopogo Live Muagututia, New Zealand 18th January 2020.

⁵¹ Personal interview with Mano Mamona, Vaitele, 11th November 2019.

⁵² Samoa Observer Newspaper, "Cyclone Ofa delivers 3 day devastating blow," February 9, 1990,1.

including the workers houses, the crops and more importantly the church building, the Minister's house and its surroundings. The plantation workers worked tirelessly in order to rebuild and restore their beloved community and especially the cocoa crops. But in 1991 they were once again hit with another cyclone. The *New York Times* reported that "Tropical cyclone Val lashed the Samoan Islands for five days, has destroyed most of the food crops, disrupted economic activity and left thousands of people homeless. It was the worse hurricane in the area in the past 30 years."⁵³

The impact of these two cyclones was devastating for the Tuana'imato Church. Things had taken a turn for the worse and the decline in church members was truly evident. There was no hope and workers had given up trying to rebuild only to have things torn apart yet again. There was little money being made due to the decline in jobs which affected Sunday offering. However, there were a select few who had stayed true to their faith. Those who stayed within the Church included Mamona, who worked at the plantation since 1972.

In 1990, Mamona revealed that he had married a young lady name Tautala,⁵⁴ living in the plantation. This finally caused him to attend the church. In 1995 he became a Deacon to fulfil their congregational obligations while working on the plantation.⁵⁵ He started serving from here on in and would walk from Talimatau to attend Sunday services. He noted that there were fourteen families⁵⁶ at the time, eleven of whom resided on the plantation and the rest were from surrounding villages. Although three of the families were from the surrounding villages, some of them worked in the plantation. Since the

⁵³ Marvine Howe, The New York Times, " *Samoan Island Are Staggering From Big Cyclone*," 1991, 1.

⁵⁴ She was the secretary of Muagututia. (manager of the plantation) She was related to Muagututia's wife, so she used to live at Muagututia's place and work.

⁵⁵ Personal interview with Mano Mamona, Vaitele, 11th November 2019.

⁵⁶ These families were, Fuga Muagututia, Lutua Vesi, Faalogo Tasesa, Amoa Amoa, Mamona Ah Ching, Taua Foimai, Poto Namulauulu, Nifo Sauaga, Ifopo Ioane, Sooalo Afato, Itagia Gasolo, Ilalio Fa, Upeli Neemia, and Aukuso Ioane.

tragic cyclones, people had stopped working; however, they had stayed in the plantation as they still yearned to attend the services. Muagututia was well aware of the effect the last several years had on the plantation. Church members were told that Sunday offerings were not compulsory. This warmed the people and allowed them to feel accepted regardless of what they gave which ultimately led them closer to the church.

In 1996, when the government had discovered there was little profit being generated from the plantation, they issued a cease notice to shut down any operations within Tuana'imato so they could use the land for a sporting complex for the then upcoming South Pacific Games in 2007.⁵⁷ This was a very tough decision on the community as it would mean not only losing the plantation, but the church too would have to be closed. The government tried to come up with initiatives to compensate the villagers and workers especially after years of service to the government.

In 1996, the members of the Church and Deacons agreed on a proposal to be presented to the government in order to plea for land for the church to be relocated.⁵⁸ Muagututia, wrote a letter⁵⁹ which all fourteen families of the church signed asking to be compensated with land for the church to be relocated. They also expressed that their church was now alive and well.⁶⁰ Four elders put up a strong front and agreed to take the letter to the government. They were Luatua Vesi, Faalogo Tasesa, Amoa Amoa as well as Mano Mamona. They attempted for several days to meet the Prime Minister Tofilau Eti Alesana at the time but were unsuccessful. Within two weeks, Alesana had passed away. They then decided to seek help from the Elders of the CCCS in the hope of a chance

⁵⁷ Personal interview with Itagia Gasolo, Siumu, 23rd December 2019.

⁵⁸ Personal interview with Mano Mamona, Vaitele, 11th November 2019.

⁵⁹ In this letter attached with the information of the church since the beginning, this is where all the information mention above comes from.

⁶⁰ Personal interview with Mano Mamona, Vaitele, 11th November 2019.

to reach government officials. The Secretary of the Elders Committee Rev Mareko Mareko, reached out to Prime Minister Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, to reconsider or provide a solution. Due to delays in finding a place to relocate the church to, the Elders Committee of the CCCS finally stepped in and resolved the situation. They had understood the plight of the Tuana'imato church and decided to buy land for the church to be located to. The CCCS paid WST28, 000 for an acre of land at Vaitele Fou.

In the years 1996-1997 those who had held on to the hope of regaining their Sunday service ritual began to move. However, tensions began to arise between the members of the church. For three weeks they bickered and argued as to how they were to dismantle church. Some argued that each person should be given parts of the building like timber and the iron roof, but many felt that they needed to keep the materials in order to rebuild the church in Vaitele. There were harsh words being thrown around with offensive remarks that eventually led one of the deacons to say; "*Afai loa o le tulaga lea ia tatala loa le falesa ma ave togi i lalo o le vaitafe.*"⁶¹ "If this is the case then take the church apart and throw it in the river." Despite these differences, Muagututia finally agreed that the church should not be torn apart and distributed, but leave all the material to rebuild a new church.

With the matter of the church building settled, another problem arose when the church members questioned the \$4,000 collected from the offerings for the church. Many asked for it to be distributed evenly but the Lay Preacher Muagututia believed this should be used as their final offering or *taulaga* for the CCCS wider congregation. Many frowned upon this as they believed they needed the funds to relocate to Vaitele. On the 5th February 1998, work on dismantling the church building and the Minister's House began. Mamona

⁶¹ Personal interview with Mano Mamona, Vaitele, 11th November 2019.

mentioned that not one person from their congregation helped with the shifting of Church materials to Vaitele. Each person had their own things to attend to.⁶² Taua Foimai was the only one willing to help. He would walk from Talimatau along with two Mormon missionaries from America, who were living with them at the time to help dismantle the church. They were the few who had taken the church apart and shifted to Vaitele. The last of what was left over from the church had been burnt up after finding themselves worn out from going back and forth. It was said that not long after they were burned, those who remained in the plantation who did not lend a helping hand, rushed over to put out the fire and took what was left.⁶³

⁶² Personal interview with Mano Mamona, Vaitele, 11th November 2019.

⁶³ Personal interview with Mano Mamona, Vaitele, 11th November 2019.

Chapter 2 New Beginnings: The Church at Vaitele Fou

2.1 A History of Vaitele Fou

Vaitele Fou is part of the larger Vaitele village. Vaitele village is located on the west of the Capital Apia along the central-north Coast of Upolu Island.¹ Vaitele has three divisions, Vaitele Tai where the main road is, Vaitele Uta close to Faleata Sports Complex and Vaitele Fou, the newly settled land near Faleula. According to the 2001 national census, Vaitele's population was 5,200. In 2016 it increased rapidly to 8,156.²



¹ Google Satellite map of Vaitele, <http://www.maplandia.com>samoa.vaitele>, 2005-2016.

² Samoa Bureau of Statistics, Population and Housing Census 2001 and 2016 Analytic Report (Apia, Samoa: Samoa Bureau of Statistic, 2001 & 2016), 86,14.

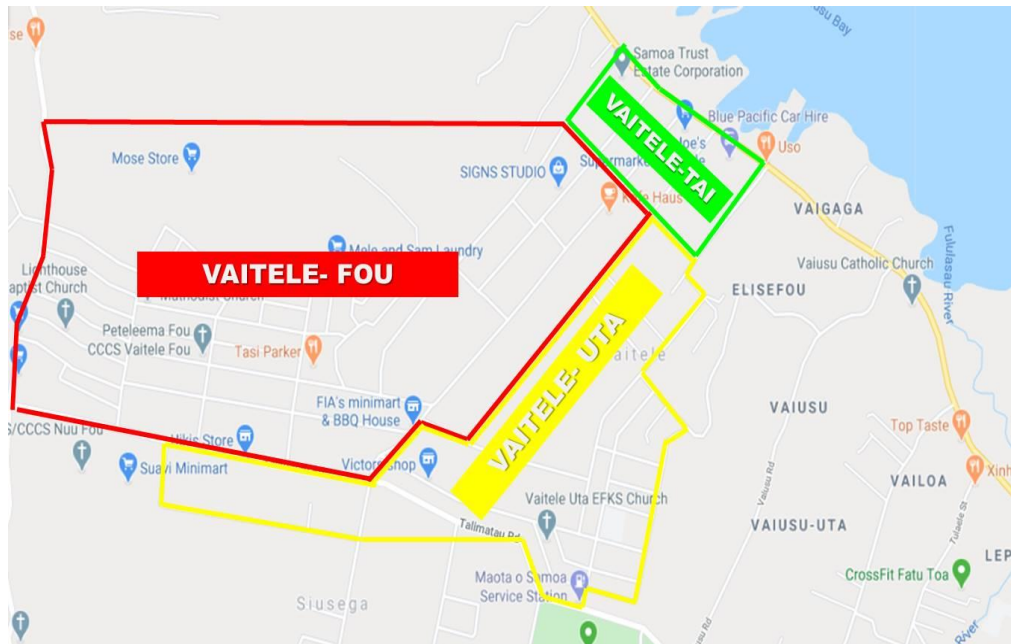


Figure 6a, b Map of Vaitele Fou current location, and Vaitele three sub-division
Source: www.google.com/maps/search/Vaitele+Samoa. Accessed on May 29th 2020.

