

Journal of Pacific Adventist History



Journal of Pacific Adventist History

Also known as

Pacific Adventist Heritage

Statement of Mission

Journal of Pacific Adventist History serves historians, members and others interested in the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific Islands. It focuses on people and events involved in the establishment and development of the church in preparation for the event of the ages—the Second Coming of Christ.

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* Reviewing and editing articles takes time, patience, skill and experience. The editor gratefully acknowledges the excellent and painstaking contribution made by the volunteers.

* The pictures on the cover: Jugha. He took the gospel to Choiseul. His second baptismal class. Pastor Lawrence Tanabose at the ground breaking ceremony for the new development at Ghoghombe



An important media perspective needs strengthening

Year after year Adventist church papers have chronicled the mission of the church in the Pacific Islands. Vivid descriptions portraying island life centering on people and events, absorbed the reader's attention. Some were so well acquainted with the expatriates in certain locations, they closely

identified with all that unfolded in the written accounts. Occasionally diagrams, graphs and pictures, added lustre and provided enrichment. Efforts of all to convey the 'good news' from overseas neighbouring countries have been, and still are, well received and appreciated.

Most written accounts originated from expatriate males, eager to share their experiences. Some were provided by itinerant leaders serving in higher levels of administrative and departmental areas. Bylines by a small number of women, mostly single employees and wives of expatriates, appeared occasionally.

By comparison, however, the contribution of our island nationals, even today is light on. How many know of the providential way the Adventist biblical message entered the Tenabuti area on the north-eastern side of the island of Guadalcanal, as well as the names of the people involved? Or of the faithful witness of the people of Choiseul who built up the church on the southern end of the island? Are the locations of the medical clinics and aid posts known, often isolated places where loving service brings health, healing and hope?

Our national peoples know the culture, customs, and the political and religious atmosphere of their lands. Their ears and eyes are attuned to the sights and sounds of local details: they know the people, their names, their service, and they know how God used, and is still using villagers, to establish His message among them. Their perspective is extremely important. They are in the best position to inform, enlighten and share.

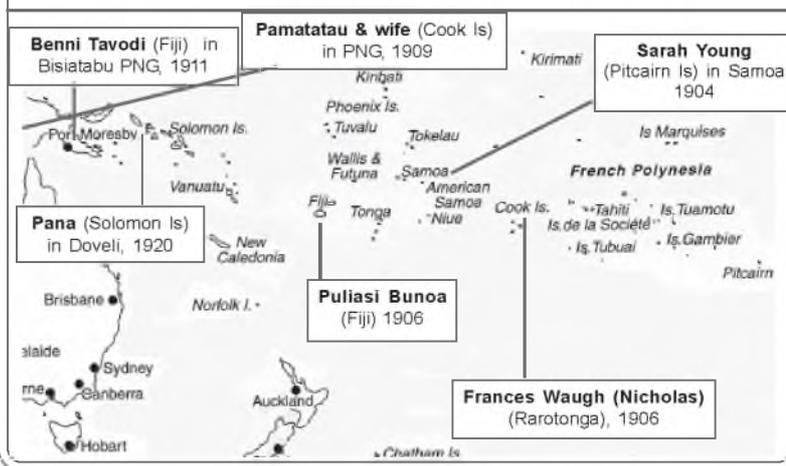
While the occasional interview written up by a specialist, or several paragraphs sent in for editing, or the preparation of a tape or a disk for transcription, do play a part, it is the islander's presentation from mind and heart in tune with God's accomplishments through His servants that is needed—his or her account of miracles, gospel advances, of joys and sorrows of God's presence in the land.

As English as a second language is far more widespread among Adventist islanders today, one important task, seemingly overdue, remains — *training in journalistic skills and public relations to better convey the mission of the church through Adventist periodicals and newsletters, and to local media outlets involving radio, television and newspapers.*

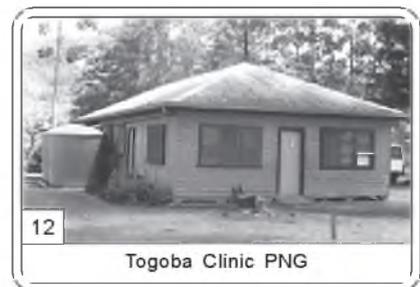
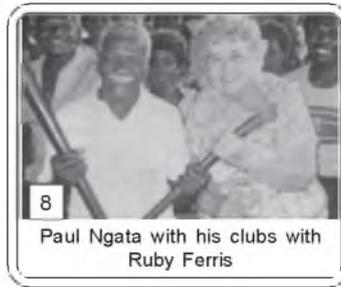
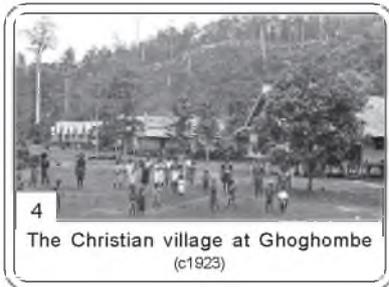
The church, the community and the world need to be better informed.

The Editor

Some local island people, some of them missionaries to other places, who contributed to church papers in early days



Contents



Articles

4 **Ghoghombe** *careful planning lead to the establishment of a firm base for the growth of the Adventist message on Choiseul.*

LAWRENCE TANABOSE

8 **Out of Darkness into God's wonderful Light** *although kindness paved the way for an Adventist school at Tenabuti, the mission station was moved to other areas*

MARTIN LOSI

12 **Adopt a Clinic** *weakened clinics of 'life' strengthened by adoption*

DR CHESTER KUMA

16 **Five Years in the Sepik—part 3** *startling experiences, strange customs and unusual happenings*

ROY ALDRIDGE

20 **Aviation in the Western Pacific—1970-1977** *providential care in extensive stormy weather to obtain urgent medical treatment to save a life*

COLIN WINCH

27 **The Isolated Western Islands of PNG** *perseverance brings the Adventist message to a remote island*

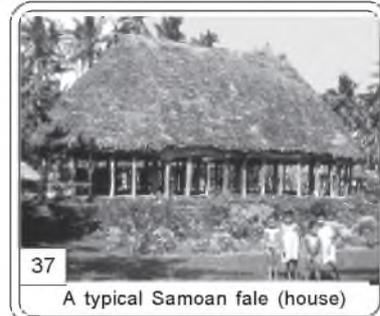
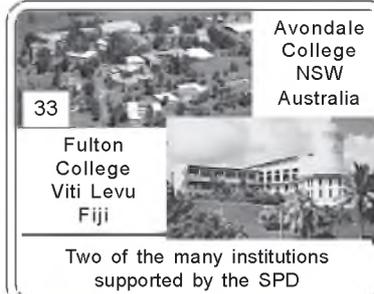
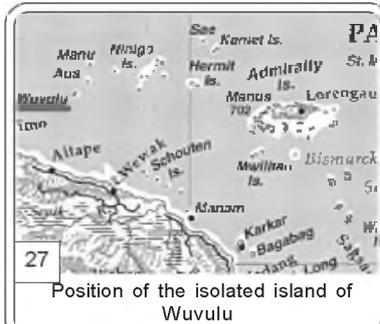
DR AARON LOPA

33 **Funding Priorities for Adventist Education in the South Pacific** *"the church pays an enormous amount of money to keep its educational programme operating"—indeed millions*

DR BARRY HILL & MRS TAMMY PANNEKOEK

37 **Puni and Vau** *a courageous change in direction brings a new life and challenges*

PUNI RAEA



2 **Editorial**
*an important perspective needs
strengthening*
David Hay

26 **The editor is listening**

39 **Photo Credits**

39 **Life Sketches**
Nathan & Mary Rore

Ghoghombe

—land identified for God's kingdom



LAWRENCE PITA
TANABOSE

Lawrence Tanabose, a Solomon Islander, was born of missionary parents in PNG on 20 February 1953.

Currently he is the General Secretary of the South Pacific Division of SDAs--the first Pacific Islander to be appointed as an officer.

He gained a broad education culminating in a Diploma in Administration and a Master of Arts in Theology (Avon Col).

He brings to his position a wide work experience in the service of the church--Bible lecturer, pastor, field evangelist, departmental director, admin. sec. & president

He was elected as president of the Trans Pacific Union Mission in 2005, with the responsibility of the church in Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Kiribati, Vanuatu & the Sol. Islands. This brought him into contact with various officials in government in those places. Thus he brings to his present position a unique experience of the needs of the church in that part of the world.

He has a passion for evangelism and still conducts public programmes.

He is married to Rosina and they have a daughter & three sons.

A partial history of the establishment of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on the Island of Choiseul: 1921

TUESDAY, 18 DECEMBER 2007, marks another significant part of the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on the Island of Choiseul (commonly known as *Lauru*). It is one of the bigger islands within the chain of Islands known as the Solomon Islands. On its south-eastern shores, nestled within the bay, and protected by clusters of beautiful and romantic little islands, is Ghoghombe, the site of the first Seventh-day Adventist village.

Pastor Jugha was the first national Seventh-day Adventist missionary that landed and established the presence of Christianity amongst the heathen tribes there in 1921. A past cholera epidemic had left a quarter of the Ghoghombe inhabitants dead including Amy, the daughter of Australian missionaries, Pastor David and Mabel Gray. The survivors deserted the village and resettled along the southern coast of the island where they had permission to relocate. Ghoghombe was allowed to return to its natural forest.

At the amalgamation of the three Solomon Islands Missions (Eastern Solomon Mission, Malaita Mission, and Western Solomon Mission) in 2006, the newly formed Solomon Islands Mission was organized into ten regional districts. Choiseul Island was one of the ten newly formed regions.

In searching for a site to establish the Regional Headquarters for Choiseul Regional District, Pastor Lawrence Tanabose (who is also a descendent of the Ghoghombe land owning tribe) requested that Ghoghombe be chosen for the project.

After many consultations, negotiations and tribal land meetings, Ghoghombe site was agreed upon by the land owners, Seventh-day Adventist Church members and some United Church members. All were supportive of the land being returned to God for the re-establishment of His church, which was called out to be the bearer of the gospel message – the Good News of salvation in Jesus and His soon return.

At the ground breaking ceremony on 18 December 2007, Donald Tanito, the grand son of chief Tanito from the United Christian Church, read the following speech:

“On behalf of the Chief and the land owners, I would like to welcome the Seventh-day Adventist Church Leaders and representatives and each one of you, who have come to witness this ground breaking ceremony. We, Tanito family (legal caretakers of the Ghoghombe land) have given these five hectares of land to the Seventh-day Adventist Church for the development of God's plan.

We are so glad to help with this development as it will be a great help to our future generations. So as of today, the 18th December 2007, we now hand over to the Seventh-day Adventist Church of Solomon Islands this piece of land.

We promise that we will further consider any future request for extra land as the development expands. To conclude, we will work together in partnership with the Seventh-day Adventist Church on developing this site in the near future.

May our Almighty God help us to work together hand in hand for the betterment of the development of our future generations. So once again, to all of you – the Seventh-day Adventist Church representatives who are here with us, ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much.

Why Ghoghombe, one may ask?

Ghoghombe had been the landing location for the Seventh-day Adventist Church on the Island of Choiseul, after it had been established at Kukudu on the Island of Kolobangara by GF Jones in 1914. Known as ‘Seven day’ it was regarded as the clean and musical religion. Early in 1918, a few boys from Ghoghombe went across the strait called New Georgia Sound on a dug-out canoe to Kolobangara Island looking for employment at the coconut plantation owned by Norman Whitley. While working there, they came in con-



Hambere village

tact with the 'Seven day' church. At Hambere Adventist (SDA) village, they were enchanted by the congregational singing during the worship hours—he worship experiences that had superseded the pagan worship they were used to. Their pagan worship was often surrounded with fear and superstitious beliefs, in contrast to these clean and happy worshipping believers.

Within that same period of time, the Methodist Church missionaries were exploring the coastal shores of Choiseul and arrived at Ghoghombe. Anchoring their boat at Ghoghombe Bay, they went ashore, but were fiercely sent off by the Ghoghombe villagers who were still waiting for their boys at Kolobangara plantation and the 'singing church'. As the Methodist minister tried to resist by clinging on to a mangrove plant, a village bystander chopped the mangrove down and threw the Methodist missionary back to his dinghy and warned him not to return.

On returning to Ghoghombe village, the plantation employees told the chief and the people of the village about the 'singing religion'. They convinced the villagers that the 'Seven day' religion was best for the children. So across the treacherous stretch of the New Georgia Sound, the village party paddled for two days. At their arrival, they made a request for Adventist missionaries at Kukudu Mission station to send a much needed teacher to teach their children how to sing and write. The church executive committee responded in faith by sending a national missionary teacher with the returning party. Pastor Jugha, who was from Marovo Lagoon and had already accepted the Christian faith and lived a life contrary to their pagan ways of living, became the first pioneer missionary to arrive at Ghoghombe in 1921.

Pastor Jugha wasted no time to christianize the people of Ghoghombe. He taught them a better and healthier way of living. The first four converts at Ghoghombe were Guso, Sukiveke, Sogavare and Bosopa. As Pr Jugha started teaching and converted the Ghoghombe residents, news spread along the northern and southern coastal shores of Choiseul Island. Interested relatives came to Ghoghombe to see for themselves the 'singing church'.

Such visitors to Ghoghombe were two young pagan warriors from Kirugela, North Choiseul. They came to Ghoghombe to look for brides, but learning of the new found faith, quickly returned to their village with the exciting news about the new religion. In 1922, two brothers, Sata and Kadae from Vio village within Kirugela district, decided to return to Ghoghombe to request a teacher. Pr Jugha, with the assistance of Pastor Gray, had trained local missionaries to work amongst their own people. Mr Dokese who was selected to return with the two brothers, Sata and Kadae, was one of those local trained missionaries. Arriving at Sasata village, Mr Dokese established a church and started training people to read and write. Mr Kioto, who also was from Marovo lagoon, was later appointed to follow up the church work introduced to the northern region by Mr Dokese.

In the same year (1922), the two brothers decided to take the good news to their tribal people who were living in the interior of the island. In agreeance with the two brothers, Mr Dokese left the work at Sisata, under the leadership of Kalepota and Derekolo and some youth, while he travelled with Sata and Kadae to Tonge to establish a church.

In 1922 the newly established Adventist village of Tonge,



Pr David Gray (centre) with the teachers and their families he and Pr Jugha trained. Pr Jugha is on the left.



Pr Jugha (centre) and the first four converts at Ghoghombe-L to R: Guso, Sukiveki, Sogavare, Bosopa



Pr Jugha, Taniteko (wife of Kioto), Kioto & Nagaha, missionaries on Choiseul, 1922

situated in the interior of the island, was dedicated. However it was very difficult for the itinerating national missionaries to regularly visit because of its remoteness. Towards the end of 1927 the Church members negotiated with the Azaka clan of the Topara tribe to give them a block of land near the coast to relocate their village. In response to their request, the Azaka clan gave them the land now known as Kakaza. In 1929 when the church building project was completed, the Meth-



Dedication of the church at Ghoghombe



Sisiata village and church



First baptismal class at Sisiata



Vio village & Nagoka a teacher there



Pastor Kata Ragoso

odist Church members who partly owned the Kakaza land went and destroyed the church building. So the following year, the new believers resettled in a place called Pogasae. There they continued to worship the Creator God and witness to their pagan relatives.

Relocation of the settlement by the Tagole tribe in 1947 saw the establishment of Kakalokasa village, which became an organized church some years later. Kakalokasa Church currently is still functioning as an organized Adventist Church within Sega district.

In 1952, the Kapi tribal families, who had accepted the Christian faith, decided to approach the Tagole chief and land owners—Tako, Gaki, Dusaru and Kalepota—if they could be given a piece of land on which they could build their church and establish an Adventist presence within Sega district. An agreement was made between the Kapi chiefs, Gogono and Voku, and the land owners, the Tagole, that the area of Tangibangara be given to the Adventist believers for the establishment of their Christian community. Pastor Kata Ragoso, a Western Solomon Is Mission committee member) was invited to dedicate the Tangibangara land to be the center of Adventist faith within the Sega district. Tangibangara was organized as a church in the same year. Since the establishment of Tangibangara village, it has grown two church companies—Pagoe and Jare Churches.

Since its establishment Tangibangara village has produced leaders for the Adventist church and the Government of the Solomon Islands:

Mr. Sogavare

- Pioneer Missionary to PNG

Pastor Rayboy Jilini

- Local Mission director and evangelist

Pastor Samson Sogavare

- Union mission director and evangelist

Pastor Moses Sogavare

- District director and evangelist

Pastor Tanabose Lukukana

- Pioneer missionary and mission director

Pastor Lawrence Tanabose

- Union and SPD administrator and evangelist

Pastor Caleb Ripo

- District director and evangelist

Honorable Manasseh Sogavare

- Politician & Prime Minister of Solomon Islands

Mr. Gilakesa

- Long service teacher

Chief Teddy White

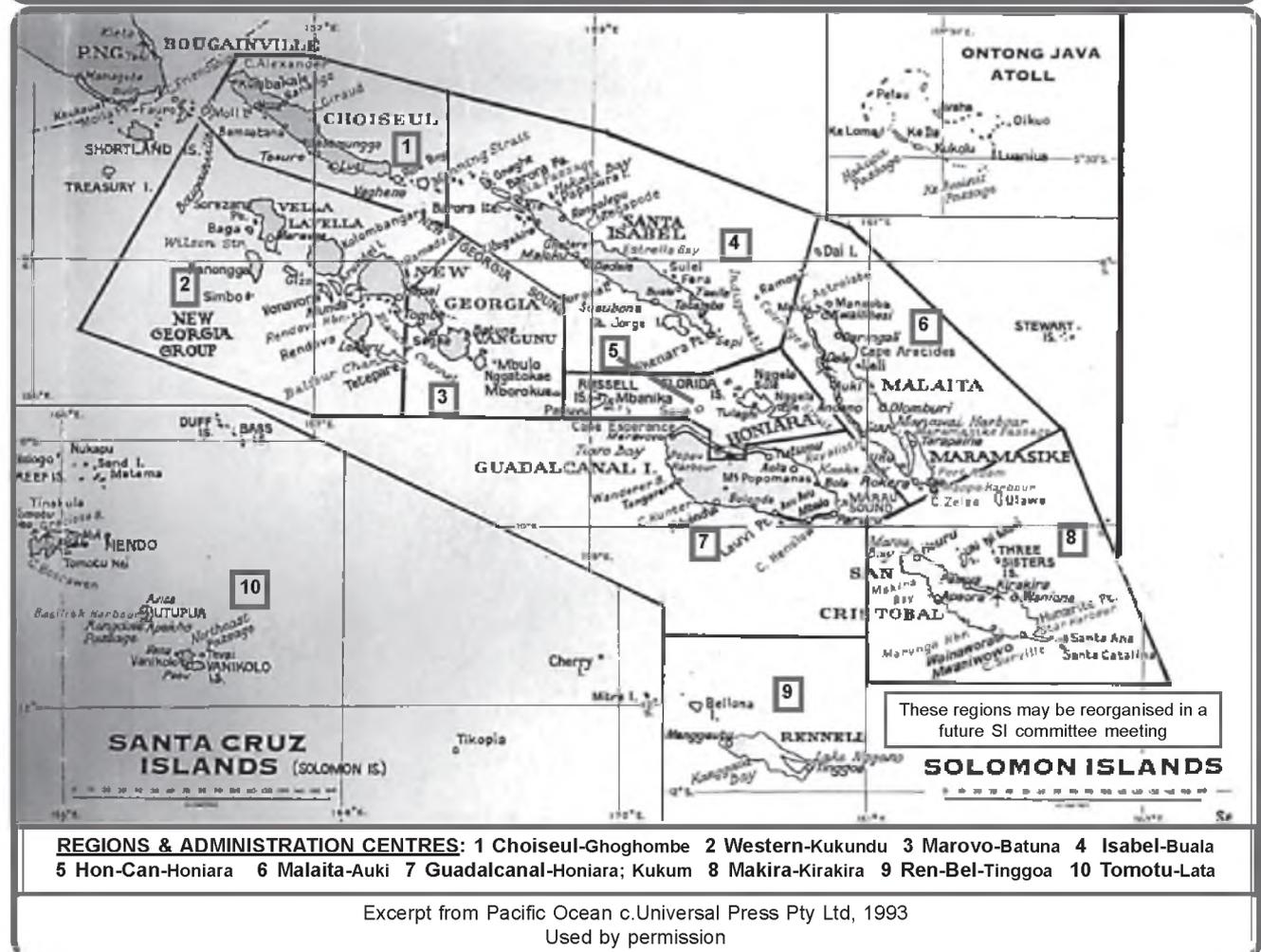
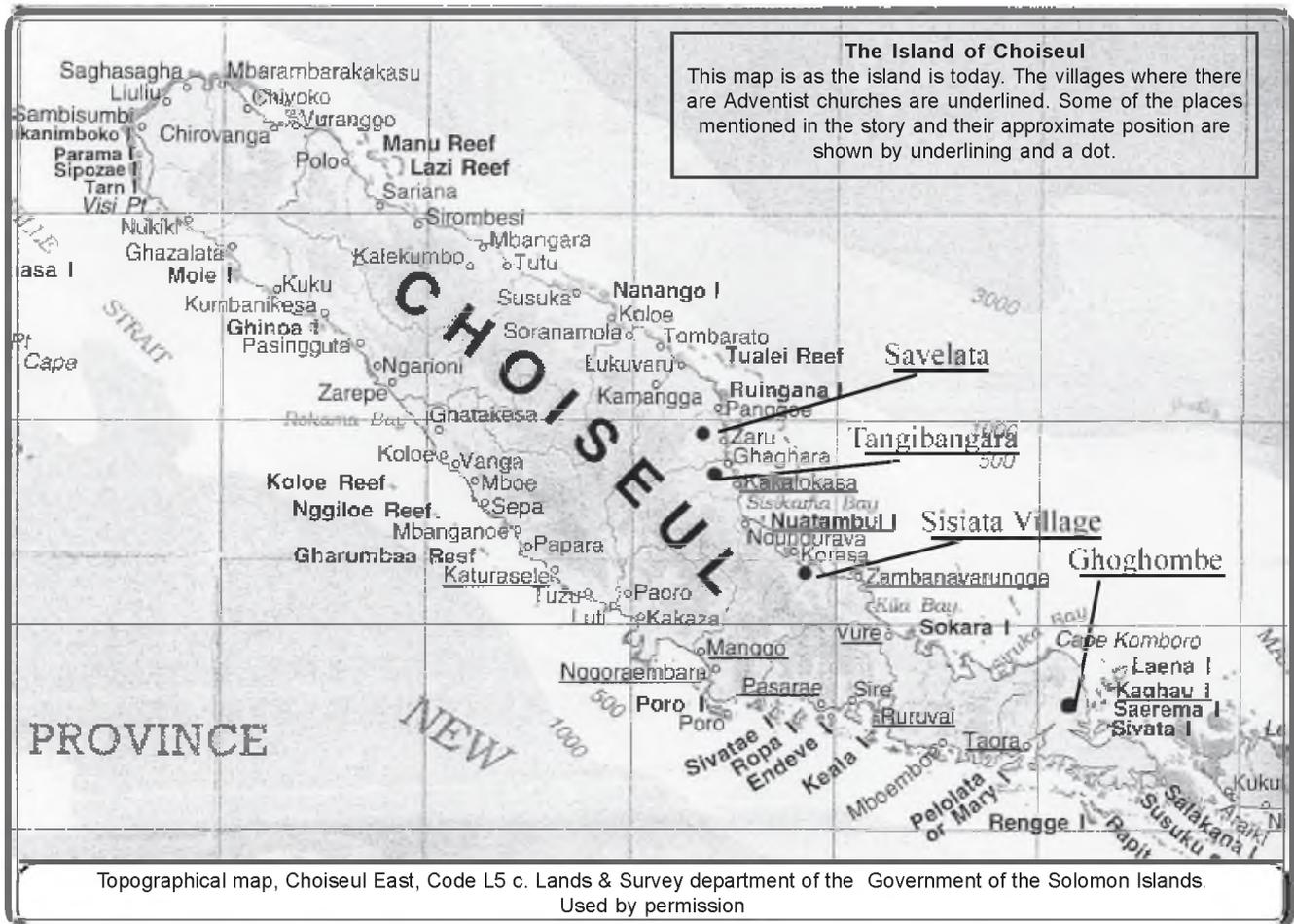
- Church teacher

