



Madang-Manus Mission Office Headquarters, Papua New Guinea

Photo courtesy of David Kiak.

Madang Manus Mission, Papua New Guinea, South Pacific Division

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Barry Oliver, Ph.D., retired in 2015 as president of the South Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists, Sydney, Australia. An Australian by birth Oliver has served the Church as a pastor, evangelist, college teacher, and administrator. In retirement, he is a conjoint associate professor at Avondale College of Higher Education. He has authored over 106 significant publications and 192 magazine articles. He is married to Julie with three adult sons and three grandchildren.

The Madang Manus Mission is the Seventh-day Adventist administrative entity for the Madang Region of mainland Papua New Guinea and the islands of Manus, also known as the Admiralty Islands, off the north coast of the mainland. Its headquarters are in Madang, Papua New Guinea.¹

The Territory and Statistics of the Madang Manus Mission

The territory of the Madang Manus Mission is “Madang and Manus Provinces of Papua New Guinea.”² It is a part of, and responsible to the Papua New Guinea Union Mission (PNGUM) Lae, Morobe Province, Papua New

Guinea. The Papua New Guinea Union Mission comprises the Seventh-day Adventist Church entities in the country of Papua New Guinea. There are nine local missions and one local conference in the union. They are the Central Papuan Conference, the Bougainville Mission, the New Britain New Ireland Mission, the Northern and Milne Bay Mission, Morobe Mission, Madang Manus Mission, Sepik Mission, Eastern Highlands Simbu Mission, Western Highlands Mission, and South West Papuan Mission. The address of the administrative office of the Madang Manus Mission is Biliau Street, Madang 511, Papua New Guinea. The mailing address is P.O. Box 412, Madang 511, Papua New Guinea.³

The mission operates under General Conference and South Pacific Division (SPD) operating policies. Those policies state that the officers of the Madang Manus Mission are elected by the PNGUM.⁴ "The mission president elected by the union is a member of the union committee and is the union representative in the conduct of the work in the mission. The president shall, with the local mission committee, supervise and carry forward the work in the local mission."⁵ Mission associate officers and departmental personnel are elected at a duly called session of the mission where representatives from all churches in the mission are present.⁶

As of 2018, the Madang Manus Mission had sixty organized churches and 217 companies. Church membership at the end of 2018 was 14,526. The mission had 179 active employees. Its tithe receipts for 2016 totaled US\$576,351. Its tithe and offerings per capita were US\$63.61.⁷

The Institutions of the Madang Manus Mission

At the end of 2018, the SPD education department reported that the Madang Manus Mission supported twenty-three primary schools and one secondary school with a total of 3,138 students and 145 staff members.⁸

The schools included:

Akiri Primary School, located at Bogia in the Madang Province, had an enrollment of 111 and a teaching staff of six.

Akurai Adventist Primary School, located at Bogia in the Madang Province, had an enrollment of 142 and a teaching staff of five.

Asai Adventist Primary School, located at Middle Ramu in the Madang Province, had an enrollment of 138 and a teaching staff of six.

Bagbag Seventh-day Adventist Primary School, located on Karkar Island in the Madang Province.

Bangapala Adventist Primary School, located at Bogia in the Madang Province, had an enrollment of 202 and a teaching staff of eight.

Bobirunpum Adventist Primary School, located at Upper Ramu in the Madange Province, had an enrollment of 178 and a teaching staff of five.

Bondek Adventist Primary School, located at Western Manus in the Manus Province, had an enrollment of thirty-six and a teaching staff of three.

Boroi Adventist Primary School, located at Bogia in the Madang Province, had an enrolment of 169 and a teaching staff of seven.

Hatzfeldhaven Adventist Primary School, located at Bogia in the Madang Province, had an enrollment of 142 and a teaching staff of seven.

Jerikin Seventh-day Adventist Primary School, located at Bogia in the Madang Province, had an enrollment of nine and a teaching staff of two.

Likum Seventh-day Adventist Primary School, located at Western Manus in the Manus Province, had an enrollment of 203 and a teaching staff of six.

Lokobou Adventist High School, located at Western Manus in the Manus Province, had an enrollment of 255 and a teaching staff of ten.

Luf Adventist Primary School, located at Western Manus in the Manus Province, had an enrollment of eighty-four and a teaching staff of five.

