



Early members and workers of the Tetey Adventist Church: Tamalea-Tambani Picture (in front: Antonius & Mahgreta), (from right to left: Amelia, Yohan, Len, Petrus, Ester, Eli) & Altje Pangemanan. Shared by the author.

Tetey

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The Pioneer Seventh-day Adventist Church in Tetey is one of the first Adventist congregations established in North Sulawesi. Currently, the church falls under the jurisdiction of the North Minahasa and Bitung Mission, part of the [East Indonesia Union Conference](#) under the [Southern Asia-Pacific Division](#). Located in Tetey Village, Dimembe District, North Minahasa Regency, the church has an official membership of 323 members as of 2025!¹

Beginnings of the Adventist Work in Tetey

The Adventist message was introduced in North Celebes between 1918 and 1923 through three key locations: Tetey, Ratahan, and Manado.² In Tetey, it was introduced by a former Dutch soldier named Bajon Tumundo. Because Tumundo had no official connection with the formal Seventh-day Adventist Church organization—neither as a licensed pastor, bible worker, nor literature evangelist—his early efforts were not documented in official denominational publications. Therefore, this history is told exclusively through the local archives of the Tetey Seventh-day Adventist Church.³

In 1917, the Tumundo-Pangemanan family returned from Java to their hometown of Tetey. The family consisted of Bajon Tumundo, his wife Altje, and their three children: Korneles, Neti, and Maritje. During his military service in Java, Bajon had learned of the Adventist faith from fellow soldiers and studied its doctrines deeply. Upon arriving in Tetey, he enthusiastically shared these newly found truths with his relatives, the Tambani-Tumundo family (Ventje and Annah). The Tambani-Tumundo family was large, with five children: Mahgreta, Pongoh, Frederik, Maritje, and Yuliana. The eldest daughter, Mahgreta, later married Antonius Tamalea, forming the Tamalea-Tambani family, who were blessed with four children: Amelia, Yohan, Len, and Ester. Bajon nurtured this extended family network. Through these two families, the first small group of believers in Tetey was formed, faithfully holding worship services every Sabbath.⁴

However, this small community of Sabbath-keepers soon faced difficulties from local authorities. During one Sabbath service, a neighborhood leader noticed them and reported to the village head (*hukumtua*), suspecting heretical teachings. This was because they stopped working and gathered for worship on Saturdays while most Christians at the time worshipped on Sunday and worked in their gardens that day. Acting on the report, the village head ordered the group to disband. Restricted from publicly observing the Sabbath, they had to hold their worship services secretly, typically deep in plantation areas to avoid detection. To avoid suspicion during walks through the village, they concealed their Bibles in shopping baskets. These hardships continued for several years.⁵

In 1925, a Bible worker named Anton Londa was sent to visit the village to strengthen and shepherd this group of believers.⁶ To avoid further suspicion, Anton Londa trained a choir during their worship meetings. While serving and expanding the gospel work in the region, Londa faced similar accusations of spreading heretical teachings. However, the accusations could not be proven because he argued that the group was merely gathering for singing practice.⁷ Nevertheless, the village leader firmly warned him that no evangelistic activities were to take place without official permission from the Dutch East Indies government, as only official government-sanctioned church denominations were permitted to evangelize, especially in rural areas. This forced believers in Tetey village to hold their formal worship services outside the village boundaries. Despite legal obstacles and other difficulties, this pioneering work succeeded. On July 18, 1925, with the assistance of

[Albert Munson](#), an expatriate missionary serving as president of the Celebes Mission, the Tetey Seventh-day Adventist Church was officially organized with ten charter members.⁸

Development and Challenges of the Tetey Congregation

The establishment of the Seventh-day Adventist congregation in Tetey Village marked a major milestone in expanding the Adventist message within the North Sulawesi Mission, particularly in the North Minahasa region. [Isaac Chester Schmidt](#), secretary of the Field and Home Evangelism Department of the Netherlands East Indies Union Mission, recorded this rapid development in a report during a three-week official visit in May 1932.⁹ Attending the Annual Conference in Tondano, Schmidt expressed his admiration for the congregation's remarkable growth in faith amid various local challenges. In addition to Tetey, he documented other Adventist congregations in North Minahasa, including Tombuluan, Tumulung, Kaima, and Maumbi.¹⁰ In 1952, it was reported that around the Tetey Church, there were three churches: Kolongan Mapanget, Tatelu, and Talawaan.¹¹ This historical fact confirms that Tetey Village was the cradle and starting point for the spread of the Adventist message to the surrounding areas.