Mr. Leleboe

- Long service church employee

And the list continues.

Since the arrival of the Seventh-day Adventist Church at Ghoghombe in 1921, churches were established and organized along the southern and northern shores of the island of Choiseul. Remote and neglected the island of Choiseul might have been, because of its remoteness, the *Lauru* people are part of the worldwide rainbow family of God. Ghoghombe is certainly the spot God has identified to begin His salvation work for the people of Choiseul and the church, once again. It will be the place Christ will come to meet His Church when He returns for His jewels. ♦



Out of Darkness into Marvellous Light

—the history of Tenabuti, Paripao District, Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands



MARTIN LOSI

Martin Losi, one of 8 children, was born at Tenabuti on 22-8-52. His parents were missionary teachers in Malaita, Bellona and around Guadalcanal serving the church from 1952-74.

After completing his primary & secondary education in the SIs he gained a Diploma of Theology from Sonoma College in PNG in 1974. From 1975 - 1988 he served in different places and in various positions in the field and in departmental work in Honiara.

In 1989 he went to Pacific Adventist College (now University) in PNG where he completed a BA in Theology in 1992. Later in 2003 he graduated from PAU with an MA in Theology.

In 1993 he became the Bible teacher and pastor of Kambubu High School in the Papua New Guinea Union Mission. From 1994 - 2000 he was a lecturer at Sonoma. In 2001 he came back to the Eastern Solomon Islands Mission as secretary then in 2002 he became president. After the reorganisation of the field in 2007 he was appointed the director for the Guadalcanal region of the Solomon Islands Mission.

In 1976 he married Martha Sooguku of Manus Island. They have three children, Luanne, works in the PNG Office of Climate Change in Port Moresby, Velarie is studying for a Business degree at PAU and their son is in Form 7 at Betikama College.

SEEKING TO RECRUIT LABOURERS from around Guadalcanal Island in the Solomon Islands, the Local Commissioner of Tulagi, Mr F N Ashley, sent a message to the district Commissioner at Aola. He then passed on the message to Mr Salemaneka, Andrew Togharopo's father, who was at the time the District Headman of the Paripao Ward. Mr Salemaneka had visited Queensland in the late 1800s during the black birding era and while in Australia he learned to speak some English. This opened the way for him to be chosen as District Headman and to work with the Colonial Government.

Mr Salemaneka held a meeting, sharing with the people the request of the District Commissioner at Aola Sub-station, to recruit labourers to work in a cargo boat. As a result two young men, Maneugu and Garimane Timba from Paripao offered their services. Mr Salemaneka took the boys from Tenabuti to Aola where they boarded a ship to Tulagi, the capital of the Solomon Islands at the time. On arrival at Tulagi they met up with other new recruits and together they travelled to Gizo, going as far as the Shortland Islands in the Western Solomons. Here they helped to unload cargo along the ports and then reload with copra for export.

On their return trip, young Maneugu became critically ill and despite a doctor's effort to save him, he died. Being denied a suitable place to preserve Maneugu's body on the boat for a land burial, burial at sea was their only option. With aching hearts they lowered him into the sea somewhere between the Shortland Islands and Gizo.

Within a few days illness struck again. Garimane Timba became ill and although a doctor stood by his side and made every effort to save him, he grew worse, slipped into unconsciousness and died just as they entered Seghe Passage.

When they arrived at Marovo Lagoon, the largest lagoon in the world, they docked at Lilihina Port, a well known place in those days. Early the next morning Salemaneka asked the captain if he could have some of the crew help him paddle a dingy ashore to the nearest village of Telina. In the 1920s, Telina was a clean and bright village and the headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. As they approached the wharf, waiting to greet them stood five men – Tatagu,



Andrew Togharopo

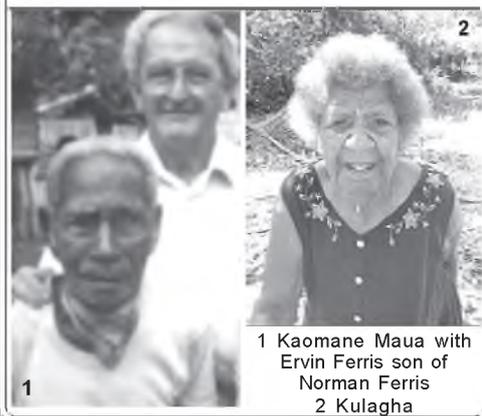
Peo



Telina Church



Kioto with his wife and family



1 Kaomane Maua with Ervin Ferris son of Norman Ferris
2 Kulagha



Pana, Jorovo Pidala, Kioto, and Peo, son of Tatagu. These men are known today to be the great pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Mission in the Marovo Lagoon.

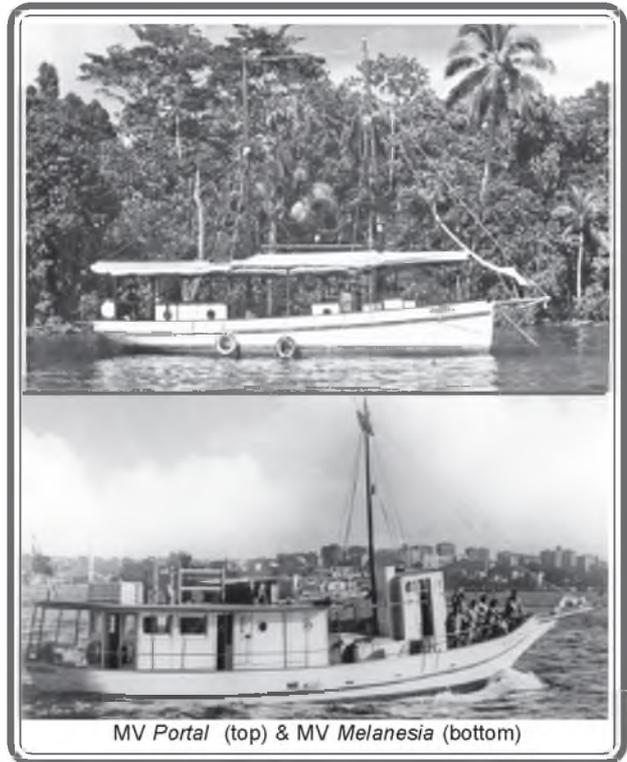
As Salemaneka turned his eyes towards the wharf he was captivated by the neat and clean looking people. Their smiling faces were bright and their clean white teeth shone in the bright tropical morning sun. As Salemaneka drew up to the shore, he could hold back the tears of grief no longer. The five men listened as he shared how Maneugu had taken ill and died at sea and how he was denied the opportunity to preserve the body in the cool room aboard the boat for proper burial on land. He described the burial at sea and how death struck again taking the life of Garimane Timba a relative of his, just as they entered Seghe Passage. Salemaneka requested a small piece of land where they could give Garimane Timba an honourable burial.

These kind pioneers of Telina sympathized with Salemaneka and offered him assistance along with a suitable piece of land on the small island of Niusarua just a few kilometres away. The people of the island prepared the site for burial and then conducted a spiritual service. Salemaneka had never witnessed any thing like this. The service was captivating and moving and the singing and prayers touched his grateful heart. The people of Telina were heartily thanked for their kindness and sympathy in the face of Salemaneka's urgent and desperate plea.

When Salemaneka returned home to Tenabuti, he told Chief Ghenatila Gava, brother of Garimane Timba, all about the sad experiences on the return voyage and the kindness of the people of Telina. Although saddened by the two deaths the chief was comforted by the attitude of the people of Telina and determined to invite a teacher from there to his village. When Chief Ghenatila Gava heard that his brothers-in-law Kaomane Maua at Koilotumuria, John Sesele at Bokoakimbo and Jim Vakalea at Belagha had received church teachers into their villages, he desperately wanted an Adventist teacher for Tenabuti.

Chief Ghenatila questioned his brother, Paul Ngata, whether the church his brothers-in-law had accepted was the right one and whether it was the same church that buried his brother at Niusarua. Paul advised that it was, so both of them decided to invite the Seventh-day Adventist church to supply a teacher to educate the children of Tenabuti village.

"Go now and get me a teacher!" Chief Ghenatila summoned his brother Paul. Paul hurried down to Bokoakimbo village and told John Sesele about his brother's request. That evening he and John went to Pastor Jugha at Burimae, a well known evangelist in the Guadalcanal District. They told him



about Chief Ghenatila Gava's desire for a teacher.

Before Pastor Jugha had time to pass Chief Ghenatila Gava's request on to anyone, Pastor Norman Ferris arrived at Bokoakimbo in his little boat, the MV Portal for an executive committee meeting at Batuna. The request for a teacher was presented at that committee meeting and it was agreed to appoint a young missionary teacher by the name of Kiko Juliasi.

Kiko Juliasi, who had been raised as a child in Batuna, boarded the mission boat MV *Melanesia* to travel to Guadalcanal and then on to Bokoakimbo. Along the way he stayed at Burimae with Pastor Jugha where he sent a message for someone to come and accompany him to Burimae. At that time Burimae was operated like a pioneering mission station for the Tasimate District.

A few days later news arrived at Tenabuti that the new teacher was ready and waiting in Burimae. The chief quickly asked Paul Ngata to go and bring him over. He took his brothers-in-law Kobia, Timonile Koivasi and Lighthotia (Mober's husband) to accompany him. They collected Kiko and his belongings and walked with him back to Tenabuti village that day. It was 13 August 1936, when these men arrived at Tenabuti along with Pastor Jugha. This took place exactly 70 years ago. (2006)

That evening Pr Jugha conducted the first devotional meeting right in front of the Luma (public thatched house) by the orange tree. He opened his picture roll and showed the people the lovely pictures of Jesus and read John 3:16 from the Bible. Those present that evening were Paul Ngata, Taghatinonia, Jimmy Saronga, Tagharuke, Tumu, Thomas Green, Philip Samanea, Vangalaka, Andrew Togharopo, Daniel Butoa, Tugu, Manekiki, Esther, Taghasulea, Kulagha, and Sele Uluhan.

Early the next day a small temporary house was constructed where morning and evening worship could be conducted. Kiko Juliasi stayed in this luma for the next six months while a permanent site was organised.

An old man by the name of Rade donated a small piece of land for the new mission school house. They built a classroom and a school house. Pastor Kiko Juliasi named the



1 Pastors Goropava (senior) & his wife; 2 Oti; 3 Kata Ragoso; 4 Sasa Rore; 5 Elisha Goropava; 6 A G Stewart; 7 Prs David and Norman Ferris

new school, 'New Place'. The children from Paripao and Tenabuti attended the school and learned to read and write. Pastor Kiko became the first pioneer missionary to the people of Tenabuti and Paripao village.

Pastor Kiko gathered all the men of Tenabuti and shared with them his desire to build a church where they could worship the God of heaven. They readily agreed to the idea and in 1938 the church was completed. This humble little church was dedicated and the following church leaders and national workers attended the dedication: Pastor Stewart (VP of AUC) as guest speaker, Pr Norman Ferris, Pr Arthur Pascoe (Principal of Batuna School), Pr Kata Ragoso Senior, Paul Ngata, Oti, Tivuru, and Pr Jugha.

As the guests arrived for the church dedication, Kiko Juliasi and his new congregation gathered in front of the building and sang songs of welcome in their honour.

After the service a baptism was conducted about an hours walk away at Maraghatitia, by a river. This baptism was the first in Tenabuti, a village steeped in paganism. The four candidates were Paul Ngata, his wife Taghatinonia, Tagharuke, and his wife Tumtu. These four precious souls were baptised by

Pastor Norman Ferris as first fruits of the gospel in Central Tasimate.

In 1939, the year after the baptism, Pastor Ferris and Pastor Jugha invited Paul Ngata to go with them to Batuna for 3 months. While there Chief Ghenatila became seriously ill and died. Kiko Juliasi conducted the burial service.

On returning home Paul continued his support for the work of the church and assisted the work of Kiko Juliasi. Pastor Ferris and Pastor Jugha invited Paul and Tagharuke to go back to Batuna with them for 3 months to see for themselves the growth and operations of the church and its activities in the Marovo Lagoon where the headquarters was first established. Exposing these two new converts from Tenabuti to more of the truth of God and the practices of the church would strengthen the faith and belief and their church members back in Tenabuti. They believed it would also help to encourage the heathen villagers to come to church and learn more.

Unfortunately, unexpected problems arose at Tenabuti. The land owners ordered the people to remove their church from the village. "This is your marching orders," one said. "Take your church away and find your own land somewhere else".

Paul Ngata and Tagaruke humbly answered, "Thank you very much, we will do just as you say!" The next day the church was moved from Tenabuti to Soghautu (the second Tenabuti).

In Paripao there was a small group of SDA church members led by Daenisamu. Thurua and Maningelea had remained committed members there. Timothy, the newly appointed mission teacher, arrived with Pastor Goropava. Pr Jugha had been transferred to Isabel sometime earlier. Pastor Goropava had previously been posted to Ghainiviti where his wife became sick and died. Her grave is now covered by sea where it is known as the Adeade Sea. Pastor Goropava was left with his beautiful sunny boy named Elisha, who later became a renowned pastor of the SDA church. Pastor Goropava and Elisha moved to Tenabuti during World War II.

At Paripao Timothy and his faithful congregation built a small church for their worship. Kiko Juliasi built his second church at the second Tenabuti (Soghautu). This second church building was dedicated by Pastor Norman Ferris and also by Pastor David Ferris, a Ministerial Medical Missionary who had been posted to Kwailabesi on Malaita. Also present at this time were our national mission workers: Pastor Sasa Rore, Pastor Panda Hite, Goropava, Pitapana, Tapalaboe, Sosopu, Bakete, Puke, Riringi, Piani, Ropiti, Birei, Piukana, Navala, Meani, Tesi and Dikolo. After the dedication 14 candidates were baptised at the Tenakogo River by Pastor Norman Ferris, Pastors Sasa Rore and Panda Hite.

This was the second baptism, and among those who were baptised were Teteo, Garimane, Taghabasoe, Sura Ruale, Manekiki, Sarasavo, Vangalaka, Kulagha, Ghana, Snile, Daenisamu, and Leuape. This church dedication and baptism was held in 1941.

For some reason during the Second World War Daenisamu decided to move away from Paripao and settled at Teabari. With him were his small group of believers and their teacher, Timothy.

At this time the church faced some financial problems and decided to cut down on workers. It was suggested that the group from Teabari and Soghautu should come together at one particular site, as the mission could only afford one teacher. The group from Soghautu moved to Verekua and those from Teabari moved to Tenabusa. A slight slope separated the two villages by a distance of about 200 meters. The new settlement became convenient areas for a school and church building. What a great reunion. Verekua became the third Tenabuti.

After 8 years Pastor Ngili organised the construction of another church which was dedicated by Pastor Wally Ferguson in 1956. This was the fourth church building that Paul Ngata had seen built.

With the population increasing and water becoming a problem it was evident that moving to a new location would be necessary. The group from Tenabusa decided to move down to Gezar and the people of Verekua (Tenabuti) moved to Govu (New Tenabuti).



Ruby Ferris (wife of Norman) & Paul Ngata



Paul Ngata



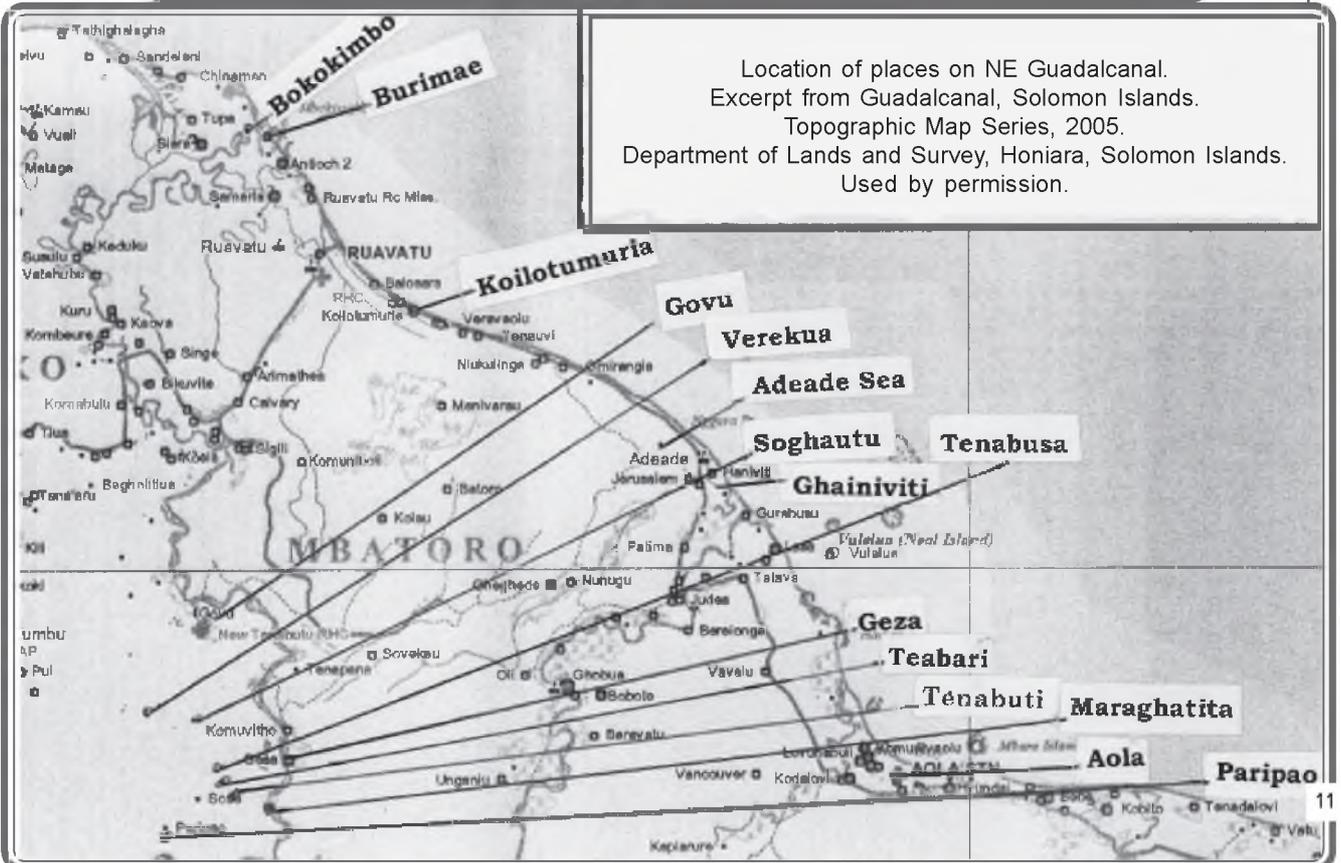
Martha and Martin Losi

In Gova, Paul Ngata and his church members built two more new churches out of bush materials. Later they began to build a permanent building. It had not been completed when, sadly, it was destroyed by Cyclone Namu in 1986. Paul saw the start of this lovely new building, but he did not witness its completion and dedication. How he would have loved to! It is our hope that the church will be dedicated in 2011.

