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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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• Cover Pictures

Betikama Missionary School

1. One of the Quonset hut schoolrooms
2. Ray Richter, Elisha Gorapava, Vavepitu.
3. The first girls to go to Betikama

Editorial

CAN WE DO ANY LESS?



EVERYWHERE ONE GOES IN THE WORLD, monuments to the past abound. Whether they be statues of national heroes, restored buildings of historical importance, paintings depicting former sovereigns or outstanding political leaders, or even commemorative images on stamps and coins that most of us use daily; all these, and much more, are used by secular governments to help us remember the past. Often even national holidays are used by governments to remind its citizens of the nation's past, whether it is in recognition of Independence Day or the birthday of some important historical figure.

Ancient civilizations also built monuments and temples to commemorate great leaders and notable military victories. If secular governments of countries large and small recognize the collective need to remember the past in order to help assure their future, should we as Adventists do any less?

All of us recall reading God's repeated calls to His people in Bible times to remember His leading in their behalf. To the extent that they heeded His admonition, they were successful in carrying out their divine assignment.

Today Adventism faces a unique challenge. Called into existence exactly as prophesied in Scripture centuries in advance, our pioneers took their prophetic assignment very seriously. They rediscovered long lost biblical truths; implemented ways and means of sharing "present truth" with others around the world; and even established organizations and institutions to help them achieve their God ordained mission.

Not willing to risk the loss of the sacrificial fervor and commitment of the first generations of our movement, Ellen White warned in *Life Sketches*, p196, "We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history."

Despite her warning, Adventism risks losing its very identity if it does not preserve and share its past. New members, including Adventist youth, often have very little knowledge of how our church began, or why. To not preserve our heritage; to not recount the stories of God's leading in the founding of our movement; to not build upon our past to help assure Adventism's glorious future, are all proven paths that ultimately will help lead us to failure. If even secular countries and organizations recognize the truthfulness of that fact, so spend large sums of money to make certain that the past is not forgotten, should Adventism do any less? After all, our past does not lead just to present realities, but instead it leads to eternity.

James R Nix

Adventist Heritage Ministry & Director EGW Estate Gen. Conference.



Refereed Articles

An invitation is extended to authors to submit articles – historical articles of a pedagogical nature, reviews of published works, and original research, relating to the mission of the Church in the Pacific Islands and among the indigenous peoples of Australia & NZ, including those island peoples who have emigrated to these countries & USA. These scholarly articles would be reviewed by a panel of peer referees.

Manuscripts of a maximum of 5,000 words to be submitted for blind review, should be typed, double-spaced, and 3 copies supplied; one to be on disk. Once several articles are published, the *Journal* would apply for listing on the Dept of Education Science and Training Register of Refereed Journals. This approval would benefit both authors and the *Journal*.

Contact the editor for further information.

Contents



4 Betikama students 1952



15 Gapi Ravu



24 The trends; what is the answer



10 A Schoolroom at Put Put



19 Kambubu High School



28 Narain Singh & his pupils

Articles

- 4 Betikama Missionary School** — *Innovative methods work well. The development of an educational institution in the Solomon Islands*
BY RAY RICHTER
- 10 Put Put & Omaura** — *Meeting educational & spiritual needs. The positive influence of the training schools in the community*
BY ALFRED G CHAPMAN
- 15 Gapi Ravu** — *A pioneer, missionary, trainer of missionary volunteers, administrator & district leader*
BY LESTER LOCK
- 19 Kambubu** — *The joy of service at a boarding school in PNG in the 1970s. The challenges faced, difficulties overcome, & problems solved*
BY DAVID CALDWELL
- 24 A Reflection** — *An exposure of a worrying trend in the church—the dwindling support for the South Sea Islands*
By BARRY OLIVER
- 28 Master-ji** — *One man's valued contribution to education in Fiji*
BY KENNETH SINGH
- 31 Big Bay Santo Island, Ambrym** — *Adventures on the frontiers of mission service in Vanuatu; God's leading*
LES PARKINSON
- 35 Letter to Mother** — *A perilous journey; the unmistakable presence of God*
BY SHIRLEY THOMSON
- 38 The New World of Today's Mission Treasurer** — *Sobering statistics*
BY RODNEY BRADY



31 A baptism at Baiap, Ambrym—Nicholson



35 Ka Seli stranded on the beach

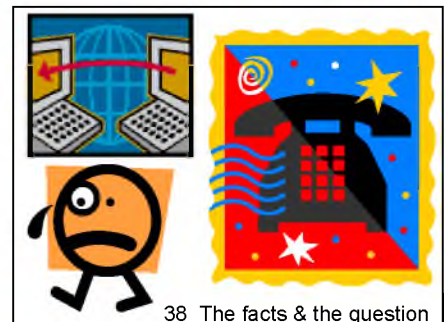
2 Editorial

Can We Do Any Less?

39 Life Sketches

Zonga Hite c. 1901—2003
Nathaniel Japeth 1923—2003

39 Photo Credits



38 The facts & the question

Betikama Missionary School

—consolidation and progress in the 1950s

RAY W RICHTER



Ray graduated from teacher training at Avondale College in 1943. He was headmaster of the SDA Primary Schools at Red Hill (Brisbane) 1944-6 and Toowoomba 1947-8.

He married Coralie Dixon in 1946 and in 1949 was appointed to Betikama School, Guadalcanal, where he was on the staff for one year and principal for 9 years. He spent the next three years at Jones Missionary College, Kambubu, on the island of New Britain, PNG, in teacher training for 2 years and principal for one year. In 1962 he became a departmental director— Education, Temperance, Youth & Public Relations — for the Bismarck-Solomons Union Mission at Rabaul, PNG, for 5 years. Then followed 11 years at Lae as Education Director for the PNGUM.

After 29 years of mission service he became Education Director for the Victorian and Tasmanian Conferences, 1978-80. He then worked in the Victorian Conference Education Office until retirement in 1983.

At Betikama, Coralie was involved in commencing and establishing education for girls.

Ray and Coralie have two children - Douglas and Jan. The Richters now reside at Melody Park R V, Gold Coast, Qld, Australia.

GUADALCANAL, A MOUNTAINOUS, FEVER-RIDDEN ISLAND in the Solomons group, of strategic importance to both sides in World War II, saw some of the most ferocious fighting in the Pacific war, particularly around Henderson Air Field, located east of Honiara, across the Lunga River. When the remnants of Japan's Imperial Army retreated to embark at Cape Esperance, on the western end of the island, they numbered 11,000, a mere fraction of the fighting force commissioned to retake Henderson Field in a bloody six-month campaign. Starvation, disease and battle casualties had decimated them. The aptly named Ironbottom Sound between Savo Island and Guadalcanal made a graveyard for 48 warships (24 from each side), sunk with horrendous loss of life.

To this scene with its grisly reminders of war came Lyndon Thrift in 1948, charged with the responsibility of establishing a school in "Sun Valley," so named by the US marines who had operated a base there. This tract of 1650 acres, lay west just across the Lunga River from Henderson Field. He came with 16 Solomon Islanders (13 from the Western Solomons and three from Guadalcanal). They planted gardens, mostly sweet potatoes, and did building work by day, holding school classes at night. The 400 US servicemen still at Henderson Field were helpful. Most of the buildings and equipment initially were built of materials from the army. In addition, the Solomon Islands SDA Mission¹ purchased, for a nominal sum, a quantity of equipment from a former gold mining venture along the Guadalcanal coast. These materials,

enabled Betikama to get under way at minimal cost.

On 30 January 1949 Thrift left Betikama to commence another school, Kabiufa, in the Eastern Highlands of Papua New Guinea. My appointment to replace him could not take place until May of that same year. Meanwhile, Pastor Lester Lock, who was serving in the Solomon Islands, took charge; he stayed until December 1949 when he went on furlough.

My wife Coralie and I, with our three-week-old son, Doug, left Sydney, Australia, on the *Morinda*², an old Burns Philp coal-burning cargo steamer. After a voyage of three weeks, we reached Honiara on May 3, 1949 to commence ten years of very interesting mission service at Betikama. We worked with the *Lock family for six months. Lester was a seasoned missionary and he taught me a lot during the time we were together at Betikama.

On arrival at Sun Valley (Betikama), I was amazed to see the amount of work that Lyn Thrift and his band of students had accomplished. In just 13 months they had built the principal's house, a press and store building, two teacher's houses, five dormitories, a cook house, engine house, the framework for a married student's house, and erected nine steel posts (booms from American Liberty Ships) for an 8,000 gallon tank. During that time Frank Aveling³ had stayed for a few weeks to set up a sawmill. By 30 June 1948, the gardens were producing food for the students and a surplus of sweet potato to sell.

Lock continued the garden and building programme. He showed the



The sawmill set up by Frank Aveling



The school-room with the Kunai grass roof

students how to use kunai grass as a roofing material.⁴ This was new to the Solomon Islanders, as they used the leaf of the ivory nut palm for their roofs. They erected a grass roof over a concrete slab (left by the US army) to use as a schoolhouse. There were no exterior or interior walls, and no desks. Three classes (Grades 3, 4 and 5) sat side by side on wooden forms. A long blackboard made of half-inch plywood used by the army for flooring quonset huts stood along one side, nailed to posts.

