($US4.8 million), declining slightly in 2004 to 7.54 million Tala. Of this the American Samoa synod contributed 1.14 million Tala in 2003 and 1.33 million Tala in 2004, which reflects the much higher income of church members in American Samoa than in the rest of Samoa (Ekalesia Metotisi O Samoa 2004: 133–151). The money is used by the whole conference for maintenance, general administration and operations, schools, and membership contributions to ecumenical organizations such as the World Council of Churches (WCC), Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC), Pacific Theological College (PTC), South Pacific Association of Theological Schools (SPATS) and the respective National Councils of Churches in the various synod areas. Other income is from land rentals and leases, bookshops and a printing operation. The total revenue from the bookshop Iupeli Siliva in American Samoa decreased slightly from 190,313 Tala in 2003 to 181,893 Tala in 2004 (whether this venture is profitable or not is not known, because there are no figures available for its total running expenses).

MCAS ministers are appointed by the annual conference but paid by their parishioners. Depending on the size of a congregation the maximum they receive is in the area of $US2,000 a month, as well as the food offerings and other benefits accompanying the prestigious status of MCAS minister.

**Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS)**

The fact that today Samoa is a two-part nation is not reflected in the organizational structure of the LDS Church there. The Samoan Mission consists of both Samoa and American Samoa (information on the history, development, organizational structure and finances of the LDS in American Samoa will thus be found in the Samoa section of this book). The LDS Church in Samoa is supervised by the Pacific Area Presidency in Sydney, Australia, which oversees all the other Pacific Islands as well as Australia and New Zealand.

The groundbreaking for the Apia temple that serves Samoa, American Samoa and surrounding smaller Pacific Islands took place on 19 February 1981, when church president Spencer W. Kimball was assisted by the Samoan Head of State, Malietoa Tanumafili II. The decision to construct a temple in Western Samoa was a very rational one that is characteristic of the business approach of the LDS church in every aspect of its work. First of all the great majority of LDS members in the Samoas lived in Western Samoa, and it was assumed that “members in American Samoa have much larger incomes and can afford to fly to Western Samoa much more easily than can Western Samoans afford to go to American Samoa” (Britsch 1986: 425). Later, while it was being renovated and enlarged, the 14,560 sq feet Apia temple was destroyed by a huge fire on the evening of 9 July 2003 (Meridian Magazine, 10 July 2003:1).

With regard to statistical information, the LDS headquarters in Salt Lake City decided in 2003 to discontinue its globally distributed annual Almanac, which used to contain all sorts of information on the development and growth of the LDS Church worldwide as well as on all the countries with LDS activities. According to the Cumorah Project International Database, which contains data from previous Almanacs, the LDS Church in American Samoa had 13,109 members in 2002. This number would be more or less correct if the growth rate of 8.3 per cent experienced by the LDS Church between 1974 and 1995 (the only period for which there is reliable census-based information) had continued to the present. However, according to other LDS sources this seems not to have been the case. The activity rate of members is at 45 per cent quite low and, more importantly, there has been
no growth in the organizational structure (4 stakes, 29 wards and 5 branches) of the LDS during the past 10 years. This should be considered alongside an annual growth rate of 1.06 per cent in recent years, which is clearly below the average population growth in American Samoa. According to well known LDS sociologist James T. Duke, "growth is fairly slow in Asia and the South Pacific" (Duke 1999:14).

The present research project indicates that the growth of the LDS Church in the Pacific Islands as a whole has considerably slowed in recent years, and might have reached its peak in the 1980s and early 1990s. With even slower growth rates in the United States itself and in Western Europe (but still strong growth in Eastern Europe, Africa and to some extent Latin America), Rodney Stark’s 1988 prediction that the Latter-day Saints could number 265 million members worldwide, compared to the 11 million at that time, must be read today with great caution. It shows that no mathematical analysis can be a substitute for real and current data, which does not support a figure anywhere near 265 million (Stark 1998: 9). One possible explanation for the slowing of growth is offered by Yong, who refers to Robert Wuthnow’s finding that due to increasing social and cultural homogeneity among all churches denominational loyalty is shifting and even Mormons do not stay Mormons forever (Yong 2000:9). Strikingly, of every 100 people born in the church only 22 remain active throughout their lives. That means 78 per cent are inactive for a year or more at some time. Most, 44 per cent, return to activity, while 34 per cent remain inactive (Duke 1999:17).

The fact that the publishing of the popular LDS Almanac was stopped in 2003 and not replaced is a strong indication that the period of growth that has been proudly displayed to the world is over. Nevertheless, in Samoa the LDS Church is the biggest spender on civil works and the largest construction client for New Zealand contractors (National Business Review 10.03.2003).

Assemblies of God (AOG)

The AOG in American Samoa trace their history back to the arrival of Herman and Frances Winklemann, US Assemblies of God missionaries who reached Pago Pago in 1926 (Field Focus Samoa 1992: 3). The Winklemans held services in their own home until 1928, when they secured the storefront that became the first AOG mission. For more than 20 years the couple evangelized the surrounding villages and islands and befriended some Samoan chiefs. In 1947 AOG minister Maurice Luce and his wife were invited by High Chief Tuiasosopo, secretary of an independent church, to be their pastor. In 1949 Maurice and Corabelle Luce founded the Happy Valley Christian School – a primary school in which they also taught the Bible. When the Winklemans left in 1951 Maurice Luce became pastor of the Pago Pago Assembly. From 1926 to 1952 the growth of the church was very slow, but in 1952 there was a spiritual revival among the few believers, spreading from the school and the Pago Pago Assembly. Other Assemblies of God missionaries came, and Samoan believers, among them Ieto Mageo who had been working closely with Pastor Luce, planted Assemblies in Western Samoa. Mageo became the first national superintendent of the Samoan Assemblies of God in 1955. In 1967 the Assemblies in American and Western Samoa formed separate districts and Max Halek Sr. was elected general superintendent of the combined council – a position he still held in 2003 when the AOG celebrated their 75th anniversary.