Today marks the 70th anniversary of the arrival of Pastor Kiko Juliasi at Tenabuti, 13 August 1936. He was our great pioneers who brought the gospel of Jesus Christ to us, and led us 'out of darkness into the marvellous light of the gospel'. (This article was written in 2006) ◆



These people were at Tenabuti when Pastor Juliasi arrived there: Serah Taghasulea & Losi Metasonia (Pr Losi's parents); Andrew Togharopo; the son of Juliasi— Guest speaker; Jim Saronga; Leauape Robert; Kulagha, the last person a visitor (Not Known)



Location of places on NE Guadalcanal.
Excerpt from Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands.
Topographic Map Series, 2005.
Department of Lands and Survey, Honiara, Solomon Islands.
Used by permission.

Adopt a Clinic— what happened to those clinics?



CHESTER KUMA

Originally from the Solomons, Dr Kuma joined Adventist Health, SPD in early 2006. Following the completion of his undergraduate training in medicine in 1986, he joined the staff at Sopas Adventist Hospital, PNG as medical officer. He then spent the next 13 years at Atoifi in the Solomons where he worked as senior medical officer and later as Chief Executive Officer for the next ten years. Dr Kuma completed specialist training in surgery in 2002 and was appointed Head of Surgery for the country. He now is thoroughly enjoying his new role at the SPD.

Medical missionary work has always been a great interest of his. The concept of 'Health promoting churches' in particular stands out as one of his major interests. He believes that if this concept of health can be developed further and incorporated within our system of local churches, it can become a powerful tool for witnessing at the grass roots level. He married Vaime on 16.12.84 at Betikama and they have three children; Roderick, Rheeamma and Nathan.

Do you remember those pictures that used to appear on our annual 'Appeal for Missions' magazines in the old days when our annual appeal was entirely for Pacific Island projects? Often they showed islanders being treated for yaws and tropical ulcers and mothers being taught how to care for their babies. Have you ever wondered whether treatments like these are still being given? Dr Chester Kuma's article will enlighten you on what we are doing today to carry on the medical missionary work started in those far off days. Dr Kuma's work as Associate Director of our Division Health Department means that he has first-hand knowledge of what is going on in our island medical work.

CLINICS IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS have always been an important component of the church's medical work, serving thousands of people every year with essential basic health services, including hygiene, immunisations, birthing, and child care. Many people will never see a doctor in their lifetime, and their only access to health care is what is provided by a nurse at a clinic. In some areas people will walk or paddle up to three days to reach a clinic with a sick relative or a young mother about to give birth.

Throughout the Pacific medical missionary work played a significant role in the spread of the gospel in the days of the pioneers. Through these humble establishments the light of truth penetrated heathenism and played a significant role in the advancement of the gospel message to many previously unentered areas. Our 54 clinics continue to perform this important work even today.

STORIES FROM OUR CLINICS

Honoa Clinic, Solomon Islands

Honoa village is located on the eastern side of the island of Malaita. It is a Catholic dominated area and so for many years a very difficult area to move into. In 1992 Rukurae, the village chief, fell ill and was taken to Atoifi Hospital for treatment. His health improved, and on his discharge from the hospital he gave an invitation for the Adventist church to establish a clinic in his village. It took three years before the clinic was finally established, but since then its impact on that area has been amazing. Soon after, a little church began in this Catholic village. Village people began attending, and soon Chief Rukurae and his son were baptised. Today that church is thriving. But there was another amazing



The permanent clinic building at Honoa completed in 2005 with the help of AusAid

development. We have received invitations from other villages and communities in that region, and today we can count six new churches established in Eastern Malaita because of that one clinic.



The nurse at Honoa

Biluro Clinic, Solomon Islands

Biluro is located on Isabel, the longest island in the Solomons. Because the island is dominated by the Anglican Church, our entry there was slow and difficult. As a result of a small window of opportunity, we were able to build a clinic at Biluro, with the support of the local mission and the Trans Pacific Union Mission. With further support from the Adopt a Clinic initiative (explained later), we have a wonderful clinic that provides health services to more than ten



The nurse at Biluro



The building of the Biluro Clinic

villages. The clinic was also provided with a boat with an outboard motor, which is used to run satellite clinics along the coast to provide maternal and child health, immunisation, and family planning programs. Now the church has been invited to run health outreach programs throughout the whole island.



Buildings and staff at Togoba Clinic

Togoba Clinic, PNG

Togoba Clinic is located in the Western Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea. It is one of our oldest clinics in PNG. It first started as a leprosarium, but over the years it has had a change of role, and now functions as one of our major clinics in the PNG highlands. Its significance lies in the fact that the Western Highlands Province has the highest incidence of HIV/AIDS in PNG. The number of people affected by this deadly disease is increasing at an alarming rate, and clinics such as Togoba are bearing the weight of the epidemic in caring for those affected as well as meeting the usual every day medical problems.



The clinic and the staff at Tumolbil

Tumolbil Clinic, PNG

Tumolbil is situated near the border between PNG and Irian Jaya. The only way to get there is by light aircraft as it is so remote and isolated. The Baptist Church initially ran a clinic there, but after some years they left because of its isolation. Then the Catholic Church took over the running of the clinic, but they too decided it was too hard. Soon after they left the people of the area made a special request to the Adventist Church to care for the clinic and provide much needed health services. This we did, and before long our mission plane was flying into Tumolbil, bringing much needed medical help from Sopas Hospital. Nursing staff were selected and sent there and soon the clinic work flourished. The people were so happy that they decided to build an additional ward where patients could be admitted for treatment. They prepared timber with knives and axes, bought window frames and panes, and before long a brand new building was set up. The only problem was that it had no beds or mattresses. As a result of the medical work there, people have begun to flock into our little church, and every Sabbath the church is crowded. Currently we have two community health workers there, one of whom is married to our pastor for that area. The pastor tells us that great and wonderful things are happening at Tumolbil. The people there have been so impressed with the work of our medical staff that they are asking for Bible studies. Praise the Lord!

PROBLEMS WITH OUR CLINICS

Clinic Buildings and Equipment

Our 54 clinics range from bush huts to well established buildings. What they all have in common, however, is the poor state of their buildings. Ninety-five per cent of our clinics are in a sad state of disrepair, and need renovations and maintenance. For example, Togoba needs repairs and maintenance and staff accommodation. Honoa needs a new staff house. Tumolbil needs beds and mattresses in its inpatient ward.

It is easy to say that the responsibility lies with the villages served by the clinics, but the situation is more complex than that. Many villages are indeed willing to do as much as they can, but most of the villagers live a simple life style, and do not create any great income with which to buy supplies and materials.

Many of our nurses live in remote areas, and are required to work and live in substandard and often unsafe buildings. They are paid only 60 per cent of the government wage, but they are happy to do this because they see it as their contribution to the medical missionary work of the church.

At over 70 per cent of the clinics blood pressure cannot be checked because they lack a stethoscope or a blood pressure machine. None of them have a complete suture set, delivery set, or incision and drainage set. These are not high cost items, but they are essential to providing safe and professional health care. Many of the clinic buildings do not have access to running water or any form of power. Buckets of water have to be brought in, and deliveries and procedures done at night rely on the inadequate lighting of a torch or kerosene lantern. With the great efficiency brought about by improved facilities and equipment at the clinics, greater emphasis could be placed on prevention.

For many of the clinics agreements are in place for the government to meet the operating costs such as wages and drug supplies. What is needed is assistance to restore the buildings and adequately equip the clinics. Support and improvement to clinics will have significant impact on many lives in terms of better health and improved productivity in the rural areas.

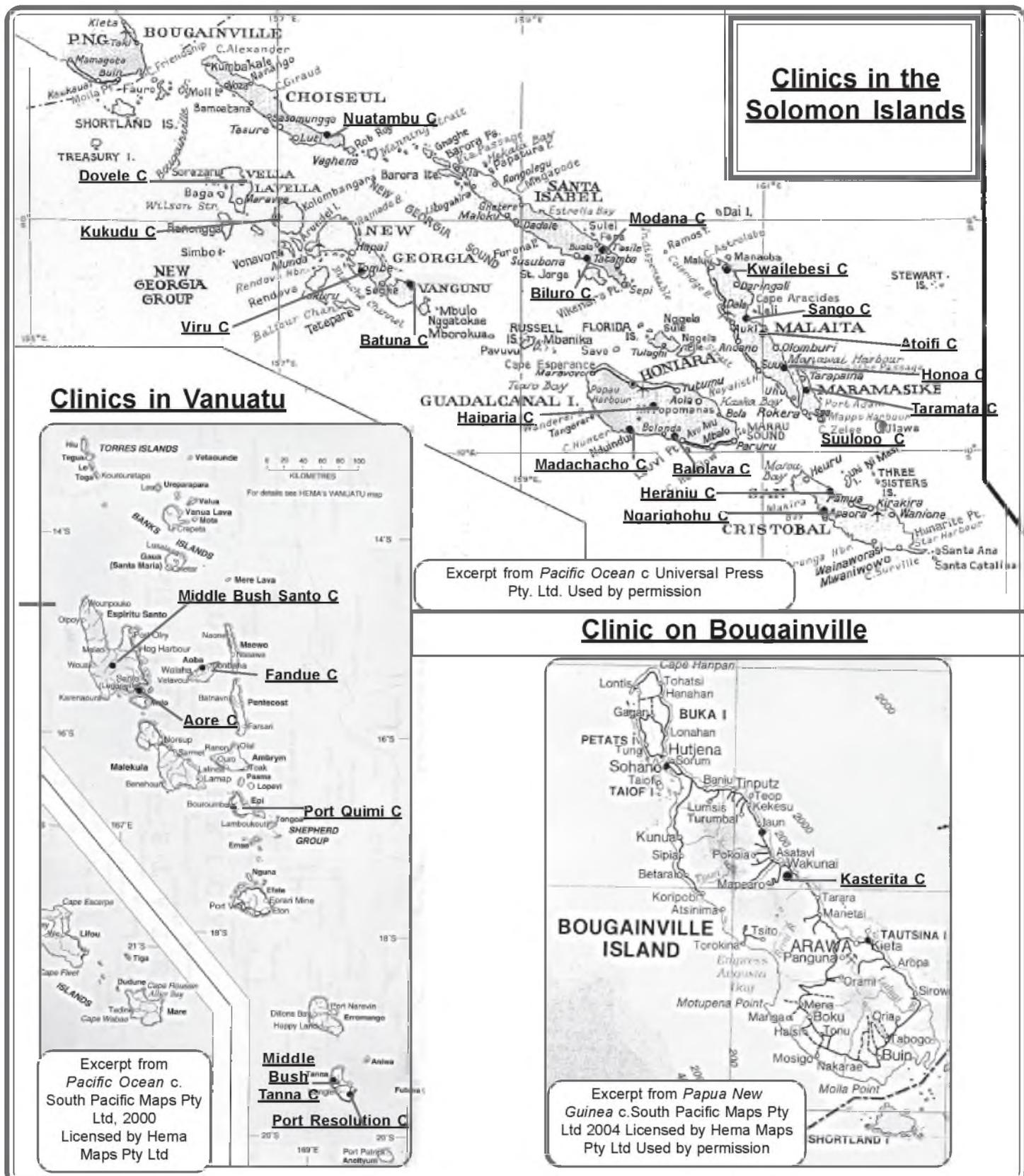
ADOPT A CLINIC

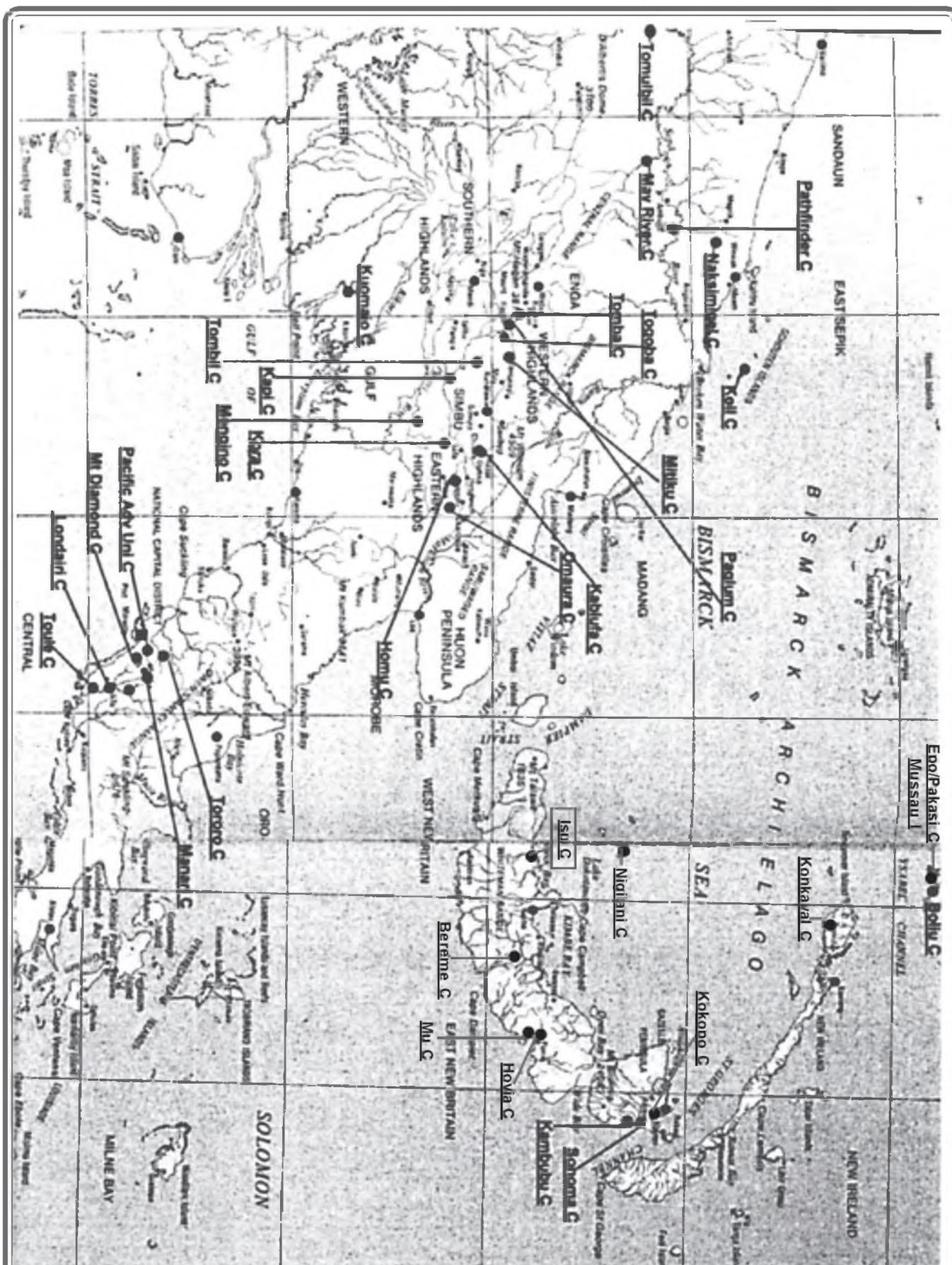
Too many people suffer and die from treatable and preventable

diseases. It is our dream that all our clinics become models of exemplary health care in the countries where they operate. We would love to see every church in Australia and New Zealand adopt a clinic. The Adopt a Clinic concept is not just about raising funds for the clinic; it is also about supporting the clinic spiritually through prayer, encouragement, and keeping their morale high knowing that they are not forgotten.

The Adopt a Clinic Program provides our churches with

an opportunity to make a significant contribution to improving health and welfare for those less fortunate than ourselves, and provide them with an opportunity to know Jesus and experience true healing. We believe there will be mutual benefit from this project: the adopted clinic will benefit tremendously from the support given, while the adopting church will benefit from a rekindling of the mission spirit. ♦





Clinics in Papua New Guinea. New Britain and New Ireland

The Aeroplane in Papua New Guinea vol 1 p. 286,7. From Ballus, Robert and R C Brown, Publishers

Five Years in the Sepik—Part 3

evidence of God's presence and care



Synopsis: A government outpost was situated over 300 kilometres from Ambunti in Papua New Guinea among a treacherous population. It was suggested that the mission establish a school there. After some negotiations with the people and the government, a site was chosen and preparations were made to establish the school and bring a teacher to it.

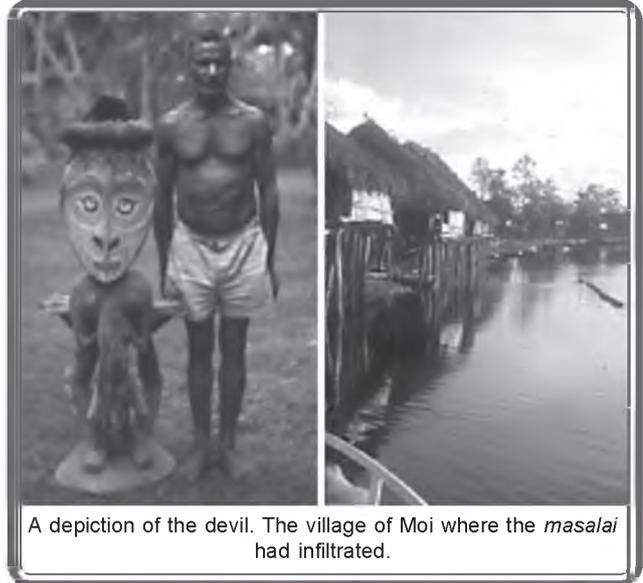
DEVIL IN THE DOORWAY

A FEW WEEKS LATER we returned to May River with Salapan, a Manus Island teacher, and his family. The materials for the school and house on the ridge were all ready. Excitement was in the air, both at the compound and in what was now 'our' village.

While we had been away, many of the people had decided that they would move out of the existing village and build their new homes around the church and school. We were delighted by this news and felt that the Holy Spirit must have been working quietly with the villagers. But we had thought it was not quite the time to suggest this just yet. The buildings were erected quickly and willingly, but the teacher's house was not quite completed by the end of our last day there. Salapan decided that he and his family would move in and do the finishing touches later. The boat's crew, a few helpers, and I retired to the *Durua* for the night. We had worked consistently and were tired. We slept well.

Salapan didn't. He was waiting on the wharf for us to awake next morning. He had quite a story to tell.

He and his family had gone to bed about 8:00 pm. The family was sleeping soundly under the large mosquito net when, about 11:00, Salapan was disturbed by a noise. Thinking someone had come to steal his belongings, he quietly lifted the corner of the net and peeped out. All was still. He silently crept a little further out to find his torch. Suddenly a



bright light filled the room and there, standing in the doorway, was the devil himself! Quickly Salapan reached for his tomahawk and tried to jump to his feet but he fell, seemingly paralysed. He tried to call out but could only manage a stifled grunt.

Meanwhile, Salapan's wife had wakened, quickly taken in the situation and called out, "Jesus, help us." Instantly, the devil disappeared. Salapan came out in a cold sweat as he told the story of those few seconds of terror.

We had planned to leave at sunrise but we climbed down into a canoe and went back to Salapan's house. There we all had a season of prayer with him and his family. Before we left we hung a large picture of Jesus, with His arms outstretched, in the doorway. Never again was Salapan troubled in this way at May River. A couple of hours later, on our way downstream, we called in to the village of Moi where we had previously been warned of an infiltration by *masalai*¹ from Lumi. This village was about thirty miles from the patrol post and, travelling with the current, it had taken us just over two hours to get there. The first person to jump on board was the *luluai*²

"Marta Marta!" he cried. (The May River people have trouble with 's') "All the *masalai* have gone back to Lumi and you will have no more trouble from them." He stood there with a great grin from ear to ear and I thanked him for the information. We remained friends until I left the Sepik a few years later. He was always cooperative and courteous and we had a following in his village. But he never told me why the *masalai* went back to Lumi. Did he need to?

THE 'EYES' HAVE IT!

Some time after this, we were again on our way to May River. We were carrying hundreds of sprouting coconuts (*kru*)

to be distributed among the villages of the Upper River. The *Durua* looked like an overstocked plant nursery as we headed upstream. There were few coconut trees in this region and those that grew, did so very slowly. We had brought 'seven-year' coconuts to Ambunti but they had not survived.

These kru nuts filled every nook and cranny of our boat, two or three deep in the cabin. We could hardly move for them and their leaves kept tickling our legs. Three very long days later we arrived at May River. Several dozen were off loaded at the wharf and we continued upstream further than we had ever been before. At each village we would issue as many nuts as they would take and give careful instructions on how to plant them.

