

THE CHANGE OF DAY IN SAMOA  
— its implications for 7th day Sabbath observance

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## THE CHANGE OF DAY IN SAMOA —its implications for 7th day Sabbath observance

### A The Prime Meridian 0, the 180 Degrees Meridian and the International Date Line (IDL).

#### 1 The Prime Meridian of 0 degrees

##### a) The Meaning of Meridian

1. The word **meridian** comes from the Latin word *meridies* meaning 'midday' for the sun crosses a stated meridian midway between the times of sunset and sunrise on that meridian.<sup>1</sup>
2. The **Prime Meridian** is the meridian, or line of longitude, where longitude is stated to be 0 degrees.<sup>2</sup>
3. The same Latin word stem gives rise to the terms: a.m. (ante meridian), meaning 'before noon' 12 midnight to 12 noon, and p.m. (post meridian) 'after noon' 12 noon to 12 midnight.<sup>3</sup>
4. The total period of time represented by a.m. and p.m. is 24 hours, (12 hours + 12 hours). This 24 hour day period of time has remained unchanged since God created the world in the beginning for He said:

Let there be light; and there was light. God saw that that the light was good, and God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light *Day*, and the darkness He called *Night*. So there was evening and there was morning, one day.<sup>4</sup>

Several thousand years later, in this present age, man can, with accuracy and confidence, use the 24 hour day period for establishing day sequence and change, as well as time zones, to bring about order and harmonious relations among the nations of the world.

##### b) Longitude Zero as a Prime Meridian

1. Since 1870, geographers and specialists in related professions from many countries have hopefully been trying to fix a common zero for longitude and the reckoning of time for the global world. Establishing a *Prime Meridian* became the main focus.<sup>5</sup>
2. During the next year, the first 'International Geographical Congress' (IGC) was convened at Antwerp, Holland. Delegates desired 'passage charts', not necessarily coastal or harbour charts and they gave their support for having Greenwich, London, as the common zero for longitude. Also there was a recommendation urging ships exchanging longitude at sea to base their calculations on the longitudes at Greenwich. But this provision was not to apply to land maps and coastal charts: these were to keep their own *Prime Meridian*.<sup>6</sup>
3. The second IGC met in Rome, Italy, in 1875, and delegates again discussed the matter of establishing a *Prime Meridian* without arriving at any further conclusions.
4. Actually there were many local *Prime Meridians* operating in the early 1880s and here are some of them.

<u>Country</u>	<u>Sea Chart</u>	<u>Land Maps</u>
Austria	Greenwich	Ferro
Belgium	Greenwich	Brussels
France	Paris	Paris
Germany	Greenwich & Ferro	Ferro
Holland	Greenwich	Amsterdam
Portugal	Lisbon	Lisbon
Spain	Cadiz	Madrid
United Kingdom	Greenwich	Greenwich
USA	Greenwich	Greenwich & Washington <sup>8</sup>

c) The Need for a Prime Meridian Intensifies

1. In the 19th century a growing number of European nations became inveterate traders as well as intrepid explorers eager to find new territories overseas. However, they began to experience inconvenience and confusion due to their promotion of prime meridians which they used as a basis for establishing additional meridians of longitude and calculating world time standards. So it soon became obvious there was a need to determine, establish and approve, a prime meridian so relations and trade links based on approved and understood days and times would proceed smoothly among the nations.
2. **To move towards a solution, the United States Congress in 1882 recommended that the president convene an international congress in Washington to decide on a prime meridian.<sup>9</sup>**  
The next year the International Geodetic Association meeting in Rome, Italy, recommended the meridian of Greenwich in the suburbs of London, be adopted as the prime meridian of longitude.<sup>10</sup>
3. By 1884, international travel was commonplace and over two-thirds of all ships used Greenwich as the reference meridian on their maps. Clearly there was an urgent need to approve a standardised prime meridian.<sup>11</sup>

d) An International Meridian Conference/Congress Establishes a Prime Meridian.

