orientation. When the COM would not accept the changes introduced by Bok he was not willing to compromise and sought affiliation with the COC in 1987.

Since 1990 students from different Pacific Islands have been trained as pastors at the COC Bible Training College at Balasuna on Guadalcanal. In addition, the COC runs three Training Centres called ‘Ministry Training Institutes’. In 2003 a Youth Leadership Training Centre was just about to open (Mesipitu 2003, interview by author).

With regard to finances the COC operates on the ‘self governing, self propagating, and self supporting’ principle, which gives each congregation a high level of autonomy. Tithings, offerings and donations are encouraged. The locally generated income is used mainly to meet administrative costs and pay allowances for the pastors.

The COC was one of the key churches in starting the Solomon Islands Full Gospel Association (SIFGA) as an umbrella organization of like-minded Pentecostal-charismatic-fundamentalist organizations. In 2003 the vice chairman of the COC was the chairman of SIFGA. According to Mesipitu, one of the founding fathers of the COC in the Solomon Islands, Pastor Joseph Douglas, has left the church and started a new group in the Western Province (Mesipitu, 2003, interview by author).

Rhema Family Church RFC

The RFC in the Solomon Islands started as a breakaway from the Church of Melanesia. Its roots lie in the early 1980s in a charismatic group within that church, under the leadership of Alfred Alufurai, a son of the first local Anglican bishop and a graduate of the ecumenical Pacific Theological College (PTC) in Suva, Fiji Islands (Ernst 1994: 124). The official beginning of the RFC took place in 1989 after the archbishop of the COM asked Alufurai to stop his activities in the charismatic renewal movement. Alufurai opted to leave the COM, and with initial support from the Rhema Bible Church in Perth, Australia, established the RFC in the Solomon Islands. Through its affiliation to the Rhema Church in Perth, the RFC became loosely affiliated to the International Convention of Faith Churches and Ministries (ICFCM) – a charismatic-fundamentalist organization founded in 1979 in Tulsa, Oklahoma, by Dr. Dayle Harrison and some independent Pentecostal pastors and evangelists. Some of these independent pastors run their own international ministries and are known to a wider public through their appearances on religious radio and TV programmes, or through their publications and pamphlets. The individual affiliates are autonomous and have their own local, regional or even worldwide networks. Typical examples are Kenneth and Gloria Copeland, leaders of the Kenneth Copeland Ministries and Publications in Fort Worth, Texas (Melton 1989: 377).

Only one year after obtaining registration the RFC split when Alufurai was replaced as leader by Fredson Fenua, a young pastor trained in Perth. Alufurai and Fenua disagreed on the question of affiliation to churches overseas. While Fenua wanted to keep and strengthen the affiliation to the worldwide Rhema Church and ICFCM, Alufurai, besides resenting his removal as leader, wanted a local indigenous charismatic church:

When white people came, there was really no respect for the local leadership of our church. They came around last year in April 1990 and they removed me from the pastoral seat of leadership. We prefer, as we have done all along, a local indigenous Solomon Islands group (Alufurai 1992, interview by author).
Later Alufurai established the Church of The Living Word and took with him approximately 50 per cent of the adherents of the RFC. Over the past decade both churches have developed independently and experienced growth, with the Church of the Living Word outnumbering the RFC by 883 adherents according to the census of 1999. Census data also reveal that about 90 per cent of RFC adherents are to be found, in almost equal concentrations, in the three provinces of Makira-Ulawa (289 adherents), Malaita (282 adherents), and Honiara Town Council (263 adherents). The remaining adherents are scattered over the rest of the provinces and islands and are insignificant in number. Being a small church, the RFC does not maintain church buildings as such but worships in rented halls or the homes of its members. The RFC must be seen as a local branch of the Rhema Bible Church in Perth, Australia, which amongst other things is expressed in the fact that it sends regular contributions to Perth to support Rhema's worldwide ministry (Fenua 1992, interview by author). In return the Rhema Bible Church in Australia supports the RFC in the Solomon Islands.