According to internal AOG statistics there were 24 Assemblies in 2003, with 42 ministers and 31 churches. The number of members and adherents was given as 5,864. Whether
these figures are correct can neither be confirmed nor denied, since there was no census after 1995 when the number of AOG members given was 4,363. What can be confirmed is that the AOG have experienced rapid growth over the past 10 years, as indicated by the visible activities and developments. In accordance with the AOG pattern worldwide, each Assembly or church is basically autonomous with respect to finances and internal affairs. The main source of income is tithes and free will offerings. The pastors are paid by the congregations, being given a certain fixed percentage of the tithes. Their income is much lower than that of ministers of the CCCAS or MCAS. Each Assembly pays 10 per cent of the tithes received to the district office to cover its operational costs. Organizationally the Assemblies of God in American Samoa are part of the Asia-Pacific Mission. Each of the Samoan districts selects its leaders and handles its local business during its annual convention. Every second year there is the Samoan Convention that brings together for fellowship the AOG Samoans now living in other parts of the world. The location of this conference alternates between the two Samoas (Halek 2002, interview by author).

As in independent Samoa, the AOG in American Samoa maintain their own Bible School, offering a three-year diploma programme, with an enrolment of 30–40 students in each year. The vast majority of students are single because the school lacks facilities for married couples. One outstanding feature is that approximately a third of the students are women, who are equally treated in the school, may preach in the Assemblies, and can be ordained. There are eight full-time Samoan lecturers teaching the 90–100 students at the Bible School.

In late January 2002 the AOG launched their own radio station after having taken over a local radio station that had gone bankrupt. The agreement with the government is that the AOG can use the station and the land for 50 years for a nominal lease fee of US$1 per year. In exchange the AOG agreed to make public service announcements and broadcast weather reports. The Asia Pacific Media Ministry of the AOG helped in installing the transmitter, equipping the studio, and training the announcers and local programmers, and assisted in the layout for daily schedules. The 5000 watt station is located in the capital city and transmits 24 hours every day of the week. It is the only AM station in American Samoa and the programmes reach all the Samoan islands as well as other island groups such as Tonga and Fiji. The programmes include live youth talk shows, preaching by local pastors, health issues segments, children’s programmes, gospel music and programmes relevant to families and local culture (http://www.apregion.org.articles/new_radio_station_for_the_south.cfm).

The youth organization of the Assemblies of God, known as Christ’s Ambassadors, is very active in organizing rallies and choirs and in personal witnessing. It is a factor in the growth of the church. In addition, a Teen Challenge programme was started a couple of years ago by Vickie and Otto Haleck, aiming to reach out to troubled youth in the urban areas and provide them with education, food and shelter. Vickie Haleck gave up a thriving business to commit herself fully to the church and her family leads by example by taking troubled kids into their home.

Despite some breakaways by members who started their own ministries, the church is well established and continues to experience high growth rates. Co-operation with other churches is limited to a few other Pentecostal-charismatic bodies.
Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA)

The history of the SDA in American Samoa began in 1891 with the arrival of the ship *Pitcairn*, which anchored for two weeks at Pago Pago before moving on to Western Samoa. Until World War II, however, almost no SDA development occurred. Only when evangelistic momentum spilled over from Western Samoa during the war years, with seven converts baptized in June 1946 and under the subsequent leadership of Tini Inu, did the church start to grow and prosper (Hay 1991).

Organizationaly the American Samoa Mission of the SDA belongs to the Trans Pacific Union Mission (TPUM), which is based in Suva, Fiji. Through the TPUM the SDA in American Samoa is linked to the division in Sydney and from there to the worldwide headquarters in Washington, DC (Pelenato 2002, interview by author). The headquarters of the Mission to American Samoa is in Ili‘ili, where the Lakina school and church are located. According to the District Director, Pastor Pelenato, there were 13 churches and 7 pastors in 2002, including one church on Manu‘a and one church (with a Tongan pastor) for the Tongan ethnic group (Pelenato 2002, interview by author). The SDA operates a single school, Lakina Academy School, which teaches up to year 10 in the American school system.

At the beginning of the 1980s the SDA experienced several breakaways caused by individuals who were already disqualified as members, or in disagreement with the central organization of structure and distribution of church income, or holding different views on doctrines such as in the area of diet. However, the three breakaway groups remained very small, with only a few followers each, and this did not affect the overall steady growth and development of the church in American Samoa (Pelenato 2002, interview by author). From humble beginnings in the 1940s the SDA has grown to 1,544 adherents (almost 3 per cent of the total population) in 1995. When the third highest ranked SDA under-secretary, Pastor Larry Evans, visited American Samoa in 2004, District Director Pelenato told a *Samoa News* staff reporter that the church had close to 2,000 members (http://www.samoanews.com/thursday.06032004/THothernews/story10.html).

The main activities of the SDA in the territory are choir practice and youth practice on Mondays and Tuesdays, prayer meetings on Wednesdays, church cell group meetings on Thursdays, youth meetings on Fridays, worship on Saturdays and church business on Sundays (Pelenato 2002, interview by author). The church has two specialized ministries in counseling and stewardship, and broadcasts a couple of hours of religious programs via cable TV.