1. From 1 October 1884, at the bidding of the United States President, Chester A Arthur, an International Meridian Conference met in Washington DC for the purpose of establishing a permanent prime meridian for the world. Forty-one delegates from twenty-five nations attended and studied various proposals. On the twenty-second day, delegates voted that they would present the following five resolutions to their governments and recommend each for adoption:
  - (1) "That it is the opinion of this Congress that it is desirable to adopt a single prime meridian for all nations, in place of the multiplicity of initial meridians which now exist.
  - (2) " That the Conference proposes to the governments the adoption of the meridian passing through the centre of the transit instrument at the {Royal Astronomical} Observatory of Greenwich as the initial meridian for longitude.
  - (3) "From this [Prime] meridian of longitude shall be counted in two directions up to 180 degrees, east longitude being plus and west longitude minus.
  - (4) "That the Conference proposes the adoption of a universal day for all purposes for which it may be found convenient, and which shall not interfere with the use of local or other standard time where desirable.
  - (5) "That this universal day is to be a mean solar day; is to begin for all the world at the moment of mean midnight of the initial meridian, coinciding with the civil day and date of the meridian; and is to be counted from zero up to twenty-four hours."<sup>12</sup>  
(A sixth resolution was unrelated to this topic.)
2. Countries agreed to the recommendations and the Greenwich meridian became the Prime Meridian for the world. But why was Greenwich preferred above all other places?
  - a. The United States had already chosen Greenwich as the basis for its own national time zone system.
  - b. In the late 19th century, 72% of the world's commerce and travel depended on sea-charts which used Greenwich as the Prime Meridian.
  - c. The location would be advantageous to the largest number of people.<sup>13</sup>  
The Greenwich meridian is now marked at night by a laser beam emitted northwards from the Greenwich observatory.
3. The approval of the Prime Meridian now meant meridians of longitude — imaginary lines on the earth's surface — would run from Pole to Pole. In so doing they marked off intervals representing one hour of time.

## 11 A Summary

From the 18th century onwards, passenger and freight shipping movements increased around the world. In order to compensate for either the loss or addition of a day when sailing around the world and arriving home again, ships either subtracted — if travelling eastward, or added a day — if travelling westward, when crossing the Pacific Ocean.

Before long, however, inconvenience and sometimes confusion occurred due to ships using national prime meridians of longitude and calculating their own time zones.

This confused situation led geographers and specialists in related fields in many countries to work on a common zero for longitude and universal time reckoning. They would be able to make reliable calculations as the day period of twenty-four hours had remained unchanged since the world was created. As their work progressed statements by authorities and conferences of experts favoured a common zero for longitude being established at Greenwich, London. Urgency for a solution eventually led to the convening of an International Meridian Congress in Washington DC in October 1884. Forty-one delegates from twenty-five countries attended and recommended Greenwich, London to be the Prime Meridian of 0 degrees for the world. All countries would benefit from this arrangement. However delegates turned away from approving where **day change** would take place as it would separate significant centres of population. They preferred a meridian which would avoid built up areas.

### 111 The 180 Degrees Meridian — its constancy as a base for future ‘time’

#### a) A logical situation

With the Prime Meridian now set at 0 degrees longitude on a global world of 360 degrees at its circumference the 180 degree line of longitude lay exactly half-way around the world from there. Delegates at the International Meridian Conference (IMC) in 1884 recommended in item three, the counting of longitude both in easterly and in westerly directions, beginning at the Prime Meridian and ending at the 180th meridian.

Actually, no other meridian, in relation to the Prime Meridian, seemed so well placed for furthering the organisation and smooth operation of ‘time’ on a round world. This meridian would pass through vast areas of the Pacific Ocean with minimal land in its path, except for the eastern point of Asia and for the southern continent of Antarctica.<sup>14</sup>

#### b) Unlikely to be altered

It seemed remote that the Prime Meridian of Greenwich would be altered or even transferred to another location, having been well supported by the nations. Obviously this would mean that the 180th meridian, halfway round the world could also be a steady and reliable reference line of longitude in the Pacific sphere in matters relating to the organisation and function of ‘time.’<sup>15</sup>

## 1V Establishing the International Date Line

### a) A Need develops for day change

A *matai* and his *faletua* from Apia in Samoa are on a journey around the world. As they cross the 24 meridian lines of longitude, they adjust their watches one hour for each meridian crossed. On arriving back in Apia, the couple notice that 24 hours have passed. But they are surprised to know that there is a difference of one day, a period of 24 hours, when they compare their watches with the date on the calendar. Such experiences are not new!

