love — for God, for others — and on offering refuge so that others will train and reach their full potential. While the New Life Centre has a close relationship with other Pentecostal churches such as the CMF and is a member of the ACCF, Wilson does not believe in working with non-Christian faiths because he feels they do not share the same vision (Wilson 2005, interview by author).

Because of the church’s focus on the family, when husbands become senior pastors their wives also become senior pastors for the women in the congregation. Theoretically, single men and women can become pastors, but this rarely happens (although there is one young woman currently being trained in Australia). Homosexuality is not tolerated. Youth are offered an advisory role but they do not make decisions in the church as this is the role of the elders. The strictness of the age hierarchy in the church is also reflected in an emphasis on disciplining children so that they respect authority. The focus on family is also reflected in the church’s views about HIV/AIDS awareness. At the time of the interview, information signs about the prevention of HIV/AIDS were being erected throughout Suva. Wilson commented on this, stating that the New Life Centre, rather than advocating the use of condoms as a preventive measure, urges abstinence, as condoms are associated with sex outside marriage, which leads to the breakdown of families (Wilson 2005, interview by author).

The New Life Centre runs a programme to promote its ideas on the family. Called ‘No Apologies,’ it involves a year of training with videos and interaction between teachers and students. In 2005, the programme is targeting unmarried mothers at the Homes of Hope. According to “The Sermon Notes” pamphlet, other weekly activities include ‘Wavelength’ for 13–19 year olds on Fridays at 6 pm, ‘Children’s Church’ for 4–12 year olds every Sunday after praise and worship, home groups on Tuesday evenings, a prayer meeting on Thursdays at 6.30 pm, and music practice on Wednesdays at 6 pm. In addition, Pastor Wilson’s wife, Sue, advertised an evening for women’s fellowship (Wheeler 2005).

Television and the Internet are viewed as a problem, with television particularly so in rural areas, where the people are perceived as interested only in rugby. If modernity has brought laxity with regard to authority and moral values, aspects of tradition are also viewed negatively. For instance, as in many Pentecostal churches, the teaching of the New Life Centre absolutely prohibits the drinking of kava (Wilson 2005, interview by author).

While the New Life Centre has clear teachings on how to lead a Christian life, it does not police individual behaviour. Instead, it teaches the principles and leaves it to individuals to decide how to incorporate the church’s teachings into their lives. Likewise, while teaching members to respect authority, it is up to the individual to exercise his or her conscience in the way he or she sees as appropriate (Wilson 2005, interview by author).

The church is also associated with CrossDaily.com. This website offers trivia and e-card contests, Christian wallpapers for the computer desktop, photos, Powerpoint backgrounds, shopping opportunities (everything from books and Bibles and DVDs to real estate), Bible searches and quizzes. The site is sponsored by American companies — Life Checks, David Brainard’s Christian Home Business, and Christian Debt Solutions — all with their own websites.

Each New Life Centre is autonomous and responsible for its own finances. Money is raised through tithing and contributions. Sometimes other churches in Australia or New Zealand will make contributions towards buildings and other projects but almost all church income is generated locally. “The Sermon Notes” records that the week’s income on 13
February 2005 consisted of $5,351.79 in tithes and offerings and $110 in the building fund (Wheeler, 2005). A complete report is available annually. From the annual earnings, 10 per cent goes directly to projects such as the Derek Prince Ministries, a pastor who planted a church in Niue, and tsunami donations. Pastors are paid from the tithes and offerings (Wilson 2005, interview by author).

**Worldwide Church of God (WCG)**

Herbert Armstrong established the Radio Church of God in Oregon, USA, in 1933, along with a radio ministry and the magazine, *The Plain Truth*. He later moved to Pasadena, established a small school to train church leaders, and continued to buy radio stations. In the 1950s and 1960s, the radio programme was broadcast internationally and church offices were opened across the world. The church's name was changed to the Worldwide Church of God (Worldwide Church of God 1999, 2001, 2005). Armstrong then created four divisions, each headed by an evangelist from Pasadena, and worked with his publishing team. In the 1960s and 1970s, the Worldwide Church of God attracted strong support in the United States through its television ministry (Kanaimawi 2005b, interview by author).

Armstrong had many unorthodox doctrines, including the keeping of Saturday as the Sabbath, the idea that God is a family (Father and Son are two beings), the belief that the Holy Spirit is an impersonal force, the necessity of obeying God through law-keeping and numerous prohibitions on behaviour, the avoidance of particular foods, the idea that Anglo-Saxons were descended from the ten tribes of Israel, and that the Tribulation would occur in his lifetime. He also introduced a three-tithe system, in which the first supported the ministry, the second was for keeping annual Sabbaths, and the third was collected for the poor (Worldwide Church of God, 2005). Some of these doctrines were questioned during Armstrong's lifetime as being too legalistic, being based on the old Jewish law and tradition (Kanaimawi 2005b, interview by author).

Rev Ratu Epeli Kanaimawi, the current head of the WCG in Fiji, first became acquainted with the church's ideas in Brisbane when he read *The Plain Truth*, and was attracted to its prophecies. The WCG began in Fiji in 1979 when it was introduced by a Mrs Perry, who invited seven people including Kanaimawi and his wife to start the church as part of the New Zealand section (Kanaimawi 2005b, interview by author).