Anglican Church

The Anglican Church in American Samoa was started in 1923 by a lay preacher who was a judge at the colonial Lands and Survey department and organized services for expatriates serving in the US Navy or working in one of the factories at the wharf (Toomaata 2002, interview by author). Eighty-two years later church attendance is about 60 or 70, who make up a single ethnically mixed congregation of 10 families served by a priest. The Anglican Church in American Samoa belongs to the Diocese of Polynesia, which has its headquarters in Suva, Fiji. For its local administration the congregation has a vestry, consisting of 10 members with the priest as chairman. The annual budget is only about $US 10,000, from which $US 1,250 is sent as a contribution to the Diocesan office in Suva. In times of natural disasters the AC has access to support from the worldwide Anglican community as well as from ecumenical bodies.
According to the priest there were no charismatic members in 2002 and the members follow traditional Anglican ways of worship. The Anglican Church is a founding member of the National Council of Churches, which is very much dominated by the larger churches and has only a limited range of joint activities.

**Bahá'í Faith**

The BF was brought to American Samoa in 1960 by Lilian Alaii and her husband when she took up the post of manager of a bank in Pago Pago. In 1961 Fanene F. Kava (Tefaiapia), a female High Chief in Pago Pago, became a Bahá'í, and the faith was spread through family and friendship connections (Kava 2002, interview by author). In 2002 there were a total of five local spiritual assemblies. The formation of a spiritual assembly requires a minimum of nine members 21 years of age or older. The total number of adherents in 2002 was only about 100, and the Bahá'í Faith is not growing. One indication of decline is that there were seven local spiritual assemblies a couple of years ago. In the perception of one of the first converts, one obstacle to growth is cultural and social pressure:

A lot of them know about the Bahá'í Faith, a lot of them understand very well... they even study about the Bahá'í Faith but they would not become Bahá'ís because they are afraid of their families or because of their status or their work, because if they do become Bahá'ís they will look at them less. They are also afraid to join the Bahá'í Faith because if the chief of the village finds out that they have joined, they might get kicked out of the village (Kava 2002, interview by author).

Other small newer churches use similar arguments to explain why they are not growing fast, but fail to explain the fact that some newer churches have been growing rapidly despite being exposed to all sorts of pressures and operating within the same social framework. Bahá'ís in the Pacific Islands usually keep a very low profile. They do not use an aggressive style of mission work, and work through networks at their workplaces or within families. Even obtaining official information from the Bahá'í Faith is difficult. While individual members are quite willing to share their views, any request for official information such as statistics or history is met with considerable reserve, suggesting suspicions that a researcher might not write what the Bahá'í Faith wants to see published.

**Church of Christ (COC/DOC)**

The Church of Christ in American Samoa began with the activities of a missionary couple from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in 1960. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) describes itself on its own website as a Protestant denomination of approximately 800,000 members in the USA and Canada (http://www.disciples.org/discover/history.htm). Key persons in the early history of the church were Barton W. Stone (1772–1844), Thomas Campbell (1763–1854) and his son Alexander Campbell (1788–1866). Stone founded the Christian Church, which later merged with the 'Campbellites.' All three were leaders in a period that became known as the Second Great Awakening in the United States (Walton 1986:59). Thomas Campbell and his son had a passion for Christian unity, as did Stone. It was Thomas Campbell who summed up their passion with the words "The Church of Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally and constitutionally one" (http://www.disciples.org/discover/history.htm).
In 1808 Thomas Campbell and others founded the Christian Association of Washington, Pennsylvania. They became known as the ‘Reformers’ for their desire to restore the Church’s first century roots, and developed a ‘Restoration Movement.’ The younger Campbell was a prolific writer and talented debater. He founded the Disciples of Christ movement, which merged with the followers of Barton Stone in 1832.

The founder and leader of the Church of Christ in American Samoa, Pastor Luaao Soli, was brought up in the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa. He joined the Methodist Church after he moved to American Samoa. Because he disagreed with certain aspects and practices of the Samoan culture he left the Methodist Church and began to search for a church that matched his own understanding of Scripture. “I believe that if the Church belongs to God”, he says, “the fa’a Samoa should be over...We should not mingle the custom with the church” (Soli 2002, interview by author). When Soli responded to a local newspaper advertisement for theological studies by extension, he came into contact with a Bible School (in Kingston, Alabama) of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). After completing several lessons he was referred to a missionary couple working in American Samoa. Further lessons with the missionary couple convinced him that he needed to be re-baptized by immersion. He also left his well paid job as assistant manager in the Starkist-Japan fish factory to commit himself fully to the new church he founded in 1979 and named Church of Christ. The first congregation consisted of six members only; the missionary couple, another local couple, and two men. Soli started to preach on the radio, speaking out against aspects of the Samoan culture such as tattoos. “You see all the people with tattoos; whenever there is a public fa’asina going on you see their lava lava, they wear it all the way up .... To stop the women being tempted we should cover our bodies with clothes” (Soli 2002, interview by author). In his preaching over the radio station WBE he also shared his conversion experience, declaring that it is not sufficient just to go to church but that one has to be Christian 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in actions, works and everything one is doing. Soli’s unconventional preaching and his attacks on the fa’a Samoa drew criticism as well as attracting supporters. In 2002 Soli claimed three congregations in American Samoa, with a total number of up to 300 adherents (Soli 2002, interview by author). Following the ideas of the founding fathers, each congregation is independent and has its own elders, deacons and pastors. The services consist of prayers, preaching and singing. Instruments are not used because the early Christians did not use any. The Lord’s Supper is celebrated every Sunday. The only source of income is free will offerings. Bingo, a form of gambling that is common practice in American Samoa’s Protestant mainline churches, is totally avoided, along with raffles and bazaars. Even tithing is not encouraged, because it is seen as an Old Testament practice that is inappropriate in a New Testament Church of Christ. Pastor Soli’s understanding seems close to the teachings of the Latter-day Saints: “Now we have a different priesthood according to Hebrews. Christ is from the tribe of Judah. He is not a Levite but he is a priest according to the order of Melchizedek. Now he is a High Priest and any Christian is a Priest of God” (Soli 2002, interview by author).

