

Summary of Part I

The total number of people, living in the area of this research is about 2.3 million, scattered over an area of 24,968,000 km² of ocean, but only 18,785 km² of land.⁴⁰³ To illustrate these extremes, this is less than the population of Sydney or Melbourne, living in an area embracing more or less the former Soviet Union, the USA, India, and Australia.⁴⁰⁴

Analyzing the table 20 we can see that 62.7 percent of the people in the area of this research belong to one or other of the Historic Mainline Churches.

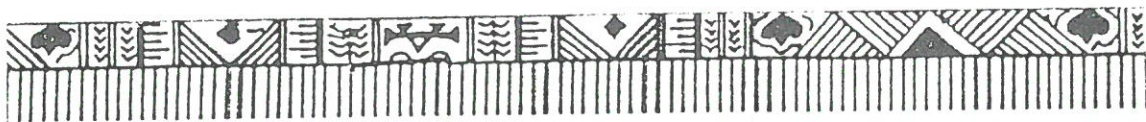
14.6 percent are adherents of the 'established new religious' groups, listed in table 21. Here it is of interest to see that the vast majority in this category are adherents of New Religious Groups who are not really new, because they started before World War II, some of them between 60 and 100 years ago.

The 'Most Recent Arrivals', listed in table 21, represent only 1 percent of the population.

Through the detailed presentation of facts we can also see that the breakaway groups from the Historic Mainline Churches or the New Religious Groups, represent approximately 2 percent of the population (see table 22). Combining these three types of groups, they represent altogether 18.1 percent of the population in the Pacific Islands covered by this research.

Besides this we looked at eight of the most widespread and active of the Evangelical-Fundamentalist Para-Church Organizations. It is of interest to note that all of them have their origins and headquarters outside the Pacific region, representing, like most of the New Religious Groups, a strong foreign influence. The analysis of the impact of these foreign based New Religious Groups and Para-Church Organizations on the societies in the Pacific Islands is part of the following two Parts.

An interesting field for further research would be to have a closer look at the countries which could not be considered in this research, especially Papua New Guinea, and one day to have a complete picture of religious affiliation in the South Pacific.



⁴⁰³ Ron Crocombe, *The South Pacific: An Introduction* (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific, 1989), 229-261.

⁴⁰⁴ See *The Times Atlas of the World* (Edinburgh: Times Books in cooperation with John Bartholomew & Son Ltd., 1979).