The LDS church in the Pacific Islands

The first Mormon missionary, Addison Pratt, who was sent by Joseph Smith himself, came in 1844 to French Polynesia.

By the early 1900s Mormon missionaries had been to every major Polynesian island where the mission work was among "the most successful of the Church's enterprises". But Mormon growth was very slow until after World War II. Gordon states that one of the reasons for the attractiveness of the Mormon message to Pacific Islanders is that "the Book of Mormon teaches that Pacific Islanders, along with Indians of the Americas, are descendants of Lost Tribes of Israel who journeyed to the New World and were baptized by Christ himself."

The Mormon belief in the spiritual inferiority of black skinned people kept Mormons away from the islands of Melanesia for over a century. Just recently, after a revelation received by the then Church president, Spencer Kimball in 1978, black males were recognized as also eligible for the Aaron priesthood, which led to mission efforts in Africa, as well as in the Caribbean and Melanesia. So far no great impact has been seen in the Melanesian Islands. Out of the total number of about 61,168 adherents of the LDS in the Pacific Islands, approximately 80 percent of the adherents are to be found in Polynesia, 5 percent in Micronesia and only 15 percent in Melanesia.

In Fiji, where the Mormons started in 1953 to proselytize Europeans and Polynesians, there were 8,297 adherents of the LDS in 1992. Especially after the two military coups of 1987, the Mormons have been very successful in their mission work on the Western side of Viti Levu and among the Indians. The former restrictions on LDS missionaries were obviously loosened by the immigration authorities after the coups. Before the coups 6 Mormon missionaries per year were granted permits, but today there are about 80 missionaries active in the country.

In Vanuatu the LDS started mission work at the beginning of the 1980s, but have not had a great impact so far. There is just one chapel and the number of adherents today is about 100.

The same situation exists in the Solomon Islands, where the LDS are not really established yet. They have just recently bought some land on Guadalcanal, possibly to build a first chapel in the near future.

In Micronesia the situation looks different. In the Marshall Islands for example, the LDS Church is possibly the fastest growing church. The work began in 1978 and in just 15 years four chapels have been built in Majuro alone.

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60 A very good overview, even if not up to date: R. Lanier Britsch, Unto The Islands Of The Sea: A History of the Latter-day Saints in the Pacific (Salt Lake City: Deseret Books, 1986).


64 Elisabeth Sikivou, LDS, interview with author, Suva, 26 November 1991.

Also in Pohnpei the LDS have been successful since starting in 1976. There are an estimated 600 adherents, organized in four branches. The average number of baptisms per year makes the Mormons the fastest growing religious group in Pohnpei.66

In Belau the LDS began in 1982. Today there are two chapels near Koror and one under construction.

In French Polynesia the first foreign mission in the history of the LDS was established in 1844. With an estimated 12,000 adherents in 1992 the LDS Church is the biggest of the non-mainline churches in the territory. Since the mid-eighties there has been an impressive temple with an attractive garden in the centre of Papeete.67

In Tonga the ratio of Mormons to the population was 15.2 percent in 1992, the highest ratio of adherents in any country worldwide. The educational system of the LDS in Tonga is well recognized. The LDS claim also to be the biggest employer in Tonga, spending more money than the government on construction and building.

Very similar to Tonga is the situation in Western Samoa. There is a huge area near Apia with a temple in the centre and surrounded by school and administrative buildings.

![Image of LDS temple in Apia, Western Samoa](image)

**Picture 2: LDS temple in Apia, Western Samoa**

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67 Elder Alain Perrin, President of the Mission in Papeete, interview with author, Papeete, 1 April 1992.
Table 4: The LDS in the Pacific Islands: An Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Founded</th>
<th>Adherents</th>
<th>Missionaries</th>
<th>Chapels</th>
<th>Temple</th>
<th>School(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>8,297</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Caledonia</td>
<td>1955</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshall Islands</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pohnpei</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belau</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kiribati</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>French Polynesia</td>
<td>1844</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>45</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>14,200</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western Samoa</td>
<td>1888</td>
<td>16,394</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Samoa</td>
<td>1888</td>
<td>4,950</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook Islands</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niue</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>61,168</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

68 Information in this table is based on field research of the author in 1991-1992, available statistics from the LDS Church itself and R. Lanier Britsch, *Unto the islands of the Sea*. 
The Jehovah's Witnesses (JW)