At the peak of his church's success, Armstrong had attracted more than 100,000 people to his services, but it has since declined, with its website claiming a current following of 64,000 members in 100 nations. After his death in 1986, many of Armstrong's doctrines were rejected by his successor, Joseph Tkach, as being unbiblical. The church's doctrines are now aligned with the statement of faith of the National Association of Evangelicals in the USA. The rather dramatic changes in doctrine resulted in the loss of thousands of adherents in the 1990s (including about 50 per cent of WCG followers in Fiji), a decline from which the church is attempting to recover (Worldwide Church of God 1999, 2001, 2005; Kanaimawi 2005b, interview by author). According to Kanaimawi, the reason why so many followers left was that the changes in doctrine suggested to many a loss of faith in God. For instance, to allow people to go to hospital suggests that one no longer has faith in God's ability to heal. Modifying the church's strict view that Saturday is the Sabbath, to permit worship on either Saturday or Sunday, also suggests to members a weakness in faith. Despite this, over time the situation has begun to stabilize and is thought likely to improve further (Kanaimawi 2005b, interview by author).
Initially a pyramid structure, the organization was later turned upside-down so that the "priesthood of believers" is now supported by the ministry at the base. The church has been decentralized so that local leaders no longer have to refer back to Pasadena. The new structure allows for quicker decision-making on the ground and gives more initiative to local leaders. Kanaimawi made the point that in the old structure, the WCG could never have joined the ACCF because he would have been required to wait several months for permission (Kanaimawi 2005b, interview by author).

The Worldwide Church of God typifies Pentecostalism in its beliefs and also incorporates a somewhat Manichean view. As Kanaimawi explains his church's doctrine, a central theological feature is a world split between God and Satan, resulting in ongoing spiritual warfare. While once it was thought that God would take care of things, the focus has shifted to the individual, who must be proactive in spiritual warfare and ask for God's intervention. This perspective originally entailed a belief in prophecy, including the attempt to forecast when the End-Times would come. However, after numerous failed attempts, the church no longer sets dates, although the End-Times are still thought to be near. Despite the devaluation of prophecy, meetings continue to concentrate on the health of individual church members and their families and to seek their empowerment to withstand the tricks of the devil (Kanaimawi 2005b, interview by author).

While now adhering to Pentecostal ideas about being born again, WCG has a quieter style of worship than most Pentecostal or evangelical churches and is more like mainline churches in this respect. Glossolalia is not regarded as proof of the entry of the Holy Spirit. While the church values the gift of healing, prayer does not always result in healing, but depends on the faith of the person involved. Also in contrast to other Pentecostal churches, kava is not prohibited, but must be drunk in moderation (Kanaimawi 2005a and b, interviews by author).

WCG teaches that some indigenous practices need to be modernized, but these need to be analysed on a case by case basis. One set of practices in need of revision is funeral customs: the tradition of wrapping the coffin with many mats should be simplified so that only one or two mats are used, for example. Another example is practices that refer to ancestral worship and are now considered demonic, such as ideas concerning the departure of the spirit from the body. Likewise, many of the practices surrounding the installation of a chief, such as not bathing for four or five nights and then jumping into the sea, are seen as either having little meaning now or being related to demonic practices (Kanaimawi 2005b, interview by author).

According to Kanaimawi, the big social issues for indigenous Fijians arise from the intrusion of outside cultures through media such as television. Cartoons showing disrespect for parents are one example. The result is that the younger generation, especially those living in urban areas, no longer know their culture. Another example is the use of rhythm in heavy rock music, which "disturbs the human rhythm of life" and therefore causes rebelliousness in young children. For Kanaimawi, the root of such problems is Satan, who is using every device available to influence people (Kanaimawi 2005b, interview by author).

Rallies are thought to be ineffective unless the situation is extreme. The 1987 rallies to uphold Sunday as the day of rest succeeded but only in the short term. (In fact, because the Worldwide Church of God has traditionally observed Saturday as the Sabbath, but now allows congregations to choose whether to hold services on the Saturday or Sunday, this decree is not considered necessary in WCG). A better course of action is for the Christian
churches to band together and approach government to explain how proposed laws are against God's law (Kanaimawi 2005b, interview by author).

This approach has also been used with regard to homosexuality as it stands in the Constitution. Kanaimawi argues that anything contravening God's law should be removed from the statute books. Tolerance towards homosexuality “went there by some mysterious means” and should be taken out. Homosexuals are to be loved and taken care of but homosexuality is regarded as a disease rather than a right and individuals should be taught to be more responsible (Kanaimawi 2005b, interview by author).

As in many Pentecostal churches, all these issues are regarded as relating back to the centrality of the family. Those who engage in domestic violence “are probably people who don’t know God” or who are struggling to accept God’s Holy Spirit within them, but domestic violence must be stopped and the family must be reconciled. However, in irreconcilable situations, the best alternative should be taken. Discussing abuse of children in terms of violence, Kanaimawi noted that it is not to be confused with “disciplining them with love” (Kanaimawi 2005b, interview by author). Children should be smacked when their own safety is at risk in situations such as when they run across the road and this must be differentiated from getting angry and beating children (Kanaimawi 2005b, interview by author).