On our way back downstream we tied the *Durua* up at the village of Auri and prepared the evening meal. I elected to have only a light supper and warmed up a tin of spaghetti. After serving it onto a plate, I went out onto the deck under the kerosene lamp to eat with the others.

Out of the inky blackness came the *luluai*, who stood nearby watching us eat. A minute or two later he disappeared but was soon back with *tutul*³ and both stood silently looking. Then they both disappeared but I was somewhat taken aback when a few minutes later I looked up into the whites of no fewer than fifteen pairs of eyes all watching me eat my spaghetti. Then they began to chatter among themselves. Finally one man dared to ask quite seriously, "Master, are you eating snakes?"

Equally seriously I replied. "I am not eating snakes."

"Well, what are you eating?"

"I am eating flour in tomato sauce."

They burst into prolonged laughter and my attempted explanation of the process of manufacturing spaghetti had them laughing all the more!

Pastor Baungasi eased the situation by sending them all off to the *hausbot*⁴ in the middle of the village where, no doubt, they sat down and discussed the dietary idiosyncrasies of white people until the early hours of the morning.

The next night, at another village, we decided to show some movies I had taken in this area on an earlier trip. Suddenly there were shrieking and shouting as several women stumbled over seated bodies and fled into the darkness. They had never seen movies before and thought the spirits of the dead had returned. After some coaxing they came back and we continued without further interruption. Some of the men were quite entertained to recognise friends from down the river. On later trips I showed them pictures of themselves and these were always popular.

One morning a crowd of children gathered on the bank to watch us wash in the river. One of our party had false teeth. These he ceremoniously removed and thrust in the direction of the onlookers. With a horrified "Whoop!" and a cloud of dust, those thirty-odd youngsters disappeared into the bush. When they returned a short time later, we had a little game with them; getting them to try to remove their own teeth. I didn't figure too highly in their estimation because I couldn't get mine out, but my friend was a mighty hero!

Mary often accompanied me on trips before our children were born. In many villages they had never seen a white man, let alone a white woman. On many occasions the people would rub our arms and legs to see if the 'white' would come off. It

was quite disconcerting at first but we got used to it. Could it be they were trying to determine whether we were suitable to eat?

Sometimes the Upper River people would ask us to buy them goods at the trade store at Ambunti. "Please sir. I'd like a lamp just like Kapai got three years ago." I didn't even know Kapai.

"What size lamp would you like?"

"Oh, not too big. Only a little bit big."

Or they might want some material for a laplap⁵.

"What colour would you like?" I'd ask.

"Blue, the same as a banana leaf," would be the serious reply.

Any colour would do in these remote areas.

We asked about the seed coconuts we had delivered on the previous visit.

"They are not growing, master. We've eaten them all. We got hungry so we dug them up and ate them."

SORCERER SUBDUED

We arrived back at Yau-en-ain just as the brief sunset was gilding the tops of the trees at the edge of the now flooded river. The rubbish and paraphernalia of village life was now inundated. Pigs, dogs and fowls no longer ran freely through the village. The whole scene was one of peaceful tranquillity; a contrast to our previous impressions. We were now able to tie up at the communal meetinghouse in the centre of the village. In no time, the beautiful sunset had changed into a brilliant starlit night; only the incessant whine of innumerable mosquitoes spoil the perfection. Tribal elders had stirred up the smoky fires in the meetinghouse to provide protection from the mosquitoes. Here we were to hold worship and show coloured slides. It usually took a couple of days to air after such a meeting.

The Sepik is renowned for its mosquitoes. Many stories are told about them (e.g. One night two mosquitoes picked up a baby boy at Ambunti and flew up into a mountain. There they discussed what they would do. "Shall we take it to Angoram to eat?" Angoram was about one hour's flying away. "No," said the other. "The BIG mosquitoes might take it from us.")

Just after dusk they swarm by the millions and it is almost impossible to take a breath without inhaling some. Sprays and swats seemed only to encourage them. This evening was no exception; but finally it was over and we had everything packed up and returned to the ship.

The *luluai* materialised out of the darkness; he was alone.



A native mosquito net

“Master, I’d like to talk.” Without the usual preamble, I realised he must have something important to say. “I’d like Pastor Baungasi to be here too,” he continued. So, in a moment, the three of us settled down on the after deck; a breeze kept the mosquitoes to a minimum and the *luluai* began his story.

“After you left last time, we had a meeting of all the head men of this village. We wanted a school. We marked out the land. We planned who should get the poles, the leaf, and the flooring. Nearly everybody wanted the school and I was pleased. But the witch doctor was not pleased; he said that bad things would happen. He said that you would take away our boys and we would never see them again. I told the people that everything would be all right but the witch doctor was very cross. One night he came and put a spell under my house: possums’ fur, a chicken liver, some cassowary feathers and a bone that he had chanted over.

“I am going to die; I will die very soon. The school must stay. We don’t want the teacher to leave. What shall I do? Tonight the witch doctor will be back to strengthen the spell and I will die quickly.”

We had sat quietly while he had spoken. Baungasi and I exchanged glances and I nodded for him to reply.

“Witch doctors are the same everywhere; they do not like schools because the children learn to be wise. They do not like missions because the people no longer fear the witch-doctors. When the people believe in God they are no longer frightened of these spells. They do not give pigs and chickens to the witch doctor in payment for his spells. So the witch doctor loses not only his power but also his wealth. Our God is very strong. His workboys (angels) are very strong too. They will not let the devil trouble you or the people who want God to help them. The devil cannot make you die if you want God to protect you and if you want to go God’s way.” The *luluai* sat nodding as Baungasi explained all this.

“I want to do this” he said.

Baungasi continued; “I will come and sleep in your house to be there when the witch-doctor comes tonight.” The *luluai* grinned from ear to ear. I nodded my approval to Baungasi and, after prayer, the two left.

This is the story Baungasi told us the next morning. Soon after they had gone to bed he sensed rather than heard the witch doctor approaching. Before retiring, much to the consternation of the *luluai* Baungasi had scattered the spell items that were under the house that was built up five feet from the ground. Through a hole in the floor he watched as the sorcerer came nearer. The intruder coaxed the smouldering *bombom* (dried leaves) into a flame for a torch and crept in till he was under the spot where Baungasi was watching. Just as he discovered what had happened to his spell, Baungasi dropped a piece of sweet potato on to his crouching shoulders. With that, the witch doctor fled the scene leaving an amused and relieved pair of observers.

It was time for morning worship. We had decided to say nothing about the nocturnal episode as we met with the village men. The witch doctor was also present. Afterwards, he came to us and asked if his son could attend our school. This was his way of dropping his opposition and acknowledging a power greater than his. And the *luluai*? No, he didn’t die. I still remember his grinning face as he declared, “The big God, who stops in the heaven on top, is very strong.”

“WHILE THEY ARE YET SPEAKING”

We left Yau-en-ain early. Home at Ambunti was a day’s sailing downstream. We carefully navigated the narrow stream down to the main river. It was between seasons and we had to be on the watch for submerged logs and new sandbanks. I took the wheel while the boat’s crew had breakfast. When we came to the main stream of the Sepik I handed the helm to Jonah, advising him to keep in the current and watch for drifting timbers. I then went to eat my breakfast.

It had been a good trip. We had helped the government by taking a policeman and his family to the May River outpost. At the district office, Des, the assistant district officer (ADO), had told me that there would be no more shipping on the upper river for some time. It is always helpful to know who or what is in the area. I sat down to eat, thankful that we’d had no accidents and were now on our way home. I had been away from home for two weeks, a little shorter than usual perhaps. Yes, it would be good to be back home.

As I was eating there was a slight bump against the hull of the *Durua*. “That’s strange,” I thought. “Doesn’t seem like a we hit a log.” I glanced out the cabin window. We were quite close to the port side of the river when we should be well to starboard in the current. I pushed the stool back and stood up to go to the wheelhouse. Then came two more bumps and the *Durua* almost stopped dead. The impact threw me into the wheelhouse quicker than I had planned.

We had been travelling down with the stream and were doing about eighteen kilometres an hour. The three-knot current slewed the *Durua* round and we heeled steeply to port as the current pinned us to the sandbank. The jolt had tossed three or four passengers overboard but the water was fortunately only about a metre deep. They thought it was a huge joke.

I ordered the anchors to be taken to deep water well upstream in front of the *Durua*. Every able-bodied passenger jumped into the chest deep water and was told to push. The crew stood by the winches and I manned the wheelhouse. With the engines full ahead, the winches winding and passengers pushing, we hoped to make deep water. But our efforts were futile; the *Durua* was hopelessly stuck.

I called Baungasi and the boat’s crew together to assess the situation. Held fast to a sandbank by a three-knot current and the river level dropping around half a metre a day, the *Durua* could be high and dry till next wet season six months away. Jonah was all apologies.

I addressed the crew and passengers, some of whom were not Christians. “There is only one thing to do. We shall pray that God will send someone to come and get us out of this mess.” We were on a long stretch of river with probably a mile in each direction to the nearest bend.

There was not a canoe in sight. Not a bird, not even a crocodile. The silence was broken only by the muted swirl of the water around the hapless hull ship.

Pastor Baungasi prayed first, then I. Simple prayers from the bottom of our helpless hearts. “Dear Lord, you can see our predicament. We can’t do anything about it. You know how much we are looking forward to being home again. If the *Durua* stays here for six months we will not be able to do much work. We need her. You are the only one we can turn to. Please help us for Jesus’ sake. Amen.” As one man we all opened our

eyes and looked downstream towards home.

“What’s that? It can’t be, but it is.” Just coming into view around the bend was a boat: a little far for positive identification just yet; but a boat! And immediately behind it was a houseboat. I eagerly grabbed the binoculars and focused on the craft. Yes, it was the government patrol boat *Opal* and the ADO’s houseboat. The crew jumped into the dinghy and rowed out to deep water to meet them. Explanations were made and a huge coil of rope was fed out as the dinghy returned to us. By joining three or four lines together we had enough so as not to endanger the *Opal*. Once again I took the wheel.

“When the line gets tight you must rock the *Durua* as hard as you can.” (I knew it would not be much but it would help.) Then it was ‘Full ahead’ on the throttle, and simultaneously black diesel smoke belched from the two boats’ funnels. “Rock it, shove it, wind that winch!” I yelled. And would you believe it? Slowly, very slowly, the *Durua* began to move. “Shove harder!” I yelled, and again every shoulder heaved. A little more and she was out of the trough she had made for herself. Then came a huge cheer from both ships as the *Durua*, still under tow, slid easily over the mudbank into deeper wa-

ter and pulled alongside the houseboat. The inevitable question, “What happened?” having been answered, I told Des that we had just finished praying when he came into sight.

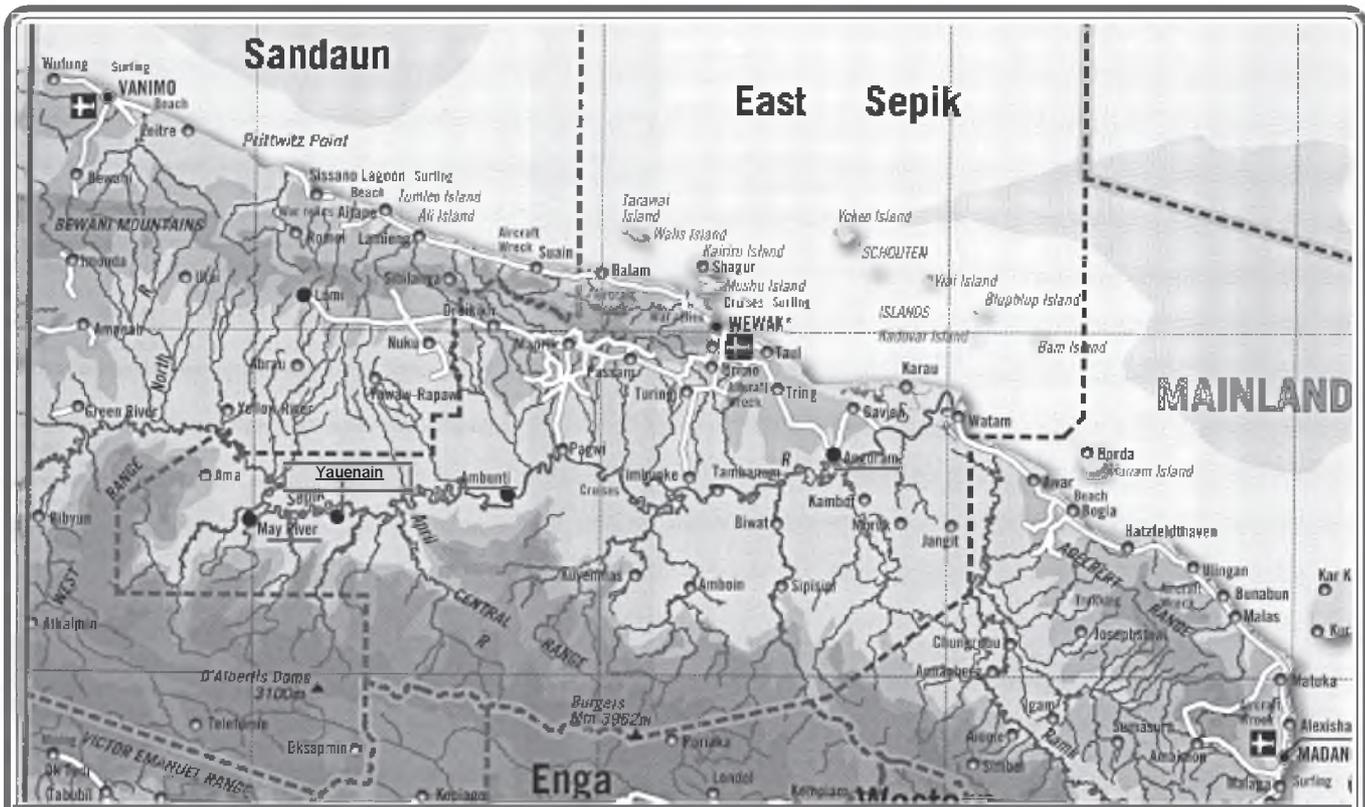
“I thought you told me there would be no shipping up river for sometime.”

“Yes, that’s right. I did. But I somehow felt we would try to fit in a patrol to May River. We left Ambunti yesterday.”

I glanced at my watch. From the time I had stood up to go into the wheelhouse at that first bump, till now, was just one hour. It had seemed much longer. The *Opal* had come in sight during our prayer. While we were yet speaking! God’s timing is accurate to the second.

- 1 Masalai are water spirits, feared but not worshipped.
- 2 The luluai is the government-appointed village chief.
- 3 The tultul is the assistant village chief appointed by the government.
- 4 Hausboi: native boys’ quarters.
- 5 Laplap: loincloth or any material.

New Guinea had not obtained its independence at the time the Aldridges were there. The Australian government controlled the country. Ambunti was a small government outpost on the banks of the Sepik River. ♦



Excerpt from Papua New Guinea c Jasons Travel Media Ltd 2005. Used by permission

The Pacific — many years ago

Tonga — First Adventist to Niue Is.

Niue (or Savage) Island. As early as 1911 it was proposed to send a worker to Niue (midway between the Cook and Tonga groups), but opposition was so great that the matter was postponed. A deacon of a little Seventh-day Adventist church in Rarotonga, himself a native of Niue, learning of the matter, decided to go there at his own expense. He worked alone, even printing several Niuean tracts before a European family joined him in 1914. Emma Howell, *Great Advent Movement*. R & H 1935

1903 statistics in Polynesia

Fiji: 1 church, 119 members	Tonga: 20 members	Cook Is: 1 church, 20 members
Samoa: no church organised, 10 members	Pitcairn: 1 church 60 members	5th Biennial Conference 3 Sept 1903

Aviation in the Western Pacific

1970—1977

COLIN WINCH



Born in Toowoomba, on 2 July 1932, Colin later moved to Sydney. He attended Mortlake Primary school then transferred to Burwood Adventist Primary & High School, successfully completing Grade 11 1949.

He worked for a year at the Sanitarium Health Food Co in Sydney, then trained as a nurse at the San (Sydney Adventist Hospital) in Wahroonga for the next four years. The following year, he married Melva Franklin on 22 November. From 1956-77 & then 1982-83 he worked in the Pacific mission fields of the SDA church for 33 years serving in a variety of positions: hospital director, district supervisor, school principal, senior pilot, acting administrator and later as president of regional missions, church pastor, a union mission youth & health director, General Secretary of PNGUM (1982-85), President of PNGUM (1985-86), President of CPUM (1987-90), President WPUM (1990-93) ending his Pacific service. From 1978-81 he was the first Chief Flying Instructor at Avondale College Flying School at Cooranbong. Also from 1980-94 he was the SPD Chief pilot & examiner of pilots. The Winchs have 4 children: Kerry, Carol, Nerolie & Christopher. In retirement Colin still flies & teaches students to fly recreational aircraft, is a volunteer chaplain to the Aged Care Facilities & still preaches the 'Word'. He & Melva are grateful to God for the varied & bountiful lives they have enjoyed.

IT ALL BEGAN AS A DREAM, that Pastors Gordon Lee and his brother John and the writer had of a flying operation which would support the mission's programme in the Western Pacific.

Late in 1969 John Lee, then Youth and Education Director for the Bismark Solomons Union Mission (BSUM) and known to his friends as the 'Minister for Air', could see the advantages a twin engined aircraft could have for the spread of the gospel and the transport and support of missionaries in the far flung reaches of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Western Pacific. He made contact with LaVerne Tucker of the *Quiet Hour* TV and radio program in California and dropped a seed thought in obviously fertile ground. The Tuckers had been responsible for the donation of a number of aircraft throughout the world including Papua New Guinea and agreed to provide another. By March 1970 a Piper Aztec twin-engined aircraft was flown from the USA to Rabaul by Captain Wayne Fowler. It was dedicated to the Lord's service in Rabaul and named the *JL Tucker*. Colin Winch who was a minister and full time pilot for the Coral Sea Union Mission was asked to take command of the Aztec and fly as pilot for both union missions. In 1971 Winch was appointed to the BSUM as Youth/Health Director and union pilot. In the following year the new Western Pacific Union

The Pilot
Colin Winch



Mission (WUPM) was set up initially head quartered in Rabaul under the leadership of Gordon Lee and in 1973 the HQ staff and Aztec were transferred to Honiara, capital of the Solomon Islands.

Workers and supplies were transported throughout the Western Pacific with frequent flights to Fiji, New Hebrides, New Caledonia, Nauru, Gilbert and Ellis Islands, PNG and several trips to Australia and New Zealand. During this time applications were lodged with the Solomon Department of Civil Aviation for an Air Transport Licence and despite strong opposition from the local airline was eventually granted in 1976. Although the new licence allowed Winch the opportunity of subsidizing and reducing the transport costs of the local missions by filling empty seats with paying passengers, the Australasian Division restricted fare collecting to patients and their near relatives on flights to and from Atoifi Adventist Hospital.

Mission station airstrips were opened at Kukudu, Western Solomons, on 20 September 1972 and at Atoifi Adventist Hospital on 2 December, 1975.

In April 1977 Winch returned to Australia having been appointed to set up a new flying school for Avondale College. The Aztec sat in its hanger for almost 12 months while the future of the programme was decided. During this time the aircraft was subjected to a flood which inundated the Henderson Airfield. Eventually a series of volunteer pilots spasmodically kept the service operating

The aircraft proved invaluable in mission outreach and support when it was operated with enthusiasm but met with some negativity from administration when the original pilot left and was replaced by people who had not shared in the 'dream' from the beginning and did not

The first landing
at Kukudu



The Aztec



have other responsibilities such as a departmental directorship to augment their interest and enthusiasm.

The aircraft proved its worth on the stormy night of 19 April 1976, when it and the pilot were called on to fly an accident victim from Santo in the New Hebrides to Noumea in New Caledonia. The Tongan man had been knocked off his motorcycle by a Catholic priest in his jeep. They had both been travelling at speed. The impact propelled the man through the air. His chest and ribs were badly torn by the sharp edge of the jeep's windscreen as he continued to fly through the air landing with his face being the first point of contact with the gravel road. His face, including the nose, had been ground off and he sustained horrific injuries over his entire body including a broken leg and arm. Recognising that the facilities at the Santo French hospital were inadequate to handle such a serious case and as our aircraft was the only one on the Santo aerodrome, the chief surgeon requested we fly the patient to the better equipped hospital in Noumea in New Caledonia.

The middle and back seats were removed from the twin Piper Aztec the *J L Tucker* and the semi conscious Tongan was loaded through the rear cargo door and made as comfortable as possible on the floor of the aircraft with an intravenous drip hanging from the ceiling. Pastor Colin Winch indicated to the little French nun that the right hand co-pilot's seat was for her but, in very broken English, she declined insisting that she must sit on the floor beside her patient so she could attend to him during the flight. Winch rigged up seatbelts to enable her to do this and then climbed into the pilot's seat.

Before starting the engines he indicated to the French sister that he would like to have a word of prayer and although he had no command of French he was able to have her understand by sign language. She seemed so relieved that the pilot was a praying man and bowed her head, crossed herself, as Winch prayed, "Dear Heavenly Father, please give us a safe flight tonight, guide sister Angelique as she ministers to her patient, bear us up, bring us safely through the storms ahead and to a safe landing at Noumea, in Jesus name, Amen."

