And so they told 3 branches to merge into one branch... For a long time sugar plantations were king here. In 1975 sugar went under and so membership went down, enrollment in school went down, and people moved away to get a different occupation. And then the resorts started to open down along the coasts. If you drive along the coast you'll see large resorts.

And at these resorts people found employment. And a lot of people that moved away moved back. And I teach at schools. But I knew that the enrollment went from 1100 to under 700, and then it started to go back up to 1200 now. And the ward has also increased in the state in relationship to the population. And so we have about 520 I think in our membership right now.

And what about the old chapel?

Right now it's for sale. And there's a full size gymnasium there. At one time that was the community center. All the activities in the plantation took place in the gymnasium. And so when the church bought it, it was quite a task to upkeep and maintain the gym. So at one time, depending on whom the stake president was they were going to tear the gym down and the next stake president come, and they were going to restore the gym. And finally, they decided to keep it, much to our relief because there was a lot of pressure from the community to keep the gym, and yet we didn't have the funds to maintain it. And so the church came and redid the whole gym. It looks nice again. And it's for sale.

It was originally purchased in 1962 by Bill Sproat. It was purchased for $15,000. It was quite a deal, so that the sugar plantation was happy to help the church. They brought the equipment, and they helped grade it and they helped in any way that they could. And it was a nice area because we're there on a corner and people knew that it was a Mormon Church.

But the thing with the existing structure out there in the parking lot, is there's only 19 parking stalls for the whole area. We had to park in on the land that belonged to our neighbor. And they were good neighbors until they sold the land. And when they sold the land the church got kind of cautious because if they built the property in the back of the church they would take all the front property away where we used to park. That would mean that we wouldn't have any parking. And so, they bought this property and built over here. But we still prefer the property down there because of the full size gymnasium. A gymnasium means a lot to young people--keeping people active. And it's great for luaus--and we have a little cultural hall back here.