**Church of the Living Word (CLW)**

As mentioned above the CLW broke away from the Rhema Family Church (RFC) in 1990 when the founder of the RFC was replaced by another pastor and differences arose over the question of affiliation overseas. While there are no major differences in other areas such as doctrine or worship, the distribution of adherents is quite different. Fifteen per cent (293 adherents) of the CLW live in Temotu province, where the RFC has only 75 followers, and another concentration of CLW adherents is in Choiseul and the Western Province, where the RFC has few members.

**Bible Way Centre (BWC)**

The BWC was registered on 9 September 1990, on the initiative of a former minister of the South Sea Evangelical Church (SSEC), Pastor Menual Laufuli. He had been exposed in 1984 to charismatic theology and worship in New Zealand, where he got in touch with the New Life Churches in Christchurch. After his return he pastored a SSEC congregation at Kukum from 1985 to 1989. Laufuli found himself in conflict with the SSEC when he accepted divorced people, or people who were divorced and living together with a new partner without being married, as full church members and participants, which was not in line with SSEC doctrines. He was asked by the SSEC leadership to leave the church when he showed no willingness to respect this rule. In 1990 Laufuli and his wife started Emmaus College at a place on the outskirts of Honiara that became known as ‘Borderline’ during the ethnic conflict. Frequent fighting between the militia groups took place there. With financial support from the Australian government (AUSAID) Laufuli was able to build a rehabilitation centre for young people who had been involved in various forms of fighting and looting during the ethnic tensions. The construction of the centre, which in fact appears to be more of a charismatic Bible School, cost $170,000 and was fully funded by AUSAID. It includes classrooms and dormitories and a field for sports. In 2003 there were 60 students, of which 16 were boarding while the rest came in on a daily basis. People from all walks of life are accepted, the only condition being that they can read and write (Laufuli 2003, interview by author). Classes are held Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The students stay
for one year, with the school year beginning in February and ending in November. No certificate is issued because the aim is not academic but rather a radical change in the lifestyles of the students. “At the end of the year people will find their lives radically changed by the power of the Holy Spirit and that change in them will make them share when they go out and be witnesses unto Jesus” (Laufili 2003, interview by author). The programme is attractive to young people because it does not cost anything and they receive a weekly allowance of $10. An interesting question for further research would be whether the BWC has been able to secure and use official government aid money to train young people to proselytize. English classes are offered at Emmaus College, as well as classes in sewing and counseling. This part of its activities is headed by a couple from the United Kingdom, the man being the pharmacist at the National Hospital in Honiara.

In 2003 the leader of the BWC claimed four congregations on the Weather Coast, four congregations on Malaita, one congregation in Mahrou, Guadalcanal and the Emmaus College in Honiara. All the congregations are autonomous. There is no general secretary or president, but Pastor Laufili, being the senior pastor of the church, has the power to appoint elders and deacons. There is an annual meeting of the BWC churches, and between meetings the church workers and members are invited to attend spiritual enrichment meetings addressed by speakers from overseas. The connection with the New Life Churches in New Zealand is still alive, with co-operation in the area of ‘worship ministry’ and ‘spiritual gifts.’ The church income derives from tithes, offerings and donations. There are obviously some rich supporters because Laufili mentioned two individual donations of $43,000 and $20,000.

Activities consist of a service on Sunday, Sunday School, special seminars for young people in the afternoon, a hospital visitation programme and a variety of activities in the women's department. Since 2001 Pastor Laufili has preached over the radio on a programme called ‘Words of Salvation,' broadcast from Monday to Friday for 15 minutes each day, for which the BWC buys time from the Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation (SIBC). There is a special arrangement between the BWC and like-minded churches and SIBC, under which the churches buy five hours of time for $SI 1,000. A special relationship exists between the BWC and Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN), because the BWC was the first local church to join TBN. This organization began to operate in the Solomon Islands at the end of 2001 after it approached the BWC through some expatriate members. The transmission tower is located at Ranadi. The local managers of TBN in 2003 were Alex Bartlett and his wife. Bartlett is a businessman and politician from Malaita, who was for some time a member of government and also known as an influential leader of the Malaita Eagle Force. After the arrival of RAMSI a variety of charges were laid against Bartlett who was finally brought to justice. As usual with TBN in the South Pacific region more than 90 per cent of the programme is pre-produced in the USA, and all that is needed is a simple studio and a transmission tower to play cassettes or DVDs. In 2003 TBN reached only a very small area but there were plans to boost transmission power from 50 to 500 kilowatts (Laufili 2003, interview by author).