Vaitele Fou is situated not far from Tuana'imato. In fact, both are situated in the same District of Faleata. It takes about six minutes to drive from where the old Church was situated in Tuana'imato to its new location at Vaitele Fou. As mentioned Vaitele land was largely owned by the German company DHPG during the German colonial administration of Samoa. According to Brunt Tony, "About a quarter of Upolu was freehold private land in the hand of German companies or families in 1914. It was generally bought from Samoans in the 1860-1880 period."³ Freehold land accounts for about 12 percent of Samoa's land. Most of it is in Apia and the surrounding urban area.⁴

In the 1990s, under Samoa Trust Estate Corporation (STEC), Vaitele land was the target of a government initiated land grab for economic growth and job creation. The

³Tony Brunt, "Upolu- Land that Came Back to the People", www.facebook.com/people/Tony-Brunt/100011385447072, 2019.

⁴ Land Equity International 2005, Samoa registration system- review, analysis and future strategy, Second Infrastructure and Asset Management Project, Component 5.01 Land Administration & Survey, technical assistance report no. 2, Samoa, March.

government initially sought to encourage commercial farming on these lands, but a lack of interest in commercial farming led to the decision to subdivide the lands in Vaitele into ¼ acre housing plots. These sub-divisions became very popular for those seeking freehold land ownership, particularly for untitled Samoans seeking freehold land ownership, which is independent from the influence of the family *Matai* or Chiefs in terms of land resource allocation.⁵ All land at Vaitele thus became freehold land when the Government handed all the land that was under STEC to the Samoa Land Corporation to sell around the 2000.

2.2 Beginning of the Church in Vaitele Fou

The commencement of the Church in Vaitele Fou began with a service on the 18th February 1998. This commencement service was held at Mano Mamona and his wife Tautala's residence.⁶ According to Mamona there was a four week period when no services were held. This gave people time to settle in until the time when the church was finally ready to hold services again, at their new location.⁷ When the church shifted to Vaitele Fou, there were not many residents in the area. There was also only one other church that had already been established in Vaitele Uta, an Assembly of God (AOG) church which accommodated the majority of residents in Vaitele Fou during this time. Early challenges were noted with church attendance. Some church members would stay home and not attend the early services. Due to the distance between Mamona's house and people's residences, many were discouraged to go to church.

⁵ Alec Thornton, Tony Binns, and Malia Talaitupu Kerslake, *Hard Time in Apia? Urban Landlessness and the Church in Samoa*, (Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography, November 2013).

⁶ Reverend Iosefa Afutiti, the current Minister of the Church, explained that the recommencement of the church had been noted and recorded in the *Api o le Galuega* or Church Record Book.

⁷ Personal interview with Mano Mamona, Vaitele, 11th November 2019.

When Mamona heard that a few of the church members had started to attend the AOG services, he decided to take a plea to Reverend Faauuga Matautia of Tulaele⁸ for help as he could not fathom seeing their church members disperse any longer. Determined not to let this ruined the hard work involved in maintaining the church, Reverend Matautia asked Mamona to continue to gather the people and begin services as a way of starting up again.

Mamona walked days on end to reach every family and was able to get many to attend. Unfortunately, those who had gone to other denominations were not able to be swayed. This however did not stop the services from taking place. Church members began to meet and discuss the need for a new leader in order to guide them as they had in Tuana'imato. In a meeting held one Sunday evening, the congregation agreed to take a request to Reverend Matautia in order to allow Luatua Vesi, who was a Lay Preacher at the time, to conduct their Sunday services. It was then that Lay Preacher Vesi commenced services again for the church.⁹

Early church services were called *lotu fa'aleaiga* or 'family worship services'.¹⁰ They were not conducted in the usual manner. There was usually only one hymn sung, followed by a Bible reading, a short meditation and then a closing prayer. This is different from the normal proceedings where there was a Prayer for the Holy Spirit, hymn, Bible Reading, hymn, prayer, hymn, a meditation on the scripture, the final hymn, and followed by the closing prayer.

At the time, the Church services were followed by a *to'ona'i* or Sunday fellowship meal. The sole purpose behind this was to keep the families and church members together.

⁸ Reverend Matautia, Tulaele CCCS who gather with the Tuana'imato CCCS for every *Holy Communion*.

⁹ Personal interview with Mano Mamona, Vaitele 11th November 2019.

¹⁰ Personal interview with Reverend Iosefa Afutiti current Minister of PFCCC, Vaitele Fou, 22nd December 2019.

There were seven families that Mamona was able to gather on his walk to resume the church, and these were the same ones that were at Tuana'imato.¹¹ The other original members returned to families and villages they had come from, specifically the rural locations.

In the two months following the commencement of these services for the families, the church was met with new challenges. The acting Lay Preacher Vesi had pointed out that the distance they were travelling each Sunday from their homes to Mamona's residence was getting difficult. Many lived in the west side of Vaitele Fou whereas Mamona's home was situated at the far end of the east side of Vaitele Fou. The distance between the majority of the families' homes and Mamona's home, was excessive.¹² At a meeting one Sunday, church members raised this as a concern. A resolution was voiced; to shift the services to Tupuola Taelasi's residence as it was much closer to the homes of the majority of the church. However, what they soon realised was that Taelasi and his family had been split into three denominations. Taelasi may have been attending their church but some of his family attended AOG and the rest Methodist. Although this provided an awkward situation for the church, the majority of the members still agreed to take their plea to Taelasi. When they arrived at Taelasi's residence, he was no longer there. Met by his children Taelasi's eldest son explained that they were now attending the AOG. Representatives of the church were told that Taelasi was now living where he worked and did not want the church services to be held at his home. Taelasi's sudden disappearance, and the negative reaction from his children was bad news for the church.. Mamona's words resonated deeply with the church as he showed his disappointment,

¹¹ They included Lay Preacher Luatua Vesi, Deacon Nifo and family, Tupuola Taelasi and wife Soo, Taua Foimai and wife Gafoa, Simi and family, Reverend Segisese and wife Eve, Mano Mamona and wife Tautala and their families.

¹² *Api ole Galuega Peteleema Fou.*

“Ona o tulaga ua oo I ai le galuega a le Alii e peiseai ua fetosoaina faapa’utolo a loi i luga o le ala” - “It is saddening to think that God’s work is being dragged around like a lost band of ants.”¹³,

In the midst of this situation, Taua Foimai and his good lady offered their residence which was not far from Tupuola’s residence to continue the services. The church was thankful for this and continued their services as usual. Foimai and Gafoa however had a small and humble abode which was not very stable. The floor was covered with palm leaves laid out covering the soil to keep out dirt and dust, Chairs from the old church in Tuana’imato however were used to seat the members during worship.¹⁴

The services at Foimai and Gafoa’s home began on 19th April 1998. Once this had been established a new challenge arose. Mamona spoke of how the church now wanted to seek out ways of fundraising in order to rebuild their church but Vesi did not agree. He didn’t like the idea of fundraising, but instead preferred to just continue having church services on Sunday as per usual.



Figure 7. Mamona and Tautala’s residence where the church was first held in VaiteleFou. Taken by the author on May 22nd 2020

¹³ Personal interview with Mano Mamona, Vaitele, 11th November 2019.

¹⁴ *Api ole Galuega Peteleema Fou.*



Figure 8. Family photo Mano Mamona, wife Tautala, and two sons Meafou (right) and Esera (left) in front of Foimai and Gafoa resident. Taken by Siavata Fidow. Unknown date

Although the church was met with many of these challenges, their bond showed no disconnection and their faith not shaken. This was evident in the addition of new families attending the services at Foimai's residence.¹⁵ On the 10th May 1998, the third Sunday since the church started at Foimai's residence, the church requested Reverend Matautia for an opportunity to re-join the Faleata West Sub District. This was because, the Church had left the Sub District when they left Tuanaimato. Reverend Matautia responded with the notion that they leave this request with them as they will need to discuss as a whole in order to come to a final decision.