The Church of Christ in American Samoa is not a fast growing church, but it has found its place in Pago Pago, Leone and Tafuna as an offspring, with a strong local flavour of the mother church in the US, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). While the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is mission oriented, the aim and emphasis of mission work is co-operation with others and working towards the unity of the church rather than planting new churches. In the Pacific Islands this church has supported or co-operated with
the United Church of Christ in the Marshall Islands (and the Marshall Islands Theological College), the Congregational Church in Kosrae, Namoneas Christian Church in Chuuk, the United Church of Christ in Chuuk, the Nukunu Protestant Church in Chuuk, the United Church in Pohnpei, the Kiribati Protestant Church (and Tangintebu Theological College), the Churches of Christ in Vanuatu, the Evangelical Church in French Polynesia, the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa, the Congregational Christian Church in American Samoa, and the Pacific Theological College in Fiji.

**Church of the Nazarene (CN)**

The CN in American Samoa was established in Pago Pago in 1964 by a missionary from the United States, who interested a traditional local chief (matati) in his teachings. When the matati died his family cancelled the land use agreement and the church moved to its present site at Nu’uuli, where the missionary had bought an acre of land from another matati, Masalosalo (Leele 2002, interview by author). Compared to other newer churches the CN is clearly not growing fast. Probably it is not growing at all, since in 2002 there was still only one CN church in American Samoa, with 16 families attached and a total number of about 100 adherents. Organizationally Tutuila in American Samoa forms one district of the Samoan CN, which has its headquarters in independent Samoa. Sources of income are tithing, offerings and fundraising. All decisions in local matters are made by a board chaired by the minister and consisting of 11 members (including 3 women) elected by ballot vote. The minister receives a salary set by the board and paid from the church account. Funds from overseas are received only in times of natural disaster through the worldwide Nazarene organization ‘Compassionate Ministry.’ Co-operation with others is understood in a practical sense rather than expressing an ecumenical spirit. The CN would like to rejoin the National Council of Churches, which it left in earlier years, because membership helps to secure access to radio broadcasting and TV.

**Community Christian Church (CCC)**

The Community Christian Church was established in 1964 by government contract workers, most of them Americans (Niedo 2002, interview by author). It was set up as an interdenominational non-profit religious organization to provide worship and pastoral care in English. Because of the focus on contract workers the number of members has always fluctuated. At the beginning a hotel room in Pago Pago was rented for services. From 1977 onwards the adherents worshipped in the Nazarene Church but had to move again because space was limited. In 1999 enough money had been accumulated to build the present church for $US 85,000. Half an acre of land was donated and another acre was bought for $US 64,000 from a building fund started in 1991. All construction expenses for the new church have been met, using donations from members and from local and international relatives and friends (Niedo 2002, interview by author).

In its development the CCC experienced two major splits and breakaways. One problem was that the church never had a permanent pastor, simply contracting pastors if the need arose. The first split took place in 1991 when the pastor in charge, Louis Imo, a Pentecostal preacher who had been appointed in 1990, founded the Word of Life Christian Fellowship. The members who stayed in the CCC were those who had started the church and preferred a quiet and dignified style of worship to the charismatic-pentecostal style. The second
breakaway took place in 1994 when Oscar Sagaio, who was a former member of the CCCAS and a graduate of Kanana Fou Theological Seminary, affiliated the CCC to the newly founded Calvary Chapel without the knowledge of all the members. As a consequence he was voted out and took half of the membership with him, mostly English-speaking Samoans who had joined the CCC during the two years preceding the breakaway and had been attracted by a more charismatic style of worship.

In 2002 the CCC had only about 35 adherents, from different ethnic backgrounds (Indians, Fijians, Chinese, Americans and Samoans). Despite its smallness the CCC has a missionary pastor from the Churches of Christ/Disciples of Christ, and a Council led by a chairperson. There are also a treasurer and secretary and six committees (stewardship, Christian Education, worship, visitation, social, and property). Since 50 per cent of the adherents are children or young people, almost every adult member has an official function and not all positions can be filled. The main activity is the church service on Sundays, with a potluck meal organized from time to time.

Whether the church will survive under these circumstances is difficult to predict, but in the opinion of the chairman, who is one of the founding members, the CCC will endure because of its uniqueness as an interdenominational church that is open to everybody and has only one basic requirement for membership, i.e. to “…accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Anything else is between God and the individual” (Niedo 2002, interview by author).

First Samoan Full Gospel Pentecostal Church (FSFGPC)

The First Samoan Full Gospel Pentecostal Church is a new local Pentecostal church made up of Samoans in the two Samoas, Hawai‘i and the west coast of the US, Australia and New Zealand. Better known by its abbreviated name Full Gospel Church, the FSFGPC was founded on 11 November 1962 by Mataifale Toaaina, a Samoan who originated from the Manu’a Islands of American Samoa. After finishing school he had attended a Bible College in Oakland, California, when he was 20 years old. He did not complete his BA because in 1974, a year before his studies would have finished, he felt called to become the founder and president of a new church. At the beginning the church consisted of only seven families. Although it originated in the USA the church is today clearly a Samoa-based and Samoan-directed new Pentecostal church.

