Since 1993 the Catholic Church in the Marshall Islands has been separate from the Diocese of the Caroline Islands. It is now the Prefecture Apostolic of the Marshall Islands, with Monsignor James C. Gould (an American Jesuit) as its first Prefect Apostolic. He looks after about 4,600 members, assisted by four priests, Sacred Heart Sisters (most of them from Kiribati), the Maryknoll Sisters, other Sacred Heart missionaries in Majuro, a Fijian priest, and one Brother in Ebeye. Recently, the church's schools registered about 1,200 students, but not all of them are Catholics. This is because the church still heavily commits itself to education, not to proselytize but for the value of education itself. On this principle the church extends its educational assistance to four government grammar schools through the expertise of the Maryknoll Sisters, who train teachers how to teach and provide a basic curriculum.

One major contributing factor in the church's emphasis on education is the changes brought about by the process of modernity. Though there are positive aspects to those changes, others have resulted in issues that need remedying — issues such as alcoholism, substance abuse (especially smoking), casino gambling, and HIV/AIDS. There are also issues such as dependency rather than independence; having a future; political leadership as opposed to the abuse of money; and poor health caused by poor diet. Through its educational programme the church hopes to foster values such as integrity, responsibility, and initiative alongside the teaching of basic knowledge.

Another reason why the Catholic Church in the Marshalls places a heavy emphasis on education is its hope of indigenizing the church. As yet there have been no local priests since Catholicism came to the Marshalls. Though many have been educated in the church's schools, some of whom were expected to become leaders in the church, they have gone abroad looking for jobs elsewhere. It is felt that there should be a Catholic ethos that generates vocations, but this has not been so in the Marshalls.

In the near future, nothing much is expected to change in the church. It is not easy for Marshallese to become Catholic, as the church requires its members to take a stand on political issues. For instance, they may have to actively oppose the dumping of nuclear wastes in the region, and commemorate the September 11 incident in the USA in a memorial service. Moreover, since the church is strongly against casino gambling, bingo and lotteries, as well as divorce, few might want to become Catholic. In 20 years from now, the Catholic Church might grow gradually and perhaps be indigenized, but that will take a long time. As it is, with most of the money coming from overseas and an administration dominated by expatriates, in contrast to the UCC, the Catholic Church in the Marshalls "is far from being a truly Marshallese church" (Hezel 1991: 287).

Assemblies of God (AOG)

The Assemblies of God was first introduced to the Marshallese by United States servicemen during World War II. Among these was Tom Fox, who, like the others, did not know the Marshallese language but during a prayer meeting was moved by the Holy Spirit to preach to the locals in fluent Marshallese (Assemblies of God, 1992: 3). Though this might have been the starting point of the AOG in the Marshalls, those involved were not officially appointed.
The appointment that defines the official starting date of the AOG was made in 1961:

Later on, in 1961, an AOG couple came to the Marshalls to teach in one of the UCC High Schools. When they started to share their belief wherever possible and to organize meetings, they were fired. While the woman returned to Guam, her husband continued to preach. The UCC asked for the intervention of the government but the missionary was able to organize considerable support so that several influential people, including one island chief, petitioned for his case and he continued until an official appointment was made in 1964 (Ernst 1994: 190).

Characterizing the beginnings of the AOG in the Marshalls were healings and miracles performed during prayer meetings and other gatherings. These events attracted many Marshallese and resulted in many conversions.

The AOG in the Marshalls is independent organizationally and financially. It has its own superintendent and executive committee, and runs its own Calvary Bible Institute.

In 1988, however, a breakaway occurred within the church, after one of its pastors, who had been disciplined, was approached by the Pentecostal Church International to establish another church. Together with other AOG members the pastor set up the Bukot Non Jesus Church (Looking for Jesus Church) in Majuro.

In spite of this split, the AOG is still a growing church. In 1992 it had managed to establish 32 churches and four preaching points (rented or private places for meetings and worship). It had 31 ordained ministers, 44 accredited church workers, and about 10,000 members (Ernst 1994: 190). By 2002, it had expanded its operations by planting churches in other parts of Micronesia, such as in Pohnpei, Chuuk, Palau, and Yap, together with 10 churches amongst migrants in different parts of the United States.