By the time I arrived, the enrolment had grown to 70 (all male), in Grades 3, 4 and 5. In this group, 22 dialects were represented. Some of the students were older than I. With no schools operating during the war, they were now keen to learn. My assistant teachers were Pastor Kolomburu Liligeto (brother to Kata Rangoso) and Laejama. A class of older men from the islands of Rennell and Belona was also formed.⁵ Laejama taught this class in the afternoon.

Equipment included a printing press, a jeep, a 6 x 6 fire truck, an old Ford-Ferguson tractor and an old two-cylinder Gardiner diesel engine from a pre-war mission boat. In the jungle students located enough 44-gallon drums of fuel to operate these engines for several years. And for several years students were also able to collect and sell brass shell cases to provide for school fees and other needs. The tractor proved unreliable and at times the jeep had to pull a hand plough.

The press had been in pre-war operation in the Western Solomons at Batuna, in the Marovo Lagoon, then the Mission headquarters. An old flat-bed machine, it had been donated by the Signs Publishing Company in 1922. Likera operated the press.⁶ He had dismantled it for transportation from Batuna, and reassembled it at Betikama. For some years the press was hand-operated. Type was all hand-set. Sabbath School lessons in simple English and the Marovo language were printed, and a Coral Sea Union Mission monthly paper. At that time Honiara had no press, so we were asked to do printing jobs for folk there, including government departments. The Quonset hut that housed the press still stands, one of the few early buildings that have survived.

The school day commenced with morning worship at six o'clock, followed by grass-cutting with sarifs for 20 minutes. A sarif was a length of flat metal about a metre long and three centimetres wide, sharpened along one edge. The rotary lawnmower didn't make an appearance until later.

School hours were from 7 till 12, Sunday to Thursday, with Friday devoted to Sabbath preparation, for work in personal gardens and for attending to business in Honiara (eight miles away). Honiara, the new capital of British Solomon Islands Protectorate, boasted government offices, a Post Office, a hotel and one government-operated store known as the "Trade Scheme," dubbed by the residents as the "Trade Shame." The main items on its shelves were rice, tinned meat and tinned fish. There were a few Chinese trade stores. Europeans ordered what they needed from Sydney, and the goods arrived months later by cargo ship.

Students were rostered as cooks on school days. They cooked sweet potato and/or cassava (tapioca) for the midday and evening meals. No breakfast was provided.⁷ There was no dining room. Students accepted these conditions as normal. On non-school days students



The principal's house built by Thrift out of Quonset huts



The boys dormitories



Housing for the married students



Crotons planted beside the classrooms helped to make the campus beautiful.

provided for their own meals from food they grew in individual gardens. Each new moon, large shoals of very small fish (similar to whitebait) would swim up the Lunga River close to the riverbank. The fish were easy to catch and were relished as a supplement to the diet. Another supplement was an edible fern (pucha) that grew plentifully in



the jungle.

During the first two years the work “boss boy” was Vavepitu, one of the students. Then Galiburi was appointed as full-time “boss boy,” followed by Sifoni, who held the position for some ten years. The successful operation of the work programme was in no small way due to Sifoni’s leadership. His nickname was “Sipae” (Spy). During the war he worked for the Japanese, often unloading ships. At night he would sneak out and report to the Americans what was going on. Sifoni was virtually uneducated, but he could speak several dialects, enabling him to keep in close contact with many of the students. The day he started work at Betikama he asked permission to speak to all of the students. He stood in front of them and said (in pidgin), “The mission has appointed me boss boy. If any student wants to fight, let him come to me.” With that he smote his bare breast with a resounding thud. He knew that with a culture of tribal fighting, sooner or later students from different districts and islands could revert to their former ways.

The spiritual health of Betikama was enhanced by the leadership and lifestyle of Pastor Liligeto (pronounced “Lilingeto”), who, with his wife Damarasi set a splendid example. He was a thorough Christian gentleman, one of the finest persons I have worked with anywhere. I had the privilege of working with him for 13 years.

Pastor Herbert White was president of the Solomon Islands Mission when Betikama commenced. In 1949 he was appointed president of the newly formed Coral Sea Union Mission with headquarters at Lae, Papua New Guinea. Pastor J D Anderson replaced him at Honiara. Pastor White took a keen interest in the progress of Betikama and arranged for the purchase of a new David Brown diesel tractor, which gave many years of reliable service. Pastor Lock initiated a major part of financing the cost of the tractor with an innovative idea. On Betikama property, just over a hill from the campus, stood an ammunition dump, surrounded by a “no entry” barbed wire fence. Kunai grass had grown over the area and when fire burned the grass, live ammunition exploded so that it almost seemed World War II had recommenced. We could hear shells whining and whistling over our house. Pastor Lock applied for and received permission to collect 25 tons of brass from this dump. Thus the purchase of the tractor was assured. Two student tractor drivers were Joseph Viribose and Jim Ledi. They were most faithful in caring for the tractor and were always willing to plough when asked. At times we found it an advantage to plough

at night before rain came and made ploughing impossible.

Pastor White also arranged for the Gardiner 2LW engine to be sent to Sydney where Ferrier and Dickinson, the Gardiner agents in Australia, gave it a thorough overhaul. This engine powered a sawmill for a time and for years provided trouble-free power to two 2.5 KVA 110 volt alternators which gave electric light from sunset to 9 pm. There was insufficient power for any electrical appliances.

During my first year at Betikama it became evident that our educational work needed trained teachers. Pastor White had surveyed our mission schoolteachers in the Solomons and found that the average time those teachers themselves had been in school was 18 months. In 1950 I selected ten of the best students in Grade 5 and gave them extra classes in teacher training.

These students went on to become teachers, pastors, office workers, district directors and administrators in our mission programme in the Solomons and in Papua New Guinea.

Following his furlough in 1950 Pastor Lock took up his appointment as principal of Jones Missionary College at Kambubu on the island of New Britain in Papua New Guinea. When training classes got under way there, top students from Betikama were sent to further their training.

Thrift had drawn up plans for a chapel and had started to put aside materials for its construction. Lock continued with this project. On our property we had a good quantity of barbed wire, which a builder in Honiara needed. He exchanged roofing iron for the wire. In 1951, Doug Gillis,⁸ a building construction graduate from Avondale College, was sent to Betikama to supervise construction of the chapel and some classrooms. Doug and I decided to make the chapel wider than originally planned. Four 30ft x 20ft (9.144m x 6.096m) classrooms were built, two on each side of the chapel, with an office and store-room between the classrooms.

In 1953 Coralie suggested it was time girls were given the opportunity to attend school. Some national leaders thought this would not work. The culture of the time dictated that a girl’s place in the village consisted of looking after young children and caring for the village chores. However, the mission committee decided to trial the education of girls. Lipa and his wife Tole⁹, an elderly couple from the Western Solomons, were appointed to care for the first intake of six girls in 1954. Coralie made smart red check gingham uniforms for these girls and soon more girls wanted to come to Betikama. As part of their education the girls were rostered to work in our home. Coralie taught them housekeeping, crocheting, sewing and dress-



The chapel being built.



An example of the cane chairs sold in Honiara

making. The Red Cross Society in Honiara helped by providing material for the girls to make children's garments for the Society. Also, garments made by the girls met with a ready sale in the villages and a viable industry resulted. Coralie also introduced JMV progressive class work, which proved popular with the students. She also formed a school choir. Later the choir conductor was Kiko Haro.

Pastor Reuben Hare encouraged me to conduct First Aid classes. After being examined by the government hospital doctor in Honiara, many students gained First Aid certificates.

The making of cane chairs formed yet another industry. Lipa taught a group of students how to do this using lawyer cane which grew in the nearby jungle.

In 1955 a Norwegian luxury liner visited Honiara. Coralie and I went to have a look over the ship. We had with us two student housegirls, Ellen Haro and Green Kilivisi to help with our two children. At the ship we were told that nationals were not allowed on board. However, when the stewardess saw how clean and well dressed Ellen and Green were, she went to the captain and obtained special permission for them to accompany us on to the ship. The two girls quickly attracted the attention of quite a few passengers who were impressed with such fine representatives of our mission education programme. Ellen later married Joshua Lapo, a Betikama student who trained as a teacher and joined our Betikama staff and was later ordained. Green married Unikana, a mission teacher. In villages where they worked, Green did much to improve the lot of women and girls.

Mission records reveal some interesting figures. In 1950 the Betikama School budget for the year was: School Expense £135; Vehicle £50; Tractor £50; Lighting £75; In 1954 student school fees for the year were : Girls: 7 shillings and 6 pence (75c) Boys: Grades 5 and 6 £2 (\$4); Grades 3 and 4 £1 ten shillings (\$3); Grades 1 and 2 £1 (\$2).

