

**A HISTORY OF THE CONGREGATIONAL  
CHRISTIAN CHURCH ULUTOGIA ALEIPATA,  
1922-2019**

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of the Malua Theological College

In Partial Fulfilment of the  
Requirements for the Degree  
Bachelor of Theology

by

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July 2021

## CONSENT FORM

**I, Eletise Palemene**

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## ABSTRACT

This work is an inaugural history of the origin and early beginning of CCCS Ulutogia, Aleipata. It aims at exploring the history and progress of the church during its early years of establishment in its turbulent history up until now.

The research uses oral sources together with historical writings found in the CCCS archives like Sulu Samoa, and publications from some prominent historians of CCCS such as the late Rev Elder Oka Fauolo and the late Rev Kenape Faletoes.

This thesis begins with exploring the origins and establishment of the CCCS Ulutogia in 1922 and highlights some of the historical events during its beginning. Then it continues with the growth and developments of the church through challenges they have experienced and milestones of achievement from their hard labour.

The study holds that establishing a church requires commitment and faith to make it a reality. Land disputes makes families in the village an enemy of each other which also affects the church. The *faiifeau* holds the responsibilities to deal properly with issues that may affect the progress of the ministry and must be proactive at all times. The problem of sources in history writings continues and the availability of appropriate information from the *Api ole Galuega* is rarely found.

The proposed history of the CCCS Ulutogia concludes with challenges for future works in order to enhance our history for the people of Ulutogia and future generations.

## DECLARATION

**I, Eletise Vainuupo Palemene**

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

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ (month and year)

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to my parents Rev. Risati Palemene and my late mother Aiga Palemene as well as my one and only sister Leiataua Audrey. Another important person that was part of my journey as well whilst undertaking my studies in Malua was the late Rev Anoi Faletutulu and Faletua Sina.

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It is with pleasure that I give credit and thanks to my Supervisor *Susuga Faiaoga*. Leuelu Setu for his endless support, time, knowledge and guidance throughout this paper. The many times I lost sight of what needed to be done, he never failed to guide me back and point out what needed to be done. *Faafetai tele lava i lau Susuga*.

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Finally, I would like to thank my father Rev Risati Palemene, my late mother Aigaeiva Palemene who sadly passed away on the day that my thesis was due to be handed in; although she is gone but I know she is smiling from above and no longer in pain anymore. My sister Leiataua Audrey Aiafi for the never-ending support and guidance during my time here in Malua, I am indebted to you all, and in awe of the love you all have shown. I wish to convey my sincere gratitude to my aunts, uncles, cousins and

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## **List of Abbreviations**

AM	Aoao Malua
CCCS	Congregational Christian Church Samoa
EFKS	Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa
LMS	London Missionary Society
FS	Faifeau Samoa
FT	Faifeau Toeaina
KAT	Komiti Au Toeaina
MTC	Malua Theological College
NUS	National University of Samoa
SAT	Samoa Tālā (Dollar)
IT	Information Technology

# Introduction

## Inspiration

This research paper has come about as a direct result of wanting to formalise and construct a history account of the Congregational Christian Church Samoa (CCCS), Ulutogia Aleipata. As I have a personal connection to Ulutogia village through my father, and presently live out of the village with limited knowledge, I determine to write this history and willing to learn more about my roots. Some of the important matters of inspirations includes the need to have a history of Ulutogia CCCS and to discuss the struggles in the earlier years of establishment and the challenges of the deadly Tsunami in 2009.

## Scope

This paper will cover the origins of the CCCS Ulutogia and how the church started in 1922 and developed through the various church ministers and some key people who helped in building the church for this small village community. The research covers the challenges and struggles faced in the construction of its first church building, the selections of their *Faifeau* and the impact of land disputes on the church. The research is also aspiring to discuss the Tsunami 2009 and its impacts on the village and the church community which introduced the community into the effect of climate change on its coastal areas. The church which was partly damaged by the tsunami then decided instantly to move inland for safety. However, the parish now decides to relocate the church site to the coastal area. A decision for relocation maybe reaffirmed because the *Faifeau's* manse has already been moved back to the coastal area. Plans are in the pipeline for the church to be moved back to the coastal area, however the church will undergo negotiation on land ownership matters before they proceed with the relocation. Furthermore, rebuilding

the church at its original site will highlight the commemoration of its 100 anniversary in 2022 given the year of establishment as recorded approves. The research needs to make sure there is a written account of the history of CCCS Ulutogia church to be recognized in the CCCS history

## **Aim**

It is my sincere hope to take this study as an initial step on documenting a history of the CCCS in my village Ulutogia Aleipata. The presentation of findings as facts and figures combined with few recommendations may provide a foundation for a way forward and enable further study to enhance this portion of history.

## **Research Method and Limitations**

There are currently little published materials concerning the history of the CCCS Ulutogia. Although a brief account on the CCCS Ulutogia is recorded in the late Rev Oka Fauolo's book *O Vavega O Le Alofa Laveai: O le Tala Faasolopito o le Ekalesia Fa'apopotoga Kerisiano Samoa*<sup>1</sup> the author recognizes that such may not adequately unfold the oral stories of our forefathers to pen a detail history in need.

The study looks into available written documents, the church archive, *Api ole Galuega aulotu* (church parish Record Book), church newsletter and printed materials as primary sources. In the area or village of study, the research employs vis a vis and online interviews with people in the village and residents abroad and few local academics at the National University of Samoa. The access of Information Technology communication tools helps to accommodate the delays in proposed interviews and in-person consultations

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<sup>1</sup> Rev Oka Fauolo's work in the history of the EFKS church is another milestone to the church. His book adds more into the archive on the history of the EFKS church printed earlier.

in the field work. The research chooses the Samoan term *faifeu* as a translation for the church minister or pastor occasionally.

Limitation of this study on finding or accessing required sources cannot be avoided and thus relies at most to oral traditions and stories passed on by the past generations for help.

# Chapter 1

## **Ua togi-pa-tau-le-ave A Dream Come True**

### **1.1 Introduction**

*Ua togi pa tau le ave* is a Samoan proverb used to express one's gratitude for a great achievement or an event that is successfully carried out. Receiving Christianity and establishing a church in the early nineteen-hundred is a milestone for a small rural village community like Ulutogia. Like successful stories on the introduction of Christianity in the Pacific where Christianity spread amazingly in less than 200 years, this small community perhaps took few hours to unite and establish the church after hearing the great stories of Jesus Christ<sup>1</sup>.

This chapter describes my village Ulutogia in relation to its origin, people, community life and traditions. It introduces how the village was named from an interesting legend of a *taupou* (virgin) who searches for a *aloalii* (prince) to get married by setting a traditional game competition called *togigaulu* (breadfruit throwing game). The village *faalupega* (honorific titles) are provided to describe the matai titles of different aiga which represent a traditional structure of the community.

The bulk of the chapter includes the establishment of the church in 1922 with challenges they lived through and milestones achieved with the limited resources they had at the time. It also gives accounts of all *faifeau*<sup>2</sup> (church ministers) worked in Ulutogia

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<sup>1</sup> Ernst Manfred, *Winds of Change: Religious Groups in the Pacific Islands*. (Suva: Pacific Conference of Churches), 1994, 4

<sup>2</sup> O le Tama Faaleagaga I le Ekalesia, poo le Faafeagaiga I le Ekalesia. E osia aloaia le Feagaiga I le va o le Ekalesia ma le Faifeau Samoa, e le gata I le taimi o le sauniga Amataga o le Galuega Faafaifeau, ae faapea fo'I le feagaiga e osia I tu ma aganuu a Samoa e ala I le 'Ie Toga.'" (Emau S. Petaia, FS Faifeau Samoa O le Malamalama e Susulu Pea. Pago Pago: Kana Publishing Printing Press, 2020)

form 1922 up to date. The emergence of the church in the beginning and the work of the *fai'feau* on the early stages of development are discussed.

## 1.2 The Village

Ulutogia village is located on the southern side of the island of Upolu in the district of *Aleipata*<sup>3</sup>. The recent census conducted by the Samoa Bureau for Statistics in 2016 indicates that the total population of Ulutogia is about 215 people, whereby the men's population is higher, 105, than the number of Female at 97<sup>4</sup>. According to this same census almost 49% of the total population are aged between 0-20 years of age and next 43% are aged between 21-64 years of age and the remaining 8% are aged 65 years and above. It is approximately one hour and twenty minutes' drive from the capital of Apia.

### 1.2.1 The Legend and origin of the village

According to legends of the past, the chief of Ulutogia village named *Tui Atua Tualemoso* had a daughter named *Se-malama-mai-lagi*, whose beauty was renown in Samoa as well as the Pacific. When it was time to find a husband for his daughter *Semalamamailagi*, *Tualemoso* put up a competition on a traditional game called *Togigaulu* (breadfruit throwing). This game allows each competitor a turn of throwing at a breadfruit (*ūlu*) on a breadfruit tree. The winning throw should hit the stalk of the breadfruit to fall without bruising the fruit. So all the bachelors and men from all over Samoa descended upon Ulutogia for the competition. In preparation for the game, they were placed in a *fale* (house) for five nights. The place where this *fale* once stood is now known as *Falepolima*

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<sup>3</sup> The eastern end region of Upolu

<sup>4</sup> "2016 Census Brief No.1," Samoa Bureau of Statistics., [www.sbs.gov.ws](http://www.sbs.gov.ws).

(House of 5 nights). According to Leutu, the eligible bachelors and young men began the game by throwing at the breadfruit on the breadfruit tree but to no avail.

However, *Alae*, son of *Saveatama*<sup>5</sup> was travelling from *Siumu*<sup>6</sup> or, according to others, from *Vaimauga* or Savaii through Aleipata; he was going on a walk-about or fishing in the sea when he saw the men playing the game of *togigaulu*. So he decided to join the game being played to try out. When it came to his turn, he cautiously threw a stone at the breadfruit and hit the chalk of the breadfruit and it dropped. Hence that winning throw marked a known proverbial saying of Samoa – *Ua Togi-pa-tau-le-ave*<sup>7</sup> This *alagaupu* (proverbial saying) has often been used by many talking chiefs or orators to state that an event has been successfully finished, or a day that has long been hoped for in prayers and people have been waiting for has now finally arrived. As a result of this famous event that occurred, the village got its name *Ulu-tau-togia* or simply known as Ulutogia.

### 1.2.2 Ulutogia and its traditional honorifics and salutations

Ulutogia is a traditional Samoan village with its own honorifics, which highlights the chiefly hierarchy of the village. Below is its traditional salutation or *faalupega*<sup>8</sup>;

*Susu le Tama a le Malo ma le Taofia a Taiai ma le Matua*

*Alalatai Oe Saoluafata*

The *Tama o le Malo* refers to the chiefly title of Sagapolutele who is the *Alii* or high chief of the village. *Taiiai* is the *taupou* (virgin) title or maiden of the village. *Saoluafata* refers

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<sup>5</sup> A chief of Siumu

<sup>6</sup>Siumu is a village on the central south coast of Upolu island in Samoa. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siumu>

<sup>7</sup> *Ua togi-pa-tau-le-ave* (*The breadfruit was hit on the stalk*). This proverbial saying can be used by orators when a Samoan traditional occasion that is well prepared and sufficiently catered for guests; or the goal of a special occasion is achieved.