Women can be empowered through encouraging them to manage their own lives more successfully. This may mean running a small business or making decisions, but at the same time women “must realize their position in the family” (Kanaimawi 2005b, interview by author). The man is the head of the household and the woman must be the best mate, under the influence of her husband as stated in Genesis. In his view, there must always be leaders and followers. In families, the family unit functions better when family members know exactly what their roles are. Thus, while women may be the leaders at work, they should not dominate at home. Indeed, in the church, women who are minister’s wives can rise to the same or higher ranking than a deaconess. They are active in counselling and fundraising activities such as participating in a local market and raising $1,000 for tea in the office and other sundry needs. At meetings, a woman tends to offer support programmes for her own husband’s ministries (Kanaimawi 2005b, interview by author).

After losing youth to other churches in the past, WCG has changed some of its practices in order to meet the needs of youth better. These changes include cutting down the length of services and holding discussions with groups of age-mates. Youth representatives also attend regional meetings with all the ministers in Australia and New Zealand, and suggest new programmes, camps and regular outings (Kanaimawi 2005b, interview by author).

In its heyday, the Worldwide Church of God generated money from tithing and from voluntary subscriptions to particular projects in The Plain Truth magazine, but it is now in a state of decline. The Plain Truth is still published in England but is now a multi-denominational magazine rather than a publication exclusively for the Worldwide Church of God. In Fiji, all funds are generated locally, except for specific programmes which may receive international help. Three tithes are no longer compulsory, as they once were. As head of WCG in Fiji, Kanaimawi sends money to the New Zealand office to deposit in the bank. The New Zealand office controls all transactions for Fiji and carries out an audit every year. The Fiji office is thus not financially autonomous (Kanaimawi 2005b, interview by author).
In the past, the international WCG had three theological colleges: one in England and two in the United States, but these have all closed. Now, an office in Australia offers a ministerial training programme completed by correspondence and over the Internet (Kanaimawi 2005b, interview by author).

Other Churches

The Jehovah’s Witnesses

Since the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society’s first branch office was established in Fiji in 1958, it has overseen the work of Jehovah’s Witnesses throughout the South Pacific. During World War II, the colonial government banned the group outright, until 1945 when its members were again permitted to preach, but it was only at independence in 1970 that all restrictions were lifted (Ernst 1994).

In 1947, the first congregation of two missionaries and four families was formed in Suva. It took nine years, however, to establish a second congregation, in Lautoka in 1956. In 1961, the Watchtower began publishing monthly in Fijian, and the Jehovah’s Witnesses built a Kingdom Hall, administrative buildings and a Bethel Home in Suva, with financial support from Australia and New Zealand (Ernst 1994). In 1993, the Jehovah’s Witnesses were finally registered (Heatley et al 2002, interview by Ernst).

After Fiji’s independence the Jehovah’s Witnesses experienced growth to the point that the 1996 census recorded 4,815 adherents (Bureau of Statistics). Having built nine new Kingdom Halls, they are now looking for land for another seven. The Watchtower is now published in English as well as Fijian, twice a month, and a second quarterly magazine, Awake!, is published in Fijian. A new hymnbook has also been translated into Fijian (Heatley et al 2002, interview by Ernst).

As Jehovah’s Witnesses cannot have blood transfusions, the members in Fiji have a hospital liaison committee to supply information on how to give treatment without blood transfusions. However, they do not run health or education services (Heatley et al 2002, interview by Ernst), and are one of the few religious groups in Fiji not to do so.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

(LDS or the Mormons)

Originating in western New York in the USA, the LDS Church teaches from two Holy Scriptures: the Bible and the Book of Mormon. Because the church sees itself as the restoration of the original church established by Christ, it does not identify itself with either Catholicism or Protestantism (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints n.d.; Woolley 2002, interview by Ernst).

Theologically, the LDS believes that God and Jesus Christ exist in bodies of flesh and bone, while the Holy Spirit is the spirit of a person. Baptism is also central but children are not required to be baptized until they are eight years old, the age of accountability. Family is central to the LDS, to continue God’s plan, and adherents must follow a strict ethical code. Although there has been publicity about some of its polygamous followers, the orthodox leadership of the LDS has ruled that the practice of polygamy was ended in 1890 and that those who practise it now must be excommunicated. In Fiji, as elsewhere, there is a focus on
the body as a gift, and therefore adherents are prohibited from smoking, and drinking alcohol, tea, and coffee (Woolley 2002, interview by Ernst). The church further believes that all who have ever lived will be resurrected with the potential for salvation (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints n.d.).

Beginning in Fiji in 1954, the LDS grew substantially after the 1987 coups, when immigration restrictions were loosened and the number of Mormon missionaries grew from around 10 to between 60 and 70 (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints n.d.; Ernst 1994). Operating throughout Fiji, Tonga, Samoa, French Polynesia, Guam and Micronesia, the Fiji Suva Mission now has 185 missionaries, with 75 working in Fiji. The church pays for their travel but the missionaries must then pay for their living expenses. Men are invited to work in the mission from 19 years of age and women from 21 years (Woolley 2002, interview by Ernst).

