

# Le Môme, Rosie (Rosalina) (1876–1919)

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Rosie (Rosalina) Le Môme was the first baptized Seventh-day Adventist in Mauritius and one of the leading pioneers of the denomination in the island.<sup>1</sup>

## Early Life

Rosie (Rosalina) Le Môme was the first Seventh-day Adventist member in Mauritius, the Pearl of the Indian Ocean. She was born on July 22, 1876,<sup>2</sup> and was the fifth daughter of Father Le Môme and his wife, who were members of the Presbyterian Church. Their old family house was situated in Rose Hill in the island of Mauritius. Her four sisters were Annie (the oldest), Alice, Lydia, and Sylvia. Her mother died in 1889 when Rosie was nine years of age. Her father went on to marry the younger sister of his deceased wife, famously known as “Aunt Jopine,” and they went on to have their own children. Rosie was always a kind, gentle, and generous person. When she became a young woman, Rosie’s wardrobe never contained more than two or three dresses. She always felt that she had more clothes than she needed, so she always gave them away as gifts.<sup>3</sup>

In 1906, at the age of 26, Rosie began to feel depressed and felt dissatisfied that she was not living as God wanted her to. In church, she often cried and would be unable to join in singing the hymns. She lost interest in parties. Rather, she found comfort in reading her Bible. While doing this, she found the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation difficult to understand. Seeing that in Bible times, whenever God’s people found themselves in



Rosie (Rosalina) Le Môme

Photo courtesy of Breejan Burrun.

trouble, they went to see a prophet, she therefore longed to see a prophet. Thus, she prayed a lot. One night while she was praying, she saw a radiant light that filled every corner of her room. She heard a voice saying: "Rosie, you must go to Europe, and God will show you what He is planning for you."

Though overwhelmed, she thanked the Lord for the message.

## Baptism and Pioneering Adventism in Mauritius

In July 1910, Rosie sailed from Port Louis, Mauritius, going to Europe for a holiday and to improve her health. She was to spend some time in England, then visit France and later Switzerland. While visiting Lausanne, Switzerland, she received a handbill and immediately began attending Adventist lectures on the prophecies of Daniel 8 and the judgment. She accepted the Adventist faith and was baptized by Pastor H. H. Dexter in 1912. At that time, Rosie learned that there was a prophet for these last days—Mrs. Ellen G. White, who was living in California. When she discovered this, she longed to go to the United States. However, the thought of sharing her new faith back home convinced her to return home. Before that, she bought as many books of Ellen White as she could find, including tracts and periodicals that she wished to distribute widely in Mauritius. She arrived there in June 1912 with much improved health and a joyful heart. Her sisters met her at Port Louis. She immediately began to witness to Lydia, Alice, and others.

Coincidentally, another Mauritian man, Elysee [Elijah] Moikeenah, who was of the Anglican Church, also accepted the Adventist faith in Australia in the first half (between March and June) of 1912, and he returned home to share his faith before Rosie. After her arrival in Mauritius, Rosie hired Moikeenah to help her, and she paid him a salary. It is likely that the role of deputy then assigned to Elijah Moikeenah overshadowed his leading contribution to the establishment of Adventism on the island.<sup>4</sup>

Later in 1916, these two were recruited as workers for the European Division Conference.<sup>5</sup> Lydia and Alice also worked hard to assist Rosie with the work. Having created wide interest, she received opposition from the population and was excluded from the Presbyterian Church.<sup>6</sup> As the number of believers increased, she requested that the Mission Board send a missionary. Pastor Paul Badaut was sent to Mauritius, and he arrived on May 2, 1914. He held his first Sabbath service on May 9.<sup>7</sup> He found 24 people preparing for baptism. After engaging in the work, he conducted the first baptism on September 12, 1914, in the river running past Rose Hill. Although the water was muddy, the candidates were happy to be baptized there.

By 1920, there were six organized companies of Adventists. Rosie and Lydia supported Pastor Badaut and prevented opposing angry mobs from harming him.<sup>8</sup> As an attempt to ridicule them, the Seventh-day Adventist Church was nicknamed the "Badaut Church" and the members were called "Badauts."<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, to honor Pastor Badaut's contribution in pioneering the Adventist work in Mauritius, in 1989, Salisbury Street in Rose Hill, Mauritius, was renamed "Pasteur Paul Badaut Street."<sup>10</sup> From Mauritius, the Adventist message spread to

Madagascar in 1917 and to Reunion Island by 1936 through tracts and colporteur work respectively.<sup>11</sup> In later years, Adventism also reached the islands of Rodriques and the Seychelles.<sup>12</sup>

## Her Death and Legacy

While still quite young, Rosie was diagnosed with heart problems, and she was advised to avoid overexertion. Although she continued telling others of the Adventist message, she was not well but hoped that God would heal her. Pastor Badaut and other church members constantly prayed for her. However, Rosie died in 1919 at the age of 39. To memorialize her contribution in pioneering the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Mauritius, on February 11, 1963, the Rosie Le Môme Adventist Home was registered by the government of Mauritius as a friendly society. This home, which houses the homeless and elderly persons, is situated at 77 Avenue Telfair, Quatre-Bornes, Mauritius.<sup>13</sup> Rosie Le Môme rests in her grave, awaiting the return of Jesus Christ whom she served faithfully. Her sister Lydia continued traveling throughout Mauritius Island, serving as a Bible instructor until the age of 89.<sup>14</sup> As of June 30, 2020, more than 100 years later, the Mauritius Conference (including Rodriques Island) had 35 churches with 5,236 baptized members.<sup>15</sup>

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## NOTES

1. This article has been adapted from: Passmore Hachalinga, "Rosie Le Meme, Pioneer of Adventism in Mauritius," *Southern News Notes*, July 2021.
2. Breejan Burrun, *The Early History of the Adventist Church in Mauritius Revisited* (unpublished manuscript, no date).
3. Drusilla Hertogs, "She Heard an Angel," *The Youth's Instructor*, April 22, 1958, 12 (also pages 14, 15, 23).
4. Breejan Burrun argues that Elijah Moikeenah was the first Seventh-day Adventist in Mauritius.
5. Paul Badaut, "The Work on Mauritius," *ARH*, June 7, 1917, 13.
6. A. Meyer, "Our Missions in the Indian Ocean," *Mission Quarterly*, September 1948, 2.
7. J. C. Raft, "Mauritius and Madagascar," *ARH*, February 20, 1930, 14.
8. Henri Evard, "Lydia Le Meme, Mauritius' Senior Citizen," *ARH*, August 16, 1962, 15.
9. Henri Evard, "Mauritius," *The Youth's Instructor*, 1852 Centennial 1952, 8.
10. Breejan Burrun, "Street Named for Adventist Pioneer," *ARH*, July 13, 1989, 19.
11. M. J. Bureaud, "Islands of the Indian Ocean," *ARH*, May 20, 1937, 16.
12. Mikael Beesoo, "Mauritius – Missionary island of the Indian Ocean," *Adventist Review*, May 24, 1984, 22.
13. Marie-Noëlle Bosdedore, "Rosie Le Meme Adventist Home," *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, accessed June 28, 2021, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=3GZS&highlight=Rosie|Le|Meme|Adventist|Home>.
14. Evard, "Lydia Le Meme, Mauritius' Senior Citizen," 15.
15. "Mauritius Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2020), 289.

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