The current president of the church is Pastor Pati Vaso, who, like the founder, hails from the Manu’a Islands. He took over the leadership when the founder passed away in 1986. One of Vaso’s first important decisions was to move the headquarters of the church from California to Tafuna on the island of Tutuila in American Samoa. In 1988 the first annual church conference was held in American Samoa, and membership increased rapidly there as well as in independent Samoa (where in 2002 there were 11 congregations — three on Savai‘i and eight on Upolu). In American Samoa there are only three congregations. The biggest, with approximately 500 members (including children), is at Nu‘uuli village, another is on Ofu in the Manu’a Islands and there is another at Afono village on Tutuila. Five branches exist in Hawai‘i and there are branches in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, New Zealand and Australia, wherever there is a significant number of Samoans. According to Pastor Vaso the church has about 700 adherents (including children) in American Samoa and 3,000 in Samoa. The latter number is probably exaggerated because the official census taken in 2001 enumerated only 1,440 adherents in Samoa. Despite the fact that most of
the churches and the majority of members are in independent Samoa, the headquarters is still at Tafuna on the main island of Tutuila, American Samoa, close to the international airport where the church runs its own Bible School. Asked about the rapid growth over the past two decades, Pastor Vasao responded: “It is something inside. Once the Spirit moves no one can stop it… That is why it is easy for them to leave the [other] church(es] and come to this church” (Vasao 2002, interview by author). After conversion the new members usually change their lives drastically for their own betterment and that of their families, for instance, by giving up smoking and drinking (Vasao 2002, interview by author).

Preachers and future ministers are trained in the church’s Bible Training Center in Tafuna. Subjects taught include Leadership, Counselling and the Holy Spirit. The College opened in 1992 and offers a two year course leading to a certificate. In 2002 there were 7 first year students and 16 second year students from American Samoa and Samoa. With fees of US$500 a year for two terms and US$1,000 for the whole two year programme, the course is attractive financially because the cost of study at the Congregational Church’s Kanana Fou Theological Seminary is much higher. The teachers at Tafuna are graduates of the Centre, including two of the sons of Pastor Vasao and other ministers and members who are considered to be qualified. There are no formal entry requirements except that candidates must be ‘born again.’

The church has no official international or national affiliation with any other church, although there are historical connections to Rhema Church in Oklahoma in the US (including the use of some Rhema materials in the Bible Training Center). At the local level there is fellowship with the Assemblies of God, and all the Pentecostal churches work together in the organization of revivals and crusades, invitations to services and general support of evangelistic outreach activities. In American Samoa the church has not become a member of the ecumenical National Council of Churches, although it did so in independent Samoa. Nevertheless, the relationship to other churches is described as cordial at village level, especially when there are funerals, in which the churches work together. There is fellowship and one service per month in Nu’uuli with the Nazarenes, Catholics, Assemblies of God, Methodists, Congregationalists and Seventh-day Adventists (but not the Latter-day Saints since they are not considered Christians by the other churches). Financially the church income is based on compulsory tithes and voluntary offerings: “If you obey the Lord you pay your tithes. If you love the Lord you give your offering, freely, sincerely from the heart” (Vasao 2002, interview by author). Other fundraising activities that are very common in the mainline churches are not pursued. The amount given by each congregation for the overall expenses of the whole church is decided in the Annual General Meeting and depends on the size of the congregation. In 2002 the big congregation at Nu’uuli, for example, contributed $US 70,000, which was used for a new building, administrative costs and the Training Centre. If the average size of a family is five this means that approximately US$700 was given by each family for the church’s central activities alone.

New ministers are ordained every year at the Annual General Conference. In 2002 there were 60 ordained ministers, plus an unknown number of associates and lay preachers. Women cannot be ordained but are very much involved in day to day church activities. Once a week they have their own night with a service that is led by women and where women preach.

Asked about the position of the church with regard to custom, the president clarified its position: “We all love the fā’a Samoa and Samoan custom, as long as they do not try to
force something that is not the will of God for us to do. Then I say no” (Vasao 2002, interview by author). An example of this was given: the president stopped children of the church from performing dances in public for the celebration of Flag Day. “I said no. We have to dance for the Lord but to me dancing for Flag Day is not what He wants” (Vasao 2002, interview by author).

On the basis of their interpretation of Matthew 24, and like many other 'born again' Christians, the members of the church believe that they will be rescued by the rapture from experiencing the hardships of the tribulation, and they hold to the eschatological view that Christ’s return will begin a thousand-year reign. One other major difference from what happens in the mainline churches is the practice of baptizing new members. Infants cannot be baptized because “they do not know what is right or wrong” (Vasao 2002, interview by author). Adults who are new members need to acknowledge their sinful nature and repent before they are baptized by immersion.

With regard to politics, the president explained the stand of his church by stating: “I do not believe in democracy. I believe in theocracy. The Bible says every ruler is from God but God is supreme above all these kinds of things” (Vasao 2002, interview by author). As a consequence the church can co-operate with the government but should not get involved in demonstrations or in working against the government. Reliance is put upon praying for the political leaders rather than organizing or leading demonstrations against them.