On the 3rd June 1998 the church was officially welcomed as a member of the Faleata i Sisifo Sub District. On the 19th August 1998, Elder Reverend. Eteuati Pasia led the

¹⁵These families were Ailoilo Fausia and Lotu, Pelenato Fidow and Siavata, Mulitalo Malo and Lima.

ceremony to officially re-launch the church. During the service Eleder Pasia also renamed the church Peteleema Fou CCCS Church in Vaitele Fou. This name still stands to this day. Leading up to this official opening, the church had already been losing families one by one. Some of the families left because of their own accord while some have lost interest because of the different environment. Eight had left leaving Luatua, Tupuola, Foimai, Amoa and Mamona. When they had shifted the church to Foimai's home, 5 families had joined the church which included, Ailoilo Fausia and wife Lotu, Pelenato Fidow and wife Siavata, Mulitalo Malo and Lima, Vaipua Felise and Seesee and Afaese. These new families represented a new membership of the Church from those at Tuanaimato.

While speaking to Olo Farani Naotala,¹⁶ he is the son of Ailoilo Fausia and Lotu. He stated that their family was one of the first to purchase land in Vaitele Fou in 1997. From the village of Fagaloa they decided to settle in Vaitele Fou to be closer to schools and work. When they bought their land they started attending the AOG until they heard of CCCS services being held at Mamona's residence. According to Naotala, they witnessed the struggles faced by the church when it was trying to re-establish at Vaitele Fou. These challenges were at a time when the people were in the initial stages of settling in and developing their homes and families. Work was difficult to find. Many families lived in simple Samoan houses such as *faleo'o*, while they searched for an income in order to pay for basic necessities and land leases. Despite these challenges, the new settlers were content in finding a CCCS church to attend. They were happy to worship in the denomination that they grew up in the villages. Under the leadership of Lay Preacher Vesi, Naotala and his family participated in several church programmes such as the choir, Sunday school and the youth.¹⁷

¹⁶ The president of the Peteleema Fou Youth.

¹⁷ Personal interview with Olo Farani Naotala, Vaitele Fou, 23rd January 2020.

Unfortunately, it had become evident that Lay Preacher Vesi's health was declining while leading the church. Soon he began to lose his sight which affected his ability to preach at his full potential. At this stage, the church took another plea to Reverend Matautia for help for their worship services.¹⁸ The church asked upon request¹⁹ for Reverend Iosefa Afutiti, an ordained Minister who was attending Reverend Matautia's church at Tulaele. Reverend Matautia took the plea to the Elder and the Sub District of Faleata West for confirmation. Reverend Afutiti was then appointed to look after the church temporarily.²⁰ On the second Sunday of June 1998, the Peteleema Fou Church finally welcomed their new Minister and his family. Upon their first meeting with the Minister and his wife, they finally decided to have Reverend Afutiti and his good lady Tina as their permanent Minister.

The church at the time included Reverend Segisese Fuataga and his good lady Eve, Lay Preacher Luatua Vesi, six Deacons and their families including Mano Mamona, Foimai Taua, Tupuola Taelase, Amoa Amoa, Vaipua Felise, Taelega Poasa, and other families who attended such as Loli, Malae Afaese, Mulitalo Malo, Pelenato Fidow, Simi Tea, Sipaea Ierome, Ifopo Ioane and Poto Ete. These families had been recorded as those who welcomed Reverend Afutiti and his family into their Church.²¹ Mamona explained that during this time, the church had no house for the minister and his wife. Hence they continued to stay in their residence in Tulaele, while looking after the church. At that time Mamona was the Secretary for the church and he helped in transporting them to and from

¹⁸ Personal interviews with Reverend Iosefa Afutiti current Minister of PFCCC, Vaitele Fou, 22nd December 2019.

¹⁹ The church request Reverend Iosefa Afutiti as one to lead following Luatua Vesi as they have noted his ongoing help with Holy Communion during the time they were situated in Tuana'imato and Tulaele.

²⁰ Personal interview Mano Mamona, Vaitele, 11th November 2019.

²¹ *Api ole Galuega Peteleema Fou.*

services every Sunday. The vehicle he used was supplied to him by the Ministry of Justice who had employed him at the time.²²

Consequently, the church expanded and therefore the need to build a place for worship and a house for the Minister and his family. This meant money and so the church began to raise funds through donations and other activities. Food stalls were organised and put up throughout Vaitele Fou in which they sold Samoan food such as, cocoa rice, pawpaw soup and baked Samoan bread. Various groups within the Church all contributed to the food stalls. The Mother's Fellowship or *Mafutaga Tina* would focus on making the food whereas the men and youth supported by, delivering the food stall. This was the beauty of this certain time for the church where all members worked tirelessly together in order to gain enough money to help develop the church.

2.3 Church Land and its Development

On the 26th of June 1998, the CCCS mother church under the direction of the Committee of Elders bought a 1 acre of land at Vaitele Fou to be gifted to the Peteleema Fou Church. This saw the fulfilment of a request by the members of the Church given to the CCCS prior to leaving Tuanaimato. On that day in which the land was officially handed over, the Elders Committee Deputy Chairman Reverend Sulufaiga Samasoni, Secretary of the Committee Reverend Maogi Leausa, Secretary of Faleata District Reverend FaapaiaTariu and Secretary of Faleata West Sub District Reverend Faauuga Matautia were present, along with five quantity surveyors and representatives from the church. This was the beginning phase in the development of the Church. As we will see,

²² Personal interview Mano Mamona, Vaitele, 11th November 2019.

this was not an easy road especially as the land was filled with bush and a coconut plantation.²³

On the 7th July 1998, work on clearing the land began. Although there were many hardships leading up to this stage, the church members came together and help to get things rolling especially as they now had land for their church.²⁴ In clearing the land, no machines were used in the process as they had to use their bare hands. The church did not have enough funds to gather the means needed for a faster and quicker process of clearing the land. Therefore, this work was carried out manually. People from other neighbouring churches such as Tulaele and Vaitele Uta, lent a helping hand.²⁵

On the 3rd September 1998, the first building for the Church was measured and outlined. The house was measured at 70 feet long and 30 feet wide with an extended area of 30 feet wide and 70 feet long. It was designed to host both the Minister and his family as well as a place where the congregation could meet and host other events.²⁶ The Minister and his family were thus meant to stay in the extended area while the main area of the house acted as a multi-purpose area for hosting church gatherings such as worship and fellowship meals.

Deacon Pelenato Fidow and his wife Siavata offered to sketch out the architectural plan for the house. Fidow had a degree in architecture along with a contracting business and was a huge help especially to the church with few funds. During the construction of the house, families would show up each day at a time to feed the workers. Any money gifted was given to the builders and workers.

²³ *Api ole Galuega Peteleema Fou.*

²⁴ *Api ole Galuega Peteleema Fou.*

²⁵ Personal interviews with Reverend Iosefa Afutiti current Minister of PFCCC, Vaitele Fou, 22nd December 2019.

²⁶ *Api ole Galuega Peteleema Fou.*

Some church members began to leave due to the financial demands of the work. However, that did not shake the faith of the majority of church members. As firm believers they too knew this would pass and God would guide them accordingly. While the work continued, more and more families began to settle in the surrounding area. Most of them came from Savaii and the rural regions of Upolu to seek better futures for their children. These families set up and established themselves on newly bought land close to work and school in the urban area. Melepone Isara who settled at Vaitele Fou at this time in 1998 witnessed this increase migration.²⁷ This was also the time when more families began to attend the Peteleema Fou Church.

At the time, the congregation had limited funds. Hence the church members continued their fundraising activities. Raffles, walkathons and a regular bingo were added to the food stalls. The money received from these along with \$30,000 they had loaned from the CCCS *To'omaga* Loaning Scheme helped with the purchase of building materials. In the end, the total cost of the work amounted to \$48,606.80.²⁸

The official opening took place on the 4th of December 1998 in which Elder Reverend Eteuati Pasia led the service.²⁹ The house however was not fully completed with furnishing. The ceiling had not been covered and the rooms had not been subdivided for the Minister and his family to live in. Despite this, the church members were happy with what they were able to provide with the money they had. The most important thing at this stage was that they finally had a building where they were able to host their Minister and hold their services.³⁰ The fundraisers continued where the mother would

²⁷ Personal interview with Melepone Isara, Malua, 20th February 2020.

²⁸ *Api ole Galuega Peteleema Fou.*

²⁹ *Api ole Galuega Peteleema Fou.*

³⁰ Personal interview with Reverend Iosefa Afutiti current Minister of PFCCC, Vaitele Fou, 22nd December 2019.

cook food for the youths to sell at the food stalls. The fathers on the other hand, continued with the work in building parts that had not been completed.