During term-end breaks I had the privilege of visiting villages and schools on Guadalcanal, Malaita, Rennell and Belona and Santa Ysabel. This gave me the opportunity to meet the parents and families of many of our students. These were happy occasions, also affording me the



Boys with their JMV work



Practising their first aid



Some of the girls with Tole



Green Unikana (Kilivisi) & Ellen Lapo (Haro)—1988

company of other missionaries such as John Gosling, Syd Stocken, Wally Ferguson, Merv Blyde and Lance Waddington, all of whom served on the islands of Guadalcanal or Malaita. On some of these trips a Betikama student, Lasi Watch, accompanied us and acted as our cook boy. As we neared a village he would hurry on ahead and have a meal prepared by the time we reached the village. While

dismantled a couple of these huts and used the steel to construct fences around some of the gardens.

Another item of war surplus was marston matting, made of manganese steel which was rust resistant. The Americans used this to pave airstrips. We were able to retrieve quite a lot of this matting and use it in a variety of ways, but mainly for fences to keep wild pigs out of our gardens.

Several times our ploughing unearthed unexploded shells, some quite large. For many kilometers around Henderson Field the land was strewn with such ammunition, which was eventually stockpiled at a site about two kilometers from Betikama. When army authorities believed most of it had been collected, they sent in experts to detonate the huge pile. For this operation, Betikama had to be completely evacuated for several hours. We all went to our mission headquarters at Kukum, some ten kilometers away.

Until the mid 1950s virtually all education in the Solomon Islands was undertaken by missions. Then the government education officer in Honiara started to spell out some guidelines for primary education. He introduced a seven-year syllabus with an examination at the end of Grade 7. Our students achieved commendable results in this exam.

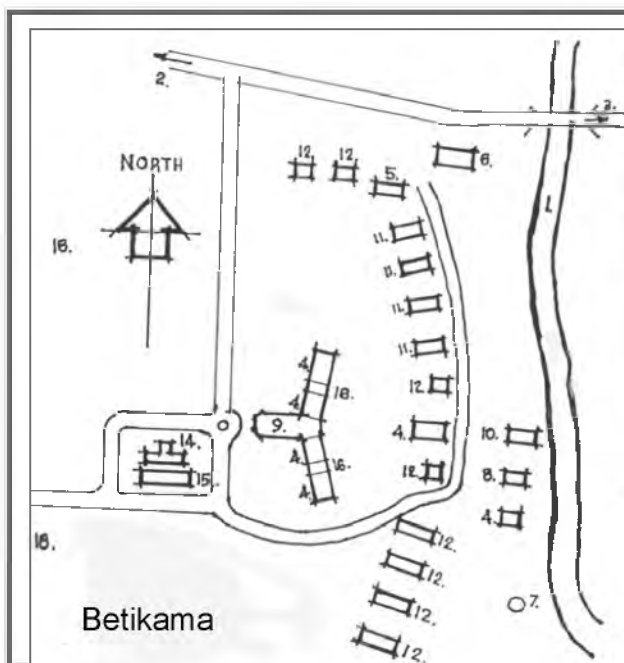
As the enrolment at Betikama grew, so did the need for more buildings. Each year saw some new project undertaken. When I left in 1958 the enrolment was 220, about a quarter of whom were girls. Kevin Silva was the next principal, followed by Max Miller and Ray Smith. In time primary pupils attended a new school set up at Burns Creek, about two kilometers away, and Betikama became a full high school. When I visited in 1988 the principal was Titus Rore, one of my students in the 50s.

The pleasure of seeing my people again, this time in leadership roles, and pausing to reflect on the advance of Christian education on Guadalcanal, gave opportunity for thought on God's many warriors who fought to win the battle for peace following such a saga of bloodshed. Betikama today is truly a tribute to the vision and dedication of many people. Coralie and I count it a special joy to be numbered among them.

NOTES

* Pastor Lester Lock has written of his service at Betikama in his book *Locks That Open Doors* in chapter 12, entitled 'The Solomon Islands'.

- Solomon Island Mission Officers at that time were Herbert White, president, and John Fletcher, secretary-treasurer.
- On that same trip of the *Morinda* in 1949 were Pastor John and Mrs Gwen Anderson and Aubrey Hiscox with his sons Ken and Barry. The Andersons were pre-war missionaries in the Solomons where they pioneered mission work on Malaita at the site of the Atoifi hospital. The Hiscox family were also pre-war missionaries on New Britain, in PNG and were taking up an appointment in the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu). In 1951 the *Morinda* was due for survey and there was so much maintenance due to be done on it that the owners deemed it uneconomical to proceed. It was sold for scrap.
- Frank Aveling at that time was serving at Batuna, on the Marovo Lagoon in the Western Solomons where he was supervising the mission sawmill and boat maintenance.
- Kunai grass was widely used in PNG as a roofing material, where the Lock family served for many years. This grass was not plentiful in the Solomon Islands but there was a large patch of it in the Honiara-Betikama area.
- Rennell and Belona are remote coral islands some 240 kilometers south of Honiara. The islanders there had had little contact with civilisation and government permission was needed to visit them. The men from Rennell and Belona were brought to Betikama for about six months to give them contact with mission work in the Solomons.
- Likera was from Dovele, on Vella Lavella Island in the Western Solomons. Pre-war he learned press work at Batuna from Dave Gray who was a missionary there.
- It was local custom to have a substantial meal at night and a light breakfast. If students wished to eat at breakfast time they provided it themselves from their own gardens as they did for all Sabbath meals.
- Doug Gillis graduated from the Avondale College Building Construction Course. He came to Betikama from Lae, PNG where he worked on building houses for the newly set-up Coral Sea Union Mission.
- Lipa and Tole were from the village of Dovele on Vella Lavella Island in the Western Solomons. Many faithful mission workers came from this village. ●



Excerpt from *Solomon Islands* (c) South Pacific Maps Pty Ltd
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Above: Betikama is about 8 miles (12.875 km) east of Honiara.
Left: Layout of Betikama Missionary School in 1958

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1 Lunga River | 6 Site of Kunai roof school | 11 Boys dorms | 17 Store |
| 2 To Honiara | 7 8000 gallon tank | 12 Staff houses | 18 Food gardens |
| 3 To Henderson Airfield | 8 Generator shed | 13 Girls dorms | |
| 4 Classrooms | 9 Chapel | 14 Principal's house | |
| 5 Press | 10 Cook house | 15 Shed | |

Establishing Put Put and Omaura Training Schools in New Guinea (1939, 1941) and an Evaluation of the Medical and Educational work there (Breaking New Ground—Part 9)



Synopsis: It had become apparent that a central training school to serve the whole of New Guinea had become a necessity. Existing school properties were examined and other sites explored. After five years of intensive searching a suitable location was found at Put Put a few miles along the southern coast of New Britain to the west of Rabaul.

a high school serving the Solomon Islands and the New Guinea Islands. Later, the establishment of high schools in the Solomon Islands lessened its influence with the people of that area. Its influence was extensive as it provided higher education and training to staff of New Guinea and the Solomon Islands for the period from its establishment until 1942, and for Papua as well from 1946 until its decline began in 1955.

Just before the Put Put property was located by Pastor Peacock, a gift of £1500 was made by one of the church members, specifically for training schools in New Guinea. From this a deposit of £200 was paid on the property.² When the decision was finally made to make this site the training school, the purchase of Put Put was financed by special arrangements between the Sanitarium Health Food Company and the Australasian Union Conference.³ The price, £4000,⁴ was for those times a large sum of money and as the church revenues were generally committed fairly fully, the extra call outside the budget, posed some difficulty. The Sanitarium Health Food Company which is closely linked with the Seventh-day Adventist organization, and which normally channels certain operating surpluses into the parent body, on this occasion made available the funds needed to meet this special demand.

The property was of about 4000 acres.⁵ It is described as a "...fine estate of natural bush country some thirty miles from Rabaul"⁶ Further, it is said to be: ... "of very rich soil and covered with natural forest. A large quantity of valuable timber is found on the property."⁷

During 1937, the sum of £5000 was allocated to the Put Put school. This was out of a total budget for Papua

THE NEW GUINEA TRAINING SCHOOL AT PUT PUT Development

WHEN THE SITE FOR THE NEW GUINEA TRAINING SCHOOL WAS PURCHASED, Pastor Harry R Steed was appointed as principal. It became known, from the area where it was located, as Put Put.¹ It was destined to become well known and influential in the Adventist Mission throughout New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and even in Papua. Its development, interrupted by the war, was continued in post-war years until it reached a peak in 1955 when it drew its students from Papua, New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. Then the Kabiufa School, near Goroka, took from it the students from Papua and the New Guinea mainland. Later, it lost its function as a training school when Sonoma Adventist College was established in 1970, leaving Put Put, known after the war as Kambubu or Jones Missionary College, as



Put Put Training School in the early days



Put Put in the early days; the Training School in 1942



Harry Steed

and New Guinea of £42,243-13-6.⁸ Once again, the *Big Week* campaign was to provide part of the funds for a developing educational institution, though on this occasion the £1200 which it was aimed to raise was to be used for four enterprises.⁹ It fell to the lot of Pastor Steed to begin the development of the Put Put station. One of his first

steps was to set up a sawmill so that use might be made of the fine timber available on the site.¹⁰ At the same time, clearing of garden land for the provision of food supplies was pushed forward. The beginning of the school was marked with the favour of some of the neighbours, as evidenced by the gift by an old German planter of a 1932 model super-six Hudson car for the use of the training school. Another man made a gift of a bull and a cow, as well as of an island just off the shore opposite the property which provided shelter for the boat.¹¹ So the missionaries were cheered as they faced the formidable task of building from scratch a training school in the jungle.