Co-operation exists with the Pentecostal-charismatic churches and organizations that have formed the Solomon Islands Full Gospel Association (SIFGA). The relationship to the South Sea Evangelical Church is still affected by the breakaway of Pastor Laufili, who took some members of the SSEC with him. In 1999 membership was just 375 adherents.
Christian Revival Crusade (CRC)

The CRC is a group of self-governing Pentecostal churches founded by Pastor Leo Harris in June 1944 in Wellington, New Zealand. Harris had a vision for national revival in both New Zealand and Australia, and in November 1945 CRC was officially launched in Adelaide, Australia, from where it grew into a movement of 130 churches in Australia alone. Today CRC is an international movement, with churches in New Zealand, Australia, Papua New Guinea, Hong Kong, Philippines, Japan, Sri Lanka, Fiji, Vanuatu, and the Solomon Islands (www.riverland.net.au/-bcrusade/crc.htm). Its first activities in the Solomon Islands can be traced back to 1983 and the efforts of two missionaries from Papua New Guinea, which led in 1984 to the movement’s official registration as a Charitable Trust (Poloso 2003, interview by author). The CRC claims to be historically the second Pentecostal church in the Solomon Islands, after the Assemblies of God.

In 2003 the position of country leader was given to Pastor Nathan Poloso and his wife Lydia. Poloso grew up as a Methodist in the United Church and became a ‘born again’ Christian in 1987. He and his wife started activities in his home village but because the United Church did not appreciate what the couple were doing they left their church and went for training at the Bethel Bible College of the CRC in PNG. Today in the Solomons there is supposed to be a National Executive Committee, but it was not functioning in 2003. While Pastor Poloso is in charge of the CRC church in Honiara, and called National Leader, there is a Field Director above him, an Australian who in 2003 was also the chairman for all CRC churches in the world (Poloso 2003, interview by author). In 2003 there were 12 churches and 3 ‘outreaches’ of the CRC in the Solomon Islands, with a total membership of 553 in 1999. According to the National Leader there were between 700 and 800 adherents in 2003 (Poloso 2003, interview by author). There is a clear concentration of members in Honiara, Malaita, Isabel, Western Province, and the Reef Islands in the Temotu Province.

In 1997 a Bible School named Christian Ministry Training Centre was opened on Malaita, 45 minutes away from the provincial capital Auki. The Centre offers a two-year programme, with a certificate issued from New Zealand, and in 2003 there were 45 first year and 19 second year students. The curriculum consists of basic Bible studies and the Centre is headed by a missionary couple from PNG, who also teach courses. After the first year there is a compulsory six month practicum, with outreach activities outside the school. The Centre accepts single students of both sexes, as well as couples. To enter, applicants must be ‘born again’ Christians, preferably with grade 6 completed, although the academic requirement is handled flexibly because “the education background does not really matter” (Poloso 2003, interview by author). The standard of teaching and the living conditions are very basic. Students have to grow vegetables to contribute to the running of the school. For a single student one year of studies costs $SI 350, (approximately $US 60), including tuition fees, accommodation and food. The annual fees for a couple are $SI 500. An interesting detail is that according to the national leader the majority of students are Anglicans or SSEC, with the rest being members of the SDA, Bible Way Centre and of course the Christian Revival Crusade.