Nearly 500 years earlier, Ferdinand Magellan’s Spanish expedition that sailed around the world from 1519 to 1522, experienced the same problem. On returning to Spain the sailors were sure of the day of the week because they had carefully maintained sailing logs. However those who lived in Spain all the time without travelling overseas, insisted the day was one day later than the day the sailors were talking about.<sup>16</sup>

b) Why does a discrepancy of one day occur when circumnavigating the world?  
 When a person travels in an easterly direction, away from Greenwich (through the Middle East, India, China, Singapore and Australia for example), the person is moving against the direction of the sun and the days seem shorter. But travelling in a westerly direction, away from Greenwich (through the USA, Hawaii, and the Eastern Pacific Islands), the person is moving with the direction of the sun and the days seem longer.  
 On arriving home after travelling around the world, a person makes a 'day' adjustment to be in harmony with the day sequence at home. If the person's travel occurred in an easterly direction, one day is deleted; if travel occurs in a westerly direction, one day is added.

c) A date line becomes a necessity

With the increase of travel and trade around the world, the necessity for the establishment of a date line where orderly day change could occur became obvious, even urgent.

d) A date line becomes a reality

Delegates attending the IMC in Washington DC in 1884, provided a basis for such a line in their 3rd 4th and fifth recommendations:

By stating that "meridians of longitude would be counted in two directions up to 180 degrees, east longitude being plus and west longitude minus," credence was given to the real possibility of a 24 hour day change taking place at the 180th meridian,

Furthermore, in stating Resolution 5, delegates added support for a 180 degree meridian dateline although they didn't state it directly. They did state however that it would be unwise to establish the Prime Meridian (0 degrees) of Greenwich in London, as the meridian where day change would occur. Rather than approving a line of longitude that would divide large centres of population, they preferred to have one which avoided built up areas.

Now let us notice what was occurring in the Pacific in the latter part of the 19th century.

Increasing shipping making its way across the vast ocean led to captains adding a day to their calendars at the 180th meridian when travelling westward. When sailing eastward they would delete a day in their calendars at 180th meridian. These day changes meant that when they arrived back at their destination in Europe or the Americas, they would be in harmony with local time in those places. This was the unofficial practice trading and passenger vessels generally followed in crossing the largest ocean in the world. Thus the idea of the 180th meridian of longitude becoming the date line was well received. With the support of the nations now evident, it would indeed be the place where the change would happen.

It is interesting that no actual forthright statement was made, or official report enacted by delegates attending the 1884 IMC, declaring the 180th meridian as the date line all countries were to observe. No binding agreement took place and even up to the present time (2011), none has been enacted by the nations of the world. In the absence of such, Pacific nations affected by the path of the 180th meridian line of day change, may make changes in its direction to suit their needs.

e) Mapping the course of the date line

Possessing reliable experience in navigating and in charting Pacific waters, the British Admiralty received encouraging support from many nations to undertake the task of mapping out the date line—a line which would course across the Pacific from north to south, principally along the 180th meridian where day change would take place. This line would become the International Date Line (IDL). In carrying out this task, the Admiralty consulted with the Pacific nations as well as major trading nations. Eventually in its publication *Admiralty List of Lights*, it stated that:

The date or calendar line is a modification of the line of the 180th meridian, and is drawn so as to include islands of any one group etc, on the same side of the line. When crossing this line on a westerly (true) course the date must be advanced one day; and when crossing it on an easterly (true) course the date must be put back one day. [ Adam's Notes]

In implementing this guideline, the Admiralty placed the IDL along the 180th meridian and allowed it to deviate around Fiji to include the Lau group of islands; around NZ to include the Kermadec and Chatham Islands, and around Alaska to include the Aleutian chain of islands. Here are the positions through which the IDL was drawn:

Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude
60°00'S	180°00'	to	51°30'S	180°00'
51°30'S	180°00'	to	45°30'S	172°30'W
45°30'S	172°30'W	to	15°30'S	172°30'W
15°30'S	172°30'W	to	05°00'S	180°00'
05°00'S	180°00'	to	48°00'N	180°00'
48°00'N	180°00'	to	52°30'N	168°00'E
52°30'N	168°00'E	to	66°00'N	169°00'W
66°00'N	169°00'W	to	74°00'N	169°00'W
74°00'N	169°00'W	to	76°00'N	180°00'

## V Summary

When travelling completely around the world, either in a westerly or easterly direction before 1884, a person, on arriving home, would be ahead or behind a day, when compared with his or her home day sequence because of the person's movement across all 24 meridians. Thus they would have to change the date to come into harmony with the local date.

To avoid increasing day change confusion affecting world travel as well as trade, the IMC in its Washington DC gathering in 1884 gave credence to an idea gaining support among many nations, of establishing a universal meridian for day change at the 180th line of longitude.

Although no action was taken by delegates officially naming the 180th meridian as a suitable place for observing day change, many ships were already using it for this purpose when sailing across the Pacific either from an easterly or westerly direction. In the absence of any agreement by the nations countries in the Pacific would be able to change the path of the date line where they deemed it prudent to do so.

Possessing experience and expertise in navigation and in the preparation of nautical charts, the British Admiralty, with the support of many nations took up the challenge of mapping the course of the date line, hereafter known as the International Date Line (IDL).

While the IDL follows a course identical to the 180th meridian it does deviate from it in some places to include all the islands of one country lying across or close by on the other side of it. Several nations benefit from these arrangements.

### B. The Reason for 'day' change in the Samoan Islands

—day change not new to Samoa

#### 1. Successfully in 1892

##### a) The July 4 change

119 years ago, before 1892, Samoa kept Eastern Hemisphere Day Sequence. This meant the country observed the same day as that observed in Australia and New Zealand.

However in 1892 Malietoa Laupapa, King of Samoa in a proclamation dated 16 June, gave the reason for Samoa's day change from Eastern Hemisphere Day Sequence to Western Hemisphere Day Sequence.

"Through an error in reckoning the people of these islands have hitherto been using the wrong day and date as judged by our true position in longitude." 'By our true position in longitude,' Lau Afioga Malietoa Laupapa meant that Samoa, between 173 degrees and 168 degrees west was situated well to the east of the 180th meridian. Thus the islands of Samoa were in error observing Eastern day reckoning; they should be observing Western day reckoning due to their location in the Pacific. To effect this 'day' change, two days were called Monday the 4th of July.<sup>17</sup>



b) American Interests Benefited

As well, the 1892 day change obviously suited American interests relating to dates and commerce. Remarkably the change occurred on the yearly date of American Independence.<sup>18</sup>

11 Unsuccessfully in 1922

In 1922 New Zealand, who was administering Samoa, promoted a return to Eastern day sequence which had operated in Samoa prior to 1892. The International Date Line limited communications between the two countries because Samoa was behind New Zealand (NZ) by a day—Samoa officials were in church on Sunday when their New Zealand counterparts desired to contact them on their Monday. The different day also interfered with business and wireless arrangements. Arranging the Samoa calendar to fit with the New Zealand calendar became the obvious solution. Greenwich officials were supportive and were prepared to make a bend in their imaginary date line so as to take it east of the main island of Upolu.

The Americans, however, were not happy with the proposal. If the date line were to be altered to benefit NZ both Samoas, however, would be disadvantaged. Western Samoa would be having its Sunday while Eastern Samoa would still be engrossed with the affairs of Saturday. The Americans were not willing that their territory of Eastern Samoa should follow NZ dates, but rather they wanted it to observe Western Hemisphere Day Sequence, the same day as observed in the United States. Because of this opposition NZ abandoned the proposal.<sup>19</sup>

111 Successfully in 2011

a) The Contents of the International Date Line Bill

The Samoan Parliament in August 2011 approved “An Act to provide for the change to standard time in Samoa and to make consequential amendments to the position of the International Date Line.... This act commences at 12 o’clock midnight on Thursday 29 December 2011.”