Contributing to the success of the AOG in the Marshalls is, on the one hand, the desire of the Marshallese for a different style of worship and, on the other hand, the dissatisfaction of UCC members about the direction taken by that church recently. But for whatever reason people were converted to the AOG, what is common to all the conversions is that they took place "on a very emotional basis."^{15}

**Jehovah’s Witnesses (JW)**

The Jehovah’s Witnesses came to the Marshalls in the 1960s. From then till 1992, they managed to build two Kingdom Halls -- one at Majuro and another at Ebeye -- and claimed a membership of about 500. Under construction then was a complex at Majuro to be named the ‘Bethel Home’ in which meeting rooms, offices, translation facilities and flats for volunteers were to be provided (Ernst 1994: 192). In 2002 the JW claimed about 700 members, 225 ‘publishers’ (dispersed in Majuro, Ebeye, Jaluit and Maloelap), and 10 missionaries (six working in Majuro and four in Ebeye). The complex mentioned was eventually named ‘Missionary Home’ instead of ‘Bethel Home’.^{16}

Of major concern to the Witnesses in the Marshall Islands are, first, although the people are receptive in that they respect the Bible, the JW missionaries feel they may not have understood it properly. Secondly, they are concerned that family life is deteriorating in that the children are not receiving proper parental care (JW missionaries 2002, interview by author). The JW mission in the Marshalls is therefore focussing on these issues.
Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA)

The Seventh-day Adventist Church came to the Marshalls in 1967. It began when Pastor Syd Nelson started a small school (Ernst 1994: 191). From that small beginning the SDA grew to a church of 1,200 members in 1992. By 1999 the membership had decreased to about 460, but by 2002 it had increased again to about 800 (Jokray 2002, interview by author). The decline in membership after 1992 is said to have been mainly due to the migration of SDA members to the United States and elsewhere.

The SDA in the Marshalls is part of a worldwide Church with headquarters in the United States. It belongs to the Guam-Micronesia Mission, and is thus a part of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division, with headquarters in the Philippines. Though a part of the worldwide SDA Church, the superintendent and pastors of the church in the Marshalls are Marshallese trained at the denomination’s Fulton College in Fiji.

Central to the church’s mission is education. The statement “We have more schools here than churches” points clearly to the key factor in the success of the SDA in the Marshalls: most of the converts first come into contact with and are attracted to the SDA by their school programme (Ernst 1994: 191). The church runs eight elementary schools and two high schools, using the expertise of specialised workers from the United States, complemented by college students from the United States and United Kingdom as teachers. Giving the schools additional credibility, English is used at all levels; everyone has to pass an entrance exam in English and mathematics to be accepted into the SDA high schools. Of course, a student enrolling in any of the SDA schools would not only enjoy the above advantages but would also be introduced to SDA religious teachings.

New Apostolic Church

The New Apostolic Church was brought to the Marshalls by a Canadian in 1973–74. A year later, an American priest was appointed to begin mission work in the group and managed to plant two churches at Majuro, each with about 100 members. When the American left, so did more than half the members of both churches. Explaining this decline in membership, a current Marshallese priest who looks after one of the two New Apostolic Churches said that Marshallese have more confidence in the leadership of foreigners than that of their own countrymen (Naisher 2002, interview by author).

Independent Baptist Church

The first Independent Baptist Church was established in Rita, Majuro, in 1976. By 1992 the church had a building for worship, a local radio station, two missionary pastors, and about 150 members (Ernst 1994: 193). In 2002 these facilities still remained at Rita, but were now under the leadership of the first Marshallese pastor along with two deacons and a congregation of about 15 members. In addition, there were the Laura Baptist Church with about 35 members and the Ebeye Baptist Church with about 25 members. Both of these churches are under the pastoral leadership of missionaries from the United States (Lang, 2002, interview by author).