**Happy Valley Baptist Church (HVBC)**

The Happy Valley Baptist Church in American Samoa was the first of a number of Baptist churches to be affiliated to the Southern Baptists in the United States. The Southern Baptist Convention, with about 39,000 congregations and 21.5 million adherents, is the second largest religious body in the United States and the largest Protestant church in America (Barrett, Kurian, and Johnson 2001:788). It came into being in 1845 after the American Foreign Mission Society refused to accept slave owners as missionaries. Over half of all Southern Baptists in the world live in five southern states: Texas, Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Alabama. The denomination starts more than 1,700 new churches worldwide every year, more than any other faith group. One outcome of this mission work was the planting of the Happy Valley Baptist Church in American Samoa by a missionary couple in 1976. A piece of land at Pago Pago was bought and a school built at a place known as the Happy Valley (Tafao 2002, interview by author). After the missionaries left for medical reasons in the early 1980s, the church relied on volunteers from the United States until June 1993, when Pastor Tafao was sent by the mission board. Tafao became Director of Missions (DOM) in American Samoa in 2002. He oversees the activities of a variety of other ethnically based Baptist churches in American Samoa, such as the Chinese Baptist Church, the Korean Baptist Church, the bilingual Samoan Baptist Church and Emmanuel Baptist Church, as well as the Pago Pago Baptist Mission and Falenui Baptist Mission, which all have their own pastors. In 2002 there were about 600 adherents including children. This number is based on counts for church attendance and the number of baptized adults. Organizationally the Happy Valley Baptist Church is related to the Southern Baptist Convention as a member of the Hawaii-South Pacific Baptist Association.

Financially the main source of income is tithing. For its activities the church has an annual budget, and anything outside the budget is discussed in a monthly business meeting.
From the locally generated income the pastor’s salary is paid, the Sunday School programme is operated, the buildings are maintained, and so on. Ten per cent of the tithing received locally is given to the Co-operative Program of the Hawaii-Pacific Baptist Convention, whose Executive Board decides how much is given to the Southern Baptist Convention for education and hospitals and so on. The church’s weekly activities consist of Bible studies for men and women on Mondays, family nights on Tuesdays, teachers’ training and prayer time on Wednesdays, school meetings on Thursdays, youth night, youth rally or youth worship on Fridays, deacon and Sunday school training on Saturdays and Sunday School and worship on Sundays. The church runs the Samoan Baptist Academy, which consists of a pre-school kindergarten and a primary school up to grade 8 with an enrolment of 200 students. The school is known for its high academic standard and uses many volunteer teachers, some of whom are retired teachers of 70 years and older from the United States (Tafao 2002, interview by author).

At local level the Baptists are not a very active member of the National Council of Churches in American Samoa because it is felt that the NCCAS is not taking many practical steps to address social issues. Pastor Tafao is also quite critical of the *fā'a Samoa*, especially the financial burden put on members of the mainline churches by such cultural practices as the presentation of an expensive *sua* to each pastor attending a funeral. These practices are believed to drive people away from the church. Criticism was also raised against bigger churches such as the CCCAS and the Assemblies of God for their lack of leadership in projects of common interest.

We don’t have a Samoan commentary. We have all these commentaries in English, in German and we don’t have a Samoan commentary. Yes, we have a *Tala Tusi Patia* (Stories from the Bible), but that was here when I grew up, since the 1940s or 50s. … We are waiting until a *palagi* comes and does it for us, while we have very educated people ourselves but we are not doing it. So that is my complaint: we need to build a unity among ourselves. When you become a big brother start behaving and acting like a big brother (Tafao 2002, interview by author).

The main reason for the existence of the Southern Baptists in American Samoa, according to Pastor Tafao, is the problem of religiousness without conversion. While Southern Baptists worldwide belong to the conservative stream of Protestant churches, the Happy Valley Baptist Church looks quite liberal in the American Samoan context with its speaking out on social issues and its recognition of women, who can be deacons and have an equal say on all aspects of the activities and the life of the church.

**Malumalo Baptist Church (MBC)**

The MBC was established by Pastor Ala in 1977 and is an Independent Fundamental Baptist Church. The word ‘independent’ indicates that the church is not a member of any council or convention or part of any hierarchy outside the local congregation. Independent Baptist churches believe that they stand alone under the authority of the Bible and are structured after the New Testament example. Accordingly the MBC has a congregational form of government, with each member having the right to vote. All affairs of these churches are conducted by the local congregations. The officers of the church are deacons and pastors. The pastor is appointed by majority vote. Independent Fundamental Baptist churches usually co-operate only with churches holding similar beliefs. Following a literal interpretation of Ephesians 5:11, which says: ‘Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but
rather reprove them," they do not participate in any outside event with churches that do not strictly base their faith and practices on the New Testament. How to identify the 'works of darkness' is of course wide open to the interpretation of the individual.

The MBC is the only church of its kind in American Samoa, and has two congregations only. There is a loose form of co-operation with three independent Baptist churches in Samoa and there are connections to others in New Zealand and Hawaii. Because of the church's non-co-operative attitude, obtaining information is usually difficult. The MBC has an estimated number of 200 adherents in American Samoa and is not growing fast (Ala 2002, interview by author).

**New Apostolic Church (NAC)**

The NAC in Samoa and American Samoa was started by a minister of the CCCS and graduate of Malua Theological College, and is a good example of the establishment of a new church by a disgruntled ordained minister of a historic mainline Protestant church. The first congregation of the NAC was established in 1979 by the Rev Edward Eves, who served the CCCS from 1974 to 1978 as an ordained minister in a congregation. Eves became increasingly critical of certain practices within the CCCS. "My home was a beautiful home and I was faced with the parishioners who lived in very poor homes. I said to the Lord 'Here I am living in this beautiful home and being faced with these very poor families.' I could not face it" (Eves 2002, interview by author). During this time Eves got in touch with the New Apostolic Church after he received a letter written by a German to the Minister for Economics with the request to pass the letter on to any minister of a congregation. Somehow this letter was given to Eves, who responded to it and was consequently visited by an evangelist of the NAC from Los Angeles, who explained the doctrines and faith of the NAC to him.