Over time, Church membership in Tetey village continued to grow through baptisms. In 1930, [Peter Drinhaus](#), president of the Netherlands East Indies Union Mission, expressed his appreciation while attending the North Sulawesi Mission annual conference. At that conference, 148 baptisms were recorded, six of whom were from Tetey. Drinhaus also reported progress on the construction of the Tetey Church building, which stood on a hill—a location that remains so to this day.¹² In February 1941, Anton Londa also reported that 18 souls were baptized, the result of a revival meeting by Serfius Rantung, a Bible worker in Tetey at the time.¹³ This event was explained again in August, when pastors and Bible workers, one of whom was Serfius Rantung in Tetey, conducted a revival meeting known as *Openbare Bijbellezing* (Public Bible Reading) for 40 nights, which concluded with a baptism ceremony.¹⁴ In 1952, Pastor Pattyranie conducted *Bijbellezing* in Talawaan Mapanget, baptizing 30 souls, 12 of whom were from the Tetey Congregation.¹⁵ In 1959, 11 souls were baptized, including the former village guard, the Tetey Village *Hukumtua*, and former Church members.¹⁶ These reports are important markers for the development of the Adventist message in the Tetey Congregation.

However, this rapid growth faced its challenges. Social tensions and opposition from some local community members intensified. According to the Pioneer Tetey Church Archives, a major crisis occurred in 1933 when their church was vandalized and destroyed.¹⁷ The arson was carried out by three local youths: Paul Wullur, Ernest Tumundo, and Yakob Tumundo. Two young children from the Tamalea-Tambani family witnessed the tragedy firsthand: Petrus Tamalea (7) and his sister, Elly Tamalea (3). When Petrus, known as Butu, saw the flames, he quickly ran to inform his family and congregation members. Though everyone rushed to help put out the fire, the flammable materials caused the church to burn down quickly. The congregation was overwhelmed with grief amidst the ruins. Instead of reacting with anger or revenge, they chose to pray together for strength, even

praying for the arsonists. Seeing them kneel peacefully in the ruins touched Yakob, one of the perpetrators. Filled with remorse, he asked his two friends to meet Pastor Londa to apologize. The three youths knelt before the pastor, admitted their mistake, and received forgiveness. Pastor Londa warmly welcomed them, prayed with them, and shared Christ's message. This encounter marked a profound spiritual turning point in their lives, leading Yakob and Ernest Tumundo to decide to be baptized. Following their conversion, they were active and faithful members of the congregation and later became church elders. Their friend, Paul Wullur, later served as the Village Head of Tetey.¹⁸

The occupation of Indonesia by Japan, particularly in Minahasa, caused many foreign missionaries to be interned and repatriated.¹⁹ During this time, the Adventist Church faced severe obstacles: churches were closed, children were forced to attend school on the Sabbath, and individuals had to work daily, often on the Sabbath. Moreover, God's followers were accused of being American spies, leading to torture and victimization for many. Despite these hardships, the churches found ways to continue their work during the war. For example, the Tetey Congregation in Tonsea conducted home visits with church leaders and deacons (called *Anggota Bekerja*) and visited youth groups and Sabbath School members. From 1942 to 1946, 1,373 people were baptized in the North Sulawesi Mission.²⁰ This demonstrates that, despite the challenges, God's faithfulness persisted, and they experienced deliverance.

Pastors who Served in the Tetey Adventist Church

Throughout its history, numerous pastors have served this congregation, committed to guiding its spiritual growth. Church archive records highlight several notable servants of God in the Tetey Congregation, including Pastor Anton Londa, who was pivotal during the early pioneering days, and Pastor Serfius Rantung, who helped strengthen the congregation's faith. Additionally, pastors such as Pattyranie, Pieter Walean, Legoh, Ch. Pesik, and Artemas Salindeho also provided pastoral care. These leaders have played vital roles in maintaining faith stability and supporting the congregation's development amid ongoing challenges.

Heritage and Historical Significance

The Pioneer Tetey SDA Church is more than an organization--it stands as a living testament to faith and perseverance amid social pressures and historical challenges. From its challenging start, marked by numerous obstacles, to the difficult years of occupation, this congregation has demonstrated that dedication and forgiveness are key pillars of the church's growth. As one of the region's first churches, Tetey's extensive history continues to inspire and serve as a vital reference point for the development of the Adventist message in North Sulawesi.

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5. Ibid.
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