<sup>8</sup> Privileges and honors of a chief title which designates its powers and authorities in the family and community

to the group of orators that give service to the *Alii* of Ulutogia. The *Matua* (elder) is attributed to the chiefly title of *Falanaipupu*. According to Samoan Cultural studies lecturer of the National University of Samoa (NUS) Ta'ioalo Matiu Matavai<sup>9</sup>, the title *matua* in any village honorifics and salutations usually refer to *tagata faavae* or founders of the village. Therefore, Falanaipupu could have first settled and honoured in the land of Ulutogia before chief Sagapolutele arrived. *Saoluafata* refers to the group of orators serving the *Alii* (chiefs) of Ulutogia. Some villagers believe people of Ulutogia originates from *Saoluafata* who travelled to this part of the island and settled. The chiefly title *Va'a* (boat) earmarks the boats used by these people in their journey Ta'ioalo also states that most of *Tulafales* (orators) of Aleipata villages are called *Saleaumua* whereas the Ulutogia's *Tulafale* are referred to as *Saoluafata*. This is further supported by another story that in the past, chiefs from other villages or anyone travelling pass Ulutogia cannot walk through the village but should take a boat to cross over to the next village. Ta'ioalo recognized the village of Ulutogia as different from all vilages in the Aleipata district. He believes the two divisions of Aleipata, *Itupailalo* and *Itupailuga* are inter-related with their honorific titles connection. While Ulutogia is located in the *Itupailuga* subdivision, its original matai titles are not connected with those of the *Itupailuga*. His views may confirm the notion that the people of Ulutogia originates from another village of Upolu but they settled at Ulutogia a long time ago.

### **1.3 The Beginning of the Congregational Christian Church Samoa Ulutogia**

The records obtained from the headquarters of the CCCS at Tamaligi shows the exact year the CCCS church established at Ulutogia, 1922. The same record also appears

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<sup>9</sup> Taioalo Matiu Matavai interview by author at the National University of Samoa (NUS), May 12, 2021

in the late Rev Oka Fauolo's book, *Vavega o le Alofa Lavea'I* as supporting documentation of the record.

This information may confirm the uncertainties raised in our interviews with some of the village people that the CCCS Ulutogia was established sometimes in the early 1900. It was unfortunate that the *Api o le Galuega* (church parish Record Book) could not be located after the tsunami of 2009 and the interview partners were not able to recall the exact year the church began at Ulutogia.

Rev Tonu Peleseuma Mauafu, a son of Ulutogia in the CCCS ministry does not agree with the CCCS records pertaining the year the church was established. He argues that the year 1922 was a late start when considering the arrival of the first LMS missionaries in 1830. "Christianity reached Samoa in 1830; that makes it almost hundred years of Christianity to reach Ulutogia? That is impossible." Rev Mauafu remembers of his young age seeing their church was already in run-down conditions and stories from his elders could clarify his point. Thomas Heath's<sup>10</sup> notes on the widespread of *lotu* (church) in Samoa may support Mauafu's argument where Heath stated that he doubted if any village in Samoa was without an LMS chapel and school. The Sulu Samoa 1990 also mentioned an *Aoga Faamasani* (Preparatory school)<sup>11</sup> for preparing youth to become teachers was established at *Aufaga*<sup>12</sup> in 1843. The *Aoga Faamasani* was opened with the Church building in Aufaga and residence of Rev Harbutt<sup>13</sup> or Misi Hapati. This church in Aufaga was a common place of worship for the whole districts of Aleipata, Lepa, Lotofaga and Falealili. Supposing that some people of Aleipata including Ulutogia attended Sunday

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<sup>10</sup> Thomas Heath; LMS missionary in Samoa, 1839

<sup>11</sup> It was preparatory school for 18-19 years old males wanting to enter Malua which normally students go to prepare for a year or two prior to entering Leulumoega Fou College, a feeder school for Malua where they spend 4 years and then eventually entering Malua Theological College to study for 5 years

<sup>12</sup> A'ufaga is a small village on the southeast end of Upolu island in Samoa It is closer to Aleipata district.

<sup>13</sup> LMS Missionary Rev. W. Harbutt (Misi Hapati) arrived in Samoa 1840 and served in Aufaga/Lepa and later got transferred to Lalomanu in 1853 and left Samoa in 1858

services or the Preparatory school at Aufaga, then it could be possible that the CCCS Ulutogia was established within the same period as Rev Mauafu suggested.

Ever since the CCCS church started in Ulutogia, seven (7) *Faifeau* have served in the village together with the current one. The CCCS Ulutogia was a part of the *Aleipata Pulega* under the *Matagaluega* (Congregational District of *Falealili*).

### **1.3.1 The *Faifeau* (Church Ministers) of the CCCS Ulutogia**

The first *Faifeau* called for the mission in Ulutogia was Reverend Ioelu, a *Faifeau Samoa* (FS) who worked in the ministry for three years from 1922 to 1925. This appointment is reconfirmed by Fauolo's that the first *Faifeau* who started the church in Ulutogia was Ioelu<sup>14</sup>. It is uncertain to say of, where Reverend Ioelu and his wife came from but some of the people I interview recalled that they probably hailed from the village of Lalomanu or Satitua in Aleipata. It is not even recorded why Ioelu's time in the ministry was as short as it was three years only. The next *Faifeau* was Reverend Evagelia (FS) and *faletua* (church minister's wife) Suitupe who served in Ulutogia from 1925 to 1938. The next *Faifeau* was notably recognized and the longest one that served in Ulutogia. He was Reverend *Faapusa Meleisea Auelua* (FT) and *faletua* Failelei Auelua from Lepa; the exact date of when they started in Ulutogia is unclear. According to some people of the village, Faapusa served in Ulutogia for at least forty (40) years until he retired in 1981. Faapusa retired while serving as the Reverend Elder (*Faifeau* Toeaina) of the *Pulega*<sup>15</sup> of Aleipata. According to Leutu Sagapolutele, their village did not want Faapusa to leave, as they wanted him to continue to serve there at all his time in God's work. Given the long time they had him as their Minister, his wife Failelei passed away

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<sup>14</sup> Rev. Oka Fauolo, *O Vavega O Le Alofa Laveai: O Le Tala Faasolopito O Le Ekalesia Faapotopotoga* (Apia: Malua Printing Press, 2005).

<sup>15</sup> A Congregational sub-district in the Congregational Christian Church Samoa

in 1977 or 1978 and was buried in Ulutogia. Showing respect to their long serving minister, the church insisted that Faapusa must be laid together with his beloved faletua in Ulutogia.

However, Faapusa's son Tufi Faapusa (FS) then a *Faifeau* in Iva, Faasaleleaga Savaii, did not want that because his father at that stage was already in poor health. He was also very frail due to old age, and was suffering from dementia. So it was a sad moment for the village to farewell their long serving *Faifeau*.<sup>16</sup>

The next *Faifeau* was Reverend Alesana Isara (FS) and faletua Tumanu who looked after Ulutogia from 1981 to 1986. Reverend Isara was another well-known name within the CCCS circles as he was educated at Malua Theological College from 1940 to 1944. In 1946 they were posted to serve as missionaries in Gabagaba, Saroa Papua New Guinea until 1953.<sup>17</sup> Upon returning to Samoa, they spent seven years as teachers in Maluafou College before they were called to serve as *Faifeau* at Avata Falealupo, in 1962<sup>18</sup>. After eighteen (18) years of service in Avata, they left for sabbatical leave in December 1980<sup>19</sup>. They decided to settled in Tumanu's family at the village of Ulutogia Aleipata. During that time, they were asked to look after the Ulutogia CCCS parish to await the next faifeau for the village. But it was not too long to wait for a new minister until the parish decided to have them as their minister. This made it a unique situation because they could not have *Osigafeagaiga*<sup>20</sup> (*covenant*) as *faletua* Tumanu was from Ulutogia and, they were still part of the ministry in Avata Falealupo. Although this is not uncommon for a *Faifeau*

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<sup>16</sup> Leutu Sagapolutele, interview by Eletise Palemene, 2019.

<sup>17</sup> Latu Latai, "Covenant Keepers: A History of Samoan (Lms) Missionary Wives in the Western Pacific 1839 to 1979" (Australian National University, 2016).

<sup>18</sup> A beautiful village situated at the west end of the larger island of Savai'i, in Samoa

<sup>19</sup> "Faifeau Faamavae - Alesana Isara," *Sulu Samoa*, 15th-31th March 1981.

<sup>20</sup> A formal ceremony to welcome a *faifeau* in his new village. The ceremony includes *lotu* and the presentation of food and traditional gifts

*nofo-aiga* (whether retired or waiting for call to a parish) to take care of a parish in absence of a covenanted Minister, it was unique that Reverend Alesana Isara and his wife Tumanu looked after the church for quite a long period of time. Their selection was questionable as it was not in line with the way village ministers of the CCCS are selected.

How the Church dealt with such appointments was not known in terms of its administrative and ministerial system accordingly. However upon interviewing Reverend Susuga Alesana<sup>21</sup> the son of the late Rev Alesana Isara, he stated that when the parish met on its monthly meeting, the election of a new *Faifeau* to replace the retired Elder Faapusa Meleisea Auelua (FT), was part of its agenda. The high chief Sagapolutele Sipaia Uitime consulted Reverend Uilipefosi Uiseaga<sup>22</sup> (FT) of CCCS Saleaumua and informed him that the Ulutogia parish has decided to have Rev Alesana Isara as their elected *Faifeau*. Uiseaga objected the proposal and asked Sagapolutele to choose another *Faifeau* as he knew that faletua Tumanu is from Ulutogia. However, Sagapolutele told Uiseaga (FT) that the village and church would not accept any other *Faifeau* apart from Alesana Isara. The parish also understands the CCCS policy<sup>23</sup> but were willing to put aside the obvious village connection with their ‘**sister**’ Tumanu and appoint Alesana Isara (FS) as he was very similar to Rev Elder Faapusa in many respects. He was an experienced *Faifeau* in his early 70s and his demeanour and age suited the village interest on elderly Church Ministers (*Faifeau matua*). At the end of their meeting, Uilipefosi Uiseaga (FT) accepted Ulutogia’s request despite the contradiction it showed. According to Susuga Alesana

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<sup>21</sup> Rev Susuga Alesana FS is the current minister of EFKS Vavau, Aleipata and son of the late Rev Alesana Isara FS and Tumanu.

<sup>22</sup> Rev Uilipefosi Uiseaga replaced Rev Elder Faapusa Meleisea Auelua as the *Faifeau* Toeaina (Reverend Elder) of Aleipata Sub-district within the Congregational District of Falealili when Rev Elder Faapusa resigned due to ill health. Rev Uilipefosi Uiseaga was the Minister at CCCS Saleaumua

<sup>23</sup> CCCS policy as per under Iloiloga o Iugafono Tumau under section 13 clearly prohibits a Minister from taking up a call to any parish or village he or his wife has connections too.