Naru Adventist Primary School, located at Usino in the Madang Province, had an enrollment of 136 and a teaching staff of 5.

Nihon Adventist Primary School, located at Western Manus in the Manus Province, had an enrollment of eighty-two and a teaching staff of six.

Nuwok Adventist Primary School, located at Lorengau in the Manus Province, had an enrollment of 247 and a teaching staff of ten.

Panim Seventh-day Adventist Primary School, located at Madang in the Madang Province, had an enrollment of eighty-nine and a teaching staff of seven.

Pililu Seventy-day Adventist Primary School, located at Western Manus in the Manus Province, had an enrollment of seventy-one and a teaching staff of eight.

Pisik Seventh-day Adventist Primary School, located in Southern Manus in the Manus Province, had an enrollment of fifty-eight and a teaching staff of six.

Riwo Seventh-day Adventist Primary School, located at Madang in the Madang Province, had an enrollment of 119 and a teaching staff of six.

Rosun Adventist Primary School, located at Central Manus, Manus Province.

Sama Adventist Primary School, located on the Rai Coast in the Madang Province, had an enrollment of 125 and a teaching staff of seven.

Tong Adventist Primary School, located on the island of Tong in Eastern Manus in the Manus Province, had an enrollment of 118 and a teaching staff of two.

Waput Adventist Primary School, located at Usino in the Madang Province, had an enrollment of 293 and a teaching staff of twelve.

Yontum Adventist Primary School, located at Middle Ramu in the Madang Province, had an enrollment of eighty-one and a teaching staff of one.

The History of the Mission: Manus

The invitation for the Seventh-day Adventist Church to commence work on the islands of the Admiralty Group, or Manus, was delivered by a young man by the name of Niu Kini who had worked for a while as a crew member on the mission vessel *Veilomani*.⁹ He was sent by the chief of Tong Island to Matupit to formally invite the leaders of the Adventist Church to commence work on the island.¹⁰ Sailing on the *Veilomani*, the first team of workers arrived on Tong Island in April 1935. The group included Oti Maekera and Robert Salau from the Solomon Islands, Ereman from Matupit, and three more men, two of which came from Mussau Emirau.¹¹ After stopping at Tong Island, they visited Baluan before landing at Lou Island on April 12, 1935.¹² Maekera was placed on Baluan Island.¹³ Salau was placed on Tong Island.¹⁴

In July, a telegram from A.H. Piper reported that:

Word from the Admiralty Group states three villages on Baluan have come over to Oti's mission. The chief and a number of young people on Tong have joined up with Salau. Other islands now calling for teachers. How good it is to know that these excellent results are seen already.¹⁵

In August 1935, Arthur S. Atkins, who had oversight of the Admiralty Islands as well as the Saint Matthias group, visited Tong, Pak, Lou, Baluan, Pom, and Lombrum Islands. He reported receiving a warm reception from the villagers at each island and that those without teachers were requesting that one be sent to their island.¹⁶

In October, a letter from Salau written in July 1935 to G. F. Jones, superintendent of the work in New Guinea, reported:

You will be very pleased to hear about this island [Tong]. It is about five months now since we started our mission, and we are well established. The people are interested to have this last message. Nearly 200 of them have started to keep the Sabbath and there are many calls from other places. Last week I had a letter from Oti, and he has 130 persons coming to his Sabbath school. We are very anxious to have a white worker come and help us. I have two boys from Mussau with me. Oti has four New Guinea boys with him. These people are very thirsty for the truth, but the labourers are few.¹⁷

Robert Tutty was the first expatriate Adventist missionary to take up residence in the Admiralty Group. He arrived in mid-1936, approximately one year after Maekera and Salau had commenced their work. Tutty set up a home on Lou Island. He was accompanied by self-supporting missionary Bill Baines. Baines had been stationed on Mussau, but transferred to the Admiralty Group with Pastor Tutty and where he made a home on the island of Pom.¹⁸

By 1940, it was reported that the first two teachers from Manus were being sent out by the Church. One was sent to Bougainville and the other was to work among his own people.¹⁹ They were the first of hundreds of people from Manus who have worked in the service of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The History of the Mission: Madang