To assist Pastor Steed in his heavy task, Lionel G Maxwell of Western Australia was appointed to Put Put, leaving Sydney with his wife, Joy, on 13 January 1937.¹² By this time there were already on the site young men from Bougainville, Mussau, Emira, Manus and Ramu.¹³ They were assisting in the work of establishing the station but their purpose was to train for service as missionary teachers. In order to hasten on the work of building up the station, and to allow the staff to concentrate on their task of educating and training their students, two actions were taken by the Australasian Union Conference Committee. The first of these, taken in July 1938, was to use the original mission house at Matupi as a boys house at Put Put.¹⁴ This lightened the load on the sawmill workers as well as on the builders. It also helped financially. However, there was still a lot of work involved in the move as the house must be demolished, moved to the boat, transported to the new site, taken ashore and rebuilt. One advantage that would lighten the burden would be the availability of a considerable number of helpers among the church members and students both at Matupi and Put Put.

On 1 March 1939, the Australasian Union Conference Executive Committee decided to accept the quote submitted by Bay Loo Company to build Put Put Training School provided that the Building Committee approved the plans and specifications.¹⁵ The cost was to be £850. Work on this building project was being carried forward

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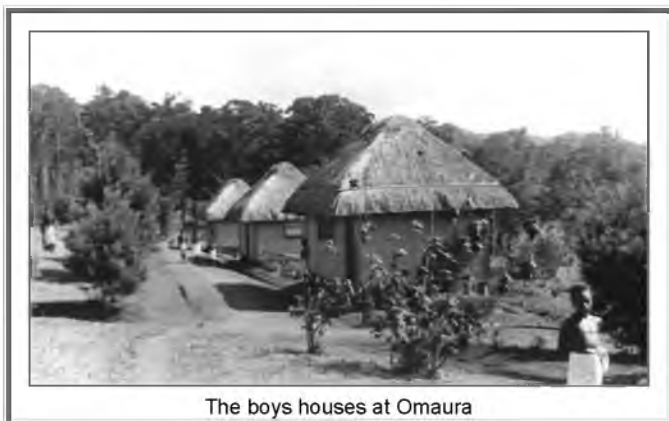
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ASPECTS OF EDUCATION IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA Staff

Septimus W Carr had been trained at Avondale as a teacher as well as a minister but except for him most of the missionaries sent to Papua New Guinea had been trained either as ministers of religion or as nurses. In harmony with the policy under which they worked they had established schools, often teaching at least part time in these schools themselves, or having the Fijian, Solomon Island, Papuan or New Guinean converts as teachers. Part of the duty of almost every missionary whether from Australia or another part of the Pacific area, was to establish a school, whether he was trained to teach or not. The general designation of the local missionary workers was *teacher*. In the days of struggle on the Bisiatabu station, it was the school that was looked to, to give a *mission* standing to the plantation to make it something more than just a plantation. At every new location we find the school as the centre which held the work closely together and gave it a form and continuity. Among Seventh-day Adventists this was particularly so as the formation of a church group must await the indoctrination of the people and the change in their life habits which would give evidence of the sincerity of the repentance and conversion professed by the believers. Only then could they be baptized and accepted into full church membership.

Influence of Schools

The preaching of the missionary on Sabbath, in the church service and in those villages he might visit was not neglected, but it occurred once a week or less frequently, and so its effect was limited. It could stir interest, awaken desire for change, present an outline knowledge, but the limitation in its frequency and duration, coupled with the inability of the hearers to study for themselves, meant that progress in understanding by these hearers was comparatively slow, and opportunity for the missionary to influence the hearers was very restricted. The Sabbath School organization suffered from the same difficulty. Designed as it was to foster private and personal daily Bible study, it needed a literate population to operate successfully. In the

illiterate societies of the mission fields it was adapted more to use on the mission station itself where the students of the school, or the people living nearby were able to gather morning by morning to study the Sabbath School lesson with the help of the missionary, than it was to use in the villages by the village people themselves. It was only much used when at least one of the village people had become literate to a sufficient degree to present the lesson to the rest of the villagers. In other circumstances, it lost its distinctive character almost completely and became in effect merely another preaching service once a week.

Medical Work as an Educational Influence

The nurses, and even those missionaries not trained as nurses, found opportunity to make meaningful contact with the people through helping them when they were sick. The Seventh-day Adventist church almost from its inception, has considered medical missionary work to be of vital importance in its program. Its benefits were not considered to be limited to the physical effects accomplished by it in preventing or healing disease and relief of pain and suffering. Nor were its benefits merely the wider benefits, such as the close contact between patient and helper; the opportunity that came with the treatment to speak of the reasons for and causes of, sickness; the opportunity for the missionary to show love and sympathy; the opportunity to point the sufferer to God and to emphasize His love and care, that accrued in the wake of these physical effects. The benefits extended beyond these physical and interpersonal ones to spiritual ones. It was considered that a keen, alert mind ready to learn and accept new ideas, and also spiritual perceptiveness are much more likely if the physical condition of the person is healthy, free from pain, adequately nourished, not debilitated by unhealthy habits and practices. So the missionary saw an important place in his overall program for medical work. The Seventh-day Adventist church has accorded great importance to this health and medical aspect of its program, calling it "the Right Arm of the Message".

"The barrier-breaking medical work...and the schools are powerful brothers...for the direct and obvious welfare of the people, while we give them...the benefits of eternal peace."

In Papua and New Guinea as in other places, the preaching of the Word of God, the study of the Bible in the Sabbath School, and the demonstration of Christian graces of love, sympathy, helpful care in medical work, were all part of the Adventist mission program. The schools also were an integral part of that program and in the mission field they had a greater share of attention than in the home field. It was evident that although in the home field people generally were literate and so by private reading of their Bibles and church literature could increase their spiritual understanding, in the mission field this was not the case. Perhaps even more important in elevating the regard in which the church schools were held in mission lands was the almost total impossibility of drawing from the illiterate society of the mission fields, people who could serve the church as missionaries, teachers or ministers.

The Purpose of Mission Schools

One of the first trained teachers sent to Papua New Guinea, Stanley Pennington, who worked at Mirigeda wrote:

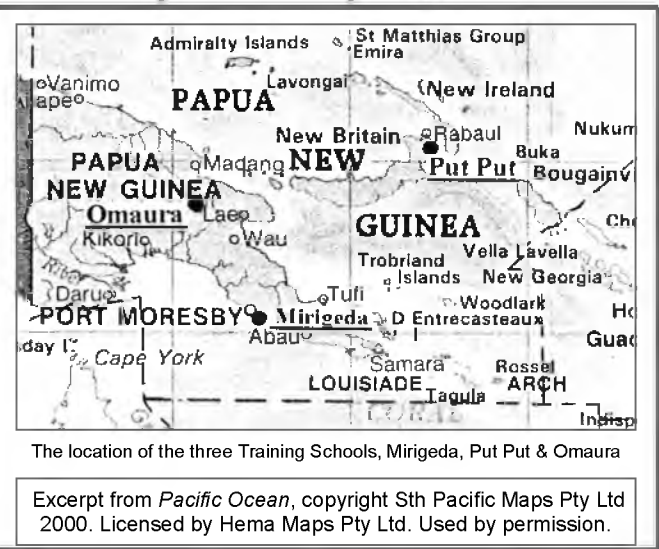
Our teaching work is the lever by which we place a permanent worker in a village. The barrier-breaking medical work, though often of a broadcast, seed-sowing nature, and the schools are powerful brothers through which we can work for the direct and obvious welfare of the people, while we nonetheless surely give them the more abiding, but often less apparent, benefits of eternal peace.²⁹

In some parts of Papua New Guinea, the people came to recognize the desirability of change in their society and school was seen as a means of achieving this. On the part of these people there was perhaps less interest in the spiritual aspects of the mission program than in its educational features. In other areas, the reverse was true and the idea of school and education were not very attractive although the people were willing to come to church and to become church members. It would be difficult to generalize about the situation. The Seventh-day Adventist mission saw that the schools gave them a far greater opportunity to exert an influence on the people than any of the other avenues open to them. The students were under their control and guidance for at least fifteen hours a week, even when they went to their homes at night. In the case of those students who lived on the mission station there was a far greater time during which the missionaries could exert their influence over and proffer their guidance to the students of their schools. Not only so but the students who lived on the mission could be influenced in a greater variety of ways and suffered less than day students from the counter influence of their own culture and religion.