In conformity with one of the basic tenets of the Independent Baptist Church worldwide, the affiliations of their churches in the Marshalls are regulated:
World Wide New Testament Baptist Missions missionaries are not to seek or accept support from any church or churches or groups who knowingly are a part of or in sympathy with neo-evangelicalism, modernism, liberalism, charismatic or any other scripturally unsound doctrine or practice (Appendix, By-Laws of the World Wide New Testament Baptist Missions, 1976: 18).

The churches and groups with which the Independent Baptist Church in the Marshalls is loosely affiliated are the Independent Baptist Churches in Pohnpei, Guam and Saipan and the World Wide New Testament Baptist Missions, Inc. with its headquarters in Kings Mountain, North Carolina (Ernst 1994: 193).

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

The LDS Church (Mormons) began in the Marshalls in 1977. In its first three to four years, it grew slowly by an average of about 50 new members per year. In the following years its growth rate averaged 150 per year (see Ernst 1994: 191). In 1992 it was reported to have about 1,000 members. In 2002 a membership of 3,516 was claimed (710 at Ebeye and 2,806 in Majuro), placing the average growth since 1992 at 251 per year (Mills 2002, interview by author). The LDS has certainly grown considerably in size and influence, to the extent of becoming the fourth largest denomination in the Marshalls.

In terms of local structure, the LDS Church has expanded as well. Its five branches on Ebeye, Kwajalein, Majuro, and Mili in 1992 had increased to two on Ebeye, seven on Majuro, and one still on Kwajalein. Whereas there were four chapels on Majuro in 1992, today there are five, and one on Ebeye. Similarly, in 1992 there were 14 young missionaries, complemented and guided by an older missionary; now there are 20 young missionaries with two older couples. Another recent addition to the church’s facilities in the Marshalls is the Family History Research Centre in Delap on Majuro.

Education is one of the main attractions of the LDS Church:

Another contributing factor in the obvious attractiveness of the LDS Church in the Marshalls is in the practice of offering courses in English, free of charge, especially in Majuro. These lessons, open to both Mormons and non-Mormons, are supplemented by special instruction in English for 7th and 8th graders who want additional help preparing for high school entrance (Ernst 1994: 192).

LDS education also provides an opportunity for young Marshallese to study abroad, especially at the Brigham Young University in Hawaii and other similarly run institutions.

Internationally, the LDS Church in the Marshalls is part of the Micronesia-Guam Mission with headquarters in Agana. From this headquarters the Marshalls church receives 90 per cent of its annual revenue. The other 10 per cent comes from the tithes of the Marshallese.

With regard to the future, the current President of the Micronesia-Guam Mission expresses his confidence in this way: “Our task is to teach them, to let them decide to receive it or not, and we will still remain friends” (Mills 2002, interview by author). What he implies is that the LDS experienced rapid growth in the Marshalls, not because LDS teachings were imposed but simply because this version of Christianity was taught, like any other form of Christianity in the country, and met with an eager response.
New Testament Church of Majuro

In 1978 missionaries of the New Testament Church of Mt. Zion in Taiwan arrived in Majuro. There they met Albert (Leveolo) Sakaio, a Tuvaluan, who offered his home for their use. Through their work, both Albert Sakaio and Pelepele Petueli were baptized and, a little later, 14 others were also baptized – all of them Tuvaluans. The Taiwanese missionaries worked for a month before leaving for Tuvalu. In 2002 Pelepele Petueli became the caretaker of the church. Owing to language problems, worship services and evangelism were carried out in Tuvaluan. In 2002 the church members numbered 32 – all ethnically Tuvaluan (Sakaio 2002, interview by author).

Baha’i Faith

The Baha’i Faith came in the 1950s, was registered in 1977, and established itself for mission in the Marshalls in 1979. In 1992 there were 1,500 members, organized in 16 local Spiritual Assemblies (Ernst 1994: 193). Although the 1999 census enumerated 305 Baha’i members, the figure given by the National Office Administrator in 2002 was about 1,800 (Bell 2002, interview by author). A decade ago, most members were educated and wealthy Marshallese, such as the current chairperson of the National Spiritual Assembly, although some were copra cutters from the rural areas (Bell 2002, interview by author). Currently, where there are good means of communication, especially with the National Office, the Bah’a’i Faith thrives (Bell 2002, interview by author). With improved communications technology the movement in the Marshalls will surely grow.