The first recorded Seventh-day Adventists living in Madang were Leonard and Eileen Thompson. Len Thompson was a layperson, working with the government public health department.²⁰ As the hostilities of World War II loomed, their daughter Nadene Jeanette died at just three years of age. There was no available Adventist minister, so the funeral was conducted by a Lutheran missionary.²¹ In December 1941, Eileen Thompson and their infant second daughter, Lynette, were evacuated back to Australia and went to live for the duration of the war with Eileen's mother in Perth.²² Len Thompson was transferred to Rabaul where he lost his life as a prisoner of war in 1942.²³

Meanwhile, in mid-1941 Stanley Gander expressed his intent to begin the Adventist work in Madang. He trekked from Kainantu in the Upper Ramu to Madang in order to collect some horses for the mission station. On arriving at Madang, he commented that "we had four interesting days in Madang, and met many people. There is also a village there calling for our mission, and on my next visit to Madang I hope to investigate this call."²⁴

In April 1942, Greta Gander, Stanley Gander's wife, reported on the establishment of the church in this village and the opening of the Adventist work in the Madang area. She said:

Seven years ago, our work in Inland New Guinea was commenced and our first mission station was opened. Ten teachers from Mussau landed by the "Macdhui" at Madang and walked through the jungle into the interior. On their way in they stopped at a village about four miles from Madang and talked with the natives. These natives then called for a teacher, but unfortunately, we had neither the teacher nor the money to commence work there. For years my husband has been trying to make contact with these folk but has had neither the opportunity nor the teachers.

Last year, my husband decided to walk to Madang and purchase horses and investigate the call of this village. He made contact with the chief and found out that they still desired our mission. He then set out to visit the village, but, having no guide, missed the track. Unable to spare the time for further investigation, he decided to return later. This he did and found a very real desire on the part of the village to have our mission. He therefore

sent two teachers from our own central mission—our school teacher Mamatau from Bougainville, and Loras from Manus. We could ill afford to lose these boys, but there were no teachers available, and we felt these people must not be kept waiting any longer.

Since my return to Australia I have often wondered how this new mission venture was faring, and was very much encouraged to hear that Mamatau and Loras have a very live interest—not only in the village in which they have located, but also in the surrounding districts.²⁵

During the latter part of the war, Leonard Barnard and David Caldwell were stationed at Madang with ANGAU. After the war, Barnard returned to Bogia, 144 kilometers west of Madang, and work with the public health department. While there, he was invited to establish a new hospital for lepers at Togoba, Mount Hagen, in the Western Highlands.²⁶ Barnard served another twenty-three years in New Guinea as a medical missionary and pilot. Caldwell also returned to serve as principal of Kambubu High School.²⁷

In 1946, Alex Campbell visited the villages of Bilibil and Yabob, the villages that had requested an Adventist mission five years earlier, where they found that the Mamatau and Loras had done a very good job in planting the church. Unfortunately, the luluais [chiefs] of the villages who had invited the Church to come to their villages had been killed in the war.²⁸ In early 1947, the first five people were baptized by Campbell. Four of the five were from Bilibil village.

In June 1947, it was announced that Stanley and Greta Gander had been invited to take up an appointment in Madang where land had recently been acquired.²⁹ By July 29, they had arrived and settled in as the first Adventist expatriate missionaries sent to Madang.³⁰ By 1949 the headquarters of the newly formed North East New Guinea Mission was in Madang.³¹

Madang Manus

The Madang Mission and the Manus Mission were combined in 1972 to form the Madang Manus Mission. After the Madang Manus Mission was organized in 1972, the church grew from 2,722 members in twenty-eight churches to 14,526 members in sixty churches and 217 companies in 2018.

1972	28 Churches		2722 members ³²
1980	32 Churches		2957 members ³³
1990	46 Churches		4052 members ³⁴
2000	51 Churches	101 Companies	7404 members ³⁵
2010	60 Churches	135 Companies	9625 members ³⁶
2018	60 Churches	217 Companies	14526 members ³⁷