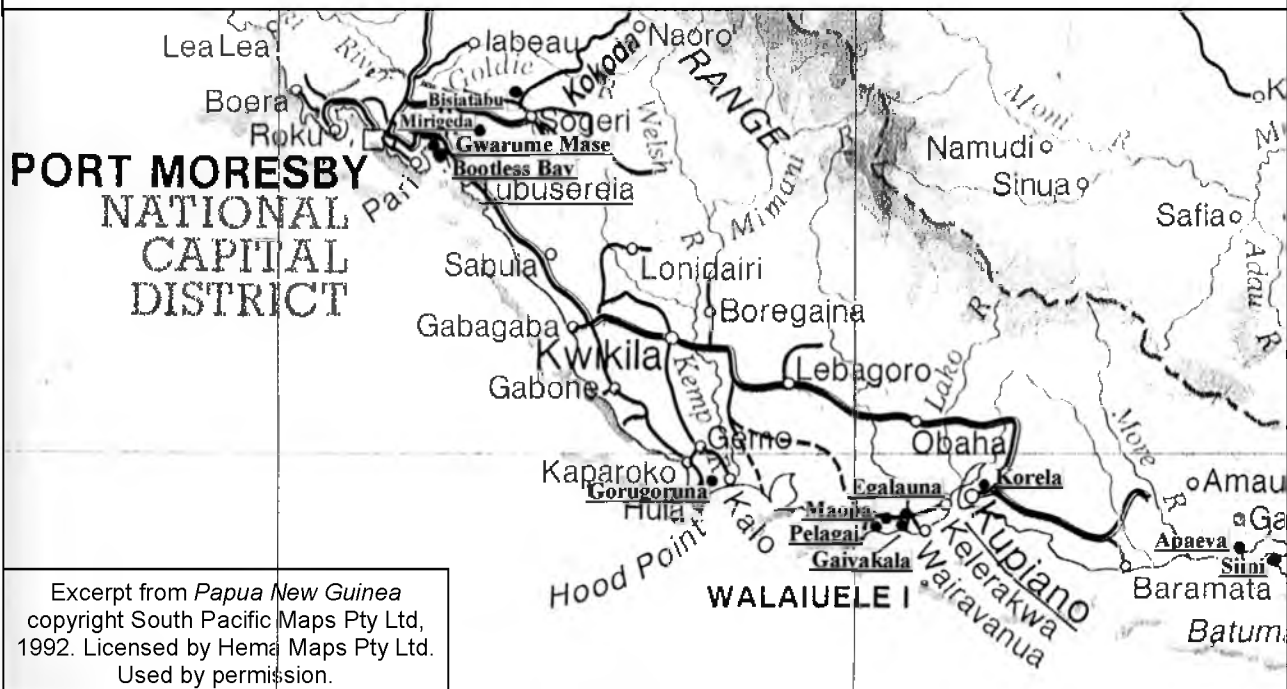
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This map shows the location of some places along the south coast mentioned in the following article by Lock





Ray Richter with his presentation gift; Sifoni—Sipae the spy



Thrift, Kata Rangoso & Elizabeth, Richter at the 40 year celebrations



Forty years on—the originals



Pastor Liligeto & his wife Damarasi

I was away on these trips two students, Willie kai from Malaita, and Markei from Guadalcanal, appointed themselves as Coralie's guardians. At night, they slept on our front veranda. I knew Coralie was quite safe.

For centuries each language group in the Solomon Islands had lived in isolation, regarding other groups as enemies. Betikama students came from many different language groups. It was too much to expect them always to carry on a peaceful existence while living in a close school community. The influence of the Gospel allowed peace to reign most of the time, but occasionally tribal animosities flared. On one occasion Coralie and I returned from Honiara after collecting the weekly mail to find blood on the front steps of our house. We learned that a fight had broken out and friends of a student who had been attacked brought him to our house and placed him in our bedroom for safety. The victim of the attack had had his head shoved into gravel, resulting in the loss of sight in one eye.

In an endeavour to prevent a recurrence of this problem I consulted with Pastor Liligeto and Sifoni. We selected a "police force" of six responsible married men of suitable physical stature and charged them with the responsibility of keeping their eyes and ears open for any suggestion of aggression between students. They were to take immediate action to defuse the situation.

In the main, their vigilance was quite effective. However, late one afternoon, trouble flared up in an instant. A student returning from working in the garden had his machete (bush knife used in garden work) in his hand. One of his mates informed him that someone had made an uncomplimentary remark about his tribe. Immediately he swung his knife and opened the skull of the nearest member of the offending tribe. As a result he spent 18 months in prison.

On his release he came to me to ask if he could return to school. When I brought his request to the staff, they unanimously voted no. I informed the young man of this, only to have him renew his request. After speaking with him at length, I felt he was genuinely sorry for his behaviour. At our weekly faculty meeting I managed to soften staff attitude somewhat. They agreed to give him another chance. He came back and kept his promise to become a peacemaker, going on to train as a very good teacher. When I visited Betikama in 1988, he was headmaster of a 300 student primary school, making an excellent job of it. As I chatted with him in his office he said, "I try to run this school just like you ran Betikama when I was a student." I rejoiced in the difference the power of the gospel can make in a life after true repentance.

The staple food for students came from our gardens. Sweet potato and cassava grew well. We were also able to fulfil a contract with the government hospital in Honiara to supply a weekly quota, for which we received three-pence per pound.

Our greatest source of annoyance lay in the marauding wild pigs determined to share our produce. We employed two ways to cope with this difficulty. Some Indians from Fiji worked with the public works department in Honiara. We invited them to bring their hunting dogs to hunt on our property. This helped, but still at times the pigs invaded, leaving their tracks even on the road in front of our house. Betikama property had a few ammunition storage huts made of heavy corrugated steel. Students

Establishing Put Put and Omaura Training Schools in New Guinea (1939, 1941) and an Evaluation of the Medical and Educational work there (Breaking New Ground—Part 9)



Synopsis: It had become apparent that a central training school to serve the whole of New Guinea had become a necessity. Existing school properties were examined and other sites explored. After five years of intensive searching a suitable location was found at Put Put a few miles along the southern coast of New Britain to the west of Rabaul.

a high school serving the Solomon Islands and the New Guinea Islands. Later, the establishment of high schools in the Solomon Islands lessened its influence with the people of that area. Its influence was extensive as it provided higher education and training to staff of New Guinea and the Solomon Islands for the period from its establishment until 1942, and for Papua as well from 1946 until its decline began in 1955.

Just before the Put Put property was located by Pastor Peacock, a gift of £1500 was made by one of the church members, specifically for training schools in New Guinea. From this a deposit of £200 was paid on the property.² When the decision was finally made to make this site the training school, the purchase of Put Put was financed by special arrangements between the Sanitarium Health Food Company and the Australasian Union Conference.³ The price, £4000,⁴ was for those times a large sum of money and as the church revenues were generally committed fairly fully, the extra call outside the budget, posed some difficulty. The Sanitarium Health Food Company which is closely linked with the Seventh-day Adventist organization, and which normally channels certain operating surpluses into the parent body, on this occasion made available the funds needed to meet this special demand.

The property was of about 4000 acres.⁵ It is described as a "...fine estate of natural bush country some thirty miles from Rabaul"⁶ Further, it is said to be: ... "of very rich soil and covered with natural forest. A large quantity of valuable timber is found on the property."⁷

During 1937, the sum of £5000 was allocated to the Put Put school. This was out of a total budget for Papua

THE NEW GUINEA TRAINING SCHOOL AT PUT PUT Development

WHEN THE SITE FOR THE NEW GUINEA TRAINING SCHOOL WAS PURCHASED, Pastor Harry R Steed was appointed as principal. It became known, from the area where it was located, as Put Put.¹ It was destined to become well known and influential in the Adventist Mission throughout New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and even in Papua. Its development, interrupted by the war, was continued in post-war years until it reached a peak in 1955 when it drew its students from Papua, New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. Then the Kabiufa School, near Goroka, took from it the students from Papua and the New Guinea mainland. Later, it lost its function as a training school when Sonoma Adventist College was established in 1970, leaving Put Put, known after the war as Kambubu or Jones Missionary College, as



Put Put Training School in the early days



Put Put in the early days; the Training School in 1942



Harry Steed

and New Guinea of £42,243-13-6.⁸ Once again, the *Big Week* campaign was to provide part of the funds for a developing educational institution, though on this occasion the £1200 which it was aimed to raise was to be used for four enterprises.⁹ It fell to the lot of Pastor Steed to begin the development of the Put Put station. One of his first

steps was to set up a sawmill so that use might be made of the fine timber available on the site.¹⁰ At the same time, clearing of garden land for the provision of food supplies was pushed forward. The beginning of the school was marked with the favour of some of the neighbours, as evidenced by the gift by an old German planter of a 1932 model super-six Hudson car for the use of the training school. Another man made a gift of a bull and a cow, as well as of an island just off the shore opposite the property which provided shelter for the boat.¹¹ So the missionaries were cheered as they faced the formidable task of building from scratch a training school in the jungle.