The LDS places a strong emphasis on education and LDS principles are taught alongside more secular subjects. Education is seen as a way of contributing to the individual’s future economic wellbeing at the same time as it creates opportunities for self-realization (Berrett 1992). In Fiji, the LDS has two primary schools and a technical college (Woolley 2002, interview by Ernst; The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints n.d.). Because schooling is so important, the church has set up a revolving fund, into which it contributes an initial sum that grows with interest, and which is used to provide loans for its more disadvantaged members so that they can pay for their education (Woolley 2002, interview by Ernst). Teachers in LDS schools are paid higher wages than those working in government schools, and the schools themselves were built and equipped from funding from the headquarters in Utah. The language for teaching is English (Ernst 1994).

A strong emphasis is placed on allowing people to act according to the dictates of their conscience, rather than forcing them into any mode of action. Members are expected to be Christian first and follow their culture only when it does not conflict with Christianity. Thus kava drinking is not encouraged because of the damage it does to families. According to the church’s Elder Woolley, a father might sit up all night drinking kava with a friend, return home and beat up his wife, and then sleep all day (Woolley 2002, interview by Ernst).

The LDS Church is financed by tithing of 10 per cent of income, and by fast offerings (money saved while fasting and paid once a month for the poor). While initially buildings were paid for by extra fundraising, churches and temples are now only built when sufficient funds are available from local tithing and any additional income from the tithing of the church membership worldwide. At the end of each year, there is a tithing settlement, in which each family sits with the bishop to discuss its contribution, whether it has been money or a payment in kind, such as yams (Woolley 2002, interview by Ernst).

The Salvation Army (SA)

The Salvation Army is a long-standing member of the Fiji Council of Churches, alongside the Methodist, Anglican and Presbyterian churches. It takes a strong position in refusing to engage with politics. As the ACCF is perceived to endorse indigenous Fijian paramountcy, the SA views the ACCF as inherently political. In addition, the SA cannot accept the notion of paramountcy of one ethnicity over another, which is at the basis of the ACCF’s philosophy (Chisholm 2002, interview by Ernst).
The Salvation Army in Fiji is part of the New Zealand, Fiji and Tonga territory, with headquarters in New Zealand, which reports directly back to London (Chisholm 2002, interview by Ernst; Salvation Army 2005). Although the Salvation Army was established in New Zealand in the 1880s, it reached Fiji only after independence, in 1973 (Salvation Army 2005). It now has a training school in Fiji, which, at the time of the interview with the Regional Commander, Major Chisholm, was training nine officers (five women and four men) to serve in both Fiji and Tonga. Officers train for two years, following a curriculum that covers theology, pastoral care and counselling, sermon preparation, and Salvation Army doctrine, principles and practices. Officers may train as singles or couples. To undergo training, a couple must pay a fee of about $110, the rest of their training being subsidized from New Zealand (Chisholm 2002, interview by Ernst).

The hierarchy is military in style. Fully committed members or soldiers are expected to sign a document called 'Articles of War.' People who are not yet full members are called recruits. Less active members who may attend irregularly are called adherents. The commissioned (ordained) officers meet annually at an officers’ fellowship. Officers are paid a living allowance that is based on years of service and the number of children the officer is supporting, and includes some healthcare. While this system previously privileged married couples, the Salvation Army is in the process of individualising its allowances and doing away with many of the added benefits (Chisholm 2002, interview by Ernst).

The SA has 10 or 11 churches in Fiji, the building of which has been financed from the London office using money raised mainly in the United States. It also raises money through offerings, tithing (called the cartridge system — which is a version of the envelope system), but most of the people in the SA are from the lower socio-economic class and have very little income. In all, about 25 per cent of the church work is funded locally, and 75 per cent is subsidized from New Zealand. The Fiji government gives some funding for the food parcels, and sometimes community organizations like Rotary also contribute funds. There have also been ideas about raising funds through cane farming. While the Fiji branch of the Salvation Army has considered the idea of becoming self-sufficient, this does not seem likely unless it moves away from its core work. As an international organization, the Salvation Army is also under pressure to assess its operations in international terms, i.e. to consider whether it can afford to expand into places like Vietnam (Chisholm 2002, interview by Ernst).

At the time of the interview, Major Chisholm noted that the poor seemed to be getting poorer, indicated by the demand for the food services provided by the SA. Since the 2000 coup, there have been increasing problems with housing, employment and primary health care, particularly with regard to diabetes, alcoholism, and drugs. For Chisholm, the root of all of these problems lies in the breakdown of the family (Chisholm 2002, interview by Ernst).

The SA in Fiji is involved in much community work, including providing infrastructural support for the government-funded home for abused girls who have been sentenced by the courts; running a young men’s hostel and a young women’s hostel; and running two community family service programmes. The SA also owns and subsidizes four or five kindergartens, charging parents a nominal fee of $35 a term. Three family peer centres function as residential shelters for women. Once a fortnight, the SA provides a community meal to people in Raiwai. Three sets of officers also act as court prison wardens. At the time of the interview, the SA was about to set up a programme called Employment Plus, with the
idea of rehabilitating ex-prisoners and school drop-outs into the workforce. Despite such services, the SA has lost many members to emigration or to other churches over the last 10 years. Major Chisholm reflected that one reason why adherents move on might be that the SA promotes total abstinence from yaqona, tobacco, and alcohol (Chisholm 2002, interview by Ernst).

**Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA)**

Beginning as a millennialist movement in North America, SDA was one of the earlier churches to arrive in Fiji, with the first SDA missionaries arriving on the *Pitcairn* in 1891. In Suva, the missionary John Fulton and Pauliasi Bunoa, a retired Methodist minister, wrote a translation of a book on the Saturday Sabbath, an activity that led Bunoa to join the SDA. When the printing press arrived in 1900, Fulton began distributing a pamphlet called “Rarama” or “light,” which gained popularity over the next few years, 2,000 copies being distributed monthly. In the same period, the SDA began work treating the sick, conducting classes, and establishing a training school in 1907, despite “fierce government opposition” (Seventh-day Adventist Church 2005). The church then expanded into Vanua Levu and also attempted to begin converting Hindus by opening a school in Samabula, Suva, which had to be closed down due to opposition (Seventh-day Adventist Church 2005).

Counting around 200 members in 1915 (Seventh-day Adventist Church 2005), it is clear that the SDA Church did not enjoy immediate acceptance or high numbers of converts in its early years. It was a distinctive church due to its practice of keeping Saturday as the Sabbath and its refusal to partake in kava drinking at traditional village functions, although it now takes care to encourage its followers to observe the correct Fijian protocol, especially when entering a village for the first time (Baravi 2005, interview by author).

SDA has since become an established church with its own radio station, and is also now building its own television station. The church boasts “the second largest Protestant education in the world” with a total of 196 educational facilities across the South Pacific. It also operates over 170 hospitals across the world, and over 80 clinic and aid posts in the South Pacific (Seventh-day Adventist Church 2005).

According to their website, the vision of the SDA churches is to “know, experience and share their hope in Jesus Christ.” This involves using the head (to study the Bible), the heart (to commit oneself unconditionally to Christ and to each other), and “the call to action” which involves ‘sharing’ the faith, a kind of gentle evangelism. The main methods used are preaching, teaching, and healing. In health work, preventive care is emphasized (Seventh-day Adventist Church 2005).

The SDA Church is distinctive with its emphases on freedom for all religions, health of the body, and its practical concern for education, social issues, and Christian notions of aid and development (Seventh-day Adventist Church 2005; Baravi 2005, interview by author). It presents itself as a practical church, publishing statements on its website about abortion, abuse, birth control, church-state relations, cigarette smoking, domestic violence, environment, euthanasia, gambling, HIV/AIDS, homelessness and poverty, homosexuality, literacy, marriage and family life, peace, pornography, racism, sexual abuse, sexual behaviour, ‘the stolen generation’, and the well-being of children (Seventh-day Adventist Church 2005).

As an example of its thinking, the church, in discussing birth control, declares that God has given people the ability to make decisions and the ability to reproduce, but that
this is not an obligation, and that people are free to enjoy sex. Decisions about having children should be based on the ability to meet the child’s needs. The type of birth control used should be based on the effects on health, how it works, and how much it costs. Although birth control may promote extramarital relations, such relations remain “harmful and immoral” for Adventists. Abortion may only be used in exceptional circumstances but the final decision rests with the woman (Seventh-day Adventist Church 2005). While such a statement upholds basic Christian ideas about the sanctity of marriage, it does so without saying that the human body is inherently sinful or that the body is primarily for reproduction. Typically, it also upholds notions of personal responsibility and context-driven choices. The fact that there is a place for abortion shows a distinctive pragmatism at work in the church.

As a matter of principle, the SDA Church defends the right of any religion to practise freely and separately from state affairs. With regard to church-state relations, the SDA advertises its belief in the total separation of church and state and the freedom to practise any faith or no faith, to change faiths or to establish religious institutions (Seventh-day Adventist Church 2005). What lies behind this principle is the idea that in the End-Times, all the churches will join to become one united Church which will then unite with the State to become an oppressive and ungodly force. For Adventists, their church’s independence is essential to ensure that they continue to follow God and not become side-tracked from their mission by issues of power (Baravi 2005, interview by author). SDA’s views are thus in direct opposition to those of the ACCF, which sees its mission as uniting all Fijians in the Christian churches.

With regard to inter-church events, while the SDA participates in meetings of the World Council of Churches and the Fiji Council of Churches when invited, it is not a member of these organizations. The reason given is that, as the End-Times come closer, Christian churches will unite to legislate for worship on Sundays. This prophecy is interpreted as Satan using Christian values as his last deception. In this way, the unity between Christian churches and the state is seen to be very dangerous. According to the General Secretary, Pastor Baravi,

> We always try and distinguish the role of the church and the role of the state. The role of the state is to make laws and that of the church is to reach out to the people and minister to them. When a state law conflicts with our biblical mandate, we will submit our stand. As much as possible, in modern society, fundamental to everything, we must be Christians (Baravi 2005, interview by author).

If the State makes a law which conflicts with the Church’s interpretations of the Bible, Seventh-day Adventists are expected to continue to act in accordance with the precepts of the Bible. As demonstrations are not considered an appropriate way of showing dissent, the SDA tries to act to prevent issues from surfacing by working at the grassroots level (Baravi 2005, interview by author). Although George Speight was a Seventh-day Adventist when he led the 2000 coup, he seems to have been acting against the teachings of SDA.

The SDA’s view that it is necessary to keep Church and State distinct, and its fundamental belief in treating all people from all races, colours and creeds equally, is also reflected in its concern about the Reconciliation and Unity Bill. Having Indians within its constituency, the SDA is concerned to represent their needs. Baravi argues that while the Bill looks biblical, the argument for restorative rather than retributive justice is misleading because God is both justice and mercy. Amnesty provisions for those gaoloed in the 2000 coup cannot be
based on reconciliation without also recognising the need for retributive justice (Baravi 2005, interview by author).