Background

With a growth from just 3,868 believers in one nation (USA) in the 1870s to about four million in 212 countries at the end of 1990, the Jehovah's Witnesses are one of the most dynamic religious groups of the 20th century.69

The history of this expanding religious group can be subdivided into three main periods. The first period was dominated by the founder of the Jehovah's Witnesses, Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916). The son of a wealthy businessman and raised in a Presbyterian family, Russell was influenced as a teenager by the rationalist spirit of his age. After hearing an Adventist preacher in 1869, it is recorded, "his faith was restored".70

In the early 1870s Russell and some friends began to study the Bible with a focus on Christ's return. They also began to seek 'Bible Truth' about many other basic teachings. "This was the beginning of the modern-day activities of Jehovah's Witnesses."71 In a pamphlet entitled The Object and the Manner of the Lord's Return, published in 1874 and written by Russell, the group reached a greater public for the first time. Five years later the Watchtower magazine was first published with an initial distribution of 6,000 copies.72 In 1884 Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society was incorporated as a non-profit corporation in Pennsylvania. Charles T. Russell was elected President, and his office was looked to as the headquarters. Great efforts followed to expand the work in other countries. In the early 1900s, branch offices of the Society were established in Britain, Germany and Australia.73

In 1909 the headquarters was moved to Brooklyn, New York, where it is today. In 1914 the International Bible Students Association was formed in London, to advance the activities throughout the British Commonwealth.74

Following the death of Russell in 1916, a second chapter in the history of the Jehovah's Witnesses was opened, when Joseph Franklin Rutherford (1869-1942) took over the presidency of the Watch Tower Society.75

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70 The figure of 4 million includes only active members, called publishers. If we include children and family members the number of adherents will be about 6-7 million.


74 Jehovah's Witnesses: In the Divine Purpose, 9.

75 Jehovah's Witnesses: In the Divine Purpose, 9.
In the beginning Rutherford faced problems when he and others were imprisoned during the closing years of World War I because of their pacifist position. But the major problem was how to explain the failure of Russell's prophecy of the return of Christ in 1914. Rutherford's explanation was in summary that Christ was indeed enthroned in 1914, but only in heaven and invisibly. He predicted that the millennial reign would be established after a short transitional period.\footnote{Nelson and Smith, 176.}  

It was not until 1931 that the official name of Jehovah's Witnesses was adopted at a convention at Columbus, Ohio. Melton comments that \footnote{Melton, 530.}:

> ...this resolution crowned the rise of Judge F. R. Rutherford to a position of absolute authority in the society's affairs. For more than a decade, he had, step-by-step, molded the loosely organized Bible Students into a tight hierarchical organization, the theocratic kingdom.\footnote{Nelson and Smith, 176.}  

Before his death Rutherford contributed more than one hundred titles to the literature of the Jehovah's Witnesses, in 78 languages, with a total of 300 million copies printed.\footnote{Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, Jehovah's Witnesses in the Twentieth Century, (Watch Tower Bible & Tract Society of New York and International Bible Students Association: Brooklyn, NY, 1989), 8.}

Rutherford's death initiated the third period of the history of the Jehovah's Witnesses, which continues to the present. Nathan M. Knorr (1905-1977) became the new president. The Jehovah's Witnesses experienced a rapid expansion all over the world. A concerted programme of training began with the opening of a special school for missionaries in 1943, called the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead.\footnote{N. H. Knorr died in 1977. One of the last organizational changes he shared in was the enlargement of the Governing Body, located at the headquarters in Brooklyn. In 1976 administrative responsibilities were divided up and assigned to various committees made up of members of the Governing Body in 1989. Its 12 members had been working full time for the organization for more than 45 years.\footnote{Jehovah’s Witnesses in the Twentieth Century, 9.}  

Basic Beliefs

The Jehovah's Witnesses agree with Christians upon the Bible as a source of theology, but their interpretation differs very much. In their publications and through their extensive door-to-door visitation they constantly attack the traditional Christian Churches (especially the Roman Catholic Church) as instruments of Satan. Recently they have produced a new Bible Translation of their own, called The New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures, which can be seen as an attempt to defend their unique exegetical and doctrinal position.\footnote{See Melton, 530.}

The following short list of the basic teachings of the Jehovah's Witnesses indicates some of the differences between the Jehovah's Witnesses and the mainline Christian Churches:  

a) Christ is the first and highest created being, and lived as a perfect man on earth.  

b) Christ died on a stake, not on a cross.  