The act provides further details. It states that: “Samoa standard time shall be set at 13 hours in advance of Co-ordinated Universal Time for the whole of Samoa” and that “the International Date line within Samoa territorial waters... is moved from the west of Samoa to the east of Samoa to reflect Samoa standard time... the precise position of the IDL shall be the 170° longitude west of Greenwich...”<sup>20</sup>

b) The Bill’s Explanatory Memorandum

The Explanatory Memorandum accompanying the Samoan Government’s time and ‘day’ Bill, sets out a summary providing information on the change of ‘day’ in the Samoan Islands. The official wording states:

The change...making consequential amendments to the position of the IDL...will enable Samoa to be on the same side of IDL as New Zealand and therefore will be in the same day as New Zealand. This will make for ease of business transactions and international travel between Samoa and its major trading partners.

This means Samoa loses Friday 30 December 2011, and makes provision for the day that is lost.<sup>21</sup>

c) The inevitable Seventh-day Sabbath choice facing

Adventists lying well to the east of the 180th Meridian  
 —either honouring the new 7th day (Saturday) thus making a clear distinction between 7th and first day observers, on the Friday of Western day sequence  
 —or continuing to honour as usual, the old 7th day Sabbath of Western day sequence now occurring on the Sunday of Eastern day sequence, because of Samoa’s location in the Pacific.

## 1. A vital consideration

Adventists need to be well-informed on past and present 7th day Sabbath practice, as well as being aware of the consequences of the choices they make.

### a) Past Sabbath Practice

1. Early church employees such as the George Tenney family, on travelling to Australia and then NZ noticed on 19 May 1888 people in Samoa observing Sunday worship on the seventh day Sabbath. This occurred because following the resolutions of the IMC in 1884, the 180th meridian had become the line where 'day' change had taken place and as Samoa lay well to the east of this line the people naturally observed Western Hemisphere Day Sequence.
2. There is an interesting sequel to the voyage Ellen G White made to Australia in 1891. Commenting on her travel south she wrote:

Between Samoa and Auckland we crossed the day-line, and for the first time in our lives had a week of six days. Tuesday, 1 December was dropped from our reckoning and we passed from Monday to Wednesday.<sup>22</sup>

Robert Leo Odom follows with this account:

When the Alemeda stopped at Apia in the Samoan Islands, the date according to the time count on the ship as Mrs White's record indicates was 'Friday, November 27, 1891'...But according to the time count ashore it was Saturday, November 28, 1891. The skipper of the Alemeda ignored the erroneous time count and waited three more days—until he reached the 180th meridian—to make the necessary adjustment.<sup>23</sup>

Mrs White describes the crossing of the IDL at the 180th meridian in the *Review and Herald* 16 February 1892, p97 and *Bible Echo and Signs of the Times*, 1 January 1892, pp8, 9. Ellen White and the captain of the Alemeda were quite clear that day change occurred at the 180th meridian.

3. A few months earlier on 2 August 1891, Joseph Marsh, captain of the schooner *Pitcairn*, had acted in a similar way at the 180th meridian, obviously regarding the line of longitude as the place for 'day' change on his voyage south from USA.<sup>24</sup>
4. The first missionaries to reside in Samoa arrived in Apia from the USA and Pitcairn Island on Tuesday 22 October 1895. These health workers led by Dr Frederick Braucht, soon established Samoa Medical Mission at Matautu-tai, a suburb of Apia. Before long Braucht was known as the 'Jewish Doctor' because of his identification with the 7th-day Sabbath of the Jews. These and later missionaries observed the 7th-day Sabbath of the Bible,<sup>25</sup> worshipping together according to Western reckoning.<sup>26</sup>

### b) Present day Sabbath observance

Today, Seventh-day Adventists, actually, since 1895, continue to honour the 24 hour seventh-day Sabbath from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday according to Western Hemisphere Day Sequence.