(FS), the *Komiti Au Toeaina KAT* (Elders' Committee) ascertained the appointment of his father as the new *Faifeau* of Ulutogia but disciplined Elder Uiseaga for three months by preventing him from conducting ceremonies of the holy sacrament of Holy Communion<sup>24</sup>. Rev Isara was 71 years old when he took over the leadership of CCCS Ulutogia. That was an interesting aspect of his selection because just before taking over, the CCCS *Fonotele* (General Assembly) passed a resolution reducing the mandatory retirement age for *Faifeau* from 75 years of age to seventy. However, Rev Isara and few other *Faifeau* had passed seventy years of age when the changes were introduced. To maintain transparency of its decision, the Elders Committee allowed them to continue serving until they reached the old mandatory retirement age of 75. Rev Alesana Isara duly retired when he reached 75 years old in 1986 at Ulutogia.

Rev Tonu Peleiseuma Mauafu on the other hand had a different view and suggested that there may be other reasons why it was hard to find *Faifeau* for Ulutogia at that time following Rev Faapusa M Auelua's retirement. The Malua Theological College graduates and other experience ministers may have turned down the CCCS Ulutogia's invitation was probably due to financial difficulties, transportation and the long distance of the village from Apia Township.

The next *Faifeau* noted in Fauolo's book was I'amafana Faauuga and faletua Christina from Auala and Afega who served from 1987 to 2006.<sup>25</sup> The selection of I'amafana is an interesting one according to the people who were part of the selection process of a new *Faifeau* to replace the retiring Isara. I'amafana (AM) was a final year student at Malua Theological College (MTC) in 1986 when his name was nominated in the parish

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<sup>24</sup> Rev Susuga Alesana Isara interview by author on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2021

<sup>25</sup> Fauolo.

vote. He was not the first choice in the vote, but another MTC student, Iosefa Uilelea (AM) won the vote<sup>26</sup>.

When the late Sagapolutele Sipaia Uitime and other chiefs of the village went to Malua Theological College to inform the principal, Rev Oka Fauolo of their decision, they were surprised to find out that Uilelea has not yet completed his studies. Rev Fauolo apologised to the delegation that Iosefa Uilelea was only in his second year of study in Malua and was therefore impossible for Uilelea to take up the call. Unless they wanted to wait until Uilelea completed his studies for another two years. Out of their curiosity to find a new *Faifeau*, the delegation then asked Rev Fauolo for someone else whom he would recommend to be their *Faifeau*. Rev Fauolo recommended I'amafana Faauuga, a final year student from the Malua Theological College Class of 1986. Hence the appointment of Faauuga came about to be Ulutogia's fifth *Faifeau* in its history and the

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<sup>26</sup> Iosefa Uilelea later went on to become Lotofaga, Aleipata's *Faifeau* in 1990. He was chosen to be the Reverend Elder of Pulega o Lepa & Lotofaga and Reverend Elder Director of the District of Lepa, Lotofaga & Aleipata in 2014 after the deaths of Reverend Elders Suafa'i Patu and Isaia Pisa Tiatia respectively.

covenant between Rev I'amafana and Ulutogia was sealed on 27 March 1987.

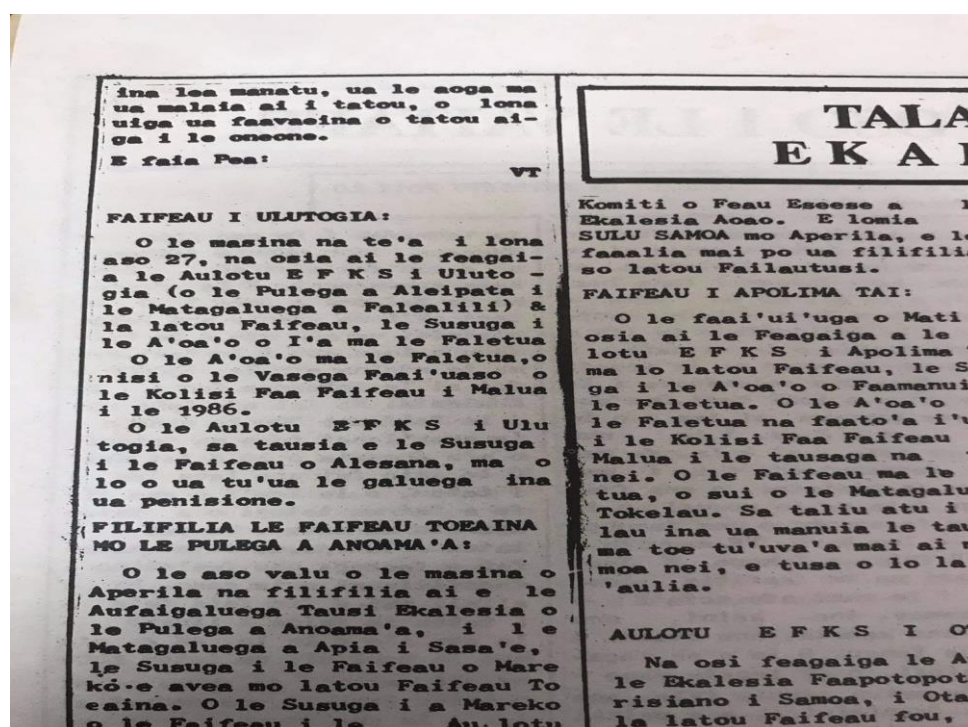


Fig 1.0 – Notice on the new minister for CCCS Ulutogia 1987 (Sulu Samoa 1987)

I'amafana came to Ulutogia as a fresh graduate from MTC and was yet to be ordained. He serves in Ulutogia from 1987 to 2006. Due to some irreconcilable differences between the village and I'amafana, the *feagaiga* between him and CCCS Ulutogia was dismissed

Rev Mose Lata (FS) came in 2006 until he passed away in 2015. It was during his tenure that the church building was moved inland following the 2009 tsunami. The dedication of the new church building was carried out on the 28<sup>th</sup> December 2013.

After the sudden passing away of Rev Mose Lata in 2015, the CCCS Ulutogia Parish then again voted for a new *Faifeau*. Like similar voting in their past elections, the second placed nominee would take the opportunity if the person who won the vote declines. In their meeting to select a substitute for the late Rev Mose Lata; Visio Saga (FS), a Lecturer at Malua Theological College was elected while Korua Matamu (FS) who was teaching at Nuuasala College came second. However, when the village chiefs and other

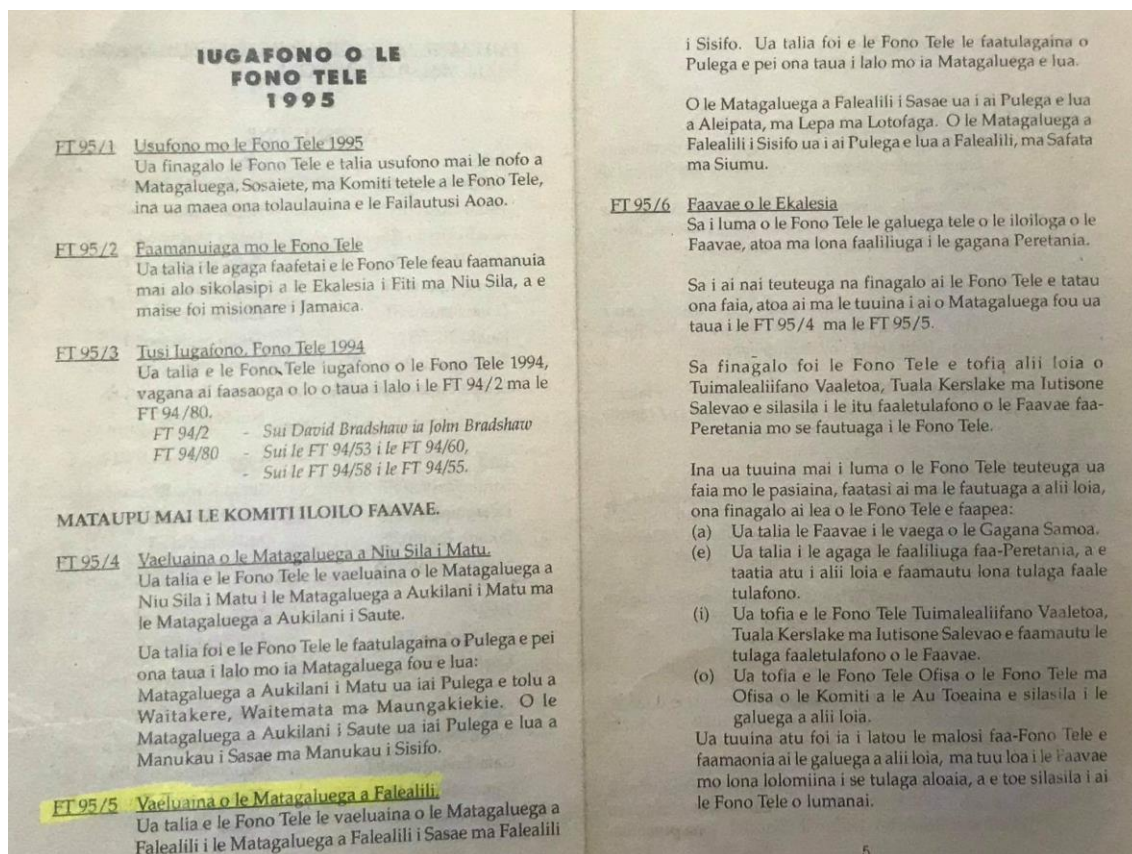
members of the parish went to Malua to negotiate with their elected *faiifeau*, Reverend Saga was already prepared to go on scholarship in Australia for his PhD Studies and was unable to take the call. The *Faiifeau Toeaina* (Reverend Elder) Timoteo Momoemausu<sup>27</sup> of the *Pulega Aleipata* (sub-district) then told the CCCS Ulutogia parish that no further vote was needed but would rather appoint the second place holder. Reverend Kororia Matamu was officially welcomed and accepted by the Ulutogia parish as their next church minister. The CCCS Ulutogia officially welcome Rev Kororia Matamu and faletua Puataunofu in 2016 and are currently working hard in the ministry.

### **1.3.2 The Changes and Milestones**

There have been a number of changes in the CCCS Ulutogia parish with regards to the development of the church since its establishment and its placement in the Pulega (CCCS districts). In the beginning, the Ulutogia parish was part of the *Matagaluega Falealili* (Falealili Congregational District) which comprising of four (4) *Pulega (Sub-districts)*. - 1) Aleipata, 2) Lepa ma Lotofaga, 3) Falealili and 4) Safata and Siumu. It was not until the 1995 EFKS *Fonotele* that a resolution (I'ugafono) FT 95/5 was passed for *Matagaluega Falealili* (Falealili CCC District) to be divided into two separate *Matagaluega*.

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<sup>27</sup> Rev Timoteo Momoemausu is the current Minister for CCCS Mutiatele and he succeeded the late Rev Elder Isaia Pisa Fiti Tiatia as the leading Reverend Elder (Faiifeau Toeaina) of Aleipata Pulega in 2014 when Rev Elder Isaia passed away.