Meanwhile, services were held in the wider area of the house while fellowship meals were held on the other side of the house. The seats were often shifted to and from to make room for these activities. During the week, the men would work on the building. On Saturdays they would work until 12pm before choir practice in the afternoon.³¹ This multipurpose building became the centre of the church where every event was held such as worship services, Sunday school, fellowship meals, church meetings as well as fundraising activities such as bingos.



³¹ Personal interview with Olo Farani Naotala, Vaitele Fou, 23rd January 2020.



Figure 9a,b The first building that was build for church and the minister, a side view and the front view. Taken by the author on May 22nd 2020.

With the new building, Sunday services were held in the usual manner. There were no families in the immediate vicinity of the church land, so there was no concern regarding excess noise. The property was surrounded by uncleared bush land and coconut trees which was a bonus for the Minister and the church. According to Reverend Afutiti, when they first settled there, his wife was often concerned with the quietness as the area was still largely unsettled.

However, soon more people began to shift to Vaitele Fou. This led to an increase in the membership of the church. Many however would just attend church services but not take part in programmes to help the church grow. According to Naotala “*Atonu o le isi mafuaga ona e vaai tagata e lei mautu lelei se falesa aua sauniga.*” “It seemed as if people were not fully committed due to the absence of a church building.”³² As time went by, the church noted the increase in traffic and pedestrians on the road outside. The church

³² Personal interview with Olo Farani Naotala, Vaitele Fou, 23rd January 2020.

then decided to install blinds to the open building to keep worship services free from public viewing and outside distractions.

As the services continued, the church members felt that they should no longer hold their Sunday fellowship meals in the same partition of the house where their services were held. They realised that they needed a separate location to conduct their services and that the space dedicated to the worship of God needed to be treated in a sacred manner. This meant separating their non-worship activities from usual worship. This resulted in moving their non-worship programmes to another building. A Samoan house was built and called *Fale o Tama* or House for the Fathers, and this was where all the non-worship activities were hosted.

Meanwhile, the congregation was now planning to build a Church. The first action taken in order for a church was a *Tusigaigoa* or Census on the 27th February 1999. At the time, twelve *matafale*³³ or working families participated with a few other *matafale fesoasoani*³⁴ or helping families. Together they raised \$802.50. There were 4 families that did not attend with no known reason why. The majority of the church members attended, and 101 people were noted along with elders and children.³⁵ At the same time church subs were collected and deposited into the savings accounts for the church they longed for to be built in the near future.

2.4 Tensions with the Church

This was also a challenging period for the church. There were constant battles and obstacles within the church. There was a time when the Minister was being questioned

³³ Families that have been registered officially, subject to fulfil the wants and needs of the congregation in whatever circumstances.

³⁴ *Matafale Fesoasoani*. families that attend the church but are not registered officially. They are given the choice whether to contribute to the extra-curricular of the church.

³⁵ *Api ole Galuega Peteleema Fou*.

for the way he handled certain situations. The tone in which he preached was also criticised and right down to the way people had reacted to his actions. This eventually pushed some members of the church away as they no longer wanted to be a part of the church. Some church members demanded that the Minister listen to what they had to say. Some argued that this was the way things were done in their villages in the rural areas where chiefs are also a big part of the church and its decision making. The Peteleema Fou church however was not a church in traditional rural village where there was a strong chiefly system. In a *nuumavae* or traditional Samoan village, there was greater reliance on the influence of village chiefs in the church. This was not the case in churches such as Peteleema Fou. Such a reason made it difficult to organise and run the church, as the church was run on a more Minister basis, with the Minister being the one and only leader.

Several members of the church raised the attitude of the Minister as unacceptable. Some were unhappy with the many fundraising activities that required a fair amount of money such as raffles and *tausala*'s.³⁶ When the Minister first took their sabbatical leave in 6th March 2005, the church members talked about sacking him upon his return. Some no longer wanted him as their Minister.

When they left, Lay Preacher Sao Solomona and Lay Preacher Faimalo Pinati took turn to look after the congregation. When Reverend Afutiti and his family returned in the month of June, concerns by the church in regards to the Minister's attitude and leadership style were raised by a retired Elder Minister, Reverend Alaovae.³⁷ Reverend Afutiti responded accordingly in the hope of keeping the peace and maintaining a civil

³⁶ Samoan Cultural Fundraisers, Samoan *siva*'s or dancing.

³⁷ Personal interview with Melepone Isara, Malua, 20th February 2020.

relationship with the congregation. It was then that the church agreed on continuing his ministry at Peteleema Fou.³⁸

As time passed and these events continued, members became used to the Minister and his leadership style. Things that had bothered them at first had now become routine. Isara believed that certain attitudes towards the Minister's leadership was not going to bother them anywhere. He suggested to the members to listen to the Minister and what he had planned as he was their appointed leader. He eventually realised that in spending more time with the Minister, he learnt something useful about him that the members of the church had not perceived accordingly.³⁹

³⁸ Personal interview with Reverend Iosefa Afutiti current Minister of PFCCC, VaiteleFou, 22nd December 2019.

³⁹ Personal interview with Melepone Isara, Malua, 20th February 2020.

Chapter 3: Growth of the Church: Important Developments

3.1 Peteleema Fou's First Church Building

In the year 2006, discussions around the building of the parish's first church began. After years of fundraising and collection of offerings from members of the Church, the congregation felt that they had saved enough money to start looking at building a church.¹ On the 26th December 2006, the foundation of the church building was laid and the construction work began. The congregation decided that they would utilise members of the church who had the expertise in construction to carry out the job. Church members who were carpenters and electricians all offered their expertise saving money for the church. Lay Preacher Autagavaia Faimalo Pinati and Deacon Sifuiva Tiai led the work as they were both carpenters. The congregation ensured that they and their men were well fed. Pinati and Tiai only wanted the congregation to pay their workers as they were from different villages and congregations, while they offered their help for free.² This was a huge financial help to the congregation. In an interview with Pinati who was instrumental in the building of the church, he claimed that the building of the church went smoothly. There was never a time when the work ceased because there was not enough money. Most importantly, upon completion, there were no loans or debts to be paid. Financially, Pinati and Tiai had not been paid other than their workers. However, both were gifted \$30,000 each, along with Samoan cultural gifts upon the completion of the project.³

During the building of the church the congregation continued with its fundraising activities. In 2006, led by Naotala, the youth participated in one of the major events of

¹ Personal interview with Melepone Isara, Malua, 20th February 2020.

² Personal interview with Olo Farani Naotala, Vaitele Fou, 23rd January 2020.

³ Personal interview with Autagavaia Faimalo Pinati, Vaitele Fou, 3rd June 2020.

the Teuila Festival which was the *Mauluulu* or Samoan dance competition. The youth took out first place and won a prize money of \$5,000. They also participated in the singing and the car decoration competition in which they won consolation prizes worth \$2,000.⁴ These prize money provided much needed funds in the building and completion of the church. There were also financial assistance by relatives and families of the various members of the Church. Tina Afutiti's family donation enabled the Church to build a fence around the compound. This cost a little over \$12,000.

Finally, the Church was completed. The work took four months and one week and was blessed and opened on the 31st May, 2007. Reverend Elder Eteuati Pasia conducted the service, along with the attendance of the Chairperson of the General Assembly, Reverend Situfu Tanielu and Vice Chairperson, Reverend Atapana Alama. In attendance also were Ministers from the Faleata District⁵. The biggest relief was that the congregation managed to pay off the entire work with the money raised without any outstanding debts.

⁴ Personal interview with Melepone Isara, Malua, 20th February 2020.

⁵ *Api ole Galuega Peteleema Fou.*



Figure 10. Side view of the new church building, taken by the author on May 22nd 2020.

In preparation for the opening, the church decided that each family was to bring items for the opening. Each *matafale* was to contribute a cow or a pig of decent size, 7 fine mats, 15 boxes of tinned fish, 3 boxes of tinned corn beef, and \$1,000. This was made compulsory for *matafale* or official working families of the church, but this did not stop *matafale fesoasoani* or assisting families from giving and lending a hand.⁶

Once the opening ceremony was over and the church officially opened, the congregation decided that those *matafale fesoasoani* could now become official *matafale*. This was in recognition of their contribution to the church building which was just as

⁶ Personal interview with Reverend Iosefa Afutiti current Minister of PFCCC, Vaitele Fou, 22nd December 2019.

much as the registered *matafale*.⁷ This increased the number of *matafale* or working families in the church to forty.⁸

3.2 Continuing Tensions and Challenges within the Church

Isara stated that when he was elected to be the Secretary of the church at the end of 2007, he recognised the families becoming closer and cooperative. Given that the work had been completed and there was now a proper church to hold services. However, Isara also noted another challenge. He describes it using the Samoan saying, “*Ona o le nu’u e faiaitala o si Aopo ma si Asau, e eseese uma mea e omai ai tagata*,”⁹ “It is because it is a community of people from different villages, they come from different places and backgrounds.” Isara was referring to the trials of trying to deal with people of differing views and backgrounds.¹⁰ This made the work of the Minister challenging as he tried to focus on ways to bring the congregation together, to become one. However, many people were critical and questioned the way that the Minister sometimes handled this situation. The Minister however at most times was not fazed as he continued his role as Minister to ensure the members of the church find a common ground.