After starting both engines and carrying out the pre-take-off checks, Winch called the tower, which had remained on duty for this emergency flight, only to be advised that the Inter-Tropic Zone was very active this night. This zone is where the north west and south east trade winds meet causing a tremendous build up of Cumulonimbus storm clouds where violent turbulence could be found. The aircraft lifted into the smooth night air and Winch turned the aircraft on to the direct track to Tontouta, the international airport for Noumea.

Ahead could be seen the lightning playing in the Inter-Tropic Zone and soon they would be in the middle of it. He advised the little nun that they would soon be flying through turbulence and she should keep her seatbelt tightly fastened and secure her instrument case. She was very busy attending to her patient who was throwing himself from side to side despite being secured with a number of seatbelts. Suddenly the plane was in cloud. A huge updraft carried the aircraft aloft at 5000 feet per minute. The turbulence was horrific. It felt as though a great giant was holding onto the plane with his

massive hands shaking it violently. The pilot, experienced in rough weather and tropical storm flying, had never experienced anything like it. He knew that just beyond this great column of rising air would be another but this would be a down draft also at 5000 feet per minute. Seconds later the aircraft was descending rapidly and although Winch attempted to arrest the terrifying descent by the use of full power and place the machine in a climb it was to no avail. The flight was approaching the mountains of New Caledonia and it was essential that sufficient clearance be maintained above them, but the storm had other plans.

For half an hour the aircraft ascended and descended time after time. The controls vibrated in the pilots hands as he attempted to control the bucking machine.

Angelique, the sweet little French nursing sister, continued her care of her patient in absolutely incredible circumstances. If she dared loosen her seat belt in order to adjust the intravenous drip she would be flung from side to side. Her instrument case had, on several occasions, risen off the floor and floated weightlessly for a few moments and then crashed back to the floor. Lightning was forking all around the aircraft and inside the cabin an eerie bluish light brightened the cockpit. The whole atmosphere was electric and for the first time Winch witnessed St. Elmo's Fire playing on the wings and propeller tips. The flashes of lightning on occasions temporarily blinded him. After one very bright flash he noticed the instruments had become blurry as had his chart which was lying on his lap. He rubbed his eyes but they remained indistinct. "Oh, please Lord, not my eyes. Not now Lord." He cried. He moved his hands to touch the instrument panel and his finger made a smear and the same on the chart. It was blood. The patient's constant coughing was spraying a fine mist of blood throughout the cabin. Winch turned to speak to Angelique and noticed the little sisters dazzling white uniform was now soiled with numerous smears of blood. "How is he?"

"Not very good" was the reply. "We must get to hospital quickly".

It was then, in the midst of the roar of the storm and the shaking and vibrating and plunging of the aircraft, that the pilot sensed someone was seated in the co-pilot seat. The sense of a presence was so strong that he was forced to take his eyes off the instruments and look toward the vacant seat. There was nobody visible and yet the divine presence was so overwhelming that he frequently checked the seat. In spite of the buffeting they were taking he sensed a peace. A feeling that four persons and not just three were on board the aircraft and all would be well.

Minutes later the aircraft popped out of the side of the storm into the most smooth and creamy air. The sky was brilliant with stars and over the nose could be seen the lights of the north east coast of New Caledonia

A decision had to be made. The pilot had often landed on a little airstrip in downtown Noumea called Magenta. It had lights for night landings and so he advised Tontouta tower that he would be proceeding directly to Magenta and to have the already ordered ambulance to proceed to Magenta instead of Tontouta. The controller advised this would not be possible as since this was an international flight. Customs, Immigration and health would have to be cleared at Tontouta.

He advised that nevertheless he had made a command decision and his flight was proceeding to Magenta as the patient on board was failing fast. Magenta was within a mile of the hospital whereas Tontouta was at least 40 miles away. "Send the officials to Magenta," he commanded.

The controller was somewhat put out but proceeded to clear the aircraft direct to Magenta advising there was a cross-wind of 15 Knots gusting to 20 Knots. Winch thanked him and the flight made a safe arrival in downtown Noumea. The ambulance was waiting on the tarmac so he taxied the *J L Tucker* up beside the vehicle.

The patient, with attached I.V. drip was unloaded through the rear cargo door and placed in the ambulance. The little Catholic sister collected her instrument case and moved toward the ambulance and then turned to look at Winch. In the glare of the floodlit tarmac, for the first time, he noticed how attractive she was despite being besmeared with blood. She turned to join her patient but stopped and looked again at him. "Tonight, God flew with us did he not?"

"Yes, Angelique, He most certainly did." And then she was gone. That brave little Catholic nun had performed an incredible feat of impeccable nursing under the most difficult of circumstances. Florence Nightingale would have been very impressed.

The pilot returned to his bloodied aircraft and prepared to put it to bed. As he stood on the wing and was about to close the door he heard a rumble of thunder in the distance. Looking up into the sky from whence he had come he could see across the mountains lightning still playing its fantastic dance among the towering clouds. He stretched weary muscles in his back and looking heavenward to the blazing stars he offered a short prayer. "Thank you, Lord, for bringing us through safely and Lord, thanks, for tonight I flew with an angel." And then he remembered Angelique. "Lord, make that two angels."

The aviation programme was well supported by mission staff throughout the WPUM. Pastor Gordon Lee, the Union President when the aircraft arrived, gave the aviation programme his blessing by his frequent use of the Piper Aztec in his visitation. Winch quotes from his letter to him dated 7 November 2000.

"I recall a trip we did together from Honiara to Tarawa, and on to Funafuti, then west to Santo in the New Hebrides and finally back home to Honiara. Without a plane like the Aztec with long-range tanks, this would not have been possible. But what a blessing such a visit to the remote corners of the union."



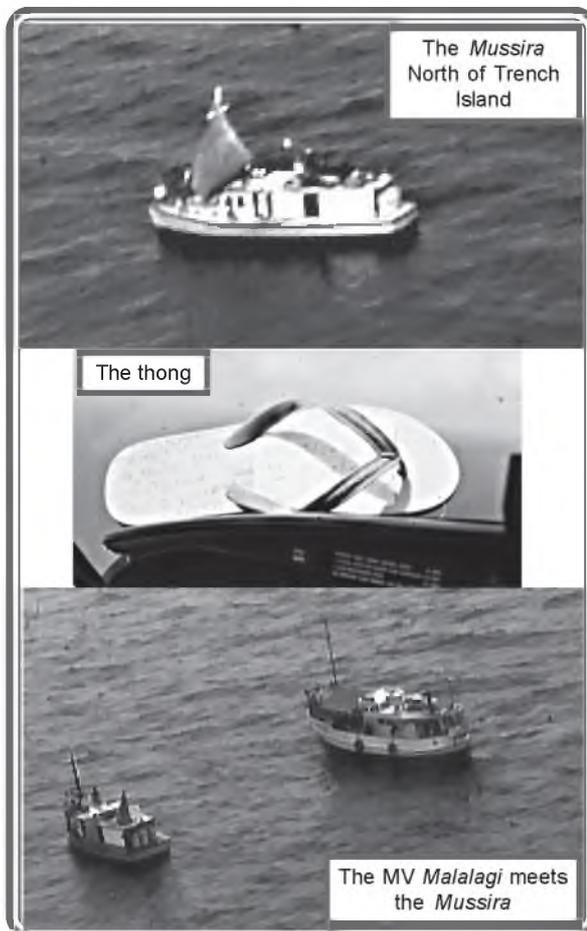
At Tarawa airport

Lee continues, "On one occasion we were in New Caledonia and the president, Pastor Misseud, needed to go to Poom in the far north of the island. I had travelled this route by road on a number of occasions. It is a hazardous and wearying car journey. But on this occasion we were there in short notice and had some wonderful meetings there with the believers.

"The mission aircraft brought much attention and positive recognition too from the governments and general public. In July 1971 we were shaken by some very serious earthquakes in the New Britain area. We had made a quick flight to Bougainville on mission business.

"While returning we were requested by the authorities in Port Moresby to change course and fly over a small island near New Ireland. Since the big quake they had received no communication from them and were wondering if a tidal wave or some such tragedy had affected them. As we flew over the island we could see that all was well there, but the quake had torn down their radio tower and therefore could not report out."

Pastor Lee further recalls an incident near Emirau on 19 April 1971. "Then there was the time we were coming back from the island of Mussau by canoe. [The Aztec was parked on the war-time airstrip on Emirau awaiting our return from Mussau]. At Emirau we were met by our people with the news that one of the inter-island trading vessels was in trouble at sea. They had lost power and now their radio was out. They were drifting in the area north of Emirau. Our mission ship had already moved out to search and we were requested by the authorities if we would do an aerial search for the missing ship. We searched for quite a long time and had to





A patient being loaded for hospital

refuel at Kavieng and try again. Finally we located the missing ship drifting far to the north west with little or no hope of touching land. They had seen the tiny island of Tench and rigged a small sail made from copra bags. Several of the crew had leaped overboard with a long rope and swam, trying to pull the large ship towards the disappearing island.

“It was not possible to make contact with them as their radio was not working. I used Pastor John Kosmeir’s rubber thong on which to write a message. Winch flew low over the ship and dropped the thong in the ocean beside the stricken vessel. Our message was that we would alert our mission ship of their position and have them come and take them in tow. When we located the vessel their radio was on the blink and could not receive a message from us. This time we used the other thong, giving the direction to the missing ship and dropped it in the ocean beside them... They recovered the thong from the sea, read and understood the message. So began a long journey to meet up with the drifting trading vessel. For two hours we flew between the two ships until they came together and the tow back to port began. This provided the mission with much public relations from the government and the Chinese owners of the trading vessel. From that day onward they would carry goods to our mission stations free of charge. More than that at Appeal for Missions time it was our pleasure to collect a very large donation from this Chinese firm.”

The former President of the Bismark Solomons and Western Pacific Union Missions concludes his remarks with: “Just a final word or two of the other benefits of the air service. It was crucial to our medical institutions. Many times we were able to save lives by carrying ill patients to our hospitals in the Solomons and New Hebrides. Furthermore, it was a blessing when visiting doctors and specialists came to work in our hospitals on limited time schedules. Much more could be said, too, in a similar vein for our educational institutions.



The late Lens & Betty Larwood

And finally, we were responsible for opening up so many isolated corners of these far flung South Pacific islands, by putting in airstrips in some of the most inaccessible places. Yes! God has greatly blessed the progress of the ‘Remnant Message’ to all the world through the mission planes.”

Betty Larwood, widow of the late Lens Larwood (tragically killed in a tractor accident at Atoifi and buried there), writes of the tremendous effort and cost involved in the construction of the airfield in order for the Atoifi Adventist Hospital to benefit from the Adventist Aviation Service. She was a nursing sister who spent many hours working in the hospital in addition to raising her family and was an accomplished anaesthetist. She recalls, “Life at Atoifi was always busy... The constant flow of patients in the hospital, with some serious and dramatic cases seemed to demand more hours than there were in the day, and often some night hours also.

“The building program took up a big part of Len’s time and always there were interruptions or complications to slow down the work. Government or mission boats would call about every three or four weeks bringing building supplies, pre-ordered groceries, mail and often visitors.

“Visitors were always welcome and enjoyed, but somehow underneath we would wish to be able to just get on with what had to be done, and so the building of the airstrip was not high on the priorities list in the early seventies. A much needed project was a good permanent water supply and 24 hour power to the hospital, which the hydro would provide, however, things were to change!

“In June 1973, a surgical team from Sydney Adventist Hospital visited Atoifi. They were preceded by two student nurses, Cheryl Borgas and Dawn Maberly, who had an eventful trip from Honiara to Atoifi. They flew from Honiara to Auki, which is on Malaita but on the opposite side of the island. The land-rover that was sent to pick them up at Auki had had an accident on the way, so the girls set out in the local ‘bus’ which broke down after a few miles. A relief bus finally arrived but had a blow-out and no spare. The girls started to walk and were later given a ride to Kwailibesi, Malaita Mission Headquarters, where they spent the night and were brought down to Atoifi by motorized canoe the next day. The canoe trip takes about 5 hours. The girls felt there was a need for a better means of transport! And they took ‘the building of an airstrip’ as their project on their return to the Sydney Adventist Hospital. They commenced raising funds by various means and contributed over \$2,000 towards the project.

“August 1973 saw the commencement of the draining of the site. A large drain was dug along each side of the strip and one of the creeks diverted. The land was cleared by hand, the large trees blasted out, some requiring twelve charges at one time to remove them. The ground was then formed up and the parts where swamp taro grew were filled. Even though the tractor was fitted with dual wheels it spent as much time bogged as working. This together with the limited time we could work because of the weather pattern – ‘wet’ and ‘wetter’ – prevented the work progressing as rapidly as we would have liked. Later a second tractor was bought and eventually the strip was covered with gravel from a nearby river.

“Finally work had progressed sufficiently to allow a test landing but many dates had to be postponed because when

the weather was dry the plane was not available. Then on 2 December 1975, when the weather was favourable, Pastor Col Winch, the pilot, said he would be in at 2.30 pm! New gravel had to be rolled, a final check for stones on the surface, and all was in readiness. At last the plane appeared overhead, did a low inspection from the mountain end, then around and the initial touchdown. It was all very exciting for the 200 people gathered along the edges of the strip. After a prayer of dedication some of the local people who owned the land and some who had worked on the airstrip were given a joy ride. They had earned it!

“So far the strip has taken over 6,500 man days of hard-going, dirty, wet and discouraging work, on the very low wage of 50 cents per day. The airstrip to this stage had cost \$8,000 (not including the cost of machinery that was used elsewhere.) At a later stage an extra 800 feet was formed and graveled to enable larger loads to be lifted and to increase the safety of operations. All of this came from interested people in Australia, New Zealand and the USA. The airstrip has brought Atoifi to just 27 minutes from Honiara! Unfortunately many visitors are now denied the pioneer ‘flavour’ that 22 hours of sea transport provides.

“While we did experience doubts about the need for an airstrip, and the use of the union aircraft in the early years, after the opening of the airstrip at Atoifi our attitudes changed and we were overjoyed at the way the flying program brought many blessings to the running of the hospital.”

Betty Larwood.

To be fair and to give a balance to the contribution made by the aviation programme the comments of Keith Hughes in a letter to the author dated 19 November 2000, are appropriate. Keith was the Union Secretary Treasurer for the time under review. He writes:

“A Church-run flying program had been in operation in the Coral Sea Union Mission for quite a number of years prior to the re-organisation of the three union missions at the beginning of 1972. Up to that time the flying was confined to the mainland of Papua New Guinea, except for very occasional flights to the New Guinea islands.

At about the time of the re-organization, the twin engine Aztec which was donated by the Quiet Hour radio program in the USA, for use by the Rabaul based Bismarck Solomons Union Mission and later Western Pacific Union Mission arrived. For a short period it was located on the New Guinea mainland. The Bismarck Solomons Union Mission at that time had no pilot qualified to fly the aircraft. Pastor Colin Winch who was suitably qualified and experienced to fly the Aztec was transferred to the union at Rabaul as Director of Youth and Health departments. This allowed the Aztec to be relocated at Rabaul with Pastor Winch being responsible for piloting the aircraft in addition to his other responsibilities.

“The addition of the flying program created additional pressures for the general administration and accounting staff of the union. It was compounded as a result of immigration and customs involvements related to the international flights to and from the Solomon Islands. This was even more so when the union relocated to Honiara in the Solomon Islands when flights were made to the New Hebrides, New Caledonia, Fiji, Nauru, Gilbert Islands, Ellice Islands and Papua

New Guinea.

While the Papua New Guinea Union had sufficient flying for up to four aircraft at one time the Western Pacific Union struggled to generate sufficient flying hours to cover costs. This situation existed despite the fact that no charges were made for the pilot's wages which were covered fully by the South Pacific Division as part of his union departmental responsibilities.

“Under the cost structure as it applied at that time, approximately 200 flying hours were required annually to cover fixed and actual operating costs. This was only achieved by charging the equivalent of commercial airfares for passengers flown for departments, institutions and local missions. Usually no charge was made for small amounts of cargo carried on flights together with passengers.

“At that time the union was not approved to operate on a commercial basis. It was able to carry non fare paying passengers in connection with the mission's general activities. Some additional revenue was generated as a result of church members occupying seats and making donations usually equivalent to commercial fares. This mainly occurred between Honiara and Atoifi Hospital, which had completed its own airstrip adjacent to the hospital on the island of Malaita.

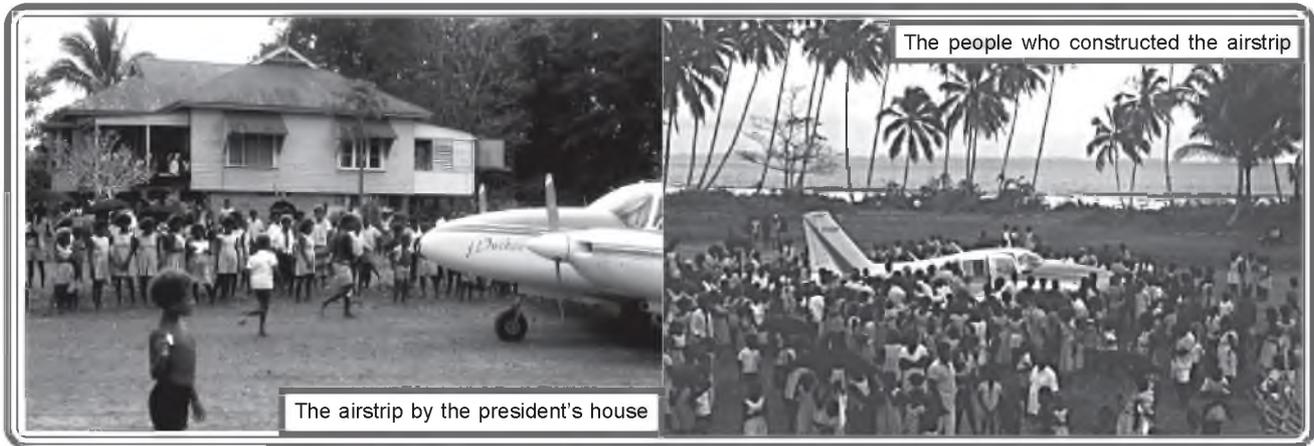
“Mr Ray Smith was the Principal of Betikama High School at that time and was also qualified to fly the Aztec. He was able to fly on limited occasions primarily within the Solomon Islands.

“When Colin Winch was absent on furlough it left the program with no pilot, particularly after Ray Smith returned to Australia permanently. Fortunately, Wayne Fowler from USA was prepared to volunteer his services and even use his own aircraft on occasions, during Colin's absence.

“To generate sufficient flying hours each year, the Aztec flew numerous flights to Fiji and Rabaul to transport students to and from Fulton College and Sonoma College. Scheduling such flights could sometimes become a nightmare when weather conditions were unfavourable, upsetting the tightly organized timetable. On other occasions the aircraft was held up at distant locations because of maintenance problems. For example, while taxiing at Vila enroute to Honiara the pilot sensed a problem with a wheel. On inspection it was discovered that the metal rim of the right main wheel was slitting. A new rim had to be obtained from Australia delaying return to Honiara for a couple of days. It was a pleasant stay in Vila but did not get the work done back at union headquarters.

“Flights planned to Tarawa in the Gilbert Islands involved about six hours in the air with one stop at Nauru. Such long flights in a small aircraft were a little cramped for the passengers. Usually the plane would carry a full load of passengers so as to make it a paying load. This created problems at the local mission headquarters where the mission president carried a number of portfolios. It was a little difficult for the visitors to ‘get the ear’ of the president when so many union personnel were competing for his time.

“On a flight to Tarawa in April 1977 the flight was planned via Nauru to Tarawa and Abemama, where some of the passengers would remain, returning to Honiara by commercial flights. The flight was to continue with the union president and secretary-treasurer as passengers stopping at



The airstrip by the president's house

The people who constructed the airstrip

three islands enroute to Funafuti in the Ellice Islands. It was discovered that the long range navigation beacon at Funafuti was not operating and therefore the last leg from Beru was navigated by dead-reckoning. Fortunately the pilot's calculations proved accurate and the plane landed safely.

"A day later it was planned to fly direct from Funafuti to Vila, a flight of about six hours. About an hour out the pilot contacted Vila and was informed he did not have permission to land at Vila. The pilot decided to divert to Fiji, only to discover that they were experiencing a cyclone. It was decided the only option was to return to Funafuti. About 10 minutes before landing Vila advised that they had now discovered the paperwork which had been submitted a week before the start of the flight from Honiara, and permission was now granted for us to land at Vila. After refueling at Funafuti the plane took off again for Vila, a total time for the day of 8 hours flying instead of the usual 6. What a birthday present for the secretary-treasurer who was on board.

"In summary, having it's own aircraft brought many benefits to the WPUM but offsetting these were a number of administrative, financial and logistical burdens. In time, as additional airstrips were developed by the church, and eventually a fully expanded commercial operation was approved, the flying program was able to continue benefiting the program of the church. Eventually, however, the commercial operation was unable to survive financially and was recently closed. This brought to close a period of almost 30 years of mission-owned aircraft operations within the WPUM."