**Fig 1.1** Subdividing<sup>28</sup> of the *Falealili Matagaluega* into two *Matagaluega* (Sulu Samoa, 1995)

The two new *Matagaluega* established were *Falealili i Sisifo* (Falealili West) and *Falealili i Sasae* (Falealili East). The Ulutogia parish is part of the *Pulega* (Sub-district) Aleipata under the leadership of the late Reverend Elder Isaia Fiti Pisa Tiatia<sup>29</sup> at Lalomanu. In 2011 the *Matagaluega Falealili i Sasae* moved a Mau (Motion) to the Fonotele to change its names to *Matagaluega a Lepa, Lotofaga ma Aleipata*. It was accepted by Fonotele that year (2011) and only the name changed whilst the composition

<sup>28</sup> "Ft 95/5 Vaeluaina O Le Matagaluega a Falealili," in *Iugafono O Le Fono Tele 1995* (Apia: Malua Printing Press, 1995).

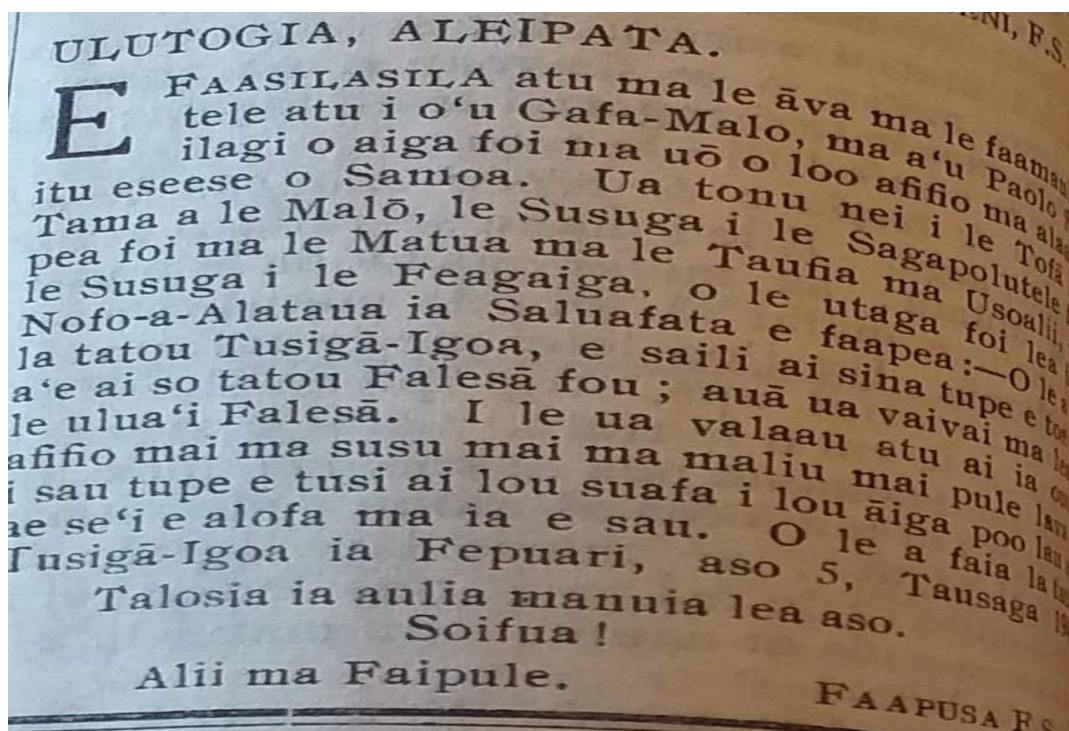
<sup>29</sup> Rev Elder Isaia Fiti Pisa Tiatia FT served as Missionary to PNG from 1971 to 1977. Then was called as Minister for CCCS Lalomanu from 1978 till he passed away in 2014. He succeeded Rev Elder Faa-Taape Su'a FT of CCCS Satitua as the Faifeau Toeaina of Aleipata Pulega in 1988 when Faataape retired. In 1995 he became the first Toeaina Faatonu (District Elder Director Minister) of the newly created *Matagaluega Falealili i Sasae*.

of the *Matagaluega* with two *Pulega* remained the same as well as the number of its associated parishes.

### **1.3.3 Construction of the first LMS/CCCS Ulutogia Church Building 1931-1956**

In the beginning, the village *lotu* were conducted in a Samoan *fale* until the people were readily agreed to donate and seek financial assistance to build a European house for worship purposes. Meatuai recalls his grandmother's story on their struggle to raise fund for a new church and house for the Faifeau. Nobody from the village got a job in government or from a business owner. People worked in their own farms and fishing to earn money for the church and feed their families. Some families were lucky enough to donate every Sunday if they have relatives or children in New Zealand to help, but mostly they were *tagiilima* (hardworking hands) to survive (Meatuai, 2019). Meatuai also compared between the beginning and his time in serving the village council of matai and church commitment in the present time as far different. He says, "Although the past times were considered difficult, but people were able to afford living from their land and resources of the sea without poverty or diseases; today is more difficult to maintain a healthy living environment in the village because everything is commercialised" (Meatuai, 2019). Whatever the differences raised in terms of social and economic activities in the village, every generation exposes to struggles and hardship of different times. The CCCS Ulutogia took twenty-five (25) years of struggle in building their first concrete church. As from 1931 they raised money from hard works within their rich lands and seas to fulfil their dream of worshipping in what they called a real church. They aired a public notices to relatives and friends living abroad to contribute in a fundraising event

called *Tusigaigoa*<sup>30</sup> while they prepared food for their generous donors (Sulu Samoa, 1947).



**Fig 1.2** – A public call to families, friends and the Church to help with the *Tusigaigoa* fundraising (SULU SAMOA, 1947).



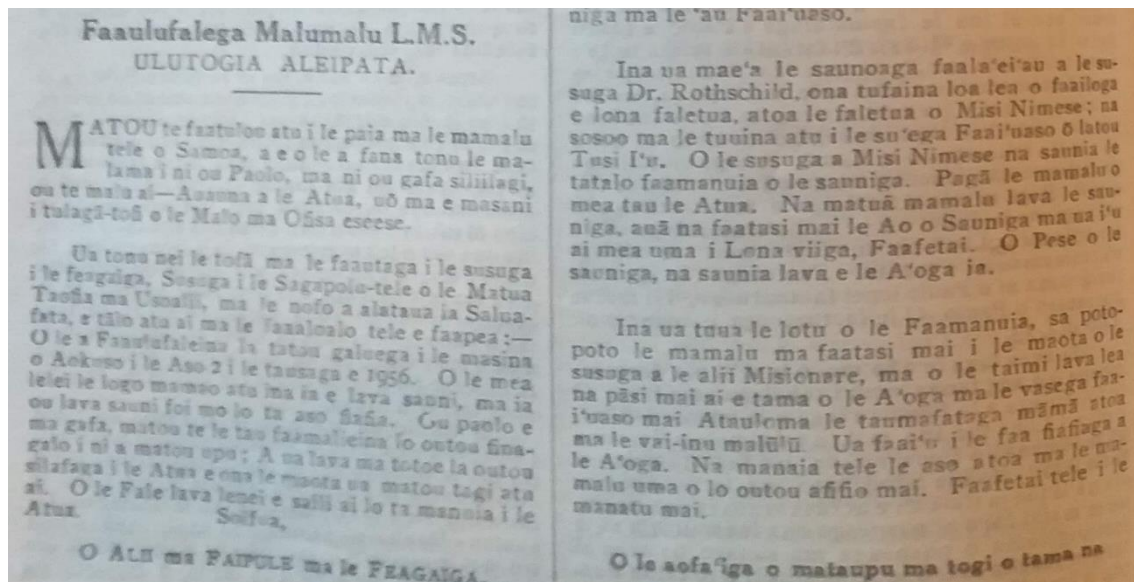
**Fig 1.3** -Young men on the finishing touch in painting. *Source: New Zealand video archive- A new Day in Samoa: www.archives.govt.nz*

<sup>30</sup> *Tusigaigoa* is a kind of fundraising event where families and friends are called publicly to donate for a special community purposes by registering their names with some amount of money



**Fig 1.4** -Young men carrying heavy wooden pews for the new church.  
 Source:www.archives.govt.nz

In 1956, the whole village was filled with joyful events of *faaulufalega* (dedication) their first built new church.



**Fig 1.5** invitation notice for the church *faaulufalega* (dedication) in August 2<sup>nd</sup> 1956 (SULU SAMOA 1956).



**Fig 1.6** A delightful day for village of Ulutogia as many come far and wide to celebrate the new church building. *Source:www.archives.govts.nz*



**Fig 1.7** - *Ta'alolo*<sup>31</sup> from the village and LMS/CCCS Lalomanu *Source:www.archives.govts.nz*

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<sup>31</sup> A traditional Samoan practice where one party give traditional goods as form of assistance for the host party especially in traditional events of dedication of a new church

### 1.3.4 New Church Building – *Tino o le Alofa Tunoa (Body of God’s Grace)*

In 1983, Rev Alesana Isara (FS) and the CCCS Ulutogia decided to demolish the church building dedicated in 1956 to make way for a new church building (Sulu Samoa, 1983). This time people had experiences what was like in building churches and better houses for the Faifeau. Despite the hardship and struggle, they feel that they can do hard work and climb mountains if they have steadfast faith in Christ (Leutu, 2019). The work as noted in Rev Isara’s report for Sulu Samoa took only 6 months and 3 weeks which was much less than the twenty-five (25) years to build the old demolished church building. On the twenty-ninth (29<sup>th</sup>) of May 1983 the Ulutogia community conducted a farewell service for their old memorial church building before it was demolished.