⁷ Personal interview with Melepone Isara, Malua, 20th February 2020.

⁸ This includes Reverend Iosefa Talouli Afutiti, Reverend Puletua, Faimalo Pinati, Sao Solomona, Taefu Vaauli, Tafa Iosua, Oloipola Ioane, Moliola Tasesa, Maeu Tanimu, Leituala Tone, Peter Faauga, Seuamuli Sitivi, Sifuiva Tiai, Aliitasi Nofoaiga, Ana Peato, Sealiimalietoa Melepone Isara, Tafaomalo Sione, Afa Karene, Fereti Leota, Lima Mulitalo, Ailoilo Fausia, TauaFoimai, Liamanaia Toeupu, Charlene Vaisau, Leota Aliilua, Matamea Maiava, Leota Viliamu, Auapaau Filo, Samotu, Sieni Aumaga, FiaSilupe, Lava, Atinae, Ma Mulitalo, Elenoa Iopu, Feagiai, Tuimauga Sina, Pasene, Mano Mamona Ah Ching.

⁹ Personal interview with Melepone Isara, Malua, 20th February 2020.

¹⁰ Personal interview with Melepone Isara, Malua, 20th February 2020.

In 2008, the church marked its 10year anniversary since it was resumed in Vaitele Fou. The District Elder and the whole District of Faleata were invited to mark this occasion. The occasion also raised \$16,834.70.¹¹

However tensions between the Minister and the Church began to surface again when the Minister and his family left in 2011 for their sabbatical leave.¹² While the Minister was away, these tensions continued to brew within the congregation. Eventually they were published in the local newspapers. To this day, no one knows who took the story to the media. Suspicions were laid on one another as the story had specified all matters discussed in the church meetings. The unknown person wrote to the newspaper four times with in-depth discussions and accusations about how church money was used. These accusations were then answered by another article which revealed how the money was being used by the congregation for the building of the church, the purchase of the Minister's car gifted at the annual *Faamati*¹³ and many other things. This response was by a church member who wanted to answer the accusations with the hope of clearing the reputation of the congregation.

Upon the Minister's return, these issues were voiced and the church's concerns were brought to the Minister. Reverend Afutiti mentioned that on sabbatical, they had heard about the events happening especially what had been published in the newspaper. He did not wish to reply to the accusations, instead forgave the individual who leaked the information. When their sabbatical had finished, he was prepared for the worst. He was returning to the church with a heart ready to accept whatever decision the church would have made at the time. Prior to the arrival of Rev Afutiti, the church had a meeting to

¹¹*Api ole Galuega Peteleema Fou.*

¹²*Faamalologa*, every six years according to the Constitution of the Congregational Christian Church Samoa.

¹³*Faamati* is another curricular of the EFKS done on a yearly basis in the month of March. A custom done as a gift to the minister, wife and family. Presents such as fine mats, household items, and clothing.

discuss the issues raised by the media, and to discuss a verdict on him and his families return. However, there was no final verdict on the situation and they decided to wait on the arrival of the minister and his family.

When they had arrived, Reverend Afutiti conducted the service and this was followed by a *to'onai* or feast in celebration of their arrival. After their service and feast, Reverend Afutiti expressed his respect to the church giving monetary gifts and many more as a sign of respect and to commemorate their sabbatical leave. Throughout all this, no one had mentioned the ordeal that had occurred in the newspaper during their sabbatical. Deacon Auapaau Filo then said “*O lea sa fai le tatou fonofono i le aso Sa ua mavae, i le toe foi mai o le faifeau, ma le iuga sei oo mai nei ona failoa lea o le iuga, ia o lea ua sau le faifeau...*” “We met last Sunday and decided on the fate of the Minister, and the decision that all will be revealed when the Minister returns. But now the Minister is here...” Elder Reverend Aloavae then responded, “*Afai o lea ua sau le faifeau ia faauau loa le galuega*” “Now that the Minister is here then he should continue.”¹⁴ In 2016 Reverend Afutiti was once again on sabbatical. He returned and continued to be the Minister.

3.3 The Minister's House

On the 12th October 2015, the construction of the Minister's home commenced. The Church Secretary at the time, Taito Tapale, was in charge of the project. He had a business which contracted carpenters and he offered to carry out the project. It was made known that anyone who wanted to help could join however, Tapale made it clear that money was not to be used on feeding his men or those helping. Rather money were to be

¹⁴ He is the senior chief in the church, the speaker for the church, in any occasion especially the Samoan lauga or sermon. He is also the oldest Deacon of the church.

reserved for the completion of the project.¹⁵ Like the previous project, the building of the Minister's house was funded by the members of the church through freewill offerings and donations, along with fundraisers such as Bonus Tickets¹⁶ in which all families were involved

The opening and blessing service of the Minister and his family's new house took place on 19th December 2015. The executives of the General Assembly of the CCCS and Elder Reverend Faauuga Matautia were invited along with the Ministers of the Faleata District. The full cost of the project was \$355,850.5.¹⁷

The completion of the Minister's house added another important building to the church complex, with a newly built church for the services and now a Minister's house for the Minister and his family. Now the congregation was looking toward building a hall for Church activities and events in the near future. This was to cater for their ever growing congregation as well as when they have to host Sub District events.¹⁸

¹⁵ Personal interview with Mano Mamona, Vaitele, 11th November 2019.

¹⁶ Bonus tickets that followed the lotto in Australia with families given two numbers for \$56 weekly, \$1950 collected with \$1000 for the winner, and the remaining \$950 saved for the minister's house.

¹⁷ *Api ole Galuega Peteleema Fou.*

¹⁸ Personal interview with Reverend Iosefa Afutiti current Minister of PFCCC, Vaitele Fou, 22nd December 2019.



Figure 11. a, b Minister's new house front view. B. The connecting of the minister's house to the church office. Taken by the author on May 22nd 2020.



Figure 12. The full view of the New Developments, the old building (left), minister's house (middle) and the church (right). Photo taken by the author on May 22nd 2020.

Today, the maintenance of the church compound is carried out by the various branches of the church including the Women's Fellowship, Men's Fellowship, the Choir and Youth. These main groups and fellowships are also important in the fundraising activities of the Church.

3.4 Ministry Work

Throughout the years since the Church shifted to Vaitele Fou, the number of families attending the Peteleema Fou Church had grown and had reached forty families. This was inclusive of the Minister Reverend Iosefa Afutiti and his good lady Tina, two Elder Pension Ministers and their wives¹⁹, *Aoao* or Malua Theological College

¹⁹ Elder Reverend Alaovae Alaovae and good lady Elisapeta and Elder Reverend Titi Eteuati and good lady Fala'i.

Graduates²⁰, five Lay Preachers²¹, seventeen Deacons²² and their families along with five retired Minister's widows²³. Over the years, Vaitele Fou has become a popular place where many retired Ministers and their wives chose to buy land and live. Reverend Afutiti spoke of how blessed their ministry is given the wisdom he has been privileged to have from the retired Elders and Ministers and their wives. He stated that he often reached out to these former servants of God for advice especially at times when things became tougher than usual. This was a blessing as these Elders had gone through this same path.

For a young church the Peteleema Fou congregation has also produced Church Ministers for the ministry. There are two Ministers²⁴ from Peteleema Fou, who are now serving in villages in Samoa. There are three young men who are currently attending MTC; two in their third year, and one in their final year. There are also two teachers²⁵ who had been serving at Malua Theological College since graduating. These blessings are evidently a result of the hard work that had been injected into this ministry. It also shows the congregation's contribution to serving God in the ministry.

3.5 Church Services

Worship is a central part of the Church. This was evident in the life of the church at Tuanaimato and when it shifted to Vaitele Fou. In the early stages in Vaitele Fou, there

²⁰ Elekana Lealiifano and wife Fiailoa Lealiifano.

²¹ Autagavaia Faimalo Pinati and wife Tenari Minila, Sao Solomona and wife Tiotio Solomona, Aumua Fuata'i and wife Olosau, Leota Salani and wife Fereita Salani, Toluono Etulasi and wife Vi Etulasi.