\footnote{All examples taken from Jehovah’s Witnesses in the Twentieth Century, 13.}
c) We are now in the 'time of the end'.

d) Only a flock of 144,000 go to heaven and rule with Christ.

e) The 144,000 are born again as spiritual sons of God, and Christ will rule his
Kingdom through them.

f) Images must not be used in worship.

g) A Christian must have no part in interfaith movements.

h) A Christian must keep separate from the world.

i) Taking blood into the body through mouth or veins violates God's laws.

j) A clergy class and special titles are improper.

Organizational structure

The overall direction for all the worldwide activities comes from the Governing Body at the
world headquarters in Brooklyn, New York. The governing body sends representatives each year
worldwide to 15 or more 'zones' to confer with the branch representatives in each zone. In the
branch offices, there are branch committees of from three to seven members to oversee the work in
the lands under their jurisdiction. The country or area served by each branch is divided into
districts, and the districts, in turn, are divided into circuits. Each circuit has in it about 20
congregations. The 'Kingdom Halls' of the congregations are the centres for meetings and worship.
The areas under each congregation are mapped out in small territories. These are assigned to
individual Witnesses who endeavour to visit and speak with the people in each home therein. The
individual proclaimer of the message is vital in the organizational structure of the Jehovah's
Witnesses.

Every member is considered a minister. The Jehovah's Witnesses distinguish between two
categories: 'Publishers' and 'Pioneers'. Publishers usually have a full time secular job and devote an
average of about 15 hours per month to the organization for spreading the message. The Pioneers can
be subdivided into two groups, 'general Pioneers', who are expected to give at least 100 hours of
service a month without any financial support, and 'special pioneers', who are supposed to give a
minimum of 150 hours a month. The latter receive a monthly allowance from the headquarters.

Women are clearly subordinated to men. They are not allowed to hold a teaching post, deliver
public lectures or direct any activities of men.

Funding

The main source of income is 'free will offerings'. At the Kingdom Halls and convention
auditoriums of Jehovah's Witnesses no collections are ever taken. Boxes are placed so that it is
convenient for anyone who may wish to contribute to do so. No one knows what others give.

Members commit themselves to regular monthly contributions for the annual 'Good Hope
action', but this is completely voluntary.

Expenses for full time workers of the Jehovah's Witnesses are very low. Full time workers live
in 'Bethel Homes' where they get accommodation and food. Most of them work in the printing
business or on farms. They get pocket money - about US$50 a month - for personal needs.

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83 Here I am summarizing the explanations of the Jehovah's Witnesses themselves, taken from Jehovah's
Witnesses in the Twentieth Century, 25.

84 See Nelson and Smith, 198-199.

The Jehovah's Witnesses have very low production costs for their publications, which are distributed by the members, called publishers, in a worldwide and effective network. All Witnesses must themselves cover the cost of the publications they have taken for distribution. The profit from the distribution of literature is approximately US$50 million a year and is used for the ongoing expansion of the organization.86

Activities

Jehovah's Witnesses believe that they must preach their message around the world before this generation passes away, because the 'end of the age' is fast approaching. Members of the Jehovah's Witnesses are usually 100% committed to this task, so that ethics and lifestyle become a predominant concern for them. One quite often finds a kind of 'martyr syndrome' in talking with Jehovah's Witnesses.87

Jehovah's Witnesses usually lead a kind of separatist existence. Fellowship with non-Witnesses is limited to the task of 'showing them the truth'. The internal community life is centered around the Kingdom Hall, where they have their public gatherings. The atmosphere and style of their 'services' is very different from that of the Christian Churches. Spiritless singing, doctrinal lessons and classroom-style studies, with repetition of lessons taken from the Watchtower magazine, make these meetings remarkably emotionless and pseudo-rationalistic.88

The practical service required from each member is called 'publishing' and consists of going from door-to-door selling literature and trying to proselytize, or standing motionless holding one of the publications at a street corner in town. There is no visible interest of the Jehovah's Witnesses in social services or relief work, which is in line with the apocalyptic character of their theology. The Jehovah's Witnesses are also not as family-life oriented as other Christian groups. It does not seem to be a preference for young couples to have and raise children.89

In the Pacific Islands the emphasis of the work is placed on translation into local languages and dialects of the different publications from the headquarters in New York. For this the Jehovah's Witnesses use highly developed and sophisticated computer hardware and software.