To assist Pastor Steed in his heavy task, Lionel G Maxwell of Western Australia was appointed to Put Put, leaving Sydney with his wife, Joy, on 13 January 1937.¹² By this time there were already on the site young men from Bougainville, Mussau, Emira, Manus and Ramu.¹³ They were assisting in the work of establishing the station but their purpose was to train for service as missionary teachers. In order to hasten on the work of building up the station, and to allow the staff to concentrate on their task of educating and training their students, two actions were taken by the Australasian Union Conference Committee. The first of these, taken in July 1938, was to use the original mission house at Matupi as a boys house at Put Put.¹⁴ This lightened the load on the sawmill workers as well as on the builders. It also helped financially. However, there was still a lot of work involved in the move as the house must be demolished, moved to the boat, transported to the new site, taken ashore and rebuilt. One advantage that would lighten the burden would be the availability of a considerable number of helpers among the church members and students both at Matupi and Put Put.

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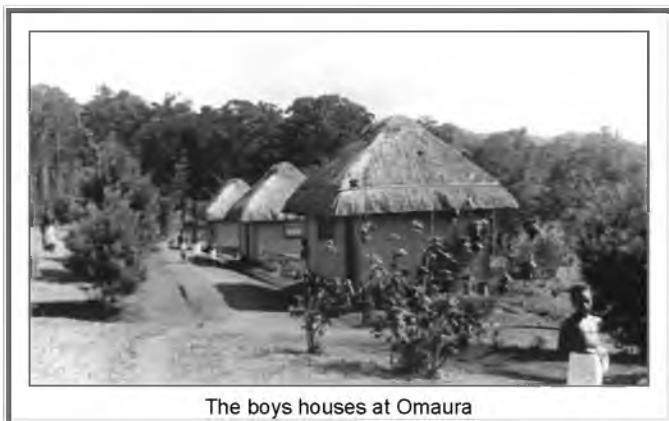
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find that at Omaura also the initial establishment of the station and the first moves to its transformation unto a training school were made by Brennan, not a teacher but a nurse. This pattern was natural enough. There were in the very early days of the stations, few students who had reached even Standard 2. The first work was to be evangelical and medical with a village school, or perhaps a district school, to give the rudiments of education. When the advances in education led to the need for a school that could train workers the first work was more organizational and managerial, relating to erecting buildings and establishing gardens. So a teacher often did not appear until the school was established. This was particularly so as teachers were in rather shorter supply in the homeland than nurses or ministerial workers.

ASPECTS OF EDUCATION IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA Staff

Septimus W Carr had been trained at Avondale as a teacher as well as a minister but except for him most of the missionaries sent to Papua New Guinea had been trained either as ministers of religion or as nurses. In harmony with the policy under which they worked they had established schools, often teaching at least part time in these schools themselves, or having the Fijian, Solomon Island, Papuan or New Guinean converts as teachers. Part of the duty of almost every missionary whether from Australia or another part of the Pacific area, was to establish a school, whether he was trained to teach or not. The general designation of the local missionary workers was *teacher*. In the days of struggle on the Bisiatabu station, it was the school that was looked to, to give a *mission* standing to the plantation to make it something more than just a plantation. At every new location we find the school as the centre which held the work closely together and gave it a form and continuity. Among Seventh-day Adventists this was particularly so as the formation of a church group must await the indoctrination of the people and the change in their life habits which would give evidence of the sincerity of the repentance and conversion professed by the believers. Only then could they be baptized and accepted into full church membership.

Influence of Schools

The preaching of the missionary on Sabbath, in the church service and in those villages he might visit was not neglected, but it occurred once a week or less frequently, and so its effect was limited. It could stir interest, awaken desire for change, present an outline knowledge, but the limitation in its frequency and duration, coupled with the inability of the hearers to study for themselves, meant that progress in understanding by these hearers was comparatively slow, and opportunity for the missionary to influence the hearers was very restricted. The Sabbath School organization suffered from the same difficulty. Designed as it was to foster private and personal daily Bible study, it needed a literate population to operate successfully. In the

illiterate societies of the mission fields it was adapted more to use on the mission station itself where the students of the school, or the people living nearby were able to gather morning by morning to study the Sabbath School lesson with the help of the missionary, than it was to use in the villages by the village people themselves. It was only much used when at least one of the village people had become literate to a sufficient degree to present the lesson to the rest of the villagers. In other circumstances, it lost its distinctive character almost completely and became in effect merely another preaching service once a week.

Medical Work as an Educational Influence

The nurses, and even those missionaries not trained as nurses, found opportunity to make meaningful contact with the people through helping them when they were sick. The Seventh-day Adventist church almost from its inception, has considered medical missionary work to be of vital importance in its program. Its benefits were not considered to be limited to the physical effects accomplished by it in preventing or healing disease and relief of pain and suffering. Nor were its benefits merely the wider benefits, such as the close contact between patient and helper; the opportunity that came with the treatment to speak of the reasons for and causes of, sickness; the opportunity for the missionary to show love and sympathy; the opportunity to point the sufferer to God and to emphasize His love and care, that accrued in the wake of these physical effects. The benefits extended beyond these physical and interpersonal ones to spiritual ones. It was considered that a keen, alert mind ready to learn and accept new ideas, and also spiritual perceptiveness are much more likely if the physical condition of the person is healthy, free from pain, adequately nourished, not debilitated by unhealthy habits and practices. So the missionary saw an important place in his overall program for medical work. The Seventh-day Adventist church has accorded great importance to this health and medical aspect of its program, calling it "the Right Arm of the Message".

In Papua and New Guinea as in other places, the preaching of the Word of God, the study of the Bible in the Sabbath School, and the demonstration of Christian graces of love, sympathy, helpful care in medical work, were all part of the Adventist mission program. The schools also were an integral part of that program and in the mission field they had a greater share of attention than in the home field. It was evident that although in the home field people generally were literate and so by private reading of their Bibles and church literature could increase their spiritual understanding, in the mission field this was not the case. Perhaps even more important in elevating the regard in which the church schools were held in mission lands was the almost total impossibility of drawing from the illiterate society of the mission fields, people who could serve the church as missionaries, teachers or ministers.

"The barrier-breaking medical work...and the schools are powerful brothers...for the direct and obvious welfare of the people, while we give them...the benefits of eternal peace."

The Purpose of Mission Schools

One of the first trained teachers sent to Papua New Guinea, Stanley Pennington, who worked at Mirigeda wrote:

Our teaching work is the lever by which we place a permanent worker in a village. The barrier-breaking medical work, though often of a broadcast, seed-sowing nature, and the schools are powerful brothers through which we can work for the direct and obvious welfare of the people, while we nonetheless surely give them the more abiding, but often less apparent, benefits of eternal peace.²⁹

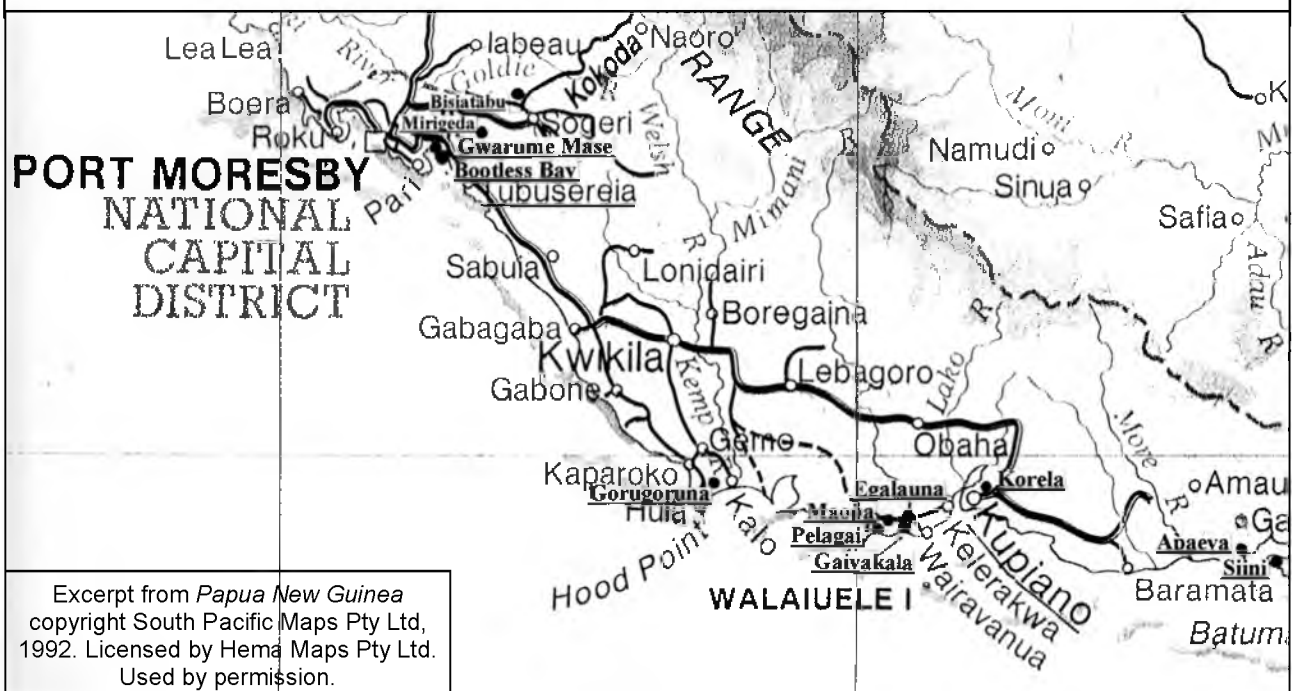
In some parts of Papua New Guinea, the people came to recognize the desirability of change in their society and school was seen as a means of achieving this. On the part of these people there was perhaps less interest in the spiritual aspects of the mission program than in its educational features. In other areas, the reverse was true and the idea of school and education were not very attractive although the people were willing to come to church and to become church members. It would be difficult to generalize about the situation. The Seventh-day Adventist mission saw that the schools gave them a far greater opportunity to exert an influence on the people than any of the other avenues open to them. The students were under their control and guidance for at least fifteen hours a week, even when they went to their homes at night. In the case of those students who lived on the mission station there was a far greater time during which the missionaries could exert their influence over and proffer their guidance to the students of their schools. Not only so but the students who lived on the mission could be influenced in a greater variety of ways and suffered less than day students from the counter influence of their own culture and religion.