²² Sifuiva Tiai and wife Vasati, Taefu Vaauli and wife Delilah, Taito Tapale and wife Toreti, Leituala Toatasi and wife Tina, Tuilagi Alaovae and wife Lusua, Fereti Leota and wife Elisa, Taulapapa Datson and wife Leufao, Luai Taulua and wife Lemata, Ailoilo Fausia and wife Lotu, Tiatia Pisa and wife Mapa, Faletapapa Itele Mose, Lealaitanumoa Sipaea, Tafa Iosua, Lima Mulitalo, Aliitasi Nofoaiga, Lefine Leituala, Naomi Leaupepe, Tapaina Sale and Mano Mamona Ah Ching and wife Tautala

²³ Sala Levesi, Lepeti Eteuati, Silivia Meatuai, Sina Tariu and Sieni Aumaga.

²⁴ Reverend Eric Mulitalo and good lady Amata serving at Fasitoo Tai and Reverend Tupou Tanielu and good lady Lynn serving at Nofoalii.

²⁵ Reverend Kara Ipuniu and good lady Tuluiga and Melepone Isara and good lady Tupe.

was only one service on Sundays. This later changed to two services one in the morning and the other in the evening. Evening services began when church services were held at Taua's residence. *Lotu Auleoleo* or the Prayer Watchers service²⁶ was also introduced and it now takes place early Saturday mornings. The *Lotu Autamafai* or Christian Endeavour service²⁷ was also introduced and now takes place during the evening service of every first Sunday of the month, followed by the third Sunday of the month. If the month have five Sundays, it would be held on the first, third and last Sunday of the month. Women fellowship services also take place once a month on the Wednesday before the first Sunday of the month or before Holy Communion Sunday²⁸.

Attendance of church services vary from time to time. Sunday morning services are often full while numbers seem to decline in the evening services. This is because many who live in Vaitele Fou who are not full members of the Church would only come in the morning services but not in the evening.

Vaitele Fou is different from traditional Samoan villages where church attendances are often made compulsory. This is also the impact of life in an urban area where individuals are often free to choose whether to attend church services. In the urban area, going on a casual ride or stroll in Apia is a popular choice rather than attending church. Vaitele Fou now has many other denominations and Reverend Afutiti has seen his church members continued as devout participants in church activities. Most noticeably is the willingness of members to attend church, give their support as well as time and money to

²⁶*Au leoleo*- This segment has served as a reliable staff upon which the Minister and all members of the Church rest during good times as well as bad. This organisation has continued to awake the prayer life of the Church, for both its own work as well as the whole world. The church believes that when the life of prayer weakness, then the life of the Christian diminishes.

²⁷*Au taumafai*- This is another recognised segment within the Church which is strongly contribution to the development, and enrichment of the spiritual life of its people. They promote importance of reading and studying the Holy Bible, and seeking the Will of God for the Church through the useful themes set for each Sunday.

²⁸ Personal interview with Reverend Iosefa Afutiti current Minister of PFCCC, Vaitele Fou, 22nd December 2019.

the various church programmes. Reverend Afutiti stressed the importance of fellowship to his church. He realises that when families are struggling financially, they would not attend many of the church programmes. He stated “*E lē faia i ni tupe le galuega ae fai i le loto. E lē taua ni tupe ao le loto atoa e auauna ai i le Alii. E leai foi se aoga e aumai ai ni tupe se tele ae leai se loto e ave ai i le Atua*” “Our ministry is not run by money but by the heart. Money is not important but a heart that serves the Lord. It is not useful to offer a lot of money but there is no heart in the offering to God.”²⁹

Members of the congregation however have become very generous in their offering to the Church. Many do so because they had witnessed God’s blessings in their lives from their service to the Church. There have been many debates on the reasons as to why Samoans have a nature of giving to the church. Some have argued it is because of the competitive spirit of Chiefly families in the village. Moreover, it is a tradition of the Samoan way of life even before the arrival of Christianity. A life of sharing and togetherness is a part of the culture. Many of the Church’s children have graduated from schools and universities and are now working in good jobs. Others have attained high status in government ministries and private companies. Reverend Afutiti also believed The Holy Spirit worked through them in being able to withstand all hardships they had come crossed and came together to worship as a family of church in Christ.

3.6 Youth Ministry

The *Autalavou* or Youth has been an important group within the church since it was relocated to Vaitele Fou. Although it is called the ‘Youth’, many elders and parents also joined to help in ways to grow the Youth. This changed when more and more young

²⁹ Personal interview with Reverend Iosefa Afutiti current Minister of PFCCC, Vaitele Fou, 22nd December 2019.

people joined and slowly the elders slid away which allowed young people to do as they please. Youth programmes are still continuing for those who are able to attend and have the urge to.³⁰ Naotala spoke of the importance of the youth and its programmes being put into place to help increase their knowledge of the Bible and to build each youth member spiritually. *Aoa* or graduates from Malua who are members of the Church are often used to share their knowledge of the Bible to the members of the Youth. Naotala also mentioned,

*O le tulaga e taua ai le lotu, ona foi o Vaitele fou, e leo se nuu potopoto, ma e eseese uma tagata o loo nonofo ai, ma e leai se faiganuu e aoaoina ai tupulaga i le fale o matai. Ao le taua lea o le lotu, ua suitulaga i faiganuu, ae ua fai ma faleaoga o tupulaga aua lava le aoaoina, i feau faasamoa, ao le tautua faasamoa i folafolaina o mea i totonu o le fale. O le sao taua lea o le Autalavou ma ana galuega faatino, ia o faatasi le Aganuu, o le Faaletino ma le Faaleagaga.*³¹ Vaitele Fou is not a traditional Samoan village, but a place where people from different villages in Samoa have come to live, and there is no chiefly council where young people learn from the house of chiefs. However, this is the importance of the church, which has replaced a village, and to has become a class room for the youth to learn the faasamoa or Samoan way of service like the announcement of cultural presentations inside a gathering. This has been the contribution of the Youth. It prioritises the Samoan culture, as well as the physical and spiritual way of life.

The teaching of the *Fa'asamoa* or Samoan culture is very important in an area like Vaitele which is not a traditional Samoan village and where there is no *Faamatai* or Council of Chiefs. As president of the Youth, Naotala admitted that there were many times when he was on the verge of giving up. According to him, leading the Youth was a tough task. Attendance was an issue. Many youth members who come across friends along the road tend to forget about Youth programmes and ended up not attending. When parish work is also called for, many of the youth do not attend, but instead play sports or enjoy other extra-curricular activities.

³⁰ Personal interview with Reverend Iosefa Afutiti current Minister of PFCCC, Vaitele Fou, 22nd December 2019.

³¹ Personal interview with Olo Farani Naotala, Vaitele Fou, Interviewed on 23rd January 2020.

3.7 The CCCS Peteleema Fou and other denominations

Within Vaitele Fou, there are many other Christian denominations. These denominations were often formed by people who had moved away from their homes in the rural areas in hope of finding a new life in Apia. Hence they also bring with them the need to establish churches to continue their way of worship.³² Some families who had moved from their rural villages arrived in Vaitele Fou to find the many different churches. When realising that the CCCS or Methodist involve a lot of financial activities, they decide to attend other churches to suit their financial situation. More charismatic churches such as the Worship Centre have become popular for this reason.

Despite the different congregations and denominations in Vaitele Fou, there has been an attempt for the churches to work together. Mainline churches such as the Methodist, Catholic and CCCS continue to work alongside one another. A *Lotu Aufaatasi* or Combine Service is held annually since 2006. “*O le faamoemoe o nei faatasiga ina ia mafai ona galulue faatasi ekalesia eseese mo se nofo fealofani, aemaise lava i tupulaga talavou*”³³ “The purpose of these gatherings so that the churches work together and to create a spirit of unity, especially among their young people.” Initially only the CCCS and Methodist attended during which the youth would partake in the service through *siva faaleagaga* or spiritual dances and creative plays.³⁴ They eventually reached out to the Catholic Church which also joined in this annual combined service. The different congregations also took turn in hosting this event. This eventually came to a halt as the Methodist and Catholic churches operated differently from the CCCS. Their Ministers changed every seven years which meant that new Ministers brought in new ideas and

³² Personal interview with Reverend Iosefa Afutiti current Minister of PFCCC, Vaitele Fou, 22nd December 2019.

³³ Personal interview with Reverend Iosefa Afutiti current Minister of PFCCC, VaiteleFou, 22nd December 2019.

³⁴ Personal interview with Melepone Isara, Malua, 20th February 2020.

thoughts. Some did not agree to this yearly service and brought it to an end. There was also an attempt to combine a service with the AOG but that was delayed as efforts were made first to bring together the three main denominations.