From then on I started to meditate a lot on the Scriptures, prayed a lot too and I didn't know that I was watched by our elders and the ministers. I sort of shut myself away gradually from them. I was concentrating on my work until one day they had a meeting and a couple of them came and took me to where all the ministers of all the districts were. There the Elders said to me 'we just want to know why you aren't participating in our ministerial meetings' and all that. I felt a very strong prompting and I stood up and I spoke for nearly three hours relating my observations on the whole work and at the same time I criticized ministers getting money from the parishes and I said 'If the Lord lays down the principles for your work you reap what you sow — what are you sowing?' I feel uncomfortable receiving money from the poor. I believe that something is not right. I believe that the CCCS, the Methodist Church, the Catholic Church, their time is finished. Their time is no longer needed by the Lord. It is like a dry well; people flock in and the well has been dried up (Eves 2002, interview by author).

Eves broke away from the CCCS and for a while the breakaway was the news of the country. All privileges of being a minister of the CCCS were taken away and in 1979 he and his family were evicted. The NAC in Canada sent some ministers who helped him set up the NAC in Samoa and American Samoa. In 1981 Eves was asked to go to Pago Pago to start the church in American Samoa. He became the District Evangelist for the NAC in Samoa and American Samoa. Compared to Pentecostal churches the NAC developed only quite slowly. In 2002 the church had six branches in Samoa and two in American Samoa, with an estimated 800 adherents in Samoa and 160 in American Samoa. Seven of the ten ministers under Eves are in Samoa and three in American Samoa.
Word of Faith Outreach Center (WOFOC)

The Word of Faith Outreach Center started on the initiative of Pastor Faaiu and his wife at the beginning of 2000. Coming from a strong Methodist background, Faaiu was trained in Oklahoma and worked under Kenneth Hagin from 1991 to 1996. After returning to American Samoa he joined the First Samoan Full Gospel Pentecostal Church as a teacher at their seminary, but did not stay with this church. “I had to leave the organization to have the freedom to do what I had in my heart” (Faaiu 2002, interview by author). In the understanding of the founder, the WOFOC is not so much another church as a ministry, set up with the purpose of supporting existing churches. The Centre does have all the features of a small, quieter new church. From the beginning in 2000 Faaiu and his wife have been working with just eight families. The only source of income is tithing, which, according to Faaiu, has reached $8,000 a month. One of the main activities is working with a group of prisoners, twice a week from morning till night. This is complemented by working with the families of these prisoners, “as if we were their legs and arms outside the gates” (Faaiu 2002, interview by author). As well as the prison service there is a prayer meeting each Wednesday. Fridays are reserved for the youth, and on Saturdays members prepare for the Sunday. The services on Sundays are basically unstructured: “you come through these doors into worship and we just worship the Lord the way we are and know and the way we express out heart to him” (Faaiu 2002, interview by author). Speaking in tongues is common, as well as healing by the laying on of hands. An organizational link exists with Kenneth Hagin Ministries, as Faaiu is a licensed and ordained ex-student of Rhema in the United States. Through Rhema there are loose connections with Samoa, Fiji, Hawaii, and New Zealand. Faaiu sees the root cause of all sorts of social problems as the freedom to do whatever one wants. In this perspective a major concern is that gay people are taking over key positions in the education system. In Faaiu’s opinion, spreading the gospel in American Samoa, where there is so much materialism, is like preaching at a rock. He claims that despite their long training in well established seminaries and colleges most of the ministers of the established and bigger churches are not properly trained spiritually and are often guided by wrong motives in their desire to become ministers.

Word of Life Christian Fellowship (WLCF)

The WLCF was started in November 1998 by a couple who aimed to establish a modern church for middle-aged and younger Samoans who had returned in recent years from the USA and become un-churched or estranged from the church they grew up in. The leader of the church is himself a classic example of a Samoan who was brought up in the Congregational Christian Church in the USA, became a ‘born again’ Christian when he was young, and with his wife joined a new charismatic church (the Good Samaritan Church). In 1990 they felt a call from God and moved from the USA to Tautini in American Samoa, with only a limited knowledge of the Samoan language and no formal theological training. They served the Christian Community Church until they felt the need for a new church. “We were attending another fellowship and the vision was very nice and I just felt that God’s will was to start a church that was more contemporary” (Imo 2002, interview by author).

By 2002 the WLCF had established a congregation of 100–150 adherents who worshipped in a rented former warehouse. “We are renting a warehouse and that is another
thing that throws people off. The idea of churches is a big cathedral, and then they come to us and it's a warehouse and you know it's very old looking, but inside it's very contemporary, fully air-conditioned. We wanted a more practical contemporary church” (Imo 2002, interview by author).

The WLCF is affiliated to the Word of Life Christian Center in Hawaii, which has sister churches in San Diego, Los Angeles and even in Japan. In American Samoa the WLCF is part of a local prayer network that consists of the New Hope Centre, the Alofa Tanua Pentecostal Church, the Worship Centre, and the First Samoan Full Gospel Church. These churches have some typical characteristics. Besides a similar style of worship and a common pattern of activities they are led by people who consider themselves visionaries receiving direct instructions from God. They each head an organization with a very hierarchical structure under one undisputed leader.