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This map shows the location of some places along the south coast mentioned in the following article by Lock



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A Pioneer and Catalyst — Gapi Ravu of Eastern Papua



LESTER LOCK

See CV in Vol 1 No 2

SOMETIMES A FAMILIAR PATTERN is seen in church mission work, especially in the developing world. In some places there can be long periods of virtually little response. Efforts are made over a number of years with no appreciable gain in membership. These times certainly test the faith of men and women promoting the gospel, but in other areas the story is different.

Steady progress occurs and membership reveals real growth.

Although early mission work in Papua New Guinea moved slowly to begin with, it gathered momentum as the years rolled on. New bases were established and the work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church prospered and expanded. Such growth highlighted the need for experienced indigenous pastoral care.

On 5 October 1950, a singular and important event occurred in the work of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Papua which had never happened before. Four indigenous men were ordained to the gospel ministry. Three of these, Kairi, Hilake, and Paiva were from the western area of Papua and the fourth, Gapigoli Ravu, was from Gaivakala village, one of a group of villages along the Aroma coast of Papua, about one hundred and thirty kilometres east of Port Moresby. In this story let us look at the life and work, of Pastor Gapi Ravu as he is generally known. As I write this story in the year 2004, Gapi is the only one of these four pastors who is still living

According to government records Gapigoli was born son of Ravu at Gaivakala village in the year 1920. One of Ravu's good friends was Galama. Some years before, Galama had worked on the coconut plantation of Mr Osborne at Bautama, a few kilometres east of Bootless Bay where a refinement plant had been built by a mining company, which was extracting copper ore from the hills a few kilometres inland from Bootless Bay. While working at the



Mabel & Ross James with their children

plantation a friendship developed between Galama and Meanou, a man from Tubusereia, a marine village, about twenty-five kilometres east of Port Moresby. Galama and Meanou often met at Gwarume Mase village, and discussed Scripture together.

Gapigoli's first contact with the Adventist Message was when Pastor Charles Mitchell, who had opened work at Korela in the Marshall Lagoon area some 25 kilometres east of the Aroma villages visited the Aroma area. While Pastor Mitchell and family were on furlough Pastor Ross James held the fort at Korela and also visited with people of the Aroma villages and an interest developed. The mission already owned a small block of land next to Pelagai village which had been bought when the land at Korela was purchased. After the Mitchell family returned to Korela a call was placed for Pastor Ross James and family to go and pioneer work among the Aroma group of villages, where there was quite a heavy population.

On one occasion while Pastor James was preaching at Gaivakala village in Hiri Motu, the lingua franca of Papua, Galama stepped up and offered to interpret for him into the local language. The offer was accepted and from then on Galama became a fairly regular interpreter for Pastor James. He also helped him learn the local language. Meanou now comes into the picture.

On a conviction from a roadside conversation with our pioneer missionary, Pastor Septimus Carr, Meanou had moved with his family to Bisiatabu in the year 1927. He had gone to the school there and became an avid Bible student. When the need was felt for a helper for Pastor James it was decided that Meanou should be the one to help. After having settled at Pelagai, the friendship between Meanou and Galama was renewed. They studied the Bible together and it was not too long before Galama was convinced of the Adventist Message and became a member of the church.

Galama decided that he should go to the school at Bisiatabu and increase his understanding, much to the disappointment of Pastor James. When Ravu heard of



Charles E & Evelyn Mitchell with Gwen & Joan

Galama's plan he went and asked him if he would take Gapi with him to school. It was arranged to make the trip on a double canoe to Port Moresby and then go up to Bisiatabu. As Ravu carried Gapi down to the canoe he said to him, "Have a good time at school, son, and one day you will be a missionary for God." Unfortunately Galama never got to Bisiatabu as sickness overtook him along the way, and despite all efforts Galama's life ebbed out of him. Gapi finally reached Bisiatabu where he studied at the school from 1931 to 1934.

In 1931 and 1932 my father Pastor William N Lock, was president of the Papuan Mission. He worked hard at the establishment of a training school at Mirigeda. Most of the buildings at the new school were purchased from the copper refining establishment at Bootless Bay. They were taken down in sections, transferred across to Nagina Hill and re-erected making up the homes for staff and students. During 1935 and 1936 Gapi studied at Mirigeda. At the completion of the school year Gapi was called to go as a pioneer missionary to Gorugoruna village where his valuable experience was needed.

After two years he left his missionary work and went to Port Moresby, where he worked until war came in 1942. At the end of that year Gapi and Veru were married by Pastor Ngava, the Solomon Islander assistant president. At the time they are enjoying retirement.

In 1944 after the Japanese had been turned back along the Kokoda Trail and at Milne Bay, the Australia New Guinea Administrative Unit allowed some of the missionaries (men only) to return. The first of these were Pastor C Mitchell and Pastor A Campbell. Gapi Ravu was called back into the work again and for five years taught at the school at Bisiatabu.

An exciting event happened for Gapi in 1948 when he was asked to go to Australia as part of the crew to bring one of the new mission ships which boat builders, Halvarsens, had completed in Sydney. Gapi had heard about Australia but now he was going to see it with his own eyes. The ship *Light* a 45 footer, was delivered to the Manus group of islands where it was to serve for many years. Gapi then returned to Bisiatabu where he carried on teaching at the school.



MV Light

In 1950 a call came to Gapi to go west and teach at the Belepa school in Western Papua. He was very much involved in other mission work, and as mentioned, he, along with Kaire, Hilake, and Paiva, was ordained. The progress of the work in the succeeding years demonstrates that the hand of God was in this move. In 1951 twenty-five souls were baptized at Belepa. The following year seventy-five souls were baptized, and in 1953, 336 converts followed their Lord in baptism, and 86 the next year.

One afternoon Pastor Gapi rode his bicycle from Belepa down to Ihu on the Vailala River, to see if there was any mail. As the moon was shining brightly that night, he decided to ride back to Belepa. On the way he was stopped by a man standing in the road, who said, "You should never travel along this road after 4 pm."

After giving him that information he allowed the pastor to go on his way. The next day about midday a man came to Pastor Gapi at Belepa and asked him, "Yesterday afternoon, where did you go?"

Pastor Gapi replied, "To pick up the mail I rode down to Ihu."

Then the man said to him, "Did you meet anybody along the road while you were riding?"

Pastor Gapi replied, "Yes, on my way home I was stopped along the road by a man."

The man then asked, "Do you know who that was?"

When Pastor Gapi replied in the negative, the man said, "I was that man. Last evening I had 18 men waiting in the bush and if you had not spoken in Motu you would have been killed on the road."

Then he asked Pastor Gapi, "Who were the two men



Alexander & Emily Campbell with Heather, Gordon & Alwyn, just at the time Pastor Campbell was to return to PNG



Pr Gapi Ravu with Mr Alan John & Mr Kanik—giving medical assistance

who were accompanying you? One was running before you and one was following. Both men were dressed in white."

Pastor Gapi thought for awhile then replied, "Yes, I know, they were two of God's angels." The man was most surprised to hear that.

After some little time the man spoke again. "The other day my group of men killed a man from Mai village. He was buried in his home village." Then with emphasis the man said: "Never travel one of these roads on your own."