With regard to finances and administration the local churches are autonomous. The main source of income is tithes and offerings, including frequent missions offerings. The Bible School is supported by the international CRC. While CRC missionaries come to the Solomon Islands, the CRC also sends Solomon Islanders to other countries. The CRC in
the Solomon Islands is clearly affiliated to the international CRC, which has the final say in doctrinal issues and matters of international co-operation and organization. In the Solomons the CRC is a member of SIFGA and co-operates with the other members and with para-churches such as Youth With A Mission and Campus Crusade, especially in organizing rallies, street evangelism, prayer meetings and church services, with the target group being 'nominal' Christians.

**Kingdom Harvest Ministries International (KHMI)**

The KHMI displays the characteristics of both a charismatic para-church and a charismatic denomination. It was established on 16 January 2000 by Pastor Ellison Barko. Before setting up the new organization Barko had served from 1990 to 1999 as pastor of the Rhema Family Church and Principal of the Rhema Bible School. With this background the KHMI also has the features of a breakaway church. Originally Pastor Barko was from the island of Isabel, where he was brought up as an Anglican. He became a 'born again' Christian while he was involved in Anglican youth work. When he attended a conference in Perth, Australia, he was encouraged by the guest speaker, a Malayan, to undertake a one-year training programme at the Vision Bible School in Malaysia. He was supported there by the Malayan, and joined the Rhema Church. The school in Malaysia is run by the Tabernacle of Glory Church, which is affiliated to the Rhema Family Church in Perth (Barko 2003, interview by author). After his year of training Barko did not receive any other formal training, which is not unusual in charismatic churches and ministries, where spiritual and other non-academic qualities count more than formal education.

According to the founder, KHMI was established with the blessing of the Rhema Family Church, which even participated in the launching. Unintentionally, members of Rhema left their church when Barko's new church — so far the only one in the Solomon Islands — was established in Honiara. As well as Pastor Barko, there is also an assistant pastor and a Board of Elders, all appointed by the visionary founder and submitting themselves to his leadership and authority. The congregation consists of fewer than 200 adherents, including children, most of whom previously belonged to the Rhema Family Church. In that there are no major differences in the theology, style of worship and weekly activities of the two groups, it might well be that the KHMI was established simply because there was no room for two ambitious and charismatic leaders in one organization. "Sitting under another man with his vision and with his call, I thought there was something that I could do more with the vision of the call that I had upon my life, which would be different from where I was before" (Barko 2003, interview by author).

Like other para-churches the KHMI found ways to establish co-operation with the established churches. This is particularly true of its relations with the United Church in the Western Province, a church that seems to be more vulnerable to new influences than the other historic mainline churches. Close co-operation existed with a superintendent of the United Church in Choiseul, who passed away in 2002, and a church group in Vella Lavella. This co-operation existed without the official blessing and knowledge of the moderator of the United Church. The co-operation is in keeping, however, with a trend seen in the United Church in recent years, in which from top to bottom the church has increasingly adopted charismatic practices of worship and theology.
Being a local ministry, the KHMI derives its income from tithes, offerings and donations only. According to Pastor Barko the contributions received are sufficient to cover all the costs of renting a building for worship, as well as other costs such as paying the pastors. In its outreach programme the KHMI uses printed materials from the USA, provided by an organization called ‘Charisma’. These materials are developed in a completely different cultural and social context and are available in English only, but are used as guidelines and adapted to the local context. Because the KHMI was established after the last census was carried out, there are no official figures available. According to Barko there are between 150 and 200 adherents in 2003, in Honiara only (Barko 2003, interview by author).

**Church of the Nazarene (CN)**

The Church of the Nazarene was brought to the Solomon Islands in 1982 by a man from Makira who returned from studies in Papua New Guinea (Miller 2003, interview by author). The first missionary, Rev Wallace White, followed, and the newly established church was included in the same district as PNG. After some restructuring, the Solomon Islands are today part of the Melanesian Field of the international Nazarene Church, which also includes PNG, Vanuatu, New Caledonia, East Timor and West Papua and is under the leadership of a Field Director. The next level in the international organization of the church is the Asian-Pacific region, which includes the South Pacific, China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, New Zealand, and the Philippines where the headquarters is located. Above this level is the World Mission Department in Kansas City, USA, and then the highest level, the six-member Board of Directors, in which the final authority for the whole worldwide Nazarene Church rests (Miller 2003, interview by author).