Cooperation

The Jehovah's Witnesses strongly deny that their groups are 'religious'. For Rutherford, religion is doing anything contrary to the will of God.90

Their open refusal of any form of cooperation with other religious groups allows no space for any cooperation at all.

86 See Hutten, 92.
87 In fact it is well documented that Jehovah's Witnesses have suffered and are still suffering greatly because of their beliefs. For example, thousands died in Nazi concentration camps in Europe, or were, and are, imprisoned worldwide because of their refusal to serve in the military under any government.
88 These are the personal observations of the author, based on participation in several meetings through field research in different Pacific Islands.
89 It was a striking experience to meet so many missionaries of the Jehovah's Witnesses in the different Pacific Islands, most of them married, but all of them without children.
90 See Nelson and Smith, 190.
The Jehovah's Witnesses in the Pacific Islands

The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Australia directed the work of the Jehovah's Witnesses in the South Pacific Islands from its formation in 1904 until 1958, when a branch office was formed in Suva, Fiji Islands. Since then the countries under the new branch have been Fiji, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Western and American Samoa, Tonga, Niue, Tahiti, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Tokelau and the Cook Islands. The work in Micronesia is directed from Hawaii or Guam.91

The total number of adherents of the Jehovah's Witnesses in the area of this research is about 17,295 (see table 6). Compared to the SDA, AOG or LDS, the Jehovah's Witnesses are not growing fast, but they are steadily increasing. Despite all their differences from the Roman Catholics, the Jehovah's Witnesses have one thing in common with that church: these are the only two religious groups which have adherents in all the Pacific Islands, which shows their universal claim.

Fiji92

The Jehovah's Witnesses have impressive new buildings in central Suva, computerized and nicely equipped with modern furniture. These buildings are mainly for administration purposes and include a Bethel Home, where the full-time volunteers (23 in 1992) live. Because of problems in getting the work permits all volunteers are locals. The emphasis of the work is on translation and distribution of literature, and proselytizing.

Western Samoa93

About 20 men and women live permanently in the Bethel Home near Apia. In 1992 there was construction work under way for a new headquarters, which will cost US$500,000. Most of the 60 people working on the construction site were volunteers from New Zealand, USA and Australia. The main activities are translating the Watchtower, producing textbooks for Sunday School, and proselytising. 90% of the money for the running costs comes from the headquarters in the USA.

Tonga94

Despite the fact that the first missionary started to preach the message of the organization in 1933, the Jehovah's Witnesses still have very few adherents. There is still no Kingdom Hall and the activities are centered on the translation of a variety of publications into Tongan.

French Polynesia

The official representative granted an appointment to the author but refused to release any information on the work of the Jehovah's Witnesses in French Polynesia.

Solomon Islands95

The Solomon Islands is the only place in the Pacific where the Jehovah's Witnesses are the largest of the non-historic religious groups, with an estimated 3,600 adherents. A huge building project close to the capital Honiara was expected to be finished at the end of 1992. The new centre will serve as a (Bethel) home for the full-time workers and for administrative and translation purposes.

Marshall Islands

The Jehovah's Witnesses began in the Marshall Islands in the early 1960s with mission work in Majuro. In 1992 there were 2 Kingdom Halls located in Majuro and Ebeye. Adherents are scattered around the other atolls. In August 1992 there was a big building project under construction in Majuro, mainly financed by Witnesses overseas. The new complex is supposed to serve as a centre for conventions, with offices for administration and translation, and will also include flats for the full-time volunteers.

Belau

The Jehovah's Witnesses started in the sixties, but have not grown fast. They are well established only in the capital Koror, with a Kingdom Hall and a Bethel Home.