Reformed Congregational Church (RCC)

The Reformed Congregational Church in the Marshalls was started following discontent about the leadership of the UCC:

Motivated by rivalries and disagreements with the leadership of the UCC rather than by doctrinal differences, the RCC was established by a group of deacons who left the UCC in 1985. While the UCC president emphasizes disobedience of an individual who refused a part-time appointment at the Marshall Islands Museum, what the current RCC president highlighted is that the RCC disagrees with the political direction the UCC has been taking in recent years. In his perception the RCC wants a return to the form of the original Congregational Church inaugurated by the first missionaries (Ernst 1994: 188).

Whichever view expresses the cause of the breakaway, the RCC has established itself as one of the religious bodies active in the Marshalls.

By 1992 the membership of the RCC had risen to about 3,000 (Ernst 1994: 184). Seven years later, however, according to the 1999 census, membership had plunged, so much that it was categorised among the ‘Others’, which constituted 1.4 per cent of the total population, or 712 persons. In 2002 the leadership of the church claimed 2 per cent of the total population as members, implying therefore an increase since 1999.19

As already mentioned, the RCC is not doctrinally different from the UCC, but it offers different activities and programmes. It focuses more on current social issues such as suicide, family planning, and youth, which are specifically approached as effects of globalization.

Even if it began as a breakaway, the RCC has, over time, developed relationships with other church organizations in and out of the country. Locally, it continues to be in a good
relationship with the Bukot Non Jesus Church (United Pentecostal Church), the Rita Protestant Church (UCC), and the Roman Catholics. Regionally, it has wanted to be a member of the Pacific Conference of Churches but has not been accepted, owing to the strong opposition from one of the member churches, namely the UCC in the Marshalls. Internationally though, it is affiliated to the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (but not to the World Council of Churches).

The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army came to the Marshalls as the result of persistent invitations from a Marshallese:

A Marshallese man named Overton Clarence read about the Salvation Army in a magazine and began campaigning for it to come in the early 1980s. He was turned down at least [two] times, so he began work on his own, based on what he read and learned. … It was on 1 June 1985 that the work became sanctioned by the international body and a full-time officer/pastor was appointed. On this date the Rita Corps (church) was established officially (Fowler 2002, interview by author).

Housing the Rita Corps is a multi-purpose building that houses both a worship centre and the Marshall Islands Salvation Army Co-ordinator’s Office.

Concerning the Salvation Army’s mission in the Marshalls, a mission statement declares: ‘We will be a church that is understood by our communities and is effective in meeting the spiritual and physical needs of those where we do ministry” (Fowler 2002, interview by author). In practical terms, the Marshallese social situation has been viewed as resembling that of London when the Salvation Army began (Ernst 1994: 192). For that reason the Army’s priority in establishing itself has been to meet the needs of the marginalised and the afflicted in the Marshalls, both spiritually and physically. On a social level, for instance, are issues of education and medical care. The Salvation Army sees these as the most pressing current areas of social concern in the Marshalls. It has promoted the value of education and provided some resources on a small scale. As for medical care, the Salvation Army prides itself on being one of the leaders in health education, especially in the area of HIV/AIDS prevention. Important in this undertaking is the building up of the capacity of the local communities for learning how to prevent HIV/AIDS and other similar socially dreaded diseases. The Army also focuses on areas such as first aid, over-the-counter pain medicine, and blood glucose testing for diabetes.

When it comes to women’s and children’s issues, the Salvation Army points to the ‘abuse’ of parental care. Explaining this, the Marshalls coordinator says:

One of my biggest concerns is the abuse children receive through a lack of parental involvement in their lives. Children are free to wander the streets with little supervision. This might not be the kind of abuse we see immediately, but I believe the future of many Marshallese children is in jeopardy. Many parents do not know what their children are doing in school or even if their children are in school. In addition, domestic violence seems to be present in Marshallese households and there is little that is done about it. A husband is allowed to treat his wife (or unmarried couples) in any way that he feels is acceptable. There is little education, resources or support for a woman who may be suffering from abuse and wants help (Fowler 2002, interview by author).
To combat this problem the Salvation Army begins with its own members. Equal opportunity for leadership, preaching, and teaching is emphatically given to both men and women members, and all corps in the Marshalls are led by husband and wife teams.