From the early 1980s until the present, growth has been very slow. The 1999 census mentioned just 100 adherents. One reason for this slow development is, according to a missionary who arrived in 1999, what he calls ‘denominational territorialism’, in which already existing churches have a hostile attitude towards new arrivals. Furthermore, the CN is usually much more cautious in its mission work than the various new Pentecostal-charismatic churches, in that it enters a village or region only on request. One successful tool for mission has been the Jesus film, which was not developed by the CN itself but was taken around the islands and to villages that were not yet familiar with TV or major avenues for entertainment.

In 2003 there were about five places of CN worship in the Solomon Islands. The main focus of the church’s activities is clearly education and health care. For example it maintains a kindergarten and a school that goes up to Form Six and has a roll of 160, taught by 11 teachers. The school operates as a private school and the fees are therefore high: $SI 675 a term for primary and $SI 1,000 for secondary.

In 2003 the CN had four ordained ministers. Requirements for ordination are four years attendance at a Nazarene Bible College (the nearest is located in PNG), and a minimum of two years active ministry. The church also offers a programme for studies by extension, with 10 students enrolled in 2003 (Miller 2003, interview by author). With just 100–250 adherents and deriving local income only from tithes and offerings, the CN is by no means self-supporting and can carry out its activities only with the support of the worldwide CN. In the Solomons the CN co-operates with the SSEC, the Bible Way Centre and to some extent the United Church. Attempts have been made to join the Solomon Islands Christian Association but so far SICA has not responded.
Bahá'í Faith (BF)

The BF reached the Solomon Islands in 1953. Since it is an offshoot of Shi'ite Islam it might be a surprise to find Bahá'ís among the predominantly Christian population of the South Pacific Islands. With their message of inter-religious unity and inter-racial co-operation and harmony, and an approach that is not based on proselytizing, the Bahá'ís were seemingly ill-equipped to take root in the mainly rural environment of the Solomon Islands, which has one of the lowest levels of formal education in the region. In the beginning Bahá'ís were basically teachers, business people, nurses, civil servants and retired people of non-Solomons origin, but the BF message was well received by some others and the first National Assembly was established in 1971. The census of 1999 listed 2,300 adherents. Comparison with the numbers recorded in previous censuses and with the average population growth indicates that the BF in the Solomon Islands seems to be in a process of minor decline. Besides natural growth inside the community of Bahá'ís there are some new members drawn from younger generations with a higher level of education. They often feel neglected by the majority of Christian churches, which usually operate within a strict hierarchy that is based on age and gender. In contrast to this the BF claims no ranking system at all, with young people and even children seen and treated as of equal importance as adults (Osiia 2003, interview by author). Almost 71 per cent of all Bahá'ís live on Malaita. The only other provinces with significant membership are the Western Province (11 per cent) and Honiara (11 per cent). In all the other six provinces there were only 153 scattered adherents.

Pacific-Asia Evangelistic Association (PAEA)

The PAEA is an interdenominational, evangelical-charismatic para-church organization, registered under the Charitable Trust Act in the Solomon Islands in Honiara in 1976. Members of the PAEA trace its roots back to the 1970s and a revival that took place within the SSEC during and after a visit of Kimecere, a pastor from Uganda (Kausimae 2003, interview by author). The objectives of PAEA are:

- To spread the true gospel of Jesus Christ to all nations, especially in the Pacific and Asia, through programmes of public evangelism;
- To conduct evangelistic crusades, conferences and seminars on behalf of all churches;
- To invite international spirit-filled Christian brothers to participate in locally organized programmes, and to participate in international Christian programmes when the call to do so arises;
- To encourage and organize the establishment of evangelistic bodies;
- To endeavour to turn the entire nation of the Solomon Islands to Jesus Christ.