## 11 Summary

Samoa was situated well to the east of the 180th meridian and observed 'day' sequence for countries lying well to the east of the line. This error was corrected when Samoa changed to Western Day sequence from 1892 onwards. This now meant that the Samoan Islands were observing the same 'day' sequence as all other island territories located east of the 180th meridian. (Cook Islands changed in 1900). Arrangements for trade with the United States of America and its territory of American Samoa also influenced Samoa to bring about 'day' sequence harmony with these two countries.

The unsuccessful attempt in 1922 to have Samoa to revert to Eastern 'day' sequence as it was

before 1892, wasn't pursued once American objections were known. New Zealand, the administering authority of the time, had hoped to improve communications, business and wireless contacts with Samoa by having the two countries observing the same day.

The present attempt by the Samoan Government to return to Eastern 'day' sequence as it was prior to 1892, is motivated by a desire 'for ease of business transactions and international travel between Samoa and its major trading partners'.

When 'day' change takes place, the IDL as in earlier days, 119 years ago to be exact, will once again chart a course enclosing Samoa in Eastern Day Sequence. At the same time it will divide the two Samoas before returning to the 180th meridian.

## D Observing the Seventh-day Sabbath in the Samoan Islands—— choice and consequences

### 1. The contemporary situation perspective

As day change will occur in Samoa from 2012 onwards, Adventists need to consider and choose between two practical positions in deciding on which day they will observe the Sabbath — Saturday, **the seventh-day Sabbath** according to Eastern Hemisphere Day Sequence, or Sunday **the seventh day** of Western Hemisphere Day Sequence.

By observing Saturday of Eastern 'day' reckoning in a Western 'day' area, Adventists would be upholding the traditional 7th day Sabbath/First day Sunday relationship observed almost everywhere around the world. (The Kingdom of Tonga is an exception at present.) Known as the contemporary situational perspective, advocates regard the path of the IDL of human origin and accept the actions of Pacific country governments in deciding its course, and in naming the days of the week. The 7th day Sabbath is to be observed according to local calendars operating in the various island groups.

### 11 The possible consequences arising from choosing the contemporary situation perspective

#### a) Adventist Identity Kept Intact

Worshipping on the 7th day of Eastern Hemisphere 'day' reckoning would keep the Adventist identity clearly before the people and provide an attractive biblical alternative to first day Sabbath observers.

#### b) Further possible 'day' change

In changing to Eastern Hemisphere Day Sequence so as to maintain their distinctive Saturday/Sabbath witness, Adventists are throwing in their lot with government and by doing so are virtually making it difficult for themselves if another 'day' change were to occur sometime in the future.

#### c) Adventists Regarded as loyal and useful citizens

Adventists would be regarded as loyal supporters of government and good citizens in the country and thus worthy of support in their practical endeavours to benefit the community.

#### d) Exalting 'Saturday above 'the biblical Seventh-day' in deciding on which day to observe the Sabbath day

One could be persuaded that determining the day for the Sabbath is made according to the use of the name 'Saturday' on calendars, rather than according to the biblical principle of the seventh day as it relates to its position in lines of longitude emanating from the Prime Meridian at Greenwich.<sup>27</sup>

#### e) A united witness for the same 7th day Sabbath observance east of the 180th meridian would be weakened.

For more than 100 years Samoa has been observing the Sabbath of Western 'day'

reckoning, along with the Kingdom of Tonga located at almost the same longitude. Samoa would now observe Sabbath one day earlier being part of Eastern 'day' reckoning. The past united witness of observing the same 7th-day Sabbath by all island groups located east of 180th meridian would be weakened. Onlookers and even critics could cite this changed situation as evidence of Adventist confusion over their day of worship.

f) Facing up to Samoan *luma*

Possible embarrassment (*luma*), cultural to a degree, experienced by local Adventists who would need to explain, after more than 100 years, apart from calling Saturday the Sabbath, why there was a need to embrace Eastern days. Later on, if government found it convenient to again modify the course of the IDL would Adventists return to their former practice of observing Western 'days'? How would they convince others of the genuineness of such a move?