Albert Godfrey, former President of the Western Solomons Mission, in a letter dated 14 December 2000, recalls his and Heather's first arrival in the Solomons and the long tedious hours of mission boat travel. Following a stint at Batuna they were transferred to Manus and mainland New Guinea and during the period under review Godfrey was appointed President of Western Solomons. He states "Nothing had changed very much with regard to air services. Almost all of our work was still done with mission ships. However, by this time Pastor Colin Winch was operating regular flights to various parts of the old Bismarck Solomons Union Mission with it's headquarters at Rabaul on the island of New Britain Still the plane could only land at established airstrips and so it didn't greatly benefit our work there at that time as we still had the long haul to Batuna by sea. One day Colin asked me if we could give some thought to establishing an airstrip at Kukudu. [HQ for the mission].

"On one of his visits by sea from Gizo we gave study to a possible site for such a strip. It was so close to our house

that it actually took in part of the flower garden at the front. We duly processed the proposal with our Western Solomons Executive Committee and it engendered real enthusiasm.. The idea was presented to our local village people and the workers of the mission and again there was great enthusiasm for the project and so it was commenced. We pegged out the area which extended a long way into our coconut plantation to the north east, and between our headquarters office and the village medical clinic and out over the sea to the south west. Teams of local people came in with whatever implements they could find to cut down the trees, of which there were quite a few large ones, and the many coconuts that had to be removed from the plantation. To our amusement we soon discovered that the real work was done by the women rather than the men and they stayed at it until the whole strip was cleared. Then it came to getting it leveled off. Fortunately we had a tractor at the mission which we used to tow a wooden raft over the area to smooth it out. Of particular worry were the large crabs of the area that used to make huge holes. So it was a constant job to check they were filled. Finally the strip was looking good with the exception we had a rather large rise about a third of the way along from the sea end.

"We notified Pastor Winch that the strip was completed and on his next trip up our way he flew out over the area and inspected it from the air. As we had radio contact with the plane Colin asked me if I really thought it was OK to land on. I replied in the affirmative. Then he replied if I really thought it was OK, would I join him in Gizo to personally travel on the first flight into the Kukudu airstrip. Of course I was delighted to have that opportunity and found someone to take me over in the mission canoe to Gizo.

"It was quite a time of excitement as Colin revved up the engines of the Aztec and then we were airborne on the first flight into the Kukudu airstrip. I was quite confident it was in good shape but when we landed I was surprised how rough the strip really was as we taxied along. However everything went well and we put the team to work a little longer to improve the surface some more. The hump about a third of the way along was always a nuisance but we didn't have the machinery to do much about it. On the initial landing we had come in over the water and landed toward the coconuts. When it came time to leave, Colin taxied back down towards the water and then turned and took off towards the coconuts. I was standing beside our volunteer agriculturalist, Robbie Holloway [now Dr. Holloway]. From where we were standing it seemed the plane was not getting off the ground in time to climb over the coconuts. When it looked to us

there was no way the plane would clear the coconuts we buried our faces in our hands to avoid seeing the horror of the plane crash, but when no crashing sound followed we opened our eyes to see the plane soaring off into the sky. Colin didn't seem disturbed when we dared raise the incident with him later but he did suggest it would be good for us to take down a few more coconuts and we were happy to do that.

"It was a tremendous blessing to be able to have visitors from overseas – general conference and division personnel – as well as the regular visits of our own departmental men and union mission officers from time to time without those dreary hours of boat travel. So much for our memories of those first days of expanding the 'Work' where we could take the plane and speed our way to the remote corners of the field. It was some time later that eventually an airstrip was

built at Batuna and the long hours of sea travel were reduced to minutes. These are just a few memories we have of those very interesting days of development of the aviation wing of the church in the Solomon Islands."

* A note from the author: "For me as a union departmental director and pilot the years from 1970 till 1977 were the most fascinating, exciting and inspirational of my entire career. The long flights of up to six hours over the trackless Pacific Ocean were never boring to me. On the contrary, I found long range navigation an exciting challenge. Before each take-off we invited the Divine Presence to accompany us and we sensed His presence on every flight. It was an awesome privilege to have been chosen for this work and I, of all men, consider myself most fortunate." ♦



The Editor is Listening

"A Struggle for Acceptance" (Vol 8 No 1 Pg 4). The first sentence of paragraph 5 reads, "seven years after English explorer , Capt James Cook, landed on Rarotonga in 1814,..."

Dr Glynn Litster of Cooranbong NSW, indicates that Captain Cook was murdered in Hawaii in 1779 and questions the 1814 date.

In preparing the final edited account for printing, part of the sentence was inadvertently left out. The original reads: " Captain James Cook, located several of the southern islands in the 1770s and the adventurous crew of the *Cumberland* in search of sandalwood made the first known landing on Rarotonga in 1814." Thanks Glynn.

"Brian Dunn, an Adventist Martyr" (Vol 8 No 1 pg 30), paragraph 5 and following. Some readers have asked about the sequence and timing of events when Brian Dunn was in hospital in Honiara. Following discussions with Pr and Mrs Percy Holmes who were stationed in Honiara at the time of Brian Dunn's death, the author of the article changed the day from Sabbath to Sunday. He then notified Journal editor of the change and forwarded draft #4 containing the revised date.

For some inexplicable reason, draft #4 did not appear in the Journal as it should have. The editor accepts responsibility for the oversight and apologises to the author for the mistake.

Of interest and in support of the changed day E J Steed on page 49 of his book entitled "Impaled", published in 1970, states that it was on Sunday at 3:30 pm that Brian breathed his last.

Kind thanks to Dr Robert and Mrs Phyllis Wood for noticing that in the article on Brian Dunn the first nurse in the front row in the picture on p 31 is Dawn Benham and not Val Dunn. Dawn is Val's sister. Correction has been made on the picture in the Heritage Room at Avondale College.

"Solomon of the Cook Islands" (Vol 8 No 1 p 39). Ken Boehm acknowledges that the photo he sent for Solomon of the Cook Islands is not a photo of Solomon.



The Pacific — many years ago (cont.)

ISA LEI — Fiji's favourite song — one view

Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna KCMG, KBE, DSO has given the following information. The melody was composed by a German named Busch in the Hawaiian Islands during the 1880s. Gradually it travelled across the Pacific to Tonga where Tongan words were put to the tune and it achieved some popularity. (Si'i Lili, Viola Lose Hina) In about 1913/14 a Tongan named Paasoni settled in Fiji, taking the 30 year old melody with him. It was soon given Fijian words by Ratu M Ulu-i-Lakeba. The words 'Isa Lei' and 'Isa Isa' in the Fijian language are exclamations of sorrow and regret at parting. The Maori people of New Zealand know 'Isa Lei' as 'Ka Ngaru'. NZ Woman's Weekly, March 11, 1954

New Boat for Fiji in 1897

"Our workers in Fiji have a new boat, which they have named the *Loughborough*. In this group there are about 80 inhabited islands, 5 or 6 miles apart, which consequently can be reached by water." The Bible Echo, 2 Aug 1897, p245

Sanitarium Offer — New Caledonia

"Within the last year [1899] the Governor of New Caledonia has, through the United States consul, made us [the SDA Church] an offer of land on which to establish a sanitarium similar to the one at Samoa." E H Gates, UCR 1 June 1900 p108

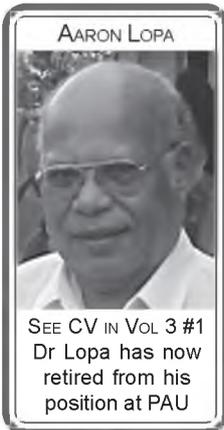
SHF help Kambubu

Land for the Put Put Training School, now Kambubu Adventist High School, was purchased in 1936, 4000 pounds being provided by the Sanitarium Health Food Company. SDA Encyclopedia Vol 10, R & H Pub Assn 1996, p834



The Isolated Western Islands of PNG

—the Seventh-day Adventist Church reaches the ‘Tiger People’



AARON LOPA

SEE CV IN VOL 3 #1
Dr Lopa has now retired from his position at PAU

THE WESTERN ISLANDS lie north-east of the island of Manus¹ in the province of the same name in the country of Papua New Guinea (PNG). There, several islands form groups and are known as Kaniet, Hermit, Heina and Ninigo with the last-named including the islands of Aua and Wuvulu. As these two islands are only 220 and 240 kilometres respectively away from the East Sepik Province on the PNG mainland, administratively they form part of the Sepik Mission

with headquarters at Wewak, the main government centre. All the other island groups, including Ninigo, are included in the Madang Manus Mission. Both missions are part of the Papua New Guinea Union Mission (PNGUM) of the church.

This article is Part 1 of a two-part series on the beginnings of the Adventist presence on the island of Wuvulu.² It covers the pre-Christian era, the winds of change, early probings and the work of the first missionaries — Mave and his wife, Kilengit and family, Belden and his family, together with the first baptism on the island.

Pre-Adventism

The people of Wuvulu lived in small villages around the island.³ Even though the island was small there were as many as ten different clans there. My mother⁴ came from the Rorina clan that lived on the eastern side of the island and my father from the Rawa clan that lived on the western side.

The people of Wuvulu Island were animists before the coming of the Adventist church⁵ While they did not worship idols, they did worship the spirits. In the light of Scripture they were devil worshippers. Many westerners when they hear about spirit worship think of it as superstition. Growing up with it, I must say it's real. Some westerners say that they worship the spirit of their ancestors. I would comment that it is not necessarily true. They were actually worshipping



Aaron & Elizabeth Lopa in recent times

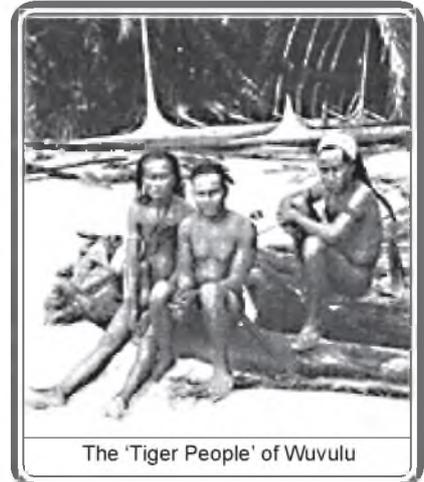
the devil who appeared in the form of their ancestors.⁶

Different clans worshipped different spirit gods and had their own priests which we call *puala*. My father was a priest of his clan. At times the *puala* used their power to kill people from another clan. Thus the people lived in fear of him. He even would try his power on another *puala* to test out who serves the most powerful spirit. Since I was a child of one of the *pualas* I had to observe many *tabus*.⁷

One of the main features of spirit worship was ‘fear’. It permeated the lives of people every day. Religion for us is a way of life, not a theory. Every thing we did centred around the spirit world. Thus the word that dominated our lives was *ma’an* meaning fear. Love was not a dominant word. In fact I can't remember the word for love in my language or in any of the dialects, and I am not surprised if we do not have one.⁸ The people were also fierce. One westerner⁹ nick-named the people of Wuvulu, ‘the tiger people’. They were warriors. They had war canoes and engaged in fierce battles. They fought each other as well as the people on the island of Aua. Furthermore, according to Richard Parkinson, the people of Aua were cleaner, healthier, stronger and more numerous than the people of Wuvulu.

Wuvulu was discovered by Captain Carteret in 1767 and he named it Matty but he did not land there. In 1817 Captain Bristow sighted the island which he presumed to be unknown. He described the island as ‘low, and carrying a dense growth of coconut palms and peopled by a ferocious race of savages’. For this reason he recorded its name as ‘Tiger Island.’¹⁰ It was in the 1890s that the steamer *Ysabel* called at the island. Actually the Germans were the first white settlers on many of the Western Islands including Wuvulu. They established coconut plantations and because they wanted land for plantations, they took the people and placed them in two main villages —Onne and Auna. I myself come from the village of Auna. The Germans were so successful that they eventually absorbed more than 80% of the land.

In spite of the arrival of the Germans, the people still remained animists. I was born into this environment which was dominated by fear, spirit worship, and without the hope



The ‘Tiger People’ of Wuvulu



MV Light

Roy Harrison

Stan Gander

Ken Boehm

as we now know it as Adventist Christians. But our belief in the underworld which we called *manu*¹¹ was strong. We called this world *forai manumu*.¹² To this savage and 'tiger people' came the missionaries who brought the gospel of Jesus Christ in the early fifties - 1950-1952.¹³

A First Attempt to Visit Wuvulu

In 1948 a new boat, 45 feet in length and named MV *Light*, was stationed at Manus¹⁴. Pastor Roy Harrison, the newly-appointed district director in that part of the Manus Province in the Northeast New Guinea Mission of the church, was keen to use the boat for establishing an Adventist presence on the islands in the Admiralty Group. On obtaining permission early in 1950 from the government office in Lorengau to visit the Western Islands he, accompanied by his wife, Lorna, Pastor Stan Gander from the NE New Guinea Mission, and three Manus Island teachers, set out on a voyage westward during the Monsoon season. At the time there were no other mission bodies operating there. Two hundred and fifty kilometres further on, the *Light* reached the island of Luf in the Hermit Group. To meet the request for teachers, one family was left there and another was made available for the island of Maron.¹⁵ Four hours later the boat arrived at the atoll of Liot, and later, at Pihun Island in the Ninigo Group where Gnat, another missionary family was left. Twelve hours further sailing brought the boat to the island of Aua. Although the missionaries were welcome there, the people were in poor physical condition. Harrison didn't sail on to Wuvulu at this time and with weather conditions being uncertain set out on the return journey.

On arriving at Manus Harrison told of the needs of the people he had visited, and village members gave clothing which was taken to them on the boat's next visit. When government authorities were informed of the deteriorating health situation on the island of Aua they requested assistance from the World Health Organisation, and in 1950 medical teams were dispatched by various government bodies to give injections to help eradicate disease among the people.

A Successful attempt

In June-July 1950 another mission boat, MV *Leleman*, made a trip to Western Islands of Aua and Wuvulu with Gander and Boehm (Secretary/Treasurer of the North East New Guinea Mission). By this time a number of people on Aua Island had already accepted the Adventist faith. They visited a Manus island teacher by the name of Molean and his wife and found them in good spirits. In his records Boehm stated that they arrived at Wuvulu Island on 13 July 1950 and

stayed for six and half hours from 1:30 pm to 8:00. Prospects were not very encouraging. Women appeared to have tuberculosis and there was a definite need for medical care. They showed pictures but the meetings were not well attended.¹⁶

A Second Visit

A year later in August 1951, Eric Boehm, now the district director stationed on the Island of Manus, set out with his wife Grace and their children on the *Light* on a return visit to the island of Wuvulu stopping briefly on the way at the island of Aua. Here the Boehm family noticed, in comparison to what they had seen earlier, that the people now appeared to be strong, well, and in good spirits.¹⁷ From his boyhood days Ken remembers that there appeared to be another influence on the island for some villagers were wearing different sized disks of Mary around their necks.¹⁸

On reaching their final destination they soon discovered that again, Adventists were not welcome on the island of Wuvulu. The people were unhelpful and uncooperative, even refusing to sell green coconuts for drinking. Boehm tried to tell Bible stories but the villagers just shouted at him. His wife had the children singing action songs but the village men dragged them away and Boehm ceased talking when some people began waving menacingly, pieces of split timber and calling out 'Mission ie gut; school ie gut; medicine ie gut?' —meaning 'We have Christianity; we have education; we have health care.' Even when Boehm and his wife who was a nurse, were assisting sick mothers and children, men would start shouting and showing a hostile attitude. When the visitors walked across to the second village they were refused entry there. They weren't even permitted to walk through the village to the beach! Only five hours were spent on the island.¹⁹ In hindsight, God was working out His plan in some mysterious way.

The Winds of Change

In mission study we speak of the 'winds of change' but I call it the movement of the Spirit of God. We see this in Apostle Peter's experience in the Bible in Acts chapter 10 where the same Spirit that was working on Peter at Joppa was also working upon Cornelius at Caesarea Philippi. The same was true of the Apostle Paul's experience in Acts chapter 16 where the Spirit interrupted his plan to go to North Galatia. Instead Paul went to Macedonia while in Troas.

According to Sili and Pana²⁰ sometime in early 1951, Mr Bill Howard, a boat's captain, took some men from Wuvulu to work on his boat MV *Francis*. They sailed via the Ninigo group of islands to the northern PNG coastal town of

Madang. After spending some time there Howard decided to make a voyage to the Western Islands via the Schouten group. Somehow the boat developed engine problems and was towed back to Madang and while staying there they heard that the mission boat MV *Light* was going to Manus. The boat had actually been handed over to Gander on 17 October 1950. He was to care for it until Pastor Frank Maberly arrived from Kabiufa in the Highlands of PNG to take Boehm's place in the Manus Islands.

As they were cooking their food on the beach someone asked them: "Where are you from?" and they replied: "We are from Manus." Then he said to them: "A mission boat at Biliau does go to Manus." So they paddled across to Biliau to find out whether the *Light* was actually going to Manus or not. Upon arrival there they met the captain of the MV *Light*, Salapan from Manus. On asking for Gander's home and Pitpit, the engineer and crew showed them where he lived. Their faces were strange to Gander and on asking where they came from they told him they were from Matty. "Where is Matty?" inquired Gander. "It is another name for the island of Wuvulu," they replied. "Yes, I know that island, and are you from Sundown or Sunrise village?" he asked. They told him they were from Sundown. Desiring to know more he asked for the name of their *luluai* (village chief) and they promptly replied that his name was Pato. So Gander suggested they wait on the island for Maberly's arrival for he was to sail to Manus shortly. The men from Wuvulu waited for three months in Madang and during that time asked Captain Howard to write a letter to Maberly explaining their situation. They then returned to Biliau.

According to Sili and Pana MV *Light* went to the Schouten Islands and visited the missionaries there, then sailed on to Manus. After arriving there they went to Lou Island and stayed at Pisik School.²¹ This would be in early 1952. From Pisik they returned to Manus and stayed in the town of Lorengau. There at Lorengau Joseph Mave and his wife Arava housed and fed them. From the time Sili, Pana and Baika first met Gander and the Adventist people in Madang until the time they sailed to the Western Islands and left a missionary on Wuvulu, covered a period of approximately seven months. While on Manus they worshipped with the Adventist people who were taking care of them.

The Third Visit

When it was discovered that the health of the people had been deteriorating on the islands of Aua and Wuvulu, many had been brought to the government hospital at Lorengau on the island of Manus and placed in semi-isolation for the treatment of tuberculosis. Church members from the nearby island of Lou befriended these Polynesian people. Every week they'd add to the hospital food a selection of luscious garden produce, juicy, ripe fruit,²² and freshly caught fish.

By early 1952 most of the villagers from these two islands had improved sufficiently to return home and so they were discharged from the hospital. But they had no money to pay a trader for their transport. On turning to their Adventist friends for help they received good news from Maberley who had returned from furlough in Australia. On his next visit, weather permitting, he would take as many

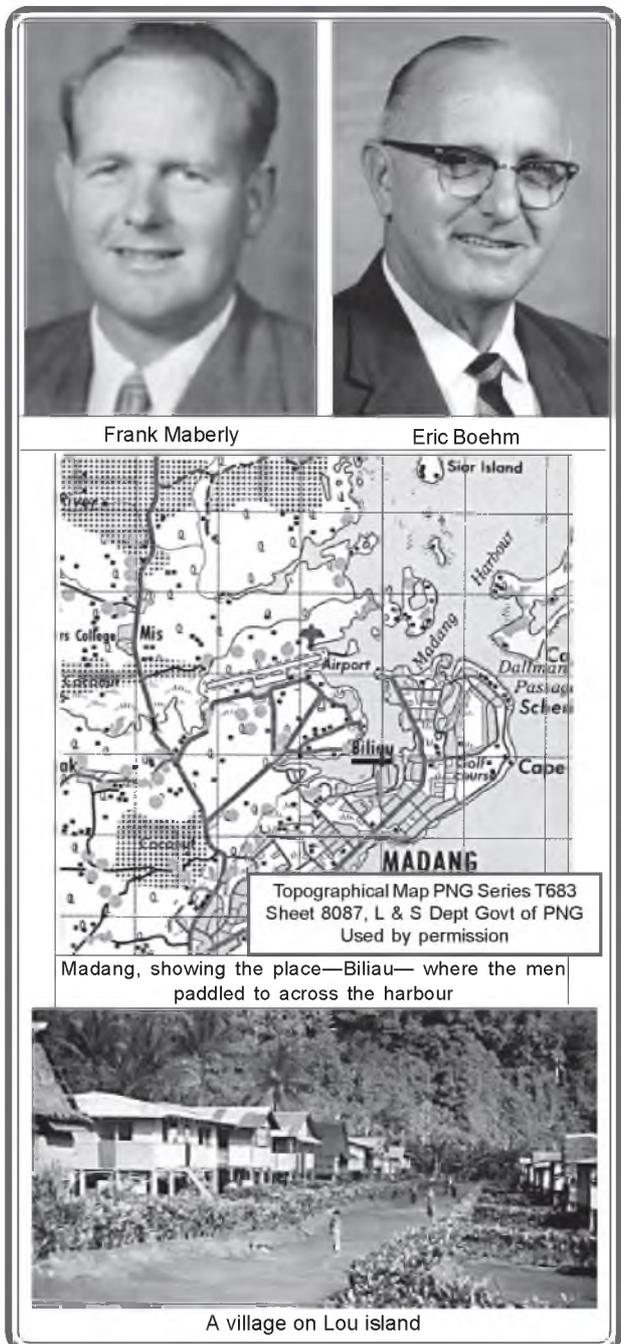
people as he could fit comfortably on to the MV *Light*.