Organizational History of the Madang Manus Mission: Structure

The History of the Development of the Madang Manus Mission Structure

Up until 1929, there was no formal organizational structure in the mission territories of the Australasian Union Conference in New Guinea which included the territories of Madang and Manus. In 1929, with the arrival of Griffiths Jones at Matupi on the Island of New Britain, an entity simply known as the “Mandated Territory of New Guinea” appeared in the *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*. The superintendent was G. F. Jones and the address was “SDA Mission, Matupit, Rabaul.”³⁸ This entity, as its name implied, included within its territory the whole of the mandated territory of New Guinea, including Madang and Manus. In 1932, the name of the entity was changed to simply “Territory of New Guinea.”³⁹

In 1945, the Papua-New Guinea Mission was formed.⁴⁰ This mission included all of the territory of the former Territory of New Guinea Mission and the former Papua Mission. (The Papua Mission had been organized in 1928.)⁴¹ The Papua-New Guinea Mission headquarters were located in Port Moresby, Papua. The first superintendent was R. A. R. Thrift.⁴² In 1946, the name of the Papua-New Guinea Mission was changed to Papua North East New Guinea Mission⁴³

In 1947, the Bismarck Archipelago Mission was formed. Charles Mitchell was the first president. The territory of this mission had previously been included in the Papua-New Guinea Mission. In 1947, New Britain, New Ireland, Bougainville, Buka, the Saint Matthias Group, the Admiralty Group (Manus), and adjacent islands were removed from the Papua-New Guinea Mission and organized as the Bismarck Archipelago Mission.⁴⁴ The remaining territory of the Papua-New Guinea Mission, including Madang, was organized as the Papua North East New Guinea Mission under superintendent Robert R. Frame.

In 1949, the Papua North East New Guinea Mission was separated into the North East New Guinea Mission and the Papuan Mission. The North East New Guinea Mission had its headquarters in Madang. H. Ward Nolan was the president and Eric Boehm was the secretary-treasurer. The Papuan Mission had its headquarters in Port Moresby. C. E. Mitchell was the president and M. R. Smith was the secretary-treasurer.

In 1950, a local mission known as the North-West New Guinea Mission was established. To form this organization the Sepik area was taken from the existing North-East New Guinea Mission territory, and Manus and the Western Islands from the existing Bismarck Archipelago Mission. It was said that “the close affinity between the peoples of Manus and those of the Sepik, and the easy accessibility of Manus from the Sepik makes this link-up desirable.”⁴⁵

In 1953 with the formation of the Bismarck-Solomons Union Mission, the Bismarck Archipelago was divided into four local missions which were organized as the Bougainville Missions under Cyril Pascoe, the Manus Mission

under Karese Manovake, the New Britain Mission under Eric Boehm, and the New Ireland Mission under John Rongapitu.⁴⁶ The headquarters of the Manus Mission were at Lorengau, Manus.⁴⁷

The reorganized Coral Sea Union Mission now consisted of the Central Papuan Mission under L. I. Howell, the Eastern Highlands Mission under A. J. Campbell, the Eastern Papua Mission under Ngava, the Madang Mission under T. F. Judd, the Morobe Mission under J. H. Newman, the Sepik Mission under S. H. Gander, the Western Highlands under F. J. Maberley, and the Western Papua under H. M. Pascoe.

In 1955, The New Ireland Mission and the Manus Mission were combined and named the North Bismarck Mission. The headquarters of the mission were initially at Boliu, Mussau. Leslie Webster was the president of the combined mission.⁴⁸ In 1956, the headquarters of the mission moved to Kavieng.⁴⁹

In 1964, the North Bismarck Mission separated into the New Ireland Mission (Kavieng)⁵⁰ and Manus Mission (Lorengau).⁵¹

In 1972, the Madang Mission (formerly in the Coral Sea Union Mission) and the Manus Mission (formerly in the Bismarck Solomons Union Mission) were combined and organized as the Madang Manus Mission. The Madang Manus Mission was one of ten local missions in the Papua New Guinea Union Mission.⁵²

The History of the Affiliation of the Madang Manus Mission with a Union Mission

Affiliation with the Australasian Union Conference. Until 1949, all of the local conference and mission entities throughout the Australasian Union Conference, related directly to that union with headquarters in Sydney. But at a specially called session of the Australasian Union between August 16 and 21, 1948, a major reorganization was approved. Australia and New Zealand were divided between two union conferences known as the Trans-Tasman Union Conference, and the Trans-Commonwealth Union Conference. The mission territories were divided into two union missions known as the Coral Sea Union Mission (CSUM) and the Central Pacific Union Mission.