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Picture 3: The *Awake* and the *Watchtower* magazine translated into more than 100 languages and distributed worldwide

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Table 5: The Jehovah's Witnesses in the Pacific Islands: An Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Founded</th>
<th>Adherents</th>
<th>No. of congregations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>1930</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Caledonia</td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>3,600</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>1930</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yap</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chuuk</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pohnpei</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosrae</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiribati</td>
<td>1951</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshall Islands</td>
<td>1962</td>
<td>500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nauru</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belau</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Samoa</td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook Islands</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Polynesia</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1960</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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<td>Tokelau</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>1933</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuvalu</td>
<td>1951</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallis &amp; Futuna</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Samoa</td>
<td>1952</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>17,295</strong></td>
<td><strong>132</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA)

Background

The SDA Church is the largest denomination within the Adventist Church family. There were about 6.5 million SDA members worldwide at the end of 1992.\(^9\) About 88 percent of all members live outside the USA, mainly in the Southern Hemisphere (Latin America, Africa, Asia-Pacific), where the SDA have experienced high growth rates over the last 30 years. Today the SDA Church is active in more than 180 countries and political areas.

The roots of the SDA church are found in the early 19th century adventist awakening in North America. The early history of the SDA can be divided into two parts. The first part is centered around the person of William Miller, born in 1782 in Pittsfield, Mass. After studying the great philosophers of 'rationalism' such as David Hume, Voltaire and Thomas Paine, Miller became a member of the Baptist Church in 1816. Subsequently he studied the Bible intensively for two years and in 1818 came to the conclusion that between March 1843 and March 1844 the world he knew would come to an end.\(^9\)

By 1844 Miller had travelled through North America and preached about 4,000 sermons. The meetings, which usually took place in tents, attracted sometimes more than 10,000 people. Between 1818 and 1844 'Millerism' became a widespread movement. The adherents of Miller were called 'Millerites'. In 1841, between 1,200 and 1,500 preachers spread Miller's message outside the USA, in England and Australia.\(^1\)

Nothing extraordinary is known to have happened in 1844 and Miller's movement fell to pieces very fast. Excluded from the Baptist Church Miller died in 1849.

The second part started with James and Ellen White. James White (1821-1881) heard Miller's message in 1842 and became a preacher himself. In 1845 he married Ellen Gould Harmon, who was to influence the SDA Church more than any other person. Because of her ability to receive visions, she was soon accepted as a prophetess.\(^1\) The group around the Whites adopted the idea of a Saturday Sabbath from the Seventh-day Baptist Church, after Ellen White received a vision.\(^1\)

In 1849 the Whites started to print and distribute the first official paper, called The Present Truth followed by the publishing of two magazines in 1850 (The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald). In 1855 the headquarters for the group of Advent believers close to James and Ellen White was set up at Battle Creek, Michigan, USA. In a meeting, held at that place in 1860, the current name of 'Seventh-day Adventist' was adopted. A new denomination was born including remnants of Miller's following.

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\(^9\) This is an estimate based on growth rates from previous years. See F. Donald Yost, ed., Harvost 90-125th Annual Statistical Report 1987 (Washington DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1987). In the SDA statistics the term 'members' includes those who are baptized and 8 years or older. If we include children of SDA members, to make it comparable with the statistics from the mainline Protestant denominations, the number of SDA members and affiliated children will be between 10-11 million.

\(^9\) Hutton, 35-38.

\(^1\) Hutton, 39.

\(^1\) Melton, 515.

\(^1\) Douglas E. Robertson, Church Leaders Manual (Warburton, Australia: Signs Publishing Company, 1990), 36. Concerning dates the following information is based on Robertson, 36-38.
In **New Caledonia** the SDA Church is still working at a low level and their growth comes mainly from people who are 'born into the Church', and not by converts, as in most of the other islands.

In **Vanuatu**, the Church runs 14 primary schools and one high school. Besides this the SDA are very active in mission work.

The SDA have a long and successful history in **Fiji** where the headquarters of the Central Pacific Union Mission is located. Two years ago they were celebrating 100 years of Mission work in Fiji. Fulton College is the regional training institution for the Central Pacific Union, with about 110 students from different Pacific Islands. Their involvement in education is expressed by the 17 schools run by the church with 66 teachers.\(^{115}\)

**From 1966 up to 1991** the membership of the SDA church in Fiji rose by 400 percent. In 1992 Fulton College became a member of the South Pacific Association of Theological Schools (SPATS) which shows once more the growing openness of the church towards the ecumenically oriented Mainline Churches.