The founder and his wife made themselves senior pastors of the new church and appointed another couple as assistant pastors and elders. They also appointed departmental leaders for music, ushers, readers, and children's church, as well as prison ministry leaders. Income is from love gifts, tithing and free will offerings. The senior pastor is paid according to what the eldership — which has been selected by him — has agreed. He also receives contributions from individuals. On the basis of a literal and conservative interpretation of the Bible the founder and senior pastor is quite outspoken on certain issues such as gambling, incest, child molestation, teen pregnancies, drug addiction and suicide. With regard to the relationship of faith and culture, which is distinctively lived out and interpreted in American Samoa, the WLCF joins the growing number of charismatic and Pentecostal churches that put the gospel clearly and expressively above the culture. “We believe that God has a culture that supersedes any other culture. To say that we honour God and we honour our culture is contradictory, because some of the things in our culture contradict what is in the Word of God” (Imo 2002, interview by author).

Voice of Christ Full Gospel Church Inc. (VOC)

The VOC is a newer Pentecostal church that was registered first on 3 October 1966 by a Samoan, the Rev Ta’afulisia Kalepo Tilo, in Sacramento, California.

Tilo was born in Aua, American Samoa, in 1933. He graduated in 1951 from Marist High School and left the territory in 1952 to join the US military, serving for four years in the Marine Corps. He then worked in the Bethlehem Steel Company in South San Francisco. In 1958, when he was 25, Tilo became a 'born again' Christian (http://www.geocities.com/Athen/Agora/2834/biography00.html).

Six years later, in 1964, he was ordained as a pastor when he started a small congregation of just eight adherents in the basement of a house in San Francisco. After having received a prophecy he took his family with him and returned in March 1967 to American Samoa. There he worked in the Immigration Office until he resigned in 1983 to work full time in the ministry. Currently there are 22 VOC churches established throughout the Pacific Islands and in the Pacific Rim: three in American Samoa (in Nu’uuli, Vatia and Aua), five in Samoa, six in New Zealand and five in the states of California, Washington and Hawaii in the USA (http://www.geocities.com/Athen/Agora/2834/branches00.html?20053). On 14 March 1982 a Bible Training School was established in Aua. A three year programme is offered, completely fee-free. In 2002 there were 30 students and six lecturers (Fanene 2002).
In 2005 the now 72-year old founder and president of the VOC can still be seen on Saturday mornings ministering at the Fagatogo market and can be heard on a regular radio programme — ‘Hour of Decision’ — which has been broadcasting since 1976. Tilo’s wife and seven children are all currently active in different positions in the church.

**Para Church Organizations**

**Promise Keepers (PK)/Men of Promise (MP)**

Promise Keepers is a charismatic para-church organization with a vision to transform men worldwide by introducing them to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. It was founded in the US by Bill McCartney and Dave Wardell. A board of directors was developed, and Promise Keepers was incorporated in the state of Colorado in December 1990. The organization claims to have reached five million men in the 10 years after 1990, by means of 100 large conferences. Countless others have been reached through radio, television, Internet broadcasting and printed materials. PK is not a membership organization. Men (and women too) are invited to participate in the different ministries carried out and to join mailing lists (www.promisekeepers.org/genr12).

Activities in American Samoa were started in 2000 by the Rev Afalupea Uta’i, a graduate of Kanana Fou Theological Seminary (1989) and ordained minister of the CCCAS. Before taking over as Director of the American Samoan branch of PK/MP, Uta’i had served for 10 years as a minister in a CCCAS congregation, and still continues to be a minister under another pastor in his home village. In 2002 MP claimed to have about 100 affiliates, the majority being from Pentecostal-charismatic churches but also members of the LDS, SDA, Methodists, Congregationalists and Roman Catholics (Uta’i 2002, interview by author). MP activities and the salary of the director are financed from the donations of the affiliates. “My standard of living has changed. It is a challenge to me to experience this because I left a place that offered me US$1,000-2,000 a month” (Uta’i 2002, interview by author). Besides working with men MP organizes an annual medical clinic from which medical supplies are distributed by volunteers (‘born again’ Christians who pay their own fares from the USA and raise the money for the medical supplies).

MP is a fairly new para-church organization that operates worldwide and aims to open branches in other islands of the South Pacific in the nearer future.

**Showers of Blessing (SB)**

The Showers of Blessing radio station began broadcasting on 18 December 1999, and is one of only four radio stations in American Samoa, two secular and two religious (Sword 2002, interview by author). It began as a non-profit organization but was converted into a commercial station in 2001 in order to generate more income to cover the running costs, including the salaries of the four people the station employed in 2002. The station is owned by Gary Sword, a ‘born again’ Christian who works for a power plant asphalt company. The manager of the station is his wife Lori Sword. The cost of the radio licence was substantial, US$60,000 and was met by donations. The main supporters are from the various newer charismatic-Pentecostal churches such as the Alofa Tanua Church, Word of Life Christian Fellowship and the Worship Centre, whose senior pastors use the station as a platform to
preach regularly to a wider audience. While the Assemblies of God use only their own pastors and AOG-produced programmes, the SB radio station claims to be open to all denominations in principle. Most of the programmes consist of music and preaching tapes or disks produced in the USA, with only two programmes produced locally. It is claimed by the station manager that all income is generated locally by means of commercial advertising, with the advertising of cigarettes and alcohol excluded (Sword 2002, interview by author).

Unlike the AOG station SB does not broadcast news or weather reports, because of a lack of trained personnel. One idea for the future is to produce a programme that relates biblical prophecies to current events such as wars, famines, and natural disasters. It is difficult to evaluate how many people regularly listen to religious broadcasting, but it is certainly a relatively inexpensive and powerful tool for preaching and evangelism. It is a tool that has not been explored yet by any of the historic mainline churches, which restrict themselves to limited slots on the public radio stations under the umbrella of the National Council of Churches.

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