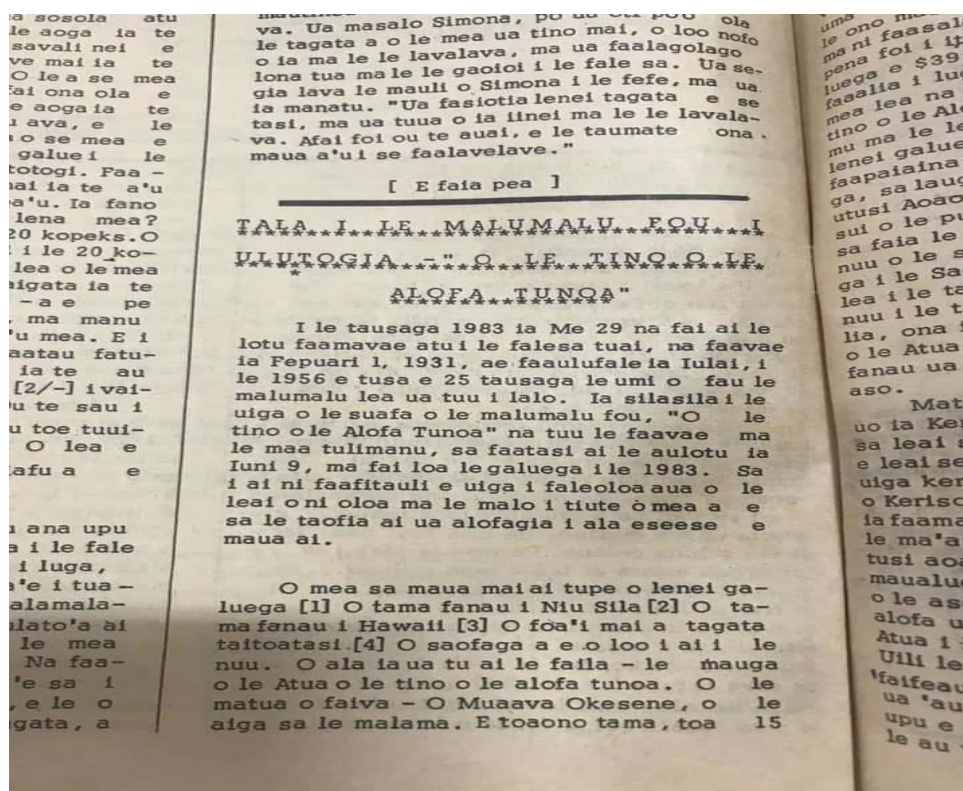
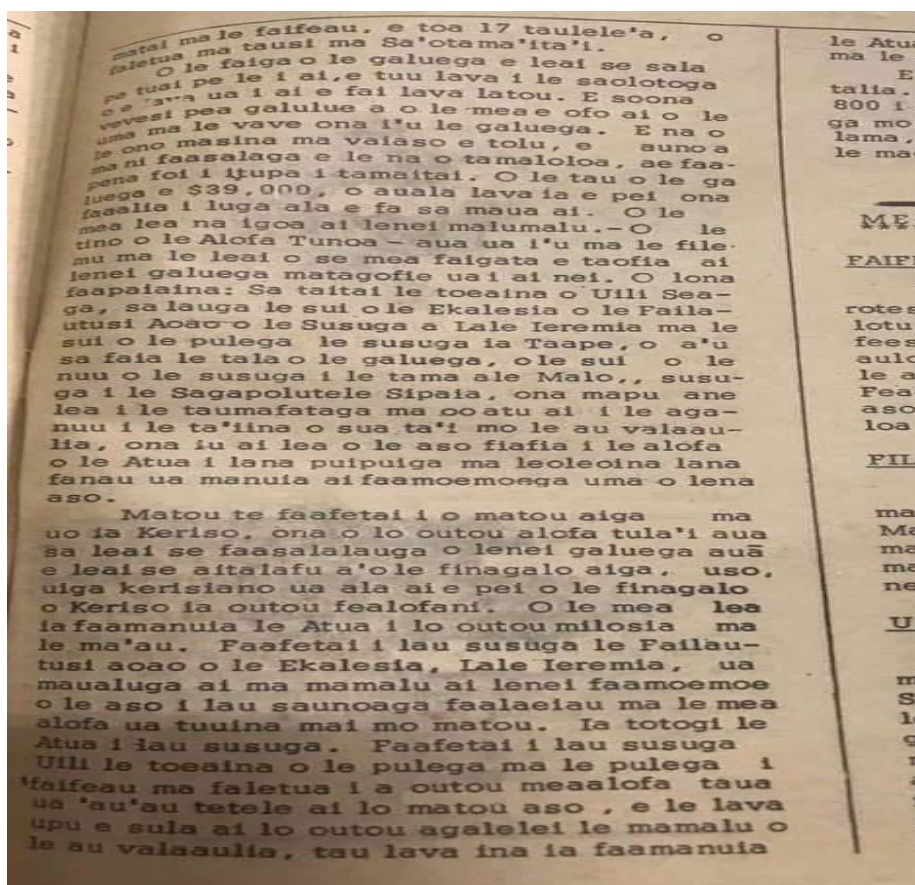


Fig 1.8 – A short report on the new church in 1983 (Sulu Samoa, 1984)

On the ninth of June 1983 the foundation stone was laid and soon after work began. Most of the funds were donated from the village sons and daughters working as church ministers

in New Zealand and Hawaii. Church members (*matafale*) also made contributions in building the church. They hired a carpenter from *Fagaloa* named *Muaava Okesene* to build the new church. His skills were widely admired by the village as it took only six months and three weeks for the project to complete.

Rev Isara, named the new church building, *O le Tino o le Alofa Tunoa* (The Body of God's Grace). The total cost of the new church project was \$39,000SAT without arrears (Sulu Samoa 1897).



**Fig 1.9** Report of the new church and opening ceremony (Sulu Samoa, 1984)

The dedication of the new Church *Tino o le Alofa Tunoa* was held on the 29 November 1983. According to the Sulu Samoa February 1984, the dedication service was well attended by friends and families of the village from overseas and all of Samoa. Invited were dignitaries of the *Pulega* Aleipata lead by Elder Uilipefosi Uiseaga FT and the

executives of the CCCS mother church as represented by the General Secretary at the time, Rev Lale Ieremia (FS).

Rev Elder Uiseaga<sup>32</sup> led the dedicating ceremony, with the assistance of the CCCS General Secretary Rev Lale Ieremia<sup>33</sup> and Secretary of the *Pulega Aleipata*, Rev Faataape Fogavai Tui<sup>34</sup> of CCCS Satitua. Rev Alesana Isara provided a report of work from its beginning to the end while high chief Sagapolutele Sipaia spoke on behalf of the church parish. Following the ceremony was a big feast at the village *Malae* provided by the church parish with usual presentations of traditional gifts to the invited guests and dignitaries.

## 1.4 Summary

The establishment of the CCCS Church Ulutogia in 1922 was welcome and valued. Christianity brought new experiences as it gradually grows and enculturates in the village community norms and traditions. In appreciation of the *lotu*, the community provides land, food, shelter and protects the *faiifeau* and his family as the *faiifeau* gains more respect for his persistent hard work. Learning the gospel more inspires people to build a church for worship. Despite the less developed and limited resources in terms of human capacity and financial need, Ulutogia managed to complete their first Church building after 25 years of hard labour.

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<sup>32</sup> Rev Uili Uiseaga replaced Rev Elder Faapusa Meleisea Auelua as the leading Reverend Elder of Aleipata Sub-district within the Congregational District of Falealili when Rev Faapusa resigned due to ill health. Rev Uili was a Minister at CCCS Saleaumua

<sup>33</sup> Rev Lale Ieremia a graduate of both Malua Theological College (MTC) and Pacific Theological College (PTC) in Suva, Fiji. He was the Principal of Leulumoega Fou College prior to his appointment as General Secretary of CCCS and was called to be the Minister of CCCS Fasitoo-tai in 1988. He later became a Reverend Elder of Aana District and Alofi Sub-District and Chairman of CCCS.

<sup>34</sup> Rev Fa'a-Taape Fogavai Tui was the Minister of CCCS Satitua and the Pulega Aleipata Failautusi (Sub-district's Minister Secretary) at the time of church dedication in 1983. He succeeded Rev Uiseaga as Reverend Elder of the Sub-district of Aleipata the following year in 1984 and retired four years later in 1988 when he reached retirement age.

Selecting a *faiifeau* was easy but finding one was stressful as not many were available in the past. Rev Mauafu<sup>35</sup> suggests other possible reasons that may have turned down the CCCS Ulutogia's invitation such as financial difficulties, poor transportation or the long distance of the village from Apia Town. Ulutogia was never left alone without a *faiifeau* ever since it established in 1922.

The CCCS policy on appointments of Church Ministers with family connections to related parishes was challenged at Ulutogia and flopped. The Reverend elder allows Ulutogia's wish over church protocols and costs suspension of his ministerial roles for four months.

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<sup>35</sup> Son of Ulutogia village and current minister of the EFKS Iva Faasaleleaga, Savaii

## Chapter 2

### ***O le ulu matagia* – A devastated church community**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

An *ulu matagia* is a breadfruit infected with fungus due to an unexpected seasonal winds making it unpleasant for meals. The concept *ulu matagia* is used here to describe the image of a church community devastated by natural force in many ways.

This Chapter provides some information on the tsunami of 2009 and its devastating impacts on the village of Ulutogia as well as the wider Aleipata districts and Samoa. It focuses on examining the impact of the tsunami on people of the Ulutogia community in relation to their village life and church activities. It also looks at the issues surrounding land ownership of lands where the church was relocated and why the church was moved inland after the tsunami. Furthermore, it discusses the decision by the congregation to move back to its original site on the coastal area and the emerging problems that hinders the progress of relocating again.

#### **2.2 The Tsunami of 2009**

On the early hours of September 29, 2009, at 17:48 UTC (6:48 a.m. local time), a magnitude 8.1 earthquake struck midway between Samoa and American Samoa generating tsunami waves of up to 22 meters (National Center for Environmental information, 2009). Two waves, up to 8 meters in some locations, caused localized devastation over the eastern and southern coast of Upolu Island with generally less severe impacts further west (SPREP 2009).

The deadly tsunami is forever etched in the memories of the people of Samoa as it took lives of 143 people and left most of the affected areas homeless with unhealthy living

environments. The district of Aleipata as well as other coastal villages of the south eastern part of the main island Upolu, were the most damage areas of Samoa. The devastation stretched past human casualties with houses smashed, cars and home furniture brushed out to sea while some villages being fully wiped out

### **2.2.1 The Damages and Loss**

The impact of tsunami made many people homeless. The cost was not just confined to deaths of family members, but also social and economic values were affected as costs of having to renovate their homes or shift inland became financially troubled. Religion was interrupted with loss of infrastructure and prolong psychological effects on its members.

An overall estimate of the aftermath of the Tsunami and Impacts on the village and the church was a severe blow for Samoa economy as indicated in a research of Tupe Tagomoa-Isara on “Tourism Recovery after the 2009 Tsunami in Samoa”. According to Tagomoa Isara at least 20 villages were affected including Ulutogia and the estimated loss to the economy was US \$104 million, an equivalent of SAT \$260 million (Tagomoa-Isara, 2010). The impact obviously was immense as many lost their livelihood. Many small family businesses were affected on this area particularly on the South East coast as this area is a popular tourist destination in the island of Upolu. The question on how, when and where would they rebuild was a challenge as the coastal areas seems vulnerable to natural disaster and may not be able to maintain its economic value in the future. Another aspect of costs on people’s lives was the psychological trauma of tsunami that triggers fear on people to rebuild near the sea (Tagomoa-Isara 2010). As a result, relocating inland was the most appropriate option considered without doubts.

### 2.2.2 Impact of Tsunami on CCCS Ulutogia

Most of the casualties of the tsunami were school children with some youths were caught up and got drown while they prepared to go to school and work (Meatuai, 2020)<sup>1</sup>. It was fortunate that, the village of Ulutogia did not suffer in terms of human life but few houses and its church building were damaged with shattered glasses and broken doors. Despite what was seen as minor damages which can be replaced, but it did not give justice to what people had to endure. Personally when I see the village (*aai*), it was like a deserted place. Although many have rebuilt their houses, it does not possess the beauty and the shiny sandy grounds it used to have. Many people had to uproot their lives and moved inland.

After the tsunami, the village used their primary school building for church services until the schools in Samoa resumed their educational curriculum. Sunday services were then conducted in the empty and damaged church building while the congregation planned to build a new church and a minister's house inland. As families tried to rebuild their households, the churches and schools were also in the same situation of searching for help.