**Western and American Samoa** are combined in one Mission. With about 4,685 members in Western Samoa compared to 1,700 in American Samoa, the focus is in Western Samoa, where the church runs one secondary and two primary schools. As in most other islands there are smaller and bigger projects run by the church’s relief programme. When two hurricanes hit Samoa badly in 1991 and 1992 the SDA Church sent US$25,000 in cash through ADRA as well as containers of foodstuffs, clothing, corrugated iron roofs, etc. According to church policy, part of this assistance was given to the National Disaster Organisations and part went directly to SDA members.\(^{116}\)

In the **Cook Islands** the focus of the SDA Church is on education. There are three primary schools and one secondary school with a total enrollment of about 160 students. The SDA Church in the Cook Islands is growing steadily but not at an extraordinary rate.

This is different from **French Polynesia**, where the SDA Church has a history of more than 100 years, with a steady but not rapid growth since the 1960s. Because of the well-advanced school system of the government there are only two schools run by the SDA Church, one primary and one secondary school. All of the 6 ordained ministers today are locals, which is different from the situation in most other Pacific Islands. The SDA Church in French Polynesia seems to be quite open for cooperation with the Catholics and the Evangelical Church. Since there is no established National Council of Churches, all cooperation at the moment remains on an informal level of 'friendly relations'.\(^{117}\)

Established in **Tonga** in 1893, the SDA Church has experienced rapid growth over the last 10 years. With a clear emphasis on teaching the second coming of Christ, combined with very well

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\(^{115}\) Supplement of the *Fiji Times*, 30 July 1991.

\(^{116}\) Pastor Ripine Rimoni, President of the SDA Church in Western Samoa, interview with author, Lalovea, 22 June 1992.

\(^{117}\) Pastor Marcel Doom, President of the SDA Church in French Polynesia, interview with author, Papeete, 31 March 1992.
developed and equipped educational, relief and health education work, the Church is expecting continued high growth rates for the future.\textsuperscript{118}

In the \textit{Marshall Islands} the SDA Church was established in 1967. The Church operates schools in Delap, Laura and on Ebeye, with a total enrollment of 1,200-1,600 students. Most of the teachers are young students and volunteers from the USA, who have not yet finished their formal education.\textsuperscript{119}

As in the Marshall Islands, the main work of the SDA in Pohnpei is focussed on education. 450 students are enrolled in three schools, so that the number of students surpasses that of the adherents.\textsuperscript{120}

A similar situation exists in \textit{Chuuk}, where the SDA Church runs a school with 170 students, which is more than the number of adherents. All teachers in this school are College students from the USA or England. With an average of 2-4 baptisms per year the Church is not growing very rapidly.\textsuperscript{121}

In contrast to the last two Micronesian Islands, the SDA Church is well established in the Republic of \textit{Belau}, where the SDA comes after the Roman Catholic and the Evangelical Churches in numbers of adherents. The first converts were made in the 1930s. Today there are 4 large congregations, 4 church buildings, and 5 pastors (3 local, 1 American and one from the Philippines). The SDA Church runs one high school and one elementary school in Belau with a total enrollment of 300 students.\textsuperscript{122}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{image.png}
\caption{Picture 4: Celebration of 100 years of mission work in Fiji, Ratu Sukuna Park, Suva, 1992}
\end{figure}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{118} Pastor Fonua Ofa, President of the SDA Church of Tonga & Niue, interview with author, Nuku'alofa, 16 June 1992.
\textsuperscript{119} Bruce Lane, Principal of the SDA High School in Laura, interview with author, Majuro, 12 August 1992.
\textsuperscript{120} Pastor Remenster Jano, interview with author, Kolonia, 18 August 1992.
\textsuperscript{121} Menry Davis, SDA school secretary, interview with author, Moen, 21 August 1992.
\textsuperscript{122} Baules Sichilong, SDA, interview with author, Koror, 25 August 1992.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Founded</th>
<th>Adherents</th>
<th>Ministers</th>
<th>Missionaries</th>
<th>Church buildings</th>
<th>Schools</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>1889</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1954</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
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<td>36,893</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>57</td>
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<td>Vanuatu</td>
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<td>9,300</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marshall Islands</td>
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<td>1,200</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>1966</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Chuuk</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>1,700</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>300</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>94,593</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>115</td>
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