The purpose of these services was to keep the youth congregated and working together as they lived as a community. This was an important gesture by the churches to capture the spiritual growth of their young people. This is especially important in an area such as Vaitele Fou which over the years has become known for all sorts of crimes and law breaking youth.³⁵ It was evident that this had become a problem as youth from different denominations were beginning to turn on one another eventually breaking into fights. In an interview with Kamuta Nofoaiga³⁶ of Vaitele Fou, young people in Vaitele Fou are often not familiar with one another due to the different setting and family upbringings. Church was the only common ground. There were times when there were disputes within the youth of each denomination even during sports and other events. These disputes build up and eventually led to police involvement.³⁷

3.8 Current State of the Church

The current state of the Peteleema Fou Church is strong. Despite the challenges of the early years in Vaitele Fou and the struggles they faced in developing the Church physically, the church seemed to have settled and is stable. The congregation's wealth is visible in the continual giving spirit of the Church members. These donations go towards maintaining the church compound, facilities, and to pay for other bills.

³⁵ Personal interview with Olo Farani Naotala, Vaitele Fou, 23rd January 2020.

³⁶ He is one of a senior member of Peteleema Fou Youth, he joins the Youth programme since 2000.

³⁷ Personal interview with Kamuta Nofoaiga, Vaitele Fou, 3rd June 2020.

At this point in time, the project to build a hall is being prepared. This is to cater for the programmes and events that take place especially during bad weather. It has been two years since the church began to put money aside. The church is not hoping to rush into it. The last thing they want is run into a big project and then find out there is not enough money to complete the work.³⁸ They are also being mindful of the families and their children who have lives to attend to, but know and understand that they serve a living God and He will show them the right time to commence.

The church members now support the Minister. Despite the many trials they've been through the fellowship and ministry between the Minister and the congregation continues to grow, with the church continuing to aid the Minister in whatever is needed.

The Minister's *alofa* or money offering from the church has also increased.³⁹ If anything, this has motivated them to give more freely and wholeheartedly to the church and the Minister. As people of faith they continue to do their good work as servants in Christ. Like many Samoans they believe that the Minister is the image of God in the flesh, and their service to him is their service to God.⁴⁰ Minister Afutiti shows gratitude, utmost thanks to God for continuously providing in such times.

It has now been over twenty years since the church was re-established in Vaitele Fou. There have been certain trials in the ministry and things that have caused hardships but like everything we do in life, we know and believe that nothing is impossible with our God. Although we go through rough waters and it's clear we cannot get to our destination alone, we know that we can rely on our Maker and Ruler. Reverend Afutiti and his good

³⁸ Personal interview with Reverend Iosefa Afutiti current Minister of PFCCC, VaiteleFou, 22nd December 2019.

³⁹ Personal interview with Reverend Iosefa Afutiti current Minister of PFCCC, Vaitele Fou, 22nd December 2019.

⁴⁰ Personal interview with Reverend Iosefa Afutiti current Minister of PFCCC, Vaitele Fou, 22nd December 2019.

lady as well as the members of the Church continue their good work as servants of Christ as they had been called.



Figure 13. Family Photo- Front Row: Reverend Iosefa Afutiti, Simeona, good lady Tina Afutiti
Back roll: Manase, Tuitapu, and Efaraima

Conclusion

This thesis has set out to construct a history of the Peteleema Fou CCCS Church in Vaitele Fou. Chapter one looks at the origin of the Church at the Tuana'imato Plantation. As we have seen this Church was established by the wives of Chinese indentured labourers. These women were Samoans who saw the importance of practicing their faith as Christian. Hence despite the fact they were married to Chinese labourers and were living in a different environment, they found it important that they establish a church in which they could not only worship but also provide spiritual guidance for those who worked in this plantation. What began by these Samoan women became a central part of the community in Tuana'imato, offering unity and a sense of belonging to those who worked there.

In the second chapter, we looked at the church when it was relocated to Vaitele when Tuana'imato was closed to make way for a government sports complex. During this period, the church faced difficulties. Many gave up whereas others stood firm in their faith and persevered to remain steadfast. The challenge was to steer the church from straying away, rather to keep the services going regardless of whether they had a church or not. Other challenges included that of keeping the congregation together especially now that other denominations had been established. Nevertheless, this failed to fracture the ongoing services being held and the journey since reallocating to Vaitele Fou. Upon receiving land from the Church, the congregation believed their prayers had been answered which brought about a newly found strength to continue God's work and ultimately work toward building the physical body of the church.

Chapter 3 focused on the gradual establishment of the church complex. The land was now well established along with a building for the services and the minister. During these times, more families had moved to Vaitele Fou and this led to more people attending

church services. The congregation grew and discussions around building a church brewed to the point it had been accomplished. The minister's house was next on the agenda. Now the church is looking to building a hall. While the Church was able to achieve much, problems also loomed as any other congregation would face; people had come from different backgrounds, upbringings and villages which brought about differences in ideas opinions, and the nature of implementing certain things. The importance of this history of the CCCS Peteleema Fou is a reflection of the continuous mission of the church in Samoa. Firstly, in many traditional villages or *nuu mavae* they have rules and regulation. Some have only one denomination. But in areas like Vaitele, the lack of traditional forms of governance like a council of chiefs creates challenges for a church.

Secondly, this piece of church history has shown that despite being in a different environment, outside of traditional Samoan villages, Samoans still value the need to form a Church for their worship. With the advent of the new church at Vaitele, people were still very dedicated to the work of God. Despite the cost of living, and the struggle of paying off the land along with money being sent to rural and Savaii families, they never failed to provide for the church.

Thirdly, the church had become a means of uniting people living in these urban communities. Despite their different backgrounds, they were willing to work together for a common purpose. This became the role of the church, an attempt to set aside these ideas and instead to focus on their spiritual beings. This was not an easy task as it involved mental, physical and spiritual understanding of one another on many levels. It is also opportunities for the youth to learn the Samoan culture not like the traditional villages they have to serve the matai's house to adapt the culture.

From my perspective as someone who has grown up within this congregation, the research I have conducted has allowed me to further understand the establishment of Peteleema Fou EFKS in its origin, until its relocation to Vaitele Fou. Seeing the drastic changes and the evolution of the church has allowed me to mould a heart of gratitude and thanksgiving to God for deploying his people as vessels to essentially spread His Word and His will.

It has now been 20 years since its emergence in Vaitele Fou, and the state of the church has grown rapidly with many willing to dedicate their lives to the ministry. Evidently, many of the congregations have witnessed God's overflowing blessings to their ongoing service and love for not only the church, but ultimately for God.

Appendix

Appendix I:

Research Questions: The following are key questions that will guide this research.

Suesuga mo le Tala faasolopito o le EFKS Peteleema Fou i Vaitele Fou

Suafa: _____ **Aso:**

Nuu: _____

Ituaiga:

Tausaga: _____

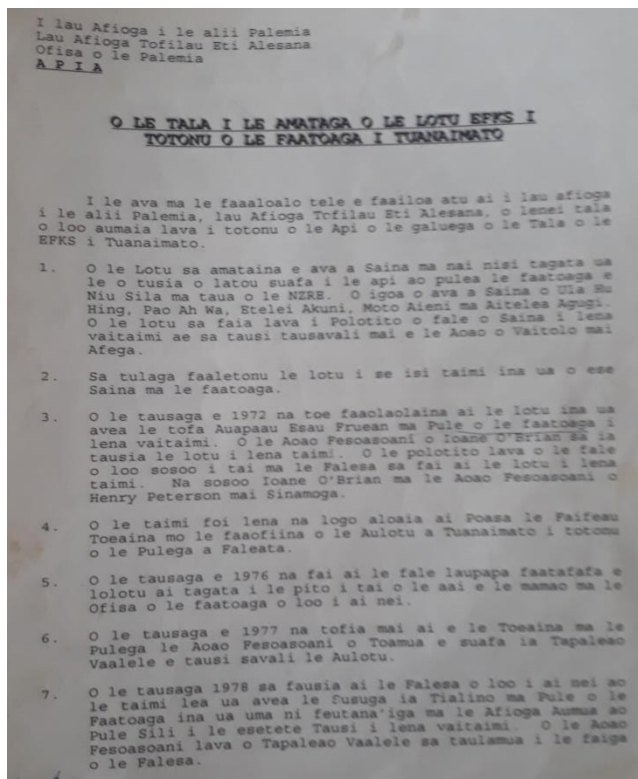
Fesili

- 1 O lea ni tala nae faalogo iai o lea le mafuaga na uluai faatu ai le lotu i
Tuanaimato?
- 2 E te silafia poo iai i latou sa iai i le amataina o le lotu?
- 3 O lea se mafauaga ua faatu ai le lotu i totonu o le faatoaga?
- 4 O lea sa taua o le lotu i totonu o le faatoaga?
- 5 E te manatua, le taimi ao faigaluega ou matua i totonu o le faatoaga?
- 6 O a ni faafitauli o le lotu i totonu o le faatoaga?
- 7 O le se finagalo ina ua aumai le poloaiga a le malo e o ese ma le faatoaga?
- 8 O le a se vaaiga na oo iai le aulotu ina ua taapeape tagata, ma agai i o latou lava
aiga?
- 9 O lea se mafuaga ua tou Malaga mai ai ma faamautu i Vaitele Fou?
- 10 O a ni faafitauli sa feagai ai i le siitiaga o le lotu?
- 11 Faamatala mai le toe tauamamataina o le lotu i Vaitele Fou?
- 12 O lea sou iloa i lea nuu o Vaitele Fou, faapea tagata o loo nonofo ai?
- 13 O lea sou vaai i le ola galulue o tagata?
- 14 O a ni faafitauli e tutupu i tagata lotu, aemaise i le va ma le faifeau?