In May 1952, a very heavily laden boat of excited and grateful people set off westward for home. Both Gander and Mave, now well accepted by the people, were on board too. Eric Roy, a Sydney Sanitarium graduate doctor who was now the Assistant Medical Officer for PNG,²³ went along as well. An abundance of supplies had also been loaded. There was taro, yam, and tapioca from the gardens, and fruits such as bananas, pineapples and pawpaws.²⁴

While the earlier visits seemed to have failed, God was working out His plan preparing some people in far away Madang to help establish a permanent Adventist presence on the island. Prayers were being answered. These events are what I call *the winds of change, or the moving of the Spirit*.

Mave on Wuvulu

Sili said that on the way back they spent the Sabbath on the island of Pihon in the Ninigo Group and the next day





Mave out fishing with his friends



Mave with some church leaders—Pr Robert Frame is on the left

sailed on to the island of Aua. Here the villagers welcomed their people back and enjoyed the company of the visitors for several days. Gander held a meeting and showed some pictures. Molean and his wife, missionaries on the island, as well as the new Adventists, were encouraged to remain firm and help others know the truth of God's Word.

Maberly now sailed on to the island of Wuvulu where nine adults were ferried ashore at Subeli on several trips of the boat's dingy.²⁵ Here, too, there were tears of joy as loved ones were reunited. And just as the anchor was being pulled up and the boat was about to move away from the island, shouting was heard coming from the beach, and a canoe began racing towards the boat. In the canoe was Pato, a Wuvulu chief, who on arrival spoke to Maberly saying: "The boat doesn't sail until a missionary is left on the island!" Surprised by the words, Maberly replied: "What's going on for Pastor Boehm told me that your people would chase us off the island if we went ashore." "But it's different now," said the chief. "You have saved our strong men when they were in Lorengau Hospital when they could have died. Your church members gave them strong, sweet food and I see they are in good health. And you have even brought them home!" Then to make sure the missionary understood his plea, he reiterated his first message saying, "Please, leave us a missionary or you do not sail!" Desiring to do what was best, Maberly and Mave talked the matter over. Finally Mave stated that there was no one on board who could be left on the island. "This is God calling: it's a real opportunity," he said. "Leave me and my wife Arava here. We must stay until the church committee can find someone suitable to come." Within minutes Mave was requesting crew members for help with special items — a knife, spear gun, cooking pot, plate and cup. Then he grabbed his Bible, took hold of his bag of clothes, and joined others for special prayer.²⁶ As they set off with the chief for the island, the *Light* steamed away towards the island of Aua, hoping to make landfall before darkness closed in.

Mave at Onne Village

Lalo and Kewa took Mave to Onne village where he was given a house of his own. Keen to ensure their visitor was well cared for they supplied him with cooked food and cared for his other needs. Once settled, he commenced morning and evening worship services with a number of villagers who showed some interest in coming along. Being a keen fisher-



A new school on Wuvulu



A church and school on Wuvulu



The people of a village on Wuvulu

man Mave accompanied some of the men on their fishing trips and used his speargun with considerable success. As the men only had long and cumbersome throwing spears and had to work hard for their catch, Mave soon became a hero with his speargun, an unknown item on the island at that time.

Word about Mave's fishing skill soon spread around the island, and the chief from Auna village asked him to come and share it with him. On meeting him Mave explained that his success came from God, and that he would first need to learn to talk to Him as he did! So the chief who had previously forbidden visits by Adventists to his village, now began a relationship with God, and after following the counsel for many months became a believer in God. Mave's kindness had made the difference in the life of the chief.

On an earlier visit Boehm had asked the people if they would like a school. A few in Onne village had said 'Yes,' but only one man, Tapa from Auna village had agreed with the suggestion. But Mave now thought the time had come to commence school work and began with a class in Onne.

One day he took Lalo with him on a visit to Auna to see Tapa who had previously shown an interest in the Adventist church. On the way Lalo told Mave that he felt uncomfortable about the lack of interest in education shown by the people of Auna. When Tapa arrived from the garden Mave spoke with him and prayed with him and made arrangements for commencing a school in the village. Soon some people began attending the school in Onne Village²⁷. Later on Mave built a flat roof shelter made of coconut palm leaves to serve as a school room in Auna. As Tapa was single Funu and his wife cared for Mave on his visits to Auna.

These were not real schools as we know them today. Mave taught the pupils the alphabet and some phonics — a,e,i,o,u and ba, be, bi, bo, bu, as well as how to count 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc. The pupils used slates to write on and used sea water to wash the writing off. Along with other children I sat at the back of the room and at times helped to carry sea water to clean the writings on the slates. The first pupils in these schools were aged between 20 and 30 years, and what they were taught helped them to read their Bible memory texts.

God prospered Mave's work on the island of Wuvulu, and later on after a visit to Manus where he was ordained to the gospel ministry during the camp meeting on the island of Lou.²⁸ The time came for Mave and Orava to leave permanently. The seed of the gospel had been sown which one day would change the lives of everyone on the island, and others would come and continue the work. They invited Pato and Pamo, *luluai* for Onne and Auna respectively, to accompany them on the boat as they wanted them to see the extent of Adventist work on Manus and other islands. Unfortunately on the return voyage to Wuvulu, Pato fell overboard and was never found.²⁹

On this trip they brought two missionaries as replacements for Mave. One was Kilengit and his family who stayed at Auna village, and Belden and his family who lived in Onne village. Kilengit was from Manus and had been working at Pihun or Luf in the Ninigo groups, and Belden was from Koio on Malaita in the Solomon Islands.

When Kilengit arrived Bulu took care of him and his family. Kilengit asked Pamo for a piece of land so he could

build a house and he was given land known as Musiki. He then cleared the place and built the mission house and later the church there. While the land today is still used by the church, I do not think the title was legally transferred to it.

The two missionary families continued the work that Mave started. As they taught the people the gospel and prepared them for baptism, they also erected buildings for church purposes. I still remember very vividly the people's first love for Jesus. When the bell rang the last people to come to church were missionary Kilengit and his family. Very early every Friday morning the members both male and female came and cleaned the mission station and swept the white sand floor of the church smoothly ready for Sabbath.

In 1955 Lemke came to the Sepik Mission as its superintendent to replace Gander who transferred to the Coral Sea administrative office in Lae to serve as the Home Missionary, Publishing and Sabbath School Secretary. In May my mother said that Pastors Lemke, Gander, and Salau conducted a baptism on Lou beach on the island of Wuvulu. I remember it well for I stood on the beach watching, but not knowing what was going on. On the same visit two churches were dedicated and Lemke conducted three weddings at the same time.

Today everyone on the island is a Seventh-day Adventist but I must add that when you get to the third generation of believers, you do find some nominal Christians and even those who do not profess to be so. However, many still have a vibrant belief in the Adventist faith. On December 2002 we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the SDA Church arrival on Wuvulu Island.

Many thanks to the dedicated missionaries from Australia, New Zealand, the Solomon Islands, Mussau and Manus. They were used by God as instruments in bringing the 'Good News' to our shores to deliver us from the bondage of sin and Satan, and to give us peace and a sure 'blessed hope' in Jesus Christ. In the next article I will look at the Subeli School.

References & Notes

- 1 Manus Island formed part of a group of about 40 islands known as the Admiralty Islands which lie between latitude 1degree and 3 degrees South, and longitude 146 degrees and 148 degrees East. Manus, also known as Great Admiralty Islands extends more than 80 kilometres from west to east, and has a maximum width of 27 kilometres. Its highest point is Mount Dremsel, 2,356 feet high. Lorengau is the administrative center. The islands were first sighted by W Schouten in 1616. Taken by the Japanese army on 11-9-42, they were liberated in March 1944.
- 2 When one reconstructs history there will always be some missing links and this account will be no exception. I interviewed the remnant of the old people who were part of the history making when the church became established on the island of Wuvulu, but their stories did not always match in some places. I was about 7 years of age when the church first came and my memory cannot recall everything that took place, but I was really part of the history too. Ken Boehm, son of Pastor Eric Boehm, gave me some very good details from his father's diary and the log book of the MV *Light* relating to their first visit to the island. Eric Boehm's diary gives further information about the people on the island of Wuvulu.
- 3 The Wuvulu people are Polynesian. They erect small but well-crafted houses of slab timber dowelled together to form the walls. Roofs were constructed of well-pitched thatched palm leaves. Canoes were built up high in the front to prevent waves

Funding Priorities for Adventist Education in the South Pacific

—a ten year survey

Dr Barry Hill & Mrs Tammy Pannekoek

Introduction

WHILE THERE ARE MANY WAYS to evaluate the importance of Adventist education to the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA) in the South Pacific Division, one sure way of measuring this importance is to add up how much money the Church spends on education. We can ask where the money goes and how much we spend. To see how the money is being spent we have traced the patterns of South Pacific Division spending on education over the period 1998 to 2008.

Survey Methodology

To extract our data we examined a range of South Pacific Division (abbreviated as SPD) financial statements. We also asked Treasury staff to assist us to locate and summarise some data that we could not access readily and we thank them for their assistance. The following sets of documents were consulted for each of the ten years surveyed: SPD Office Accounting Records; SPD Annual Budgets including Expatriate Budget Papers; and SPD Financial Reports.

When determining what the South Pacific Division spent on Education in the ten year period, there were many different areas to consider. Firstly there were departmental costs, namely the wages and expenses of the SPD Education Department. Then there was the amount spent on base and special appropriations that include study sponsorships, explained shortly. In addition to those costs were the salaries of expatriate teachers and lecturers in the Pacific 'mission field', and denominational scholarships granted to certain students who study at Avondale College. Other spending targeted advanced study in Australia and New Zealand. These expenditures will be covered in our summary.

Some areas of heavy education spending are not covered in our report. If we had infinite time we could explore areas like the educational costs borne by all our conferences, missions and unions. These include funding from local tithes which can add up to fifty percent of tithes in some missions. Then there are the hidden costs of running the SPD office in supporting education. Examples are the costs of financial auditing, administration, treasury support, Information Technology (IT) and other office costs. Another hidden education cost is Church employee's school fee discounts. Due to the difficulty in gathering this diverse information we will concentrate on most of the education spending in the SPD office, keeping in mind that our figures do not show all that has been spent in our Division.

There were some constraints on our efforts to report our data accurately. At first the annual SPD budget was run by the calendar year from 1998 to June 2002, but after that the calculations changed to the financial year which ran from July to June. That change also meant that we were missing six months when we collated the figures for denominational scholarships for Avondale students. Conversely it also meant that we included an extra six months in many of our calculations so that the budget totals in our overview mostly cover a time period of ten years and six months. However the figures we have summarised can give us a good ball park figure of expenditure, taking the constraints into consideration.

Education Department Costs

In Table 1 the annual Education Department budget is broken down into six components. The first component is staff wages and departmental expenses. The wages budget was for two directors and an assistant. On top of this there were special projects, two examples being the updating of the education handbook and the development of curriculum for mission field schools. Other additions were inter-division travel and education seminars which included some principals' conferences run jointly for the Australian and New Zealand Pacific Unions. As an example of an annual departmental expenditure since 2000, the 2002/2003 departmental budget was \$311,450. Over a ten year period departmental costs alone added up to a considerable amount, namely \$3,901,209.

Year	Budget	Special Projects	Inter-Division Travel	Seminars	Curriculum Development	Government Affairs	Total
1998	176,552			11,950	281,970	80,756	551,228
1999	181,859			11,950	196,372	82,408	472,589
2000	186,209	9,500		1,500	196,560	86,272	480,041
2001	229,925	8,000		18,892			256,817
2002 June	128,313	1,250	4,160	5,000			138,723
2002/2003	260,350	20,000	1,100	30,000			311,450
2003/2004	268,468			30,000			298,468
2004/2005	279,763	15,000		35,000			329,763
2005/2006	287,389		3,500	30,000			320,889
2006/2007	288,812	68,000	3,500	30,000			390,312
2007/2008	315,929	25,000		10,000			350,929
Total	2,603,569	148,750	12,260	214,292	674,902	249,436	3,901,209

Table 1 also includes expenditure for curriculum development and government affairs between the years 1998–2000. These figures included the cost of employing two curriculum associate directors, a government affairs associate director and one office assistant. The total cost for the decade was \$924,338. Funding for these four people was provided indirectly from the conferences. So between 1998 and 2000 there were five education administrators in the SPD office. However after 2000 three of these five positions went to the Australian Union Conference.

Base and Special Appropriations to Tertiary Institutions

In the spread sheet in Table 2 we can see that there were large expenditures on ‘base appropriations’ and ‘special appropriations’. Base appropriations are simply lump sums paid to tertiary institutions in order to enable them to continue running. The ten year total expenditure for these was \$48,150,904. This is indeed a large ongoing commitment by the SPD.

The special appropriations totalling almost \$17,000,000 can be split into three different categories as shown in Table 2. These are institutional projects, study sponsorships and teacher professional development. The table shows how much was spent on each category during ten years and six months. The reader can see that most money was spent on institutional projects. Some examples of these projects were Fulton College senior girls’ hostel, Betikama Form 7 development, Fulton College ladies residence, Beulah College dining hall/kitchen, Avondale College information systems, Tuvalu School equipment, and PAU repairs and maintenance. This is not an exhaustive list but it gives the reader an idea of what can constitute an institutional project.

Table 2 shows that SPD funded sponsorships for study sponsorship in various Pacific institutions and unions totalled \$3,536,262. Such funding can easily go unnoticed by the constituency, but over time it adds up to become a large outlay. Teacher professional development totalling \$85,000 was not a large expenditure. However it is noted that from 2000 onwards for the next decade ADRA helped the Education Department with an additional \$45,000 a year for teacher professional development, a total of \$450,000 not recorded in Table 2 below.

Money given for study sponsorships under the ‘special appropriations’ category warrants further explanation. In Table 2 various kinds of appropriations are obscured in the total figures. For example, in the decade under review \$1,628,386 was given for advanced study in higher degrees for division employees in the Pacific region. Then the PNGUM was allocated \$673,100 for student sponsorships at Church institutions while the WPUM was granted a further \$215,000 and the TPUM another \$100,000. In addition sponsorship of ministerial students at Sonoma totalled \$35,000, at Fulton \$40,000, and at PAU \$95,300. Further special funding included \$50,000 for Bougainville teacher support one year, and \$40,000 for National teacher educational sponsorships. In addition the Division budgets between 2003 and 2006 showed funding of \$60,000 for tertiary student support in New Zealand and the Pacific. And PAU received special attention with funding for student work sponsorship to the tune of \$320,000 and \$35,000 for travel subsidy for students based in the TPUM and studying at PAU. Advanced study money was indeed disbursed in numerous ways.

Study sponsorship did not stop with the Pacific. The Conference Advanced Study Fund has enabled ongoing sponsorship of the Avondale Master of Education Program and doctoral studies in education for students in Australia and New Zealand. In all a total of \$3,081,786 of conference-provided funds was spent by the SPD office in the decade. This money was not funded in the ‘special appropriations’ category shown in **Table 2 below**.

Year	Base Appropriations	Special Appropriations Itemised			Total Special Appropriations
	Total for Year	Institutional projects	Study Sponsorships	Teacher professional development	
1998	3,084,498	3,773,105	406,000		4,179,105
1999	5,013,704	1,696,500	371,000		2,067,500
2000	2,851,120	998,255	235,786		1,234,041
2001	3,656,300	1,018,255	170,786	65,000	1,254,041
2002 June	2,374,560	838,254	473,640	20,000	1,331,894
2002/2003	4,694,073	574,000	170,000		744,000
2003/2004	5,933,048	1,226,000	180,000		1,406,000
2004/2005	5,087,901	530,900	721,200		1,252,100
2005/2006	5,223,660	847,700	271,250		1,118,950
2006/2007	4,463,964	729,000	258,300		987,300
2007/2008	5,768,076	1,120,400	278,300		1,398,700
Total	48,150,904	13,352,369	3,536,262	85,000	16,973,631

If we add together the money spent on the Education Department and on special and base appropriations over ten years, the total is considerable. All together over sixty-eight million dollars were spent on these budgets in ten years. That is a large investment.

Expatriate Salaries

In addition to its budgets for the Education Department and its various appropriations, the SPD has spent a considerable amount of money on the salaries of expatriate teachers and lecturers working in the mission fields. Collectively Tables 3A, 3B and Table 4 show which institutions were supplied with teachers or lecturers, how many were employed, and how much was spent on salaries each year. The figures for 2007–2008 were not supplied, so the totals in this spread sheet are for a period of 9 years and 6 months. In an average year over \$4,000,000 was spent on expatriate salaries. All together in our timeframe over \$47,000,000 was spent on expatriate salaries in the Pacific. And we add that this was not the total annual expatriate wage bill for the Division because it does not count salaries of some expatriate administrators and pastoral staff.

Table 3A – Expatriate Salaries										
Teacher Salaries and Educational Expenses										
Financial Year	Expats	1998	Expats	1999	Expats	2000	Expats	2001	Expats	2002 - June
Fulton College	7	528,101	7	579,306	7	533,666	6	575,238	6	577,776
Suva High School									1	96,296
Betikama High School	4	301,772	4	331,032	3	228,714	3	287,819	3	288,888
Aore Adventist Academy	2	150,886	2	165,516	1	76,238	1	95,873		
Pacific Adventist University	24	1,810,632	24	1,986,192	22	1,677,236	24	2,300,952	28	2,696,288
Sopas School of Nursing	5	377,215	6	496,548	6	457,428				
Sonoma College	9	678,987	8	662,064	6	457,428	5	479,365	4	385,184
Kambubu High School	4	301,772	5	413,790	5	381,190	4	383,492	3	288,888
Mt Diamond High School	3	226,329	3	248,274	1	76,238	1	95,873	1	96,296
Kabiufa High School	3	226,329	2	165,516			1	95,873	1	96,296
Total Budget	61	4,602,023	61	5,048,238	51	3,888,138	45	4,314,285	47	4,525,912
Average Budget per Expatriate (x \$10k)		75,443		82,758		76,238		95,873		96,296

Table 3B - Expatriate Salaries										
Teacher Salaries and Educational Expenses										
Financial Year	Expats	2002 - 2003	Expats	2003 - 2004	Expats	2004 - 2005	Expats	2005 - 2006	Expats	2006 - 2007
Fulton College	6	713,788	6	770,880	6	886,770	6	848,256	5	646,780
Suva High School	1	118,965	1	128,480						
Betikama High School	3	356,894	3	385,440	1	147,795	1	141,376	1	129,356
Aore Adventist Academy										
Pacific Adventist University	26	3,093,084	25	3,212,000	21	3,103,695	21	2,968,896	24	3,104,544
Sopas School of Nursing										
Sonoma College	4	475,859	3	385,440	3	443,385	3	424,128	3	388,068
Kambubu High School	1	118,965	1	128,480	2	295,590	2	282,752	2	258,712
Mt Diamond High School	3	356,894	3	385,440	1	147,795	1	141,376		
Kabiufa High School	1	118,965	1	128,480	1	147,795				
Total Budget	45	5,353,414	43	5,524,640	35	5,172,825	34	4,806,784	35	4,527,460
Average Budget per Expatriate (x \$10k)		118,965		128,480		147,795		141,376		129,356

Table 4		
Summary of Tables 3A + 3B		
Year	Total Expats	Total Budget
1998	61	4,602,023
1999	61	5,048,238
2000	51	3,888,138
2001	45	4,314,285
2002 June	47	4,525,912
2002/2003	45	5,353,414
2003/2004	43	5,524,640
2004/2005	35	5,172,825
2005/2006	34	4,806,784
2006/2007	35	4,527,460
Total	457	47,763,719

Table 5 - Avondale Scholarships	
Denominational Employer's Scholarships paid to Avondale College - FIN.40.30 (2)	
Year	Total
1998	1,069,705
1999	1,037,066
2000	995,752
2001	819,127
2002	982,244
2003	1,310,070
2004	1,155,000
2005	1,276,424
2006	1,068,886
2007	1,469,661
Total	11,183,935

Avondale College Scholarships

Lastly, the South Pacific Division spends further money on education by offering scholarships for all SDA students studying in non-government funded HECS courses at Avondale College. Table 5 shows the money that was given mostly to theology students in the decade under review. The figures in this table were formatted on the calendar year, so the total reflects what was spent in ten years from 1998 to 2007. Overall more than \$11,000,000 was spent on these scholarships at Avondale. Again this figure is something easily hidden in the ongoing operation of the church, something little known by members.

Funding Priorities

In its spread sheet below Table 6 summarises most of what the SPD has funded for education in the ten year period. As the reader can see the budget for the combination of all base and special appropriations was the most expensive area of expenditure at over \$68,000,000. Base appropriations appeared to be the top funding priority. This was partly due to the high cost of running our tertiary institutions which are seen as essential by the Division. Close behind was the second largest amount of money, over \$47,000,000 spent on salaries of expatriate teachers and lecturers employed in Pacific schools and tertiary institutions. This second priority goes hand in hand with the priority of keeping the tertiary education sector viable.