111 The 180th meridian perspective

a) —a biblical basis for days and time.

In the beginning God set a 24 hour day—based on the time for the earth to make one rotation on its axis—consisting of darkness and light, to guide the lives and activities of people on the world. Each day began and ended at sunset. At the end of each six day period, God established the last day of the week 'holy' and 'blessed' and designated it the 'Sabbath'.<sup>28</sup>

Ellen White on the permanence of God's plan wrote: "God himself measured off the first week as a sample for successive weeks to the end of time".<sup>29</sup>

Although God did not state the exact location for 'day' change, He does give guidance to nations. For just as He counselled Israel, the Psalmist says in Ps 67:4 that He will guide the nations of the earth.

Even in modern times God's guidance could have assisted the nations to establish the Prime Meridian with its consequential establishment of the 180th meridian as the location for 'day' change. He also blesses when there are many advisors involved in making plans. (Proverbs 15:22)

b) The 180th meridian—a firm foundation for Sabbath change.

In our populous world of today, God's 'days and times' plan is the basis for the meridian perspective of the seventh-day Sabbath observance. With the establishment of the Prime Meridian at Greenwich and its consequential confirmation of the 180th meridian half way round the world as the longitudinal line of 'day' change, a firm foundation existed for the establishment of the seventh-day Sabbath on both sides of the 180th. Now the seventh day arrives at sunset at each meridian in succession, changes 'day' at the well-anchored 180th, and continues on until it returns to where it started. Right across the meridians Sabbath on the 7th day is a full period of darkness and light in each period of longitude.

c) All islands on or near the 180th meridian, to keep the same day.

To avoid confusion where islands of one country would be observing two separate days, the British Admiralty placed the IDL around all when some were lying across, or were located on the other side near the 180th meridian. The meridian perspective accepts this change applying to the Lau Group of islands in Fiji. Dividing Fiji into two separate days would serve no useful purpose.

Observing Eastern 'day' sequence are other islands situated well to the east of the 180th. The IDL skirts a patch around the Chatham Islands and the Kermadec Islands, allowing for the same 'day' observance as New Zealand, the administering authority situated to the west of the 180th. The western islands of the Alaaskan chain located to the west of the 180th observe western 'days'.

These islands are somewhat of an anomaly. Placing the IDL to the eastern side of the NZ territories, and to the western side of the Aleutians means the line has deviated from the

common understanding of the IDL in relation to the 180th. As population is miniscule one can sympathise with an administering authority desiring to maintain same 'day' contacts with its isolated territory. No Adventists live on these islands but this position could change. Further study could provide practical counsel for any who desire residence on any one of them.<sup>30</sup>

d) Fastening Sabbath to an unchanging meridian.

The 180th meridian provides a clear, firm, almost certain line of longitude to which 7th day Sabbath observance can be safely anchored. It has not moved, changed or altered in the 127 years since 1884.

e) Observing same day Sabbath provides a united witness.

Without exception Adventists in countries located east of the 180th meridian, are providing a united witness in observing the 7th-day Sabbath on the same day of Western Hemisphere 'day' sequence. As the Sabbath arrives and is welcomed at the eastern boundary of each country it continues on crossing lines of longitude in a 24 hour period and finally farewells the Sabbath at the next sunset.

Even in countries following Eastern days, Adventists faithfully observe Sabbath according to the seventh-day of Western days. Take for example the two independent countries of Tonga and Samoa:

*7th day of Western 'days'				
TONGA	Saturday — 7th	Sunday — 1st	Monday — 2nd	Eastern 'day' names followed by Tonga
SAMOA	Friday — 6th	Saturday — 7th	Sunday — 1st	
*7th day of Western 'days'				

In these two nations Adventists observe the 7th day Sabbath on the same day even though there is the difference of one day — Sunday in Tonga is Saturday in Samoa.<sup>31</sup>

1. A similar situation exists in the eastern islands of Kiribati: on the Phoenix Islands and on the Line Islands. Adventists observe the 7th day Sabbath on the 7th day Western order of days.<sup>32</sup>
2. On the islands of Wallis and Futuna, situated near the 180th meridian on its eastern side, Adventists do the same: worship on Sunday, the 7th day of Western Day Sequence<sup>33</sup>

Each Pacific country and territory situated east of the 180th meridian is, at this time, observing the 7th day Sabbath according to Western 'days'.