These objectives have clearly determined the Association’s activities. Evangelistic groups from the Solomon Islands have so far visited PNG, Fiji, Nauru, Vanuatu, and Kiribati. In the beginning of the SSEC, where the PAEA started, and other established churches were reluctant to accept the new organization, which was the first of its kind in the Solomon Islands, fearing that it would set up a new church. Because that has not happened, however, most of the churches have no problem in co-operating with the Association today. According to the objectives, rallies, prayer meetings and seminars have been organized, as well as visits from evangelical-charismatic-fundamentalist preachers from overseas, such as Bill Subritzky and Reinhard Bonnke. In 2003 PAEA claimed to have 2,000 affiliates, from a variety of
denominations. It is obviously well connected to high ranking people in business and the government, such as Edward Kingmele, an active member of the Association and also the Private Special Secretary to Prime Minister Kemakeza (Kingmele 2003, interview by author). With these connections PAEA was instrumental and supportive in the setting up of the first and only purely Christian TV station in the country, Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN).

Haven in the Storm

Haven in the Storm is one of the latest charismatic para-church organizations in the Solomon Islands. It was established at the height of the ethnic tensions in 2000 by Loretta Palmer, a daughter of the former archbishop of the Church of Melanesia, Norman Palmer. The organization grew out of one of the charismatic renewal groups within the Church of Melanesia and was registered as an organization under the Charitable Trust Act of 1964 (Palmer 2003, interview by author). The basic goal of the organization is: “to direct people that Jesus is the Haven in the Storm”. Palmer explains that “the storm could be problems in their marriage, finance, or any type of problems. We want people to know that the solution can be found in Jesus” (Palmer 2003, interview by author). The main activities derive from this overall goal and are intended:

- To provide Christian guidance and counseling to people in need irrespective of denomination.
- To provide a venue for prayer fellowship, sharing, teaching, and counseling.
- To encourage people and in particular women through training to become self sustained or self sufficient.

Activists of Haven in the Storm have been working with young people in raising awareness of HIV/AIDS and alcohol abuse, and within Youth With A Mission as youth leaders. The founder of the organization is an energetic woman, married with children, and driven by her personal ‘born again’ experience.

In 2003 the organization was financed mainly by the income generated from the provision of secretarial services by Loretta Palmer at a prominent shopping mall in Honiara. There is a photocopier, a binding machine and a computer with Internet connection in one room, and a second room is used as a prayer room or for individual counseling sessions. A television tuned to Trinity Broadcast Network is usually running in the background. “I was challenged by many evangelists on the TBN on how important prayer is, and so I studied it and shared and taught it to the women” (Palmer 2003, interview by author). Other income

Profile: Loretta Palmer – Founder of Haven in the Storm

I grew up in a Christian home and I spent a lot of time in the church. I did not have a personal relationship with the Lord and when I did become born again that changed me and made me look at things differently. That was when I was in school. Things just changed for me. I began to understand things better. I began to know God personally and the Bible was a precious thing and I came to know it deeply. Now I can’t go anywhere without the Bible. I have gone through so much in my life. I have gone through supernatural healing and my cancer was healed by faith and for me those experiences gave me something I know was real and I would say unless someone is born again.

I am free to worship with passion and now I no longer see people as somebody different especially with other born again believers and it is something that I cannot explain. You have to experience it to know what I am talking about. I would like to talk about women. Our women live a defeated life and I believe that born again is a victorious life and that is what we are trying to teach — that you have to be born again. (Palmer 2003, interview by author)
derives from small donations from individuals. There is no special connection to any denomination, except that most of the activists and members belong to the Church of Melanesia, which provides space and time for charismatic worship at St. Barnabas Cathedral in Honiara. Palmer receives daily information via the Internet from Kenneth Copeland and other evangelists in the USA. With its special attention to the counseling of women and young people, Haven in the Storm is definitely responding to a huge need, especially in the context of the ethnic conflict that has affected and disrupted the lives of thousands of people. There is a lack of expertise in crisis or trauma counseling in the Solomon Islands, and to develop the work of Haven in the Storm further it would be good if its workers, who are basically self-taught and base their counseling on the Bible only, could undergo some formal training leading to a certificate or degree so that they could train others professionally.