Faiumu remembers the willingness of members of the church to rebuild the church on the same place as early as possible, however the minister opted for relocation. "This was the individual decision of Rev Mose. The whole village community and the congregation wanted to rebuild the church on the same spot where it locates before the tsunami."<sup>2</sup> The minister's view of moving the church and his manse inland won the day. The construction work immediately began for the new church and manse and dedicated in 2013. The approximate cost of the whole project was estimated to be \$650,000 SAT. Sadly, not even

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<sup>1</sup> Faiumu Meatuai, interview by Eletise Palemene December 12, 2019

<sup>2</sup> Faiumu Meatuai, interview by Eletise Palemene. January 4, 2020

two years had passed since the dedication of the rebuilding project, Rev Mose sadly passed away.

### 2.2.3 Assistance from Council for World Mission (C.W.M)

The Council for World Mission (C.W.M), had generously donated \$30,000SAT to help the village community on catering children's educational needs. Some overseas Churches, and people of Niue also contributed to this fund. This money was released from a reserved fund known as a Children's Relief Fund. Ulutogia had a share of the pie to pay for their Children's school fees.

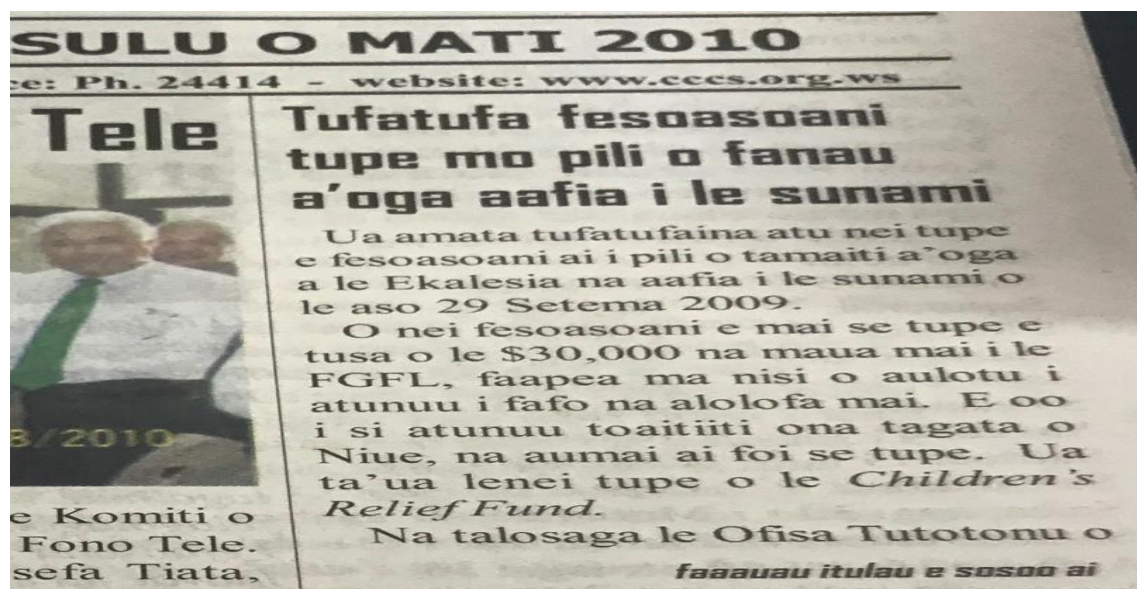


Fig 2.0 distribution of the Children Relief Fund (Sulu Samoa,2010)



Fig 2.1 List of the Children’s Relief fund recipients (Sulu Samoa, 2010)

About sixteen (16) children from Ulutogia benefitted from this tsunami aid. They attend different schools like Aleipata College, Samoa College, Avele College and the majority at the CCCS mission schools of Maluafou, Leulumoega Fou and Papauta Girls Colleges.

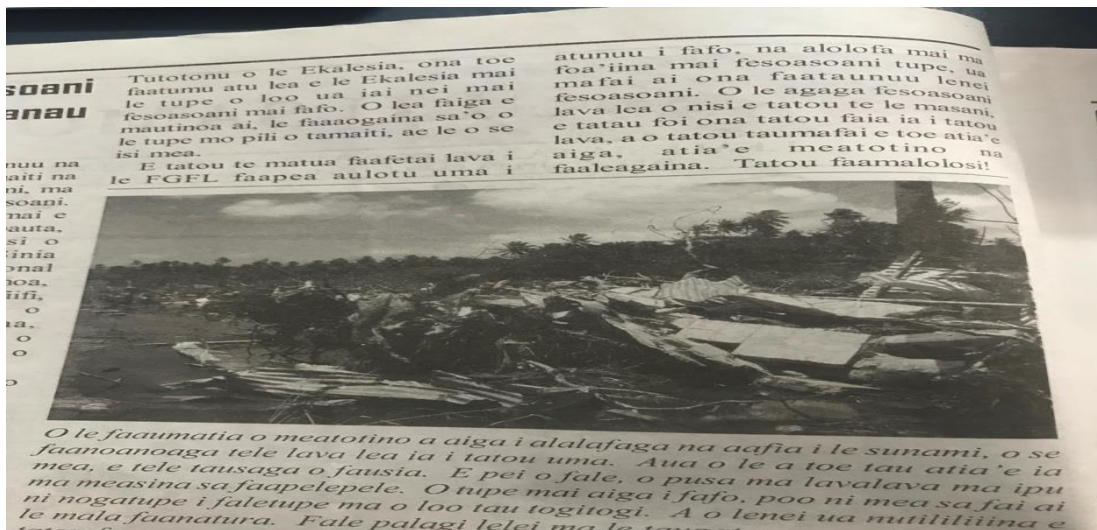


Fig 2.2 One of the damaged sites in the Aleipata district (Sulu Samoa, 2010)

The fund was committed for three years of payment to the receivers without conditions. Because of the delay in the process of making it available, parents were allowed to pay

their children school fees and forward their receipts to the Finance Committee of CCCS for refunds.

### **2.3 Relocation and Land matters**

The relocation inland of the church was seen a best option but it was not smooth sailing. Not long after settlement, tensions grew between families of the villages in relation to the ownership of the land. Whereas some families viewed this move as merely a temporary fixture, others saw it as a permanent move. One prominent family in the village contested the location of this church as it was alleged that half of the physical building encroached on their land. According to Rev Susuga Alesana<sup>3</sup>, his Falanaipupu family is currently in battle with the Sagapolutele family over the ownership of land which the new church now locates. He says, “the Church should have never moved inland before land was secured and legally registered under the name of the CCCS Ulutogia” (Alesana 2020). And that was correct because the previous minister, Rev. Mose, who initiated the move inland, did not inquire to carry out a viable search on legitimate owners of the land in the proposed relocated area. It also did not help that Rev Mose insisted for the need to move inland, while the parishioners resisted and wished to rebuild the church upon the same location. Mose’s decision to shift immediately inland was basically for safety as the key priority and risking another tsunami in the future was something that the Pastor did not want to risk doing.

Rev Alesana remembers that Rev Mose determined to have the project done but, forgot to consider that land is treasure or *measina* in Samoan families. And when Rev Mose passed away unexpectedly, some of the village people agreed with Alesana that the

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<sup>3</sup> Rev Susuga Alesana, son of Ulutogia and minister of the CCCS Church. His parents look after the Ulutogia parish after some times in the ministry

minister's early death was perhaps caused by curse on the land or haunted by the spirits of the land (Alesana, 2020). They thought it could have been more sensible to perform the necessary ritual of blessing the land before commencing the phase of rebuilding, which in this case was not carried out. Whether it was intentional or not, not blessing the land indicates that Rev Mose rushed into a final decision without proper consultation with people of the land.

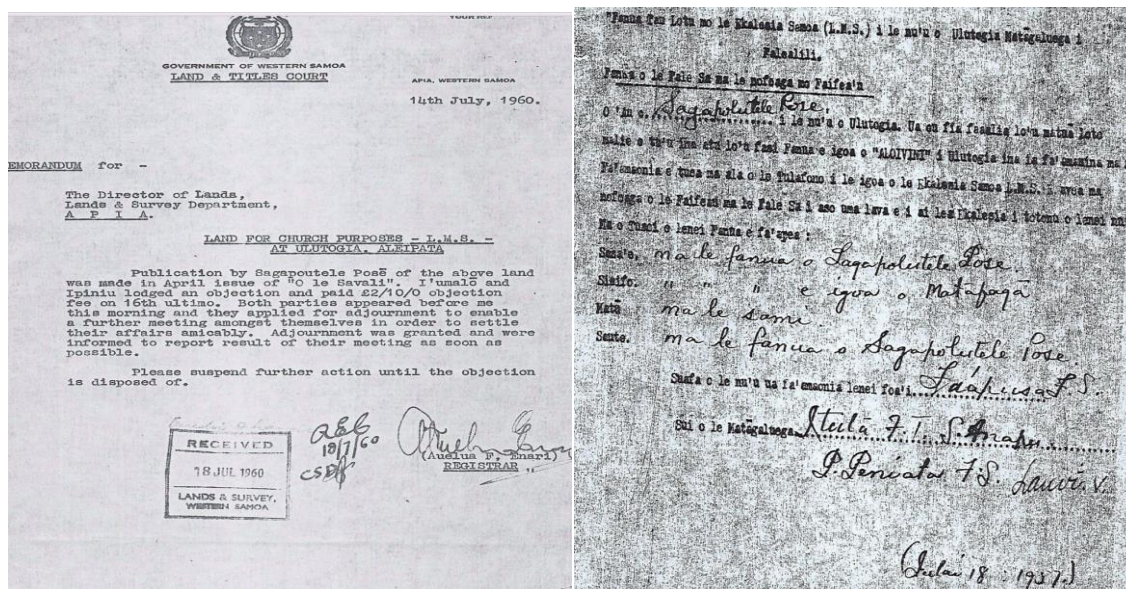
The current *faiifeau*, Rev. Matamu has been hesitant in the continuation of their resettlement because it prolongs tensions between parishioners. These tensions which he deems as unnecessary disturbances unsettle the peace among the church families. To avoid differences on these land disputes, Rev. Matamu sees that the only viable solution is to leave the disputed land and relocate the church to its original site which is legally registered under the church's name.

### **2.3.1. Land Disputes**

Although the parish has settled inland and worshipped at the new site, freedom of worship was not in mere achievement in terms of land security.

The insecurity of land motivated Rev Matamu to move the church back to its original location in the coastal area. However, things soon hit a snag according to Rev Matamu; before they started work on the coastal site, a stop notice from the Lands and Titles Court was delivered to him by police officers to stop the pending project. The Stop Order was lodged by some families of the village who wanted to reclaim their land where the church was built for many years back. This was a blow at the start and Matamu needed to investigate the truth about these claims. He found out documents of proof that the land was legally registered under the CCCS Ulutogia as its possession. However, the matter did not end there but continued to a court hearing between CCCS Ulutogia, represented by Rev Matamu and another senior deacon Fili versus the opposing side of the

Sagapolutele family. The customary land in dispute is known as Sa-Matafaga which the church believes was gifted in 1957 by Sagapolutele Pose for the church in Ulutogia. Witnessing such land offer was supported by Rev Itula of the CCCS Samusu on the Land and Title documents (attached copied of Land and Title notices). However, when the gifted land was notified in the Savali publication as property of the L.M.S Ulutogia, an objection by High Chiefs I'umalo and Ipinu was lodged. However, reconciliation was carried out and after further deliberations between the parties involved, the matter was unreservedly withdrawn. Now the parish is prepared to go ahead with their proposed relocation.