Most members of the SDA are Fijian, but they are asked to become Christians first and foremost, above and beyond their culture. As a result, the church is not tied to traditions, although adherents are encouraged to support their traditional obligations as long as they do not contradict their obligations as Christians. The SDA prohibits the drinking of alcohol and kava, and smoking. It also prohibits women from wearing make-up and jewellery, because this is thought to draw too much attention to the ego. However, the Fiji office also recognizes that this requirement is difficult for Indo-Fijian women because their society views women who do not wear jewellery as free women (Baravi 2005, interview by author).

The focus on the equal treatment of all people also means that, although the act of homosexuality is condemned in the Bible and is not condoned by the church, the homosexual is nonetheless loved by God and therefore deserves support. However, in the case of child abuse and especially incest, the SDA does not get involved but hands the matter directly to the police. After the police have dealt with the matter, the church will counsel the individual and pray with him but will not attempt to solve the situation (Baravi 2005, interview by author).

The SDA is one of the few churches in Fiji that does not have charismatic congregations, because of the way its beliefs guide the style of worship. There are churches within the SDA that incorporate music, but it is never allowed to overtake the hour of worship and half-hour of Scripture on the Sabbath. Nor is the Holy Spirit emphasized in SDA doctrine. The church does preach that people live in the End-Times, but emphasizes the good news that Jesus is returning (Baravi 2005, interview by author).

With regard to the numerous Pentecostal churches emerging in Fiji, Baravi expressed concern that this multiplication of churches might be about collecting money. In his view, breakaway churches are valid if the split is based on beliefs but is invalid if it arises simply from a disagreement. In contrast with the congregational basis of these churches, which may be creating the possibility for further division, the SDA is not congregational and is much more structured, and therefore does not suffer from breakaways. However, Baravi also noted that the new churches are good at nurturing and have a clear focus on mission. The newer the church is, the more growth they will experience, but the fast growing churches are also likely to fall faster. By contrast, the SDA is an old church and therefore its growth is slow but steady (Baravi 2005, interview by author).

Despite their growth, the new Christian groups are not perceived as a threat, as the SDA believes in people's right to choose the church they want to belong to. The idea that one church is the traditional church for an entire village infringes on the rights of the individual and also allows for irresponsible leaders who may become political in their dealings or may lose their accountability. Tithing is one example, says Baravi. Whereas Methodists impose tithing on their people, the SDA believes in voluntary tithing based on good will (Baravi 2005, interview by author).

Conclusion

Clearly, religion plays a vital role in the educational, social and political landscape of Fiji. Broadly, Christianity is the religion of indigenous Fijians, despite efforts to include Indo-Fijians in the Methodist, Catholic, Anglican, Assemblies of God, New Life, Seventh-day Adventist and Pentecostal churches. This has cultural, social and political implications
for the way Christian theology is interpreted. There are marked equivalences regarding the centrality of the family, the importance of discipline and hierarchy, and the idea that alternative sexualities are unacceptable. Moreover, in most churches (including almost all the churches in the ACCF), but with notable exceptions including the Roman Catholic Church and the Salvation Army, social problems are construed as spiritual and therefore as individual rather than as systemic, an interpretation that largely determines whether the church offers social programmes or not. Another salient characteristic is the charismatic tendencies in almost all Christian churches except the Jehovah’s Witnesses, the LDS, and the SDA. The use of media and electronic communications is also widespread, particularly among the newly emergent churches but also in the SDA. Economically, almost all churches expect tithes from their members (10 per cent of their earnings) and may also ask for offerings and donations to fund their activities.

In the remaining section, the social and political involvement of the religious groups, the reasons for shifts in religious allegiance, and the reasons that may facilitate the emergence of new Pentecostal groups will be addressed.

Social and Political Involvement of the Religious Groups

Mainline churches are typically more interested in developing social programmes aimed at particular groups in Fiji society. For the Catholic Church, the highest priority is to provide relief for the poor, whatever their ethnicity (Mataca 2005, interview). By contrast, one strand in the Methodist Church agrees with the idea that the quality of a person’s relationship with God affects his or her social wellbeing, although the church does offer a number of social programmes (Waqairatu 2005, interview). The Salvation Army is particularly active in providing programmes for many sections of the community (Chisholm 2002, interview). Other churches such as the Grace Baptist Church have focused on the plight of the squatters (Lele 2005, interview) and SDA has many preventive programmes for its members (Baravi 2005, interview).

Typically, the Pentecostal churches are not involved in the radical transformation of society, but rather are more focused on personal conversion and a more immediate relationship with God through the presence of the Holy Spirit, which is perceived to then transform society — a perspective most fully expressed by the General Secretary of the Assemblies of God (Tanoa 2005, interview). The evangelical drive to save souls is often considered more important because of the imminence of the End-Times. However, sometimes the Pentecostal churches do involve themselves in social programmes. Examples are the Evangelical Fellowship, which has been concerned with youth and marijuana abuse (Nakauyaca 2005, interview), and the Christian Mission Fellowship, which in many ways exemplifies the Pentecostal focus on evangelism in preparation for the End-Times but has also sporadically run a medical clinic (Kurulo 2005, interview).