These are:

- Tonga, Niue
- Wallis and Futuna,
- Samoa, American Samoa,
- Tokelau, Kiribati,
- Cook Islands, French Polynesia,
- Hawaii, Pitcairn.

So every Adventist living in the Pacific Islands east of the 180th meridian, observes the same 7th-day Sabbath, as the sunset arrives in their location—a powerful and impressive witness for the unified observance of the 7th-day Sabbath in the Bible.

f) Western 7th-day Sabbath observed for over 100 years

From the times of the early church workers until present times, a period of 116 years, the 7th day Sabbath has been observed in Samoa on the 7th day of Western day sequence. Some came from USA in 1895, others later from Australia in 1904. Over the years many Adventist employees have, along with Samoan believers, observed the same Sabbath day, recognising that Samoa lay well to the east of the 180th meridian, the place where 'day' change occurs.

Of interest is the attitude of the church's administrators in 1922 when New Zealand wanted Samoa to revert to Eastern 'day' sequence. The executive committee at headquarters in Wairoa, NSW, advised Adventists in Samoa thus:

To make no change whatever in the observance of the Sabbath as it recurs in its weekly cycle, notwithstanding that the official name of the day may be changed by the Government from Saturday to Sunday.<sup>34</sup>

At the committee's request an accompanying letter of explanation, written by Pastor Pastor A W Anderson, a departmental director, was sent. It stated:

The Sabbath keepers in Samoa will simply continue to observe the day they have been observing as the Sabbath without any reference whatsoever to the name which is given officially to that day by the government...

The fact that men call Sunday the Sabbath does not make it the Sabbath.<sup>35</sup>

#### 1V The possible consequences

##### a) Observing the correct seventh-day of Western Day Sequence

Adventists would be seen maintaining Sabbath observance according to Western Hemisphere 'Day' Sequence in relation to the firmly established 180th meridian rather than being swayed by the government modifying the position of the IDL and the weekly cycle for the purpose of trade and communications.

##### b) Maintaining a united same 7th-day Sabbath witness with other countries.

Adventists in Samoa would add to the united witness of seventh-day Sabbath observance in all Pacific countries located east of the 180th meridian.

##### c) Some may prefer a 'Saturday' Sabbath.

Possible discomfort by some Adventists when worshipping on Sundays because almost everywhere else in the world worship on Saturdays. They would rather observe the day locals regard as Saturday, convinced, that by so doing, they provide a cleaner witness to biblical truth for the end time.

#### V Adventist Seventh-day Sabbath observance from 2012 onwards—the choice

Perhaps, and put simply, the choice for Adventists, once they have considered relevant information would be between two points of view:

—whether to base seventh-day Sabbath observance on government modifications to the path of the International Date Line, which, in past years, has varied, and in the future could vary again,  
—whether to anchor seventh-day Sabbath observance on the seventh-day of Western Day Sequence, which applies to countries located east of the unchanging 180th meridian.

#### V1 Religious freedom in the Constitution of Samoa no hindrance to 'day' choice for worship

Freedom of religion is safeguarded in Item Eleven titled 'Freedom of Religion' in the constitution of Samoa. No official state religion, or day of worship is mentioned. People have the right to practise their religion, and also the right to change their religion. There is no restriction on the choice of a day for worship, or on how worship is to be conducted.

Paragraph one on page 12 states:

Every person has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others, and, in public or private, to manifest and propagate his belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.

**In conclusion:**

May Adventists in the Samoan Islands experience blessings of peace and contentment in observing the biblical Sabbath on the seventh day of the Western Hemisphere day sequence. And may the preciousness of warm fellowship with Jesus always make “the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord.” (Isaiah 58:13)

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