- 15 O a ni suiga ua iai le lotu i lona atinaeina talu mai ona faavaeina?
- 16 Ae faapefea le ola faaleagaga o tagata, ma le latou tali atu i le galuega a le Atua?
- 17 O le a se taua o le lotu, i le tou nonofo ai i totonu o Vaitele Fou?

**“Faafetai tele lava mo manatu faalia, ma faamatalaga aua lenei
suesuega”**

Appendix 2 Letter by Fugaipopogo Live Muagututia



- 2 -

8. O le tausaga e 1982 sa tausia ai e le Susuga a Euta Kupa FS le Ekalesia i Tuanaimato me sa tausi savali ona e lei i ai se fale o le galuega i lena taimi e nofo ai le Faifeau.
9. Sa taumafai Euta Kupa e fai se fale o le galuega ae taofia e le sa avea ma Pule o le Faatoaga i Tuanaimato i lena taimi o Mika Wulf.
10. Na le faaalalo lava o loo faamauina i le api o le galuega le faafesootaiga o lau afioga i le Alii Palemia, lau Afioga Tofilau Sti Alesana e Euta Kupa ao le taimi foi lena o Pule Sili le tofa faasootauloa Sam Silli i le Esetete Tausi ma maua mai ai loa ma le faatagaga e fai ai le fale o le galuega i Tuanaimato.
11. Na maea le fale o le galuega i le tausaga e 1983 ma sa fai lava e Euta Kupa FS ma see mai loa i ai Euta Kupa ma le Faletua nonofo ai.
12. O le tausaga lava lea 1983 na toe valaaulia mai ai Euta Kupa e le EFKS i Faleaseela ona tausia ai loa lea o le Aulotu i Tuanaimato e le Susuga i le Aoao Fesoasoani o Tec Uli sa ovasia ai i totonu o le Faatoaga.
13. O le tausaga e 1985 i le masina o Setema na avea ai Fugaipago Live Muagututia ma Pule o le Faatoaga i Tuanaimato ma o ia foi o le Aoao Fesoasoani.
14. O le tausaga e 1986 na Litaea ai Tec Uli mai lana galuega i le Esetete Tausi poo le Malo ae tauave e le Susuga i le alii Aoao Fesoasoani o Muliau Lata le tausia o le Ekalesia i Tuanaimato.
15. O le tausaga lava lea e 1986 na sii ma'i ai le tofa a Muliau Lata, Aoao Fesoasoani i Niu Sila, ma o le masina o Novema na faamavae aloaia mai ai Niu Sila mo le tausiga o le Ekalesia i Tuanaimato.
16. O le tausaga lava lea e 1986 na tofia aloaia mai ai e le Toeaina o Eteuati ma le Pulega Fugaipago Live Muagututia (Aoao Fesoasoani) na te tausia le Ekalesia i Tuanaimato ma o ia foi o le Pule o le Faatoaga i Tuanaimato e oo mai i le aso.

TULAGA O LOO I AI NEI LE FALESA MA LE FALE O LE GALUEGA:

1. O loo tutu faatasi lava le Falesa ma le fale o le galuega, o lo la va pe tusa ma le sefuluono (16) iata pe tusa foi ma se afa eka le vaega eleele o loo aafia ai.

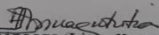
- 3 -

2. O le tulaga i tuaoi.
 - * E tuaoi i Sasae ma le vaitafe lea o loo i ai le Paoa Moli Eletise o Fuluasou.
 - * O le itu i Sisifo o le faatoaga lava a le Esetete Tausi agai i le auala tele o le Malo o loo faalava ane i Siusega.
 - * O le itu i tai poo Saute o le faatoaga lava a le Esetete Tausi agai i le Paoa i Fuluasou ma le auala tele o le Malo i Emau ma Talimatau.
 - * O le itu i uta poo Matu o le faatoaga lava a le Esetete Tausi agai i le tuaoi ma fale talimalo o le au Graigs ma le auala tele o le Malo agai i Aleisa ma Tafaigata.
3. O le toatele lava o tagata o loo nonofo i Tuanaimato o loo nonofo latalata lava i le mea o loo i ai le Falesa.


O le tala lena i le amataga o le Lotu EFKS ma lona faatagaina i totonu o Tuanaimato ma ona tuaoi ua tuuina atu ma le faaalalo tele mo lou silafia.

Lau Afioga i le alii Palemia, o loo faapipii faatasi atu ma se molimau a le Susuga i le Failautusi o le Pulega a Faleata i Sisifo e uiga i lena lava Ekalesia i Tuanaimato.

Saunia ma Tusia:


(Fugaipago Live Muagututia)
AOAO FESOASOANI
EFKS I TUANAIMATO

Me 8, 1996


EKALESIA FA'APOTOPOTOGA KERISIANO I SAMOA
Congregational Christian Church in Samoa
 T U L A E L E

Minister: Rev. Fa'avaia Mata'ucia
 P. O. Box 3092
 Apia
 Western Samoa
 Phone 21153

Me-7-1996.

I Lana Afio'ga i le Alii Palemia,
 I le avia lava ma le fa'atatalo o
 le tuisia ai lena tui motu ma le
 Silafia e lau Afio'ga o se tuiaga o i a
 lena. Lona ma le Ekalesia Fa'apopotoga
 Kerisiano Tuamotu. O loo tuisia lena
 Motu e le Haa Haa'oam o Tuga Lene
 ae ei lalo o le Tulega i Tuleata i Sisifo.
 O ona tuiaga uma o Sauniga tau Saka
 namata o loo i lalo pea o lau Tuisiga.
 O se Ekalesia lava o loo alu alu lelei
 i galuega fa'atino i le tuiaga, ma o loo
 maopopo po i tuiaga tau Sauniga
 Malo te ma'upu pea i Sauniga i se
 tuiaga fa'atino i Haa Sa o Tuamotu
 tuiaga uma. O lea e maitia fa'atino
 ai lava i se mamata le fa'atino
 pea o lena Auleta i tapuai ai lea
 viga o le Atumua ma le fa'atino a le
 Alii.

Ia mamata lava lau Afio'ga
 ma le mamata o le Malo.

Soifua. Sauniga Malo F.S.

Glossary

<i>Auaiga</i>	Family
<i>Api ole Galuega</i>	Record book
<i>Alofa</i>	money offering for the minister
<i>aganuu</i>	Samoan culture
<i>Autalavou</i>	Youth
<i>faleoo</i>	Samoan house
<i>fa'amati</i>	custom done as a gift to the minister
<i>fa'amatai</i>	council of chiefs
<i>fa'asamoa</i>	Samoan way of life
<i>fa'amalologa</i>	sabbatical leave
<i>faifeau nofoaiga</i>	minister awaits for a calling
<i>Fale o Tama</i>	house for the fellowship of father's
<i>Fomeni</i>	foreman
<i>lafoga</i>	offering
<i>lotu aufaatasi</i>	combine services
<i>lotu autaumafai</i>	Christian Endeavour
<i>lotu auleoleo</i>	prayer watcher
<i>lotu fa'aleaiga</i>	family worship
<i>Mafutaga Tina</i>	mother's Fellowship
<i>Mafutaga Tama</i>	father's Fellowship
<i>matafale</i>	families have been register officially
<i>matafale fesoasoani</i>	families that are not register officially
<i>matai</i>	chief
<i>Matagaluega</i>	District

<i>mauluulu</i>	Samoan traditional dance
<i>nuumavae</i>	Samoan traditional village
<i>ovasia</i>	overseer
<i>Pulega</i>	Sub District
<i>siva faaleagaga</i>	spiritual dance
<i>taulaga</i>	offering
<i>tausala</i>	Samoan Cultural Fundraisers
<i>togiaso</i>	payday
<i>toomaga</i>	loan scheme
<i>toona'i</i>	<i>feast</i>
<i>tusigaigoa</i>	census

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