**Fig. 2.3** Lands & Titles documents showing objection by Ipinu over the land church is being built on and the document of offer also known as pulefaamau shows the offer of Alovini land by Sagapolutele Pose for use by the LMS Ulutogia.

### 2.4 Spiritual Life of CCCS Ulutogia

The core aspect of the ministry that the Faifeau must not take lightly is the spiritual life of the church and Rev Korua Matamu, reiterates that saying, “the Faifeau must also not forget the most important reason why they go into the ministry; they are to cultivate the spiritual lives of people of church villages and nations.

There were gaps needed to fill for the purposes of feeding the spirits continuously. As Alister McGrath states, “Christians understood the work of the Holy Spirit to focus on revelation, salvation and Christian life”<sup>4</sup>, the faifeau must maintain that focus on shepherding the flock without doubts. Rev Matamu notices the inactiveness of people in attending services during the week like *Lotu Au Leoleo* (Watchtower service) and *lotu Au Taumafai* (Christian Endeavour service) and reacts by changing his weekly services schedule. Instead of having these services on Wednesday and Saturday mornings he reschedules the *Lotu Au Taumafai* on every second Sunday evening of each month and *Lotu Au Leoleo* follows on every third Sunday evenings. He also changed the allocation of other Christian groups (*Au Kamapani*) differently. Instead of liturgical groups but sub-village groups (*pitonuu*) such as Ulutogia Highlands and Ulutogia Central while maintaining the Ulutogia Youth. His idea was getting everyone involved in church events as a simple way of refreshing spiritual life. With the changes introduced, people have anticipated the roles they take in church services and never stop participating in church activities. Moreover, people commits on donating more into Church offerings this time to help with the development of wider church community. These offerings contribute to their yearly offering (*taulaga Samoa*) at the end of the year.

## 2.5 Summary

The impact of the tsunami of 2009 was devastating as it not only destroys the environment and counts the loss of some people, but the whole community was psychologically affected (Meatuai, 2020)<sup>5</sup>. The challenges confronted during the post

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<sup>4</sup> McGrath E. Alister. 2011 5<sup>th</sup> edition. *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, (London: Willey-Blackwell)

<sup>5</sup> Meatuai interview by author at Ulutogia village, October 15, 2020

tsunami period were difficult to deal without the assistances from the government of Samoa, international donors, the local communities and the CCCS church.

The rebuilding of the church and relocating the community worship compound was extra load while people were rebuilding homes and rejuvenating their family lives, but it took courage and faith to shift the church and the *Faifeau* residence inland because the whole community was involved<sup>6</sup> (Peresia, 2021).

Relocation after the tsunami was completed urgently, and it was not without challenges from families who own the proposed land in use. The church continues to operate on an unsecured land on prolong debates. In searching for peace, the current minister proposes a relocation of the church back to its original location before the tsunami 2009. His proposal may sound but perhaps not easy for people who had already suffered financial difficulties and the continuous hassles of land disputes in the community. Shifting a church which is in good condition is frustrating to the parishioners and reflects poor planning and inadequate consultation between the minister and his parish. With concurring challenges, the church never gives up the fight as they come together to support the proposal and fight against the odds of obstacles on the way.

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<sup>6</sup> Peresia. Interview by Eletise Palemene at Malua Theological College, May 4, 2021

## Chapter 3

### Analysis of the CCCS Ulutogia history

#### 3.1 Introduction

The CCCS Ulutogia, has experienced a very difficult and rough journey in its early years but despite all that they still persevered. Its history is a testament of the hard work of those involved right from *Faifeau and Faletua, A'oa'o Fesoasoani* and wives, Tiakono, men, women, youth and children. The church as it now stands is a testimony of the contributions of all church members who were part of CCCS Ulutogia over the years.

This chapter gives an analysis of issues raised and discussed in the previous chapters to contribute in the formulation of a history of the CCCS Ulutogia. It looks at the growth of the church both physically and spiritually and the influence of the church to community life in relation with their social and economic undertakings. On the other hand, the community also contributes in shaping or reshaping the praxis and spiritual frontline of the church. The interpretation also touches on the necessity of record keeping in the *faiifeau* ministry and the advantages of maintaining records for historical purposes and pastoral work

#### 3.2 Historical Records and Assumption

This proposed history of CCCS Ulutogia collects few available materials from the CCCS main office with odds and ends of stories shared by the interview party and entwined into an open-ended piece. Few interview partners suggest that the recorded time of 1922 at which the church began in Ulutogia may be quite uneven when compared to its neighbouring villages. Rev Tonu Peleseuma's presumption that the church in Ulutogia was established in the late eighteenth century may be appropriate unfortunately there were

no written materials supporting his presumptions plus, elders in his village today could not confirm any appropriate dates the church began. Perhaps a better estimate could be drawn from the time a *Aoga Faamasani* was established between Aufaga and Lepa in 1843 (Sulu Samoa, 1990). As people of Aleipata affiliates with the church of Aufaga, it may be possible that this could be the starting point of developing a CCCS church at Ulutogia. Whatever conclusion we may arrive, Rev Mauafu challenges the research to dig further to find new discoveries with logical answers; and for whatever dates or years of establishment it proposes, he was thankful to his ancestors for receiving Christianity and building the church for their future children.

The quest for possible facts reminds of the importance of writings and keeping records secured. For Ulutogia CCCS, Records and *Api ole Galuega* are not in place for the church archive and most importantly for the *Faifeau's* line of works. The tsunami seems a reasonable defence for the loss of such invaluable notebook; however, if lay preachers or others who look after the parishes may have accessed then perhaps these missing items<sup>7</sup> are stored in a different home.

### **3.3 Selection of Faifeau**

The Freedom of selection for a *Faifeau* gives equal opportunities for members of the parish to vote their own candidates of choice. Such freedom of choice has sometimes negated the authorities of the Elders and the mother church when an *aulotu* keeps bidding for leniency on their decision. It was a tough call for Elder Uiseaga when he allowed Rev Alesana and Tumanu to work in their own village as it forces him through the risk of breaching church protocols. The consequences of his compassionate decision cost him

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<sup>7</sup> The Faifeau *Api ole Galuega* is mostly not available in Faifeau libraries and offices and recorded as a common problem when writing histories of *aulotu*

with suspension weeks and discrediting his pastoral reputation. Elder Uisega's choice on people over church policies may strike debates for the church to take heed. What Uisega did may have saved the Ulutogia parish members from switching to other denominations or changing religious beliefs and faiths as seen in some of our EFKS *aulotu* recently. For the Ulutogia parish, age with experiences was favourable let alone family relations with their chosen candidate. And that was an interesting call when one considers experiences ahead of the young and bright fellows for the ministry in the villages.

Chances for *Faifeau* and *Aoao Malua* to work in an *aulotu* was high in past years as not many of them were available. This was seen at the Ulutogia parish when they searched for one from graduates of Malua Theological College twice.

Responding to calls from church parishes also impose *aoao* and *faifeau* on freedom of choices, which may contribute to difficulties on selecting a *faifeau*. However, Rev Tonu expresses a concern on other reasons why the *faifeau* regrets coming to Aleipata that time. These may involve factors like, lack of good transportation, poor road infrastructure and the far locality of the village from Apia urban areas.

A change in lifestyle also brings a new outlook in the village with growth on people attending other denominations at walking distances.

### **3.4 The Tsunami Impacts**

The aftermath of the tsunami brought several changes to the village people in terms of social, economic, and religious status of the *aiga*. The village physical landscape changes as people tries to rebuilt from the loss they have experienced. This also affects the church in every aspect of physical development as well religious beliefs and spiritual healings.

The loss of lives, homes and valued properties also generated fear of poverty, diseases, unemployment, unethical behaviours and the refusal of people to participate in the church. “We were lost, we did not know what to do and where to start rebuilding. Everything was blank in our minds” (Meatuai, 2020). The experiences shared by Meatuai and other villagers shows insecurity and no hope to face hardship after the tsunami. However, the church responded as a supporting agency with other local and overseas organisation that assisted them financially.

### **3.4.1 Relocation and Land Matters**

The relocation of the church to a number of locations is headache and challenging to the ministry. Not only it creates differences among the village families, but it really affects the progress of the church development in terms of memberships and financial destitute. Samoa values their land highly, “it is the source of family identity and security” (Samoa, 2006); any gifting of land should never be taken lightly, because every person in a Samoan household owns a right on family lands. As generation pass on, land deals based on oral or unwritten agreement cannot survive in future debates. The Ulutogia parish went through a hassle of family consultations and reconciliations until they finally come to an agreement that confirm the given rights of land to the CCCS parish. Any relocation of modern-houses and high rise buildings involves high costs and hard labour to the community, an issue which must be well forecasted before any implementation. Considering the financial part of the shift seems to be brushed aside by the present *Faifeau*

## **3.5 Physical and Spiritual Rebuilding**

The establishment of the church in the beginning differs due to changes it has gone through with regards to social and economic development in Samoa. People were determined to build the church although the cost of living for them was not affordable.

Building a church for 25 years indicates how economically poor the village was but they united to raise funds for the church. Despite the struggle with economic and social changes it is a testament to their commitment and dedication to the Lord's work.

Over time, the church has developed in terms of people's capacities and participation as people's economic situation improved. Sons and daughters living abroad helps, although moving abroad was a drive for better opportunities and bright future. The Ulutogia community is satisfied as they have owed a lot to their children's *tautua aitaumalele*<sup>8</sup> (serving from abroad) in serving the church.

Church offerings and donations have increased tremendously as compared to past years. According to Rev Matamu their *Taulaga Samoa* (Offering for Samoa) increases every year as in his first year \$25,000 was offered, and in 2020 the offering raised to \$50,000.

One family has kindly donated a 4WD Toyota truck for the *faiifeau*. Despite the migration of the village people overseas and to urban areas, they never stop contributing to those who residing in the village. One of the interesting fact raised by Matamu is the *growth in the number of church members (Matafales) from 14 families to 18 families now with three supporting families (3 matafale fesoasoani)*. The fact that more families have been added to the Ulutogia parish as well as an increase of their annual offerings to date, indicates that the parish is successfully in good progress. These are encouraging outcomes of hard work carried out by the *faiifeau* and people who admits themselves to the church and Rev *Matamu* recognised these *tautua* as all due to the commitment of people to the church and Gods ministry. Success comes after hard labour and people believed in their service for God and faith carries them along their journey without looking back.