To date, the Salvation Army has established five corps or local churches, which are structured and organized on a quasi-military basis. Besides the one at Rita on Majuro, two more were set up in 1992, one at Laura on Majuro, and another at Ebeye on Kwajalein Atoll. In 1997 another one was set up at Jabwor on Jaluit Atoll. A fifth was set up at Jaluit on Jaluit Atoll in 2000. For each corps an Officer is appointed in charge of the soldiers (church members), and is, at the same time, responsible to the Captain or Administrative Coordinator at the headquarters in Majuro (see Figure 1 below).

**Organizational Structure of the Salvation Army Worldwide.**

- **International HQ**
  - London, England

- **USA National HQ**
  - Alexandra, Virginia

- **Western Territory HQ**
  - Long Beach, California

- **Hawaiian Pacific Isles Division**
  - Honolulu, Hawaii

- **8 Other Divisions**
- **Other Territories**
- **Other USA Territorial HQs**

- **Rep of Marshall Islands**
  - Coordination Office Majuro, RMI

- **Rita Corps**
- **Laura Corps**
- **Ebeye Corps**
- **Jabwor Corps**
- **Jaluit Corps**

The Captain, who is currently Charles Fowler, oversees all the Salvation Army operations in the Marshalls, under the direction of a Major in the Hawaiian and Pacific Isles Division in Honolulu, Hawaii. Together with eight other Divisions, the Hawaiian and Pacific Isles fall under the command of the Commissioner of the Western Territory based at Long Beach, California. From this territorial headquarters comes 90 per cent of the funding for the Marshalls ministry. In addition, it is also where the suggestions of the Marshall Islands Captain for the appointments of Officers in the Marshalls are received and implemented.

Four Marshallese have thus far graduated and been commissioned. Three of them are doing internships to gain more experience and to receive direct supervision in the US. The fourth, a single woman, has been appointed to take charge of the children and youth of the five Marshallese corps. Of the current corps mentioned above, two are in a state of steady growth, as their Officers are mature and experienced leaders, one is in a static condition, while the other two, whose Officers are young and inexperienced, are in a state of decline.
Any Marshallese can become a soldier or church member of any corps, but he or she is required to sign a covenant and profess the Salvation Army’s articles of faith, after first undergoing a ten-part course in which the Army’s doctrines and practices are learnt and studied. Included in the articles of faith is a promise to abstain from all alcohol and tobacco.

Asked about the future of the Salvation Army in the Marshalls, the Captain stated that its mission was not going to get any easier:

I think ministry is going to get harder. Right now it is still ‘culturally’ important to attend church and be involved in church. I have seen in my short time a negative trend away from that. The younger generations, especially, are starting to see church as just another ‘thing to do’. The church must do more to get back in touch with God on a personal level (Fowler 2002, interview by author).

The challenge that lies ahead for the Salvation Army in the Marshalls is basically the nurturing of its members and future leaders. That is, it is faced with the challenge of how to instil Christian principles into its young members so that being churchly is not just another culturally accepted element, but a relational reality with God.

**Full Gospel Churches (FG)**

Years after the breakaway of the Bukot Non Jesus Church, the Assemblies of God suffered another breakaway, and from this the Full Gospel Church was formed. “Frankly speaking, it was not the intention to start a new church that caused the break away from another church. It was for the purpose of taking care of those who were driven out of a church” (Edwards 2002, interview by author). What this means is that the original members of the FG were AOG members who had either left that church for one reason or another, or had literally been driven out for disciplinary purposes. Whatever the reason, another religious organization was established in the Marshalls.

Motivating the original pastoral intention was the personal experience of the founder and current pastor of the FG, Rev. Ronald Edwards:

I was in a “mainline” denomination 35 years ago. When I was attending a Bible School, God’s Spirit began to move in a “new” way (to us). At first I was very uncomfortable in the way they worshipped God, but my heart wanted more of Him. As I prayed and asked Him to help me to grow in the “knowledge of God,” I was baptized in the Holy Spirit and began to speak in a new tongue (Edwards 2002, interview by author).