The third highest priority centred around special appropriations of almost \$17,000,000, and which was included with base appropriations in Table 6. The fourth priority focused on money for denominational scholarships for Avondale students which cost the Church over \$11,000,000 in the decade. Then it cost almost \$4,000,000 to keep the SPD Department of Education operating for ten years. Finally two funding sources at the SPD lay outside annual appropriations and budgets. There was the spending of over \$3,000,000 on advanced study in Australia and New Zealand, shown below as the CAS Fund provided by conferences, and \$450,000 given by ADRA for Pacific professional development.

Year	Total Appropriations	Expat Salaries	Scholarships	Total
1998	7,814,831	4,602,023	1,069,705	13,486,559
1999	7,553,793	5,048,238	1,037,066	13,639,097
2000	4,565,202	3,888,138	995,752	9,449,092
2001	5,039,372	4,314,285	819,127	10,172,784
2002-June	3,921,605	4,525,912	982,244	9,429,761
2002/2003	5,699,523	5,353,414	1,310,070	12,363,007
2003/2004	7,617,516	5,524,640	1,155,000	14,297,156
2004/2005	6,599,764	5,172,825	1,276,424	13,049,013
2005/2006	6,573,499	4,806,784	1,068,886	12,449,169
2006/2007	5,811,576	4,527,460	1,469,661	11,808,697
2007/2008	7,512,705	not supplied	2007 (above) last year supplied with data	7,512,705
Total	66,709,386	47,763,719	11,183,935	127,657,040
Total for CAS fund for 10 years				3,081,786
Total for ADRA Professional Development				450,000
TOTAL				131,188,826

Trends in Spending

A glance at Table 6 shows that the grand total for departmental expense and base and special annual appropriations for tertiary education did not increase appreciably since 1998. However the combination of budget figures masks some increases. Some educational spending did increase over time. For example if we examine the rising cost of operating the SPD Education Department, the 2008 figure of \$315,929 was \$139,377 more than the 1998 total, an increase of 44 per cent. Although we can argue that this increase is simply consistent with annual inflationary increases in the general economy, it is still real money. Likewise base appropriations generally climbed steadily over time. The amount of \$3,084,498 in 1998 was much less than the \$5,768,076 of 2008.

In contrast, annual spending on expatriate salaries in the field of education did not increase on average after 1998. Although there were fluctuations the 2007 amount was still less than the 1998 figure. While this holding pattern operated there was also a decrease in numbers of expatriates serving in the Pacific in the decade. Numbers dropped from 61 to 35. It seems that the SPD administration and ultimately the executive committee kept deciding that the amount spent on expatriate salaries was to be kept relatively constant because of other priorities, meaning that as employment costs rose each year, fewer staff could be employed.

Conclusion

Our ten year survey has shown that over the decade the Division's educational funding priorities centred primarily on its tertiary program. While Avondale College received a good deal of funding the bulk of the money went to the Pacific tertiary program. Base and special appropriations and expatriate wages accounted for most of this spending. Advanced study also soaked up much funding. We also note that advanced study funding for the school system was provided by levies on conferences in Australia and New Zealand, and was disbursed by the SPD.

In all the total educational spending in the decade for the areas we have summarised in our survey was \$131,188,826. This amount indicated an annual spending average of over \$13,118,882 by the SPD office.

Our grand total shows that the Church pays out an enormous amount of money to keep its educational program operating. The bottom line of all our calculations clearly leads us to one unequivocal conclusion: education is very important to this Church.



BARRY HILL

Dr Barry Hill was born in Murwillumbah NSW. He is married to Valmai and they have two married children, Sharlene and Kelvin.

He attended two Adventist Primary Schools, Avondale & Zillmere. He also attended four state primary and two state high schools. His professional degrees are BA Ed (Avondale College), Dip Ed (Massey University, NZ), Master of Curriculum Studies (UNE), and PhD (UNE).

He taught English, history and many other subjects at Christchurch Adventist School from 1967-1974. He then ran the Secondary Teaching Diploma Course at Fulton College (Fiji) for 6 years.

After a study break of 4 years he lectured at Avondale College for 3 years before moving to the SPD Education Office where he was first Associate Director of Education (Secondary Curriculum) for 12 years then Associate Director of Education Administration for 2 years. Since 2003 he has been the Director of Education for the South Pacific Division.

Tammy Pannekoek was born in the USA in Stoneham MA. She is married to Luke and they have two sons aged 9 & 10. She attended Hinsdale Academy in Chicago, IL then graduated from Thunderbird Academy in Phoenix AZ.

Shortly after, she married Luke in his home town of Darwin, Australia.

Tammy commenced her undergraduate degree in 1996 at Avondale College, but after 2 years of study took a break after her first son was born. She returned to her studies and graduated with a BA in history and English in 2006 at Avondale College. She worked as the Departmental Assistant in the Education Department at the South Pacific Division.



TAMMY PANNEKOEK

Puni and Vau

—swimming against the tide of accepted beliefs,
they made it to the shore of biblical certainty



PUNI RAEA

Puni Raea, born in Western Samoa in 1933, grew up in Samatau on Upolu. From 1946-50 he attended Vailoa school. In 1951-2 he attended Fulton College in Fiji attaining a general secondary education. From 1953-55 he served as a public health inspector in Western Samoa. On 25 January 1956 he married Aanasae Afamasanga. For the next 8 years he served at the Mootootua Hospital in Apia. After studying at the NZ National Health Institute in Wellington on a WHO Fellowship Award he worked for 2 years on the tuberculosis project at Mootootua Hospital. During 1969 he studied in Honolulu, Hawaii then served at the Peace Corps Training Centre on Molokai Is. Hawaii. For the next 11 years he was a health inspector for the Porirua City Council in NZ. From 1982-86 he was a community liaison officer for the Samoan Pacific Islanders living in Wellington, NZ. For 2 years he was the public relations officer for the Electric Power Board in Wellington. He and Ese retired in 1993 in Newcastle NSW. Ese died in November 2008. Their children are Penina, Jerry, Sarona, Raea and Hefren. He is recognised as an outstanding tulafale (orator chief).

PUNI, AND VAU were faithful and strong adherents of the LMS (London Missionary Society) Church in the village of Samatau at the western end of the island of Upolu. Puni, the son of Puni Emosi, was a titled chief known as Puni Leota Ierome Alii, and his education led him to be a student in his final year at the London Missionary Society Malua Theological College. His wife, Vau Saibai, was the daughter of an LMS missionary in Papua New Guinea, hence her second name Saibai, which came from the island of Saibai in the Torres Strait area, where her parents served for ten years. Because of his parents reputable religious background, Puni served for six years as locum for the local congregation. Puni Ierome had been training to become a church minister, but had been called home to succeed his father with the family title of Puni.

At that time Vau's brother, Sanika Afaese, who was a Government School Inspector, had recently accepted the Adventist faith after extensive Bible studies with Dr Ieru Kuresa of Apia National Hospital. When Afaese received this new gospel light he had, like all new converts, a burning desire to take the Seventh-day Adventist biblical message to his families in the villages of Samatau and Safotulafai on the island of Savaii. His plan was to study with his sister Vau and his brother Fepulea'i Taalolo whenever an opportunity arose. He planned to utilise the time of his field visits to the villages around the islands to bring them the thrilling news of the Adventist faith.

Afaese visited the school at Samatau and spent the following night there in order to have time to study with Puni and Vau. Sometimes he even spent his free weekends studying with them. In 1936, after a whole year of detailed Bible studies, Puni and Vau were ready to accept the Three Angels messages; to keep the seventh-day Sabbath and to look forward to the second return of Jesus Christ. However there were several hurdles which had to be overcome before they could actually take their stand for their precious new found belief. These problems that had to be solved were firstly the completion of the construction of the new Samatau LMS church building, and secondly the calling of a minister to look after the congregation. Until these very important obligations were met, it would be unwise for them to leave.

Puni and Vau kept their hope alive within themselves and worked very hard to fulfil these immediate responsibilities before they could make their determination known. A minister was found and immedi-



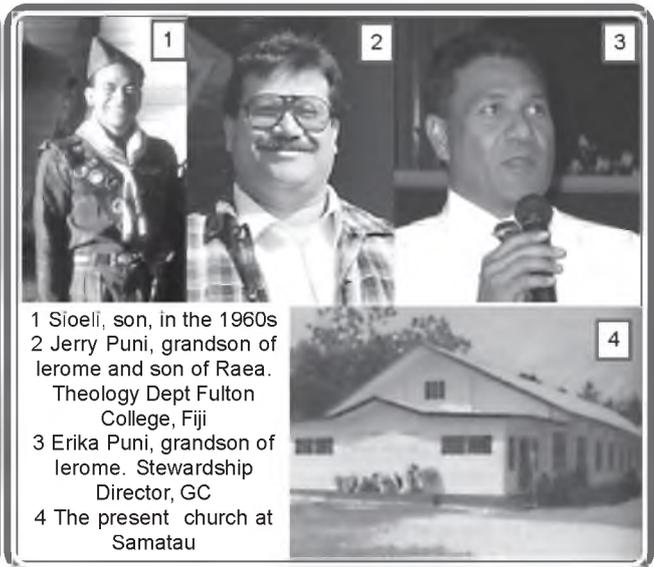
ately called to fill the position. The church building was close to completion and the day for an opening was chosen. After these two major programs were carried out, another unavoidable situation arose which could not be ignored as it could be detrimental to their proposed exit from the old faith. The immense debt of three thousand pounds caused by the construction of the new church building must be fully paid before they could honorably depart. Although they were eager to leave, Puni and Vau knew that it was only fair to meet the whole payment of the amount owing on the church. So for the next three years they patiently worked with the church membership to pay the debt.

On the last Sunday of May in 1940, after returning to Samatau from the fono at Malua, Puni was given the opportunity of preaching in the afternoon service. This was not something new for Puni as he had been a lay preacher in the church. For years he had been ready for this moment and he had carefully selected a text from the Bible for his last sermon for the congregation of people whom he loved and whom he had worked with for the Lord. He chose John 16:7 (second phrase) "It is expedient for you that I go away."

It was a normal Sunday afternoon with



Fereti Puni, the first national president of Samoa, and his wife Puataunofo. Fereti was the son of Puni Ierome.



1 Siieli, son, in the 1960s
 2 Jerry Puni, grandson of Ierome and son of Raea. Theology Dept Fulton College, Fiji
 3 Erika Puni, grandson of Ierome. Stewardship Director, GC
 4 The present church at Samatau

the minister and his wife and the congregation hierarchy all in attendance. What was exceptionally unusual was the fact that the service was well attended as if a special occasion was to be celebrated. Nothing had been suspected about the intended farewell message though the topic sounded strange. The hearers were puzzled at first, but as the sermon progressed in words which were wisely and carefully chosen, it became obvious that the speaker was indeed delivering a farewell speech.

It was a great surprise and the people were stunned by this unexpected occurrence. The congregation started to wonder why the right hand man of the church, the archdeacon (Tiakono Toeaina o le Matagaluega a Aarta) of the Aarta province was leaving. However, the next few words, spoken by Puni, explained it all. "Today, is my last day with you in this church. This is the last time you will see and hear me preach from this pulpit. I have studied the Adventist faith and accepted it. From this day on, I have become a Seventh-day Adventist, and that's the reason I am leaving you. May the merciful God richly bless the minister and keep you all in His love. This is my sincere prayer in the name of our precious Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

Puni and Vau had not been idle since the time that they had secretly accepted the new Biblical light. They had quietly studied the Bible doctrines with some members of their extended family, and consequently three immediate families of the Puni clan left with them to start the new Seventh-day Adventist company in the village. These families were Lavea Sali and Temu, Lei'a Peleti and Pa'e'e, and Faalavelave and Sose. These together with Puni and Vau were the founding members of the SDA Company at Samatau in 1940. Each week they would meet in the home of Sanika Afa'ese at Satali. Sosaia and his wife Fua cared for them as their minister.

The news that Puni had become a Seventh-day Adventist spread like wild fire for it was an extraordinarily special happening. However, he was true to his word. This whole event had taken the LMS denomination in Samatau and the whole of Samoa by surprise. Numerous attempts by the leadership of both the district and the national church were made to persuade the newly converted Puni to repudiate the Seventh-day Adventist faith, but, he chose to remain true to his new Friend and to be faithful to him till death.

After receiving much love and sympathy from the members of his previous church, the devil began working to stir

up the hearts of the people to condemn the stubborn man and his wife. There were numerous negative influences from both inside and outside as the matter had been taken up by the village supreme council of chiefs. One day when Puni and Vau were out working in their inland plantation, the chief of the council called an emergency meeting. The meeting's agenda had only one item to deal with, and that was the expulsion of Puni and his wife and all members of his family that had followed him in the new religious group. By the time Puni and Vau returned from the plantation that afternoon, the council decision had already been publicly proclaimed throughout the village concerning the expulsion of Puni and his followers. In addition, no one of the village was allowed to call at Puni's place, and no one was permitted to talk to Puni and Vau while the council's decision was in force.

All sorts of nasty rumours and false reports were made and spread around about the man who had previously been highly regarded by all, but was now looked on as a lunatic and a great fool. Relatives and friends became the bitterest enemies. People started to ask how this man who had once been a great Christian leader could possibly turn to the Seventh-day Adventist church. Wasn't this church an offshoot of Judaism, the very people who had crucified Jesus Christ?

Things went from bad to worse. Several death threats were made to the new SDA converts, particularly Puni and Vau. Unknown to the traitors, as the villagers called them, there was an assassination plot being planned on the life of Puni. Usually Puni and Vau slept on the double bed at one end of the open guesthouse, but somehow on this particular night, through the Lord's protection and safe keeping, they slept on the floor at the inward side of the bed. Sometime during the night, they were awakened by the noise of something happening on the bed. They heard the sound of someone running away from the house behind the bed area. They got up and lit the lamp. When they inspected the bed, they discovered a sharp cane knife stuck in the bedding with its blade sunk into the thick layers of sleeping mats about 30 centimetres in depth.

For six years Puni remained expelled from the village's council of chiefs, but for some unknown reason he was not banished from the village. He was baptised by Sanika Afa'ese into the Seventh-day Adventist faith in June 1941 at the annual fono in the Vailoa Missionary College, and was only

The Story of Two Lives — Pastor Nathan & Mrs Mary Rore



Nathan Rore was born at Dovele on the Island of Vella LaVella in the Solomon Islands on 27 February, 1928. Educated at the Betikama Missionary School (BMS), Honiara, on the main island of Guadalcanal, he commenced regular denominational service as a part-time primary school teacher at the same educational institution in 1949. He began full-time employment two years later, and on 1 March 1951, he married Mary who remained his loyal and devoted companion during all his years of service for the church.



In 1954–55 Nathan served as the Assistant Director of Education for the Bismarck Solomons Union Mission, and for the following 4 years as the Headmaster of the Bolu Central School on the Island of Mussau in Papua New Guinea (PNG). From 1960–63 he served as Secretary Treasurer, Education and Missionary Volunteer Secretary of the Nth Bismarck Mission located at Kavieng in western PNG. Five years of similar service at Lorengau for the Manus Mission followed, and in 1969 Nathan was appointed Assistant President of the Bougainville Mission also in PNG.

For the next 20 years, beginning in 1971, Nathan held presidential responsibilities in his homeland of the Solomon Islands—Malaita(1971-80); Eastern Solomons (1981-86) and Western Solomon (1987-90). He then retired because of health problems.

For 40 years Nathan and Mary had contributed to the advancement of the mission of the church and God had blessed their endeavours. During these years they had faithfully cared for the members of their family—Rosemary, Judith, Vaine, Clezy and Calvie (now deceased).

Nathan was an astute administrator who inspired his workers to push the frontiers of the Adventist biblical message further into new areas for he knew there was always someone further on — someone who needed to know of God's special invitation in the last days, someone who needed hope in a hopeless world. Warmhearted and gracious but firm on biblical principles, he was well-respected by all.

Mary was an excellent home-maker and helped out with the work of the church where she could. Weakened by ill-health, Mary passed to her rest on 13 August 2007, and Nathan died on 19 January 2009. Two of God's precious servants now await the Master's call to eternal life.

accepted back to the village community in December 1947. This only happened after God miraculously intervened by using the Aana District Supreme Authority at the assembly of the Samoan peoples' representatives in Lepea, at the traditional meeting ground in preparation for their future national independence. They ordered the immediate full restoration of Puni to the village circle.

Puni was not only a man of excellent planning, but a man of action as well. Despite his age and the small handful of local Adventist believers, he enthusiastically organised fund raising to build a proper church building in which God's people could comfortably worship him. A fishing net was woven from sinet made of coconut husk, and fishing expeditions were promptly organised around the district. The church members under the able leadership of Puni toiled so hard for more than ten years to raise funds for their new church. All revenue from fishing and plantation crops was saved and the new church was built, completed and dedicated in December 1955 on land donated by Puni around 1947.

On his last night on earth, which was Friday night, Puni called all his children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren to his hospital room in Apia and spoke to them all for the last time. He stressed two vital issues. The first one was to remain true and faithful to God

and His work, and secondly to love one another and be ready for the imminent return of Jesus Christ. He wanted us all to meet again in the resurrection morning. He was quite well that evening for he sat up on his bed and led out in our worship with a strong voice.

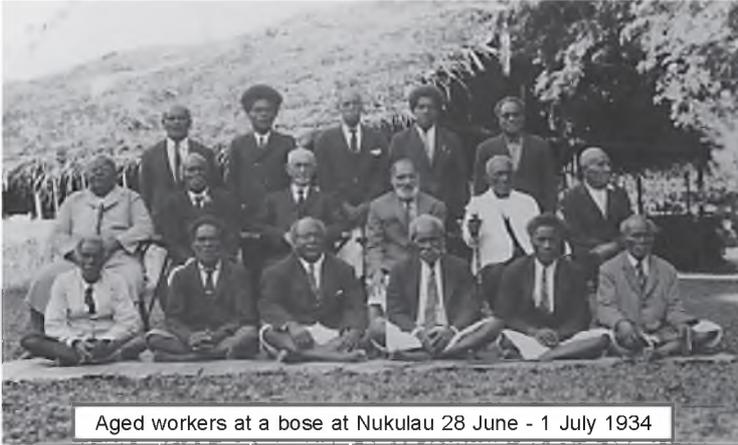
Everyone, including the children, kissed and hugged and bade him goodnight. We were amazed to learn that he knew the time of his passing for he had told us during the week when it would be. That same night, at about 3 o'clock in the morning, our beloved father passed peacefully to his rest, still holding fast to the blessed hope of his Saviour's glorious appearing.

After faithfully serving his Master for 27 years, Puni lerome was laid to rest on 17 July 1967 at the age of 107. Vau had predeceased him twenty years earlier on January 23, 1948. The President of the Samoan Mission, Pastor David Hay, officiated with Pastor Neru Nuuialii at Puni's funeral service. The Reverend Siave, whom Puni had called to replace him and to care for the LMS congregation, and Reverend Tavita, who was the current LMS minister in Samatau, both volunteered to make testimonies about his wonderful life. They had known Puni so well as the faithful hero and servant of God. The High Chief Tuimalealiifano was also present at the funeral. ♦

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Life in Fiji in earlier years 1928-1934



Aged workers at a bose at Nukulau 28 June - 1 July 1934



Fiji office (L) & press (R) at Suvavou, Viti Levu, 1930



Ratu Joni and Ratu Viliami 1929

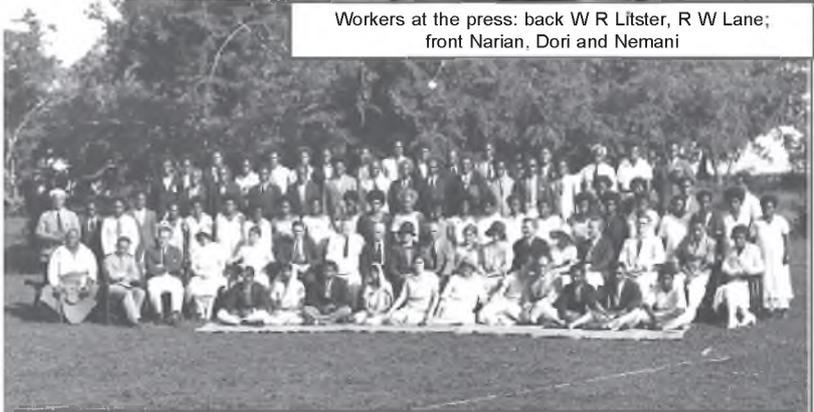
bose: a council, a meeting for a specific purpose.

ratu: a title of rank before names of males who are chiefs.

Viti Levu: the main island of Fiji.



Workers at the press: back W R Litster, R W Lane; front Narian, Dori and Nemani



Bose Nukulau 1931- W G Turner, A G Stewart and Mrs Stewart in attendance



H R Martin baptising at Lewa, Viti Levu



Buresala church & school on Ovalau Is.

Buresala, Navuso and Samabula facilities were taken to Korovou and became Fulton Training School (1941); Fulton Missionary School (1945); Fulton Missionary College (1950); Fulton College (1972—).



The Buresala boys

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AUSTRALIA



L Wilkinson at Navuso school, Wainibuka