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<sup>8</sup> Tautua Aitaumalele: service from a distance eg: a family member who lives overseas but supports the ones at home. <https://practice.orangatamariki.govt.nz/assets/practice/Vaafetu/vaafetu-samoan-families.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1CF1HIqd2qv1RSdy52yGnqi3IHIHcipRZSA4lu6ataqcT2uH01g48B3o>

## Chapter 4

### Conclusion

Writing a history for the CCCS Ulutogia is a challenge given the scarcity of written or published materials and the uncertainty of oral presentations from the researched area. The problem of sources continues as not only in the church headquarters but also in the village churches. The *Faifeau* are probably inconsistent writers or perhaps are not willing to write by virtue of the church and the village parish. This problem exists as the research discovers that some of them do not hold or process *Api o le Galuega* for their ministries<sup>1</sup>. Land matters is one of the stumbling blocks in the CCCS Ulutogia which continues to break families' relationships and interfere with the church affairs. The uncontrollable legal battles on land disputes sadly reflect the loss of cultural respect of Samoan families towards their *faifeau or lotu* and, lack of mutual understandings among responsible parties to settle (*soalaupule*)<sup>2</sup> matters before going to court

The relocation of the church inland was accomplished in times of distress however when tension between families with land rights emerged, the church was asked to evacuate the disputed land. The situation does not please the *faifeau* as land debates has already affected the progress of his work and therefore argues to relocate again. his decision was tough and discouraging to the parishioners. Although the earlier negotiations of the land in disputes were not successful in his perception, perhaps the *faifeau* should deal carefully

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<sup>1</sup> See also Tavita Pulu, in his Thesis. A History of CCCS Saleapaga since Tsunami 2009: An Analysis of the impacts of a Natural Catastrophe, 2018

<sup>2</sup> Soalaupule: is usually translated literally as "to deliberate". Soalaupule is made up of three different words being, *soa* which literally means 'a partner'; *lau* which means 'your or yours' or a 'leaf'; and the word *pule*, which literally means 'authority'. So the combination of these three words forming Soalaupule can be literally translated and interpreted as 'to share your authority with your partner'

Fa'alepo Aveau Tuisuga-le-taui O le Tofa Liliu a Samoa: A Hermeneutical Critical Analysis of the Cultural Theological Praxis of the Samoan Context. Phd Thesis, Melbourne College of Divinity, 2009

with the issue first to avoid falling into the same errors. The people struggles to survive while serving the church sincerely therefore the *faiifeau* may not need to pressure them with his own decision before taking matters into proper consultations.

An overview of *faiifeau* selected by Ulutogia includes characters of maturity, culturally knowledgeable and an intelligent servant of the Gospel. Their choices picture how a *faiifeau* should prepare himself to face the reality of the ministry in the villages.

The quest to identify possible times in which the church was established may continue, but and the existence of a district station for Aleipata Lepa and Lotofaga in 1843 where a Preparatory Class was installed may provide relevant information to lead new searches for this history.

There are weaknesses in record keeping and information security in the parishes and the mother church at the least. The church may need to consider appropriate measures to preserve its history by encouraging its members on keeping their *Api ole Galuega* and other published material up to date.

The success stories of recent development and spiritual growth in the Ulutogia CCCS parish lives. Their achievements and major milestones as well as various challenges has motivated them to continue fighting and move forward with faith.

The research concludes that its findings are not absolute however it contains some relevant information that may encourage further studies to enhance this history for the CCCS Ulutogia. From the least developed community to a developed family of believers who never give up their faith in times of troubles, the research discovered valuable information and learned some constructive ideas from the life experiences of the Ulutogia people in the church.

## Appendix

### PEPA O FESILI

E fia maua se malamalaaga i fesili ua taua i lalo. Faafetai.

1. Amataga o le EFKS i Ulutogia
  - (i) O le a sou silafia I le amataina mai o le galuega I Ulutogia
  - (ii) Ao ai fo’I Faifeau sa tou feagai ma faapea le faasologa o Faifeau ma filifiliaina o latou
2. O le EFKS Ulutogia ma le Sunami o le 2009
  - (i) O le a le aafiaga o le Ekalesia I le galu-lolo poo le sunami o le 2009
  - (ii) Aisea na siitia ai le nofoaga o le Ekalesia le Falesa ma Maota o le Faifeau I uta
  - (iii) O ai na taulamua I lea faaiuga ma sa autasi ai le Ekalesia
3. O le Galuega Faafaifeau a le Faifeau (Pastoral Ministry)
  - (i) O a sau silasila I le agaiga o le galuega I le itu faaletino ma le itu faaleagaga
  - (ii) O a ni luitau mo le Ekalesia i Ulutogia mo le aga’i i luma

### PEPA O TALI

E fia maua se malamalaaga i fesili ua taua i lalo. Faafetai.

1. Amataga o le EFKS i Ulutogia
  - (i) O le a sou silafia I le amataina mai o le galuega I Ulutogia

**Tali:** I la’u iloa iai masalo ua atoa le 100 tausaga pe sili atu fo’I talu na faavae le Ekalesia.

  - (ii) Ao ai fo’I Faifeau sa tou feagai ma faapea le faasologa o Faifeau

**Tali:** Ia o le Faifeau na ou ola a'e mai o iai o le Toeaina o Faapusa ma out e matua ifo a o lae iai nei le Toeaina tua alu ese lava ina ua gasegase ma amata ona leiloa seisi, sosoo mai ai lea ma Alesana, I'a, Mose ma le faifeau lea iai nei o Kororia.

2. O le EFKS Ulutogia ma le Sunami o le 2009

(i) O le a le aafiaga o le Ekalesia I le galu-lolo poo le sunami o le 2009

**Tali:** Ia matua aafia le aai nei I le sunami, e ui e leai sesi na maliu mai Ulutogia ae tele meafale ma mea totino na faaleagaina le gata o fale o tagata ae faapea fo'I le fale o le faifeau na alu uma lalo faatasi ma le fale o le Galuega, o le Falesa fo'I na taei ia faamalama ma isi vaega o le Falesa. Ia o lea na afua ai loa le faaiuga a faifeau ia Mose e sili ai le me'I I uta o le falesa ma le fale o le faifeau.

(ii) Aisea na siitia ai le nofoaga o le Ekalesia le Falesa ma Maota o le Faifeau I uta

**Tali:** Ia o le manatu o Mose I te'I toe oso sesi faalavelave faalenatura pei o le Sunami ma e sili ai le me'I I uta e fai si maomao mai ma tai le sami.

(iii) O ai na taulamua I lea faaiuga ma sa autasi ai le Ekalesia

**Tali:** O le mea moni a ia toatele o le Ekalesia na mana'o lava e toe fausia le Falesa ma fale o le Faifeau ma Galuega I tai nofoaga tuai ae peitai e ese fo'I se manatu a le faifeau ma ui lava I se manatu o le aulotu ae na lolo lava le mana'o le Faifeau ona e faigata le latou va nonofo ai o le latou Feagaiga taulagi lea.


3. O le Galuega Faafaifeau a le Faifeau (Pastoral Ministry)

(i) O a sau silasila I le agaiga o le galuega I le itu faaletino ma le itu faaleagaga

**Tali:** I la'u vaai iai o loo sologa manuia uma mea ma a e vaai fo'I le taulaga a Ulutogia ia alualu I luga mai le mea sa iai.

(ii) O a ni luitau mo le Ekalesia i Ulutogia mo le aga'i i luma

**Tali:** O le luitau tele a lea iai o le taumafai lava tapu'e agaga o tagata aemaise lava tupulaga talavou le ala fo'i lea o le faia o polokalame faa le autalavou ma isi autalavou o isi nuu lea matou te tuaoi

  
 GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN SAMOA  
 APIA, WESTERN SAMOA

8th August, 1960.

MEMORANDUM for:-

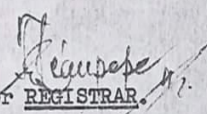
The Director of Lands,  
Lands & Survey Dept.,  
A P I A.

Re: LAND FOR CHURCH PURPOSES - L.M.S.  
AT ULUTOGIA, ALEIPATA.


Our memorandum to you dated 14th July, 1960 refers.

The objection as lodged by I'umalo against the above has now been unconditionally withdrawn and that the usual fee prepaid in respect thereof has been refunded.

The Pulefaamau may be proceeded with for confirmation in as far as this Office is concerned.

  
 For REGISTRAR.

*Director of Lands*  
*Enveloper. Heupape*



RESERVATION OF SAMOAN LAND FOR CHURCH PURPOSES  
UNDER THE SAMOAN VILLAGE REGULATIONS 1938  
SECTION 37 - 40.

APPLICATION

To the Secretary to the Government :

I, Sogepolutele Pose of Ulutogia, Aleipeta do hereby  
claim, apply and declare as follows :

- 1.....THAT I claim beneficial ownership of the Samoan land described in the schedule hereto together with rights of access thereto as customary with Samoan lands.
- 2.....THAT I hereby set aside the said land exclusively for Church purposes together with said rights of access thereto, for the benefit of the adherents of the Samoan Church (L.M.S.) in Ulutogia, Aleipeta Upolu to be so used for so long as in the opinion of the High Commissioner there are adherents of the said denomination reasonably requiring the use of the land for Church purposes.
- 3.....THAT I hereby apply to the High Commissioner that he will declare by Proclamation under his hand the said land to be reserved for Church purposes and to be so held for the adherents of the said denomination.

SCHEDULE

All that portion of the land called "ALOIVIMI" situated at Ulutogia, Aleipeta Upolu containing an area of ..... (more or less) and which is bounded to the EAST by the land of Sogepolutele Pose, to the WEST by the land called Mstsfaga, to the NORTH by the sea and to the SOUTH by the land of Sogepolutele Pose.

DECLARED and SIGNED at Apia this     day of     1957,  
the same having first been read over to the signatory in the Samoan language and he appearing thoroughly to understand the same, in the presence of :

Witness : \_\_\_\_\_

Fees £1. 10. 0. paid on \_\_\_\_\_ Receipt No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Preliminary enquiry before the Asst. Secretary (D/A) \_\_\_\_\_  
Persons present .....  
.....

Approved for publication in the 'Sevili' of

' LANDS AND SURVEY DEPARTMENT '

3 November, 1964.

Pastor Vivian Dean,  
Secretary,  
Savona Church I.S.S.,  
P.O. Box 422,  
A.P.I.A.

Dear Sir,

FULEFA'AMAN OF SAGAPOLYTAKE FORE ON PART LAND LALAE  
AT ULITOGIA ALIPIA FOR CHURCH PURPOSES

I regret that you have not been officially advised of the Registrar, Land and Titles Court letter of 8 August 1963 which unfortunately I overlooked.

The Court advised me that the objection as lodged by I'malo against the notice in the April 1963 issue of the "Savali" was unconditionally withdrawn.

Confirmation of purchase may proceed upon your payment to the Land and Titles Court of the prescribed fees. Upon confirmation, a land title survey is required before proclamation under terms of the Council of State is published setting aside part land "Lalae" for Church purposes.

Yours faithfully,

*Justed. 3-11-64*

*A.C.*  
(A.C. Christian)  
DIRECTOR OF LANDS

## Glossary

Aulotu	Church Parish
Api o le Galuega	Church record book
Faalupega	Traditional Honorifics and Salutations
Faifeau	Church Minister/Pastor
Fale	Samoan House
Faletua	Wife of a Church Minister/Pastor
Matagaluega	CCCS District
Lotu	Church
Lotu Au Leoleo	Watchtower service
Lotu Au Taumafai	Christian Endeavour service
Pulega	CCCS Sub-district

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