This not only moved the founder into forming a new church but influenced the direction in which the FG would go. As a church, the FG sees its mission primarily as the encouragement of baptism in the Holy Spirit: “The Full Gospel Churches exist expressly to give continuing emphasis to this reason-for-being in the New Testament apostolic pattern, by teaching and encouraging believers to be baptized in the Holy Spirit” (Edwards 2002, interview by author).

The FG believes that by receiving this baptism its members will be able to do evangelism in the power of the Holy Spirit, which inaugurates the performing of miracles as well. At the same time, baptism in the Spirit will add a necessary dimension to the worshipping relationship of the Marshallese believers with God, so that they can respond and bear the fruits of the Holy Spirit for the betterment of the church as a whole.
Structurally, the FG is committee-based (see Figure 2 below).

**Organizational Structure of the Full Gospel Churches**

![Organizational Structure Diagram]

Key: Line of Authority ——— Line of Relationship


The most influential committee in the FG structure is the Church Council, which has authority over the church trustees, church board, church personnel, and the pastor.

The FG relies heavily upon its members for financial support. From them comes 95 per cent of the church's income, which is generated through tithing, free offerings, pledges, bazaars, and other fund raising means. The remaining 5 per cent comes from overseas.

Although it sends some of its members overseas for training, the FG trains most of its members in the Marshalls. It runs its own two-year theological and leadership training programme in which most of the trainees pay for their own training, although a few are sponsored by the church. Three members were sent for church-planting training at the 'Victory Family Centre' of the Assemblies of God in Singapore. Among those who have been ordained after successfully completing the training programme are three women, this being an indication of the equal opportunities given to women by the church.

Of great concern to the FG are issues relating to gambling, prostitution, and HIV/AIDS in the Marshalls. The church sees the root cause of these to be unawareness of the consequences of outside influences upon the Marshallese way of life and society as a whole. To confront these issues the church co-operates with other concerned communities and participates in national and international programmes carried out to address them.

The current leader is optimistic as to the future of the Full Gospel Churches:

As Christians, we need to teach and hold on to the “absolutes” of life in Christ Jesus and be open to some cultural changes that are not so important, such as dress styles, etc. If the church “holds up” a loving, powerful Jesus and is growing in the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5), there will be an attractive and magnetic draw to “the good and the Godly.” The future should be approached in a positive light because of who God is and because of His purpose in the earth (Edwards 2002, interview by author).

How realistic this optimistic perception is, only time will tell. Nevertheless, the FG has expanded from being a single church with about a dozen members to 11 churches with about 700 members (including both baptized and inactive).
Meram In Jesus Church/Light of Jesus Church

What led to the formation of the Meram In Jesus Church in 1992 was a land dispute. The dispute occurred between the Bukot Non Jesus Church pastor, at that time Rev. Anje Hensene, and his senior deacon, Mangining. Hensene made a will that his son, Rev. Paul Hensene, a pastor of the same church, would replace him as iroi jikik (lesser chief), giving him land rights over the land where their church stood. That conflicted with the intent of the senior deacon Mangining, who tried to claim his rights over the same land (Sam 2002, interview by author). The conflict finally ended in a split and the formation of the Meram In Jesus Church. Established at Darrir, Majuro, the church began with two pastors and about ten members. In 2002, with 60 members, a pastor, an assistant pastor, and a church building under construction, the church had plans to reach out to the other islands in the Marshalls (Tobey 2002, interview by author).

Marshallese Pentecostal Church

This church was formed at Majuro in 2001. On 4 March that year, a member of the Bukot Non Jesus Church, Helmet Libokmeto, had a vision in which she was asked by the Lord to start a new church. She and her husband Adelber Libokmeto became the first pastors of the first eight members. By 2002 the members had increased to about 100. Although independent, this church holds doctrines that are basically those of the Assemblies of God. The problem it currently faces is that it does not have a bus or a van to help transport its members to and from worship (Adelber and Libokmeto 2002, interview by author).