Madang and Manus Territory within the Coral Sea Union Mission In this reorganization, the territory of the Coral Sea Union Mission included "Papua, the Mandated Territory of New Guinea, and the British Solomon Islands Protectorate."⁵³ Both Madang and Manus, although in different local missions were part of the Mandated Territory of New Guinea and thus parts of the CSUM.

Manus Territory within the Bismarck Solomons Union Mission. In 1953, the territory of the Coral Sea Union Mission was divided into a Coral Sea Union Mission and a Bismarck-Solomons Union Mission.⁵⁴ Manus remained in the BSUM until it was dissolved in 1972. From 1953 until 1955, it was affiliated as the Manus Mission.⁵⁵ From 1955 until 1964, it was part of the North Bismarck Mission.⁵⁶ Between 1964 and 1972, it was again designated the Manus Mission.⁵⁷

Madang Territory within the Reorganized Coral Sea Union Mission. After it was reorganized in 1953, the Coral Sea Union Mission continued to have its headquarters in Lae, New Guinea. The reorganized union now had as its

territory "Papua and the mainland of the Mandated Territory of New Guinea; comprising the Central Papuan, Eastern Highlands, Eastern Papuan, Madang, Morobe, Sepik, Papuan Gulf, Western Highlands, and Western Papuan Missions."⁵⁸ The Madang Mission was affiliated with the CSUM throughout the period of its existence from 1953 to 1972.

Affiliation with the Papua New Guinea Union Mission. In 1972, there was yet another reorganization of the union missions in the Australasian Division. The Papua New Guinea Union Mission (PNGUM) was formed with ten local missions.⁵⁹ They were the Bougainville Mission, organized in 1953; the Central Papuan Mission, organized in 1928; the Eastern Highlands Mission, organized in 1953; the Madang Manus Mission, organized in 1949 and reorganized in 1953, 1972; the Morobe Mission, organized in 1953; the New Britain New Ireland Mission, organized in 1953 and reorganized in 1961, 1972; the North East Papuan Mission, organized in 1953 and reorganized in 1972; the Papuan Gulf Mission, organized in 1954 and reorganized in 1960; the Sepik Mission, organized in 1953; and the Western Highlands Mission, organized in 1953.⁶⁰

The missions that had existed up until the reorganization in 1972, but which were absorbed into other missions on reorganization were the Madang Mission, the Manus Mission, the New Ireland Mission, the East New Britain Mission, the West New Britain Mission, the Milne Bay Mission, and the North Papuan Mission.⁶¹

In 2000, another major reorganization of the unions in the South Pacific Division occurred at the South Pacific Division session.⁶² Five unions were reduced to four by rearranging boundaries. This change did not alter the territory of the Papua New Guinea Union Mission.

Presidents of Madang and Manus Since 1953

Manus Mission (1953-1955): Karese Manovaki (1953-1955).

Madang Mission (1953-1972): Thomas F. Judd (1953-1955); J. R. Martin (1956-1960); Sidney A. Stocken (1961-1962); C. T. Parkinson (1963-1964); Louis T. Grieve (1965-1966); Harold G. Harker (1967-1969); John H. Newman (1970-1972).

North Bismarck Mission (1955-1964): Leslie A. J. Webster (1955-1960); Wallace R. Ferguson (1960-1962); Karese Manovaki (1962-1964).

Manus Mission (1964-1972): Albert A. Godfrey (1964-1968); Wallace R. Ferguson (1969-1970); Roy A. Harrison (1971-1972).

Madang Manus Mission (1972-): Roy A. Harrison (1972-1973); Joseph Mave (1974-1975); Wilfred Billy (1976); Lui Oli (1978-1979); Philip Daboyan (1980-1982); Peter Pondek (1983-1985); John Wahwah (1986-1990); Daniel Haru (1990-1991); Gilbert Egu (1991-1995) John Wahwah (1995-2002); Makoa Daroa (2003-2010); Benjamin Hap (2011-2015); Garry Lauke (2016-).

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NOTES

1. Much of the information in this article comes from the personal knowledge and experience of the author as a former General Secretary and President of the South Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists. The author acknowledges the contribution of Pauline Yorio, Administrative Secretary in the Papua New Guinea Union Mission Office in the collation of the information for this article.
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