**Campus Crusade for Christ (CCFC)**

CCFC is an international, interdenominational evangelical para-church organization involved in global evangelism, founded in 1951 at the University of Southern California by William (Bill) R. Wright. Wright and his wife Vonette were at the helm of the organization until 2001 when Steve Douglas was appointed president. With a clear worldwide planning structure and reporting chain, CCFC is organized like a transnational corporation. This becomes even clearer if one takes into account some statistical figures: in the year 2000 CCFC had 24,823 staff members and about 553,700 trained volunteers working for them in 191 countries of the world and covering 99.6 per cent of the world's population (Annual Ministry Report 2000: 1). Since 1979 there have been more than 4.3 billion exposures using the Jesus film produced by the organization, translated into 654 languages, and taken to the remotest places on earth.

CCFC began working in the Solomon Islands in the mid 1970s. From 1992 to 2003 the number of full-time staff in the country increased from three to five (plus three associate staff). The main activity is the organizing of training courses in evangelism, discipleship and church growth, with the overall aim of spreading the gospel to the unreached and to the nominal members of the different churches. A specialized area of work developed during the ethnic conflict when a programme was set up to target the wives of police personnel at the Police Headquarters in Rove (Pangahau 2003, interview by author).

CCFC in the Solomon Islands receives allocations for the running of its office, on a monthly basis and on request, with strict reporting requirements attached. In line with its worldwide policy, CCFC staff members from the national director down to all the co-workers are not paid by the organization but must raise their support locally. In its organizational structure the Solomons office follows a chain of command under which the local national director is accountable to the regional director, who in turn reports to the vice president of Oceania, who is finally accountable to the president. Routine administrative matters are handled locally by the national director. In matters like recruitment the regional director needs to be involved.

CCFC is affiliated to SICA, with associate membership status, and is careful to keep a very clear profile as a para-church in order to avoid suspicions that it is 'sheep stealing' and secretly planting churches. On this basis CCFC has been able to co-operate with or at least keep some sort of relationship with almost every denomination and Christian organization in the country, with the exception of the SDA, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Baha’i Faith, and Mormons.
ECUMENICAL CO-OPERATION

Solomon Islands Christian Association (SICA)

Established in 1976, SICA is made up of the five main churches in the Solomon Islands: the Church of Melanesia, the Catholic Church, the South Sea Evangelical Church, the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the United Church. Together these churches represented 90.3 per cent of the whole population in 1998. Since 1986, when SICA represented 91.7 per cent of the population, there has been a slight decrease that reflects the small decrease in all the member churches except the Seventh-day Adventist Church. As well as these denominations, SICA includes two para-church organizations (Campus Crusade for Christ and the Bible Society) as associated members (Funikafa 2003, interview by author).

SICA has an executive committee that meets once a month. Each church is represented on this executive, and the chairmanship is rotated. There is a full time General Secretary who monitors and implements the decisions reached at policy and political meetings on behalf of the member churches.

The main functions of SICA are listed as follows:

1. To promote mutual understanding and co-operation among the churches in the Solomon Islands.
2. To help members to plan together and share resources in joint action.
3. To promote mutual understanding and co-operation between SICA and the government.
4. To help promote a greater awareness of social issues, justice, peace, and human development.
5. To encourage the participation of members in activities of the worldwide Christian family.
6. To secure and provide assistance locally or overseas in times of natural disasters and special needs that arise (Solomon Islands Christian Association Constitution. Honiara. 1988).

In order to perform these functions SICA established another desk, the Ecumenical Resource and Support Desk (ERSD), which has a manager and an accountant and a work force of 15 people from the member churches. Normally the team works on the Village Education Programme (VEP), addressing the social issues faced by the communities. However, when the ethnic conflict broke out the VEP mobilized field teams to work in the affected areas. In addition to committees for Christian Education, Church and Society, Religious Broadcasting and Translation, SICA developed a Peace Office to address the national crisis. The strength of the Peace Office is that its agenda is based on the closeness of the workers to the unfolding events. Soon after becoming functional the Peace Office was able to play an intermediary role between the people and the government. Besides this more recent response to human-made disasters, SICA has long been known for responding effectively to natural disasters such as cyclones, earthquakes and tidal waves, carrying out relief operations by using the networks of its member churches (Funikafa 2003, interview by author).