During the time of the study, the Methodist Church was holding rallies in Nausori protesting at the tolerance for homosexuality that had been written into the Constitution. Although Pentecostal churches are usually typified as having an apolitical stance in favour of a focus on the individual, the Evangelical Fellowship of Fiji and the Assemblies of God also felt that this issue might warrant demonstrations (Nakauyaca 2005, interview; Tanoa 2005, interview). By contrast, while homosexuality is not tolerated, the New Life Centre does not police its members or require them to demonstrate on any moral point (Wilson
2005, interview) and the COC does not encourage its followers to engage in public protest (Matewai 2005, interview). While the LDS argues that these matters should be left to the dictates of one's own conscience (Woolley 2002, interview), the SDA is probably the most opposed to this action, believing that the Church should be working at grassroots level to prevent this kind of civil disturbance (Baravi 2005, interview).

Education is considered central by many church groups, whatever their affiliation. Although Pentecostal groups are more likely to emphasize the evangelistic purpose of education, Methodism first introduced education with the same intentions (see education section). However, one Pentecostal school, the Christian Outreach College, no longer views evangelism as primary, but rather focuses on the individual’s growth as a Christian (Waqairaratu 2005, interview). Further, churches like the Latter-day Saints have concentrated on education more than any other form of social outreach (Berrett 1992; Woolley 2002, interview). Numerically, there are now more Catholic schools in Fiji than schools belonging to any other denomination, but these have been poorly supported by government (Mataca 2005, interview).

The political impact of the various groups has been diverse. There are two basic views on the way Fiji should be governed: the humanistic perspective in which Fiji is a multiracial society that should encourage equal opportunity for every citizen; and the view that Fiji is primarily for indigenous Fijians and therefore needs to be governed with regard to Fijians first. Both views are reproduced in the structure and the history of the Methodist Church. For instance, the Indian Division of the Methodist Church tends to encourage the first view. In addition, during the 1987 coups, the Methodist Church experienced its own struggle between nationalists and moderates, reflecting the different views held among Fijians in the wider community. Further, as most Fijian politicians including the current Prime Minister are Methodist, and as most chiefs are Methodist, the Methodist Church is, in many ways, inherently political, which creates specific kinds of tensions not found in other churches (Waqairaratu 2005, interview).

Because Pentecostal churches are focused on the individual's relationship with God, and on evangelism, they are usually characterized as apolitical (Ammerman 1991). In Fiji, this position is perhaps best illustrated by the New Life Centre and the COC (Wilson 2005, interview; Matewai 2005, interview). While churches like the CMF may consider their ideal position as apolitical, events such as the 2000 coup confronted them with questions of whether to and how to engage with civil society in an unstable political climate (Kurulo 2005, interview).

Whatever may be said about the individual Pentecostal-charismatic-evangelical groups, the umbrella organization for these, the ACCF, was conceived in political terms as a “response to the fragmentation of indigenous communities by political parties” (Waqairaratu 2005, interview). Given its closeness with government, the ACCF has a directly political impact: whether working on specific projects, unifying civil society, or giving its support to the Prime Minister on matters such as the Reconciliation, Tolerance and Unity Bill. This closeness to government alienates other Christian churches, such as the Roman Catholic Church, because of perceived bias towards certain sections of the community (Mataca 2005, interview), and the Seventh-day Adventists, who interpret this unity in theological terms as an oppressive institution and a sign of the End-Times (Baravi 2005, interview). It also creates the perception that the political purpose of the ACCF is to further the interests of
the Fijian elite over others (Chisholm 2002, interview; Baravi 2005, interview), although some ACCF member churches do not agree with this perspective (Wilson 2005, interview).

Despite their interest in promoting the indigenous Fijian cause, many of the member churches of the ACCF feel that aspects of Fijian culture must be modernized. Funerals were mentioned as being unnecessarily costly and time-consuming (Tanoa 2005, interview; Kanaimawi 2005b, interview). While many also favour the nuclear family and particularly the husband-wife unit, the Methodist Church actively discourages the influence of the Fijian extended family (Waqairatu 2005, interview; Matewai 2005, interview; Wilson 2005, interview). In this way, the churches are contributing to large scale change in Fijian social life, which particularly affects the period in which women have the capacity to make decisions within the family (see below).

**Reasons for Shifts in Religious Allegiance**

There is a view that the more established churches have become moribund and have lost their relevance because of their emphasis on tradition, an idea supported by the fact that many of the Pentecostal leaders were once Methodists (Ryle 2001). Even the older Pentecostal groups such as the Assemblies of God have suffered from this perception and lost members to newer groups like AGOFI that claim to offer a revival (AGOFI 2001).

Women and youth are particularly attracted to the new churches, for a number of compelling reasons. Firstly, part of the Pentecostal experience is to “give witness” or narrate the story of conversion from life as a hapless sinner into the fulfilled saved identity. In Fijian society, the voices of women and youth are often overlooked because they are usually low in the village hierarchy, but, in a Pentecostal church, they are asked to participate actively by giving witness to a crowd of people who are sympathetic to their stories, which provides a deeply emotional experience. Further, in churches like the Christian Mission Fellowship, women have strikingly strong roles in the leading of services.