The National Council of Churches

Motivated by their government’s decision to give financial support to schools owned by churches, but only if those churches formed an organization that would link them together, several churches (the UCC, the Catholic Church, the AOG, the SDA Church and the LDS Church) co-operated in 1991 to establish the National Council of Churches (Ernst 1994, 193). Discussions about money dominated the early meetings. Since then there have been no more meetings, as there was little to be discussed of a religious nature, this not being the initial reason for establishing the Council (Monsignor James Gould 2002, interview by author).

Summary and Outlook

In the previous study a decade ago, Manfred Ernst wrote:

No other society in the area of this research has experienced such a dramatic and all embracing change as that of the Marshall Islands after World War II. This change can be briefly described as a breakdown of traditional social structures, cultural patterns, and traditional sets of values, caused by urbanization, migration, and rapid development of communication systems and technologies. It left many individuals confused, uprooted, insecure and therefore vulnerable to all kinds of new religious groups with a message of hope. The explosive growth of new religious groups has to be analyzed in this context (1994, 194).
Notes


2 Mason uses the local term kajur for 'commoners' or 'working class' while another source uses the term rjerbal; see, for instance, 'Republic of the Marshall Islands Country Paper, July 2004' www.mfat.govt.nz/foreign/regions/pacific/country/marshallislands,paper.html.

3 One source states "two archipelagic island chains of 30 atolls and 1,152 islands"; see 'Marshall Islands' (http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/print/rm.html).

4 The highest point is 10m above sea level in an unnamed spot on Likiep, in Ratak; see 'Marshall Islands' (http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/print/rm.html).


6 The author observed such discharges from foreign fishing vessels anchored in the lagoon at Majuro while their catch was processed at the factory for trans-shipment overseas for packaging and other processes.

7 On average a wato is about 1-2 hectares and spread across an atoll from the lagoon edge to the ocean side reef. See Mason 1987: 10.

8 Members of the unicameral parliament, or Nitiyela, are elected through universal suffrage of Marshallese who are 18 years old and over, for a 4-year-term period. 'Marshall Islands' (http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/print/rm.html).

9 Rev. Lawrence N. Edwards, a President of the Board of Directors of the Reformed Congregational Church, argues that one of the reasons he left the United Church of Christ was because he wanted to return to the original Congregational church that grew out of the missionaries' work in the Marshalls (Edwards 2002, interview by author).

10 Following the union in the USA of the Congregational, Evangelical and Reformed Churches in 1957, a Protestant denomination called the United Church of Christ was formed. The name was adopted by the ABCFM missionaries working in the Marshalls, and has remained until today in spite of opposition by some of the members who believe they should still be called the Congregational Church of the Marshalls. Those in favor of the old name affiliated themselves with a break-away movement from the United Church of Christ in the Marshalls, called the Reformed Congregational Church (see Ernst 1994: 188-189).

11 In 1992 there were 37 ordained pastors, 42 assistant pastors, 26 local churches and 82 sub-churches (see Ernst 1994: 186).

12 Where not stated otherwise, the information on the Catholic Church is based on an interview by the author of the Prefect Apostolic, Monsignor James Gould, Majuro, 30 September 2002.

13 Figures quoted in Hezel (1991: 269) were disputed by Monsignor James Gould in the interview by the author in 2002.


15 Ernst stated that "it was claimed that the UCC became 'too political' and failed more and more to meet the 'spiritual needs' of their members. As elsewhere in the South Pacific the AOG in the Marshall Islands preaches a clear separation from politics and focuses on the spiritual development of its adherents." See footnote 249 in Ernst 1994, 190.

16 The JW missionaries would not give their names, saying the information they gave could also be found in JW publications; interview by author, 2002.

17 The current (2002) figures are from President Mills.

18 Ernst (1994: 192) reported that 42 young Micronesians, among them Marshallese, studied at Brigham Young University, at Hawaii, in 1991.

19 The percentage claimed by the current president of the RCC is disputed by his UCC counterpart, who stated that many of those returning to the UCC were from the RCC.
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