SICA has a variety of sources of income, including contributions from its members, donations from within the country and beyond it, subsidies from government, and revenue from assets (such as renting out office space).
During its history SICA has experienced years of stagnation as well as times of development filled with activities and action. Especially since the outbreak of the ethnic conflict, and through its different member churches and their leaders, SICA has developed into a widely accepted voice of reason, peace and reconciliation. Even under pressure and at great personal risk, SICA church leaders and workers stood up and spoke out against the ruthless fighting and killing, the displacement of people, and the corruption that was widespread in both central and provincial governments. One example of this stance is the work of Matthew Wale, an accountant by profession, a Malaitan and a member of the SSEC. This SICA activist helped to organize a National Peace Conference in August 2000. From this meeting came a communiqué calling for fundamental human rights to be respected and warning against a blanket amnesty. Because of his involvement in the conference and because he was not afraid to speak out against injustices, Wale came under attack, apparently from the Malaitan Eagle Force. Evidently as punishment for the position he had taken, his house was ransacked by gunmen, his cousin was severely beaten up, and a variety of valuables were taken (www.web.amnesty.org/library/print/ENGASA430082000). Similar stories, easily enough to fill a book, could be told of church leaders and SICA activists and other people who risked their lives, some of them even being killed.

It can be said that when the country faced a major crisis SICA was able to develop its full potential. Representing over 90 per cent of the whole population, the organization developed a consciousness of its responsibility, especially at a time when other institutions were crumbling. This made SICA the most influential and powerful civil society organization in the Solomon Islands in recent years. It can be seen as a role model for effective ecumenical co-operation at national level, and it is to be hoped that other National Councils of Churches in the region will not only take notice but also start to develop their own huge potential.

**SUMMARY AND OUTLOOK**

The Solomon Islands is a nation of villages, islands and cultural identities based on language and tribal groupings. Christianity to some extent became part of the cultural identity but — as in many other parts of the world — if central Christian values are not reconcilable with tribal identities and priorities, Christianity becomes subordinate.

While church leaders and some church groups and individuals rose to the challenges posed by this general conflict and became biblical prophetic voices, others followed their tribal/ethnic leaders and acted against core values such as ‘you shall not kill’, ‘you shall not steal’, and ‘you shall not desire your neighbour’s house’. They did so on a massive scale, just as happens in other wars anywhere in the world, regardless of whether or not the majority of people are Christian. In the context of the Solomon Islands this raises questions about the profundity of the Christian faith that was first adopted just a little over 100 years ago. The huge gap between religious principles and their transformation into action is, as already mentioned above, not unique to the Solomon Islands, but it is nevertheless remarkable in an environment in which Christianity is so openly and frequently expressed in so many ways, including prayers and church attendance — a situation quite different from that of the secularized nations of Europe.

As has been shown, the number of religious groups in the country has continued to increase over the last 15 years. The impact of new religious groups on overall religious affiliation, however, has been felt less than in other Pacific Island nations, in that there are
only minor changes in the distribution of religion along denominational lines. The historic mainline churches, with the exception of the United Church, are remarkably stable as a group. The overall statistics indicate clearly that the newer religious groups have experienced growth not so much at the expense of the historic churches but as an outcome of successful evangelism among non-Christians. The development of different religions in the Solomon Islands over the past decades also indicates that new religious groups, regardless of their orientation, do not grow fast in basically rural societies in which the vast majority of people live in villages with functioning social structures. In the years to come it will be interesting to see whether the Unification Church of South Korea’s Reverend Moon can take root in the Solomon Islands and in other Pacific countries such as the Marshall Islands, because this is a new type of religious group. It has been observed that in recent years the Unification Church has made serious efforts to get a foothold in the Pacific Islands (Johnson 2001).

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