However, many of the Christian churches have conservative notions of the woman's place in the family. Although all claim to be biblical, these interpretations are quite contradictory. On the one hand, Nakauyaca from the Evangelical Fellowship advocates a strictly hierarchical family, in which women must show their respect to men by means of Fijian traditions such as kneeling and crawling along the floor (Nakauyaca 2005, interview). For Kanaimawi, head of the Worldwide Church of God and of the ACCF, women must be best mates to their husbands who are the leaders of the family, but women are permitted to hold leading positions in public life (Kanaimawi 2005b, interview). Yet for Tanoa of the Assemblies of God, women should be treated equally in the family but are not permitted to hold public roles over men, such as leading the country (Tanoa 2005, interview).

Secondly, churches are responding differently to Fijian traditions of the extended family. While the Catholic Church uses the extended family to counter violence and abuse in the immediate nuclear family (Mataca 2005, interview), the Methodist Church and Pentecostals such as the Christian Outreach Centre and New Life are placing more emphasis on the husband-wife unit as the primary unit in the family (Waqairatu 2005, interview; Matewai 2005, interview; Wilson 2005, interview). The difference between types of family is the extent to which a woman may be heard at different times in her life. In extended families, the mother of the husband is likely to have more power than the wife (Waqairatu 2005, interview), while nuclear families tend to reverse this. The emphasis on nuclear families
thus creates tension with traditional Fijian family structures because it introduces new concepts about the roles of individual family members.

Whatever the desired form of family promulgated by the emerging churches, the emphasis often remains quite patriarchal and this is also true of the structures of the churches. Although women are the first to convert to new movements, they are not leaders in any of the newly emergent churches investigated here, although in some of these churches they may partner or replace men in leadership roles. By contrast, women can now be ordained in the Methodist, Anglican and Presbyterian Churches. Thus, women's conversion to Pentecostal churches is apparently not a challenge to men in leadership roles. Conversion from the mainline churches is more likely to be attractive because it gives women a way of countering some of their husbands' more extreme practices that are considered to impoverish family life. One commonly cited practice of Methodist men is the excessive consumption of kava, which seems to have increased over the last decade and which takes men away from their families for entire nights. Women may achieve this change by converting to a church that prohibits kava consumption and then persuading their husbands to join it with them (Waqaïratu 2005, interview; Woolley 2002, interview; Newland 2004).

Youth find Pentecostal worship much more attractive and alive than worship in the mainline churches. Pentecostal worship is noticeably loud and musical, often using Afro-American Gospel styles with contemporary electrified musical instruments (Waqaïratu 2005, interview). Ryle suggests that this provides proof that the mainline churches have simply become dull and old-fashioned (Ryle 2001), although the more established churches are now reassessing their styles of worship in response (Waqaïratu 2005, interview; Kanaimawí 2005, interview).

Factors that Facilitate the Emergence of New Pentecostal-Evangelical-Charismatic Groups

The number of churches has proliferated since the 1987 coups. This has led to the suggestion that, since the coups, people have felt enormous insecurity, which spurs them to go looking for the security offered by the theology of the Pentecostal, evangelical or charismatic churches, which preach that God will look after them (Mataca 2005, interview). While this may be so, there are also a number of structural factors that facilitate the emergence of new groups.

Many of these churches were initiated by missionaries from the USA, Australia, or New Zealand, or they are breakaways from more established churches. To succeed, they must quickly establish a following through evangelistic campaigns, and, if they did not have the support of international churches when they began, these connections must be developed. Pentecostal and evangelical churches are also prone to breakaway movements because of leadership or theological disputes, and this is possible because many of them are structured as independent congregations (Baravi 2005, interview). However they begin, these churches represent themselves as revival movements, as exemplified by their emphasis on music, testimony, and the physical experience of the Holy Spirit.

While the creation of the umbrella organization, the ACCF, was a strategic move on the part of the Methodist Church, its leaders remain ambivalent towards much of Pentecostal theology and the attraction of Pentecostalism to their own members. The Methodist Church is the most outspoken voice in the call to limit the number of new churches appearing in
Fiji (Fiji Times 13/8/03:1). Yet it is a member of the ACCF, which rather ironically may encourage the emergence of new Pentecostal groups because the organization views all new sincere Christian movements as part of God’s plan and contributors to the body of Christ (Kanaimawi 2005b, interview). Because the theology is similar from one group to the next, these churches have a strong basis for agreement. Therefore the ACCF can engage in many different activities according to the strengths of its member churches (Kanaimawi 2005b, interview). The ACCF also offers smaller Pentecostal groups practical support (Wilson 2005, interview).

In all, the emergence of new Pentecostal groups is not likely to cease. If political insecurity creates a psychological need for members to join, the structure of society in Fiji may continue to feed this need. If older more established churches are considered moribund, the same may happen with the more successful new churches as they become more institutionalized — and indeed this appears to be one of the challenges facing the Assemblies of God. If the congregational structure of the newly emergent churches enhances the possibility of breakaways, the older Pentecostal-charismatic-evangelical churches will continue to face this possibility. Moreover, the ACCF offers the ideal umbrella organization because its members can act independently or participate in much larger projects as specialized agencies. For Fiji, then, the question is not so much a question about the number of churches but about the extent to which they may act under a united umbrella.

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