In 1955 at the direction of the Union Mission committee Pastor Gapi moved to Oriomo, there to work as the secretary-treasurer of the Western Papua Mission. There he served for two years. At that time Pastor Kila Galama (son of the Galama earlier mentioned) was the president of that local mission. On one occasion as they were traveling along the Turama river to transport some volunteer missionaries to Daru they ran into trouble. As happened periodically a tidal wave was swirling up that river. Recognizing their trouble sincere prayers were made for God's protection. Miraculously they were saved from what appeared to be certain destruction.

Pastor Gapi and Veru's next move was to Kabiufa, the high school for the Eastern Highlands Mission. There he served in a double capacity. During the morning he taught in Grades 1 and 2. In the afternoon he conducted a training session for volunteer missionaries. And let me say right here that volunteer missionaries have contributed a great work in bringing souls to the Lord Jesus. During the four years they worked at Kabiufa Pastor Gapi baptized one hundred people. In 1958 while still working at Kabiufa Pastor Gapi had another visit to Australia. This time as a delegate to the session of the South Pacific Division where he received many blessings.

In the year 1961 a call came for Pastor Gapi to proceed to Port Moresby there to serve as the assistant president of the Central Papua Mission, and for six years he helped Pastor Ernest Lemke in that capacity. In the year 1965 while helping to run the district meeting at the village of Domara he received a call to proceed to Rabaul so that he might take up the work of President of the East New Britain Mission. Great distress came to them there as when their household effects were transported by ship, on



Pastor Kila Galama

unloading at Rabaul the goods were not carefully stored there and heavy rain saturated much of their possessions and made them mostly useless. The worst was that most of his books were virtually destroyed by this saturation.

During his term of service in that local mission, work was pioneered and established in the Namatanai area of East New Britain. Great joy came as the work was developed in that area as it was in the face of much opposition. Joy also came when work was opened up at Ganai village, some distance inland from Kambubu Adventist Academy through unusual circumstances. The people of Ganai had made a raid on a coastal village

and created much havoc. Much food was taken from the village gardens and a great feast was made in celebration of their victory. Not long after this Ganai villagers were plagued with diarrhoea. A request was made to a government officer but no help came. Another request was made to a local mission without effect. A message also was sent to Pastor Gapi's office for help. The response was quick and medical help was sent to them. Folk from Kambubu Adventist Academy also gave help. Some local roofing materials were taken up by students from Kambubu and a new house was built in this village. Mission work was established in the village and during the next few years many souls were baptized. One man from that village, after training at Kambubu and mission service was ordained, and for several years Pastor Eric Oronga did the Pidgin translation work for the Union Mission until sickness brought his service to an end.

In 1970 work was opened in a new area. Beni Kolo-mana from Pomio village married an Adventist woman from the Manus area. She was a trained nurse and gave medical service to the people. She also taught Beni the message about the Lord Jesus, and shared it with other villagers. The local villagers raised much opposition to folk accepting the Adventist Message. At Beni's request Pastor Gapi arranged for a Mussau Islander, Enoch Hasa, to help the villagers to know about Christ. In the first baptism three locals were baptized, and a strong work has developed in Pomio village

A change came for Pastor Gapi and Veru in 1972 when the Union committee requested that he transfer to Apaeva village and lead out in the work in the Abau



Veru & Gapi Ravu —



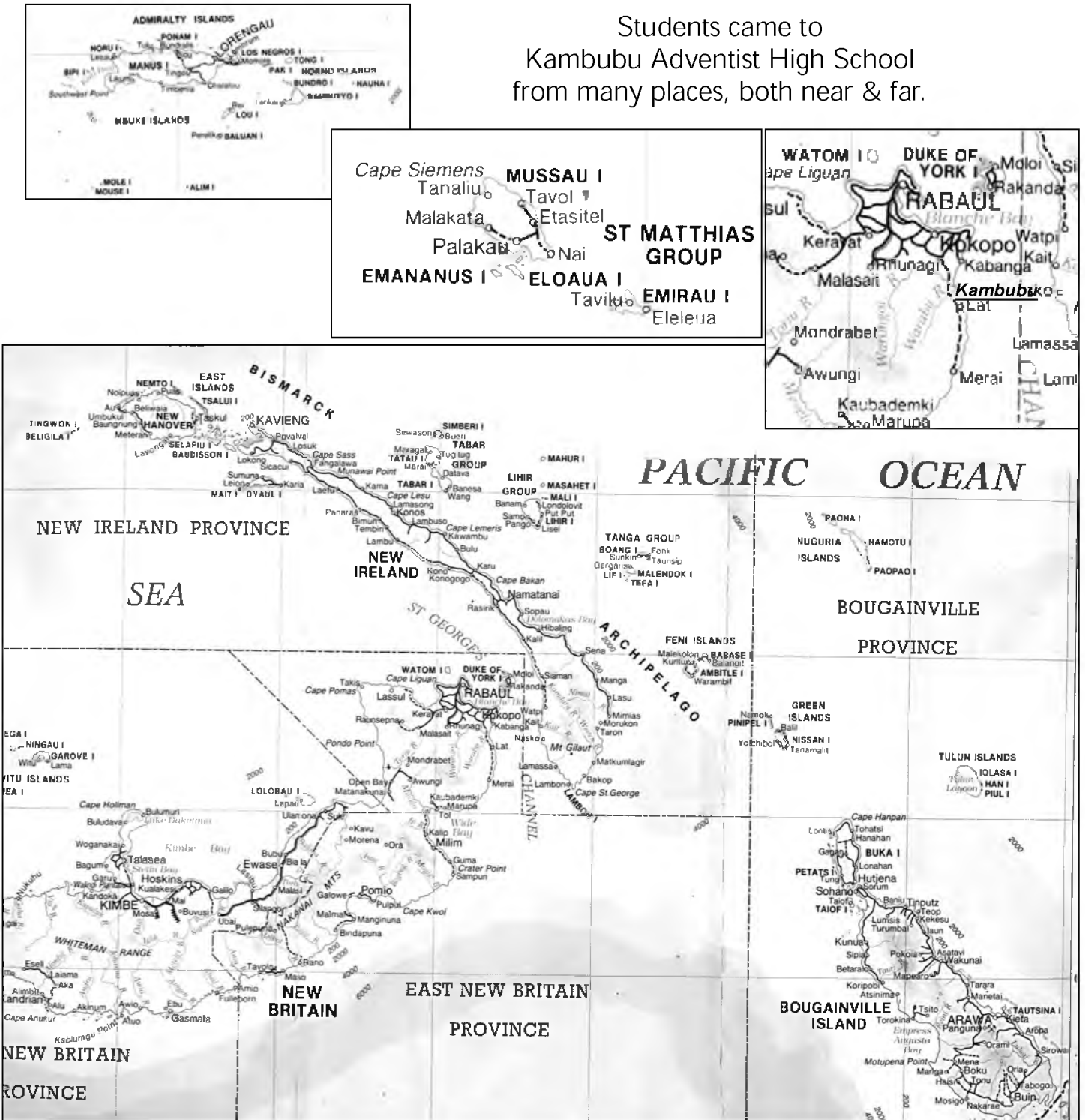
Outside their home

district in the Central Papua Mission. While at Apaeva village Pastor Gapi conducted an evangelistic campaign in Siini village which resulted eventually in the baptism of 12 people. Some of these were the leading men of the village.

Pastor Gapi's last term of active service was at Korela where he led out as district director for three years. Toward the end of 1978 he requested the Union Committee that he be allowed to retire. The committee accepted his request so on December 31 of that year Gapi closed off his work as a full time worker and started activities as a retiree. He has built a house for himself and Veru at Kupiano, which is a couple of kilometers toward the mouth of

Marshall Lagoon from Korula. In his retirement he and Veru have helped the work of God in many ways in that area, and continue to do so. The Lord continued to bless his service. As a result of their combined work, in the year 1996 fifteen souls were baptized. In 1998 a further twenty-five were baptized. The following year, 1999 was even more fruitful with twenty-eight baptized. In the last year of the millennium, the year 2000, 19 further souls were baptized by the pastor. They have no children of their own but they have many children in Christ. May the Lord continue to bless them as they live and work for Him. ●

Students came to Kambubu Adventist High School from many places, both near & far.



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Our Years in Kambubu

—operating a boarding school on the island of New Britain
in PNG in the 1970s

DAVID CALDWELL



David was born in Tasmania in 1922 but grew up in Melbourne completing his education at Essendon High School. After nearly 2 years as a student teacher in the Victorian State Education Dept he went to Avondale College & graduated in 1943 from the teaching course. He then took over Glen Huon school in Tasmania in 1944.

During the year he joined the army serving as a European Medical Assistant in PNG until his discharge in 1946. He then joined the Health Department of the Provisional Administration, running a hospital at Bogia and instructing Medical Orderlies in Lae, Mt. Hagen and Rabaul. In 1949 he received a call to teach in the Papuan Mission. He served in Madana and Belepa till family health problems brought him back to Australia in 1951.

While teaching in Albion & Toowoomba he completed his BA through Queensland University.

In 1958 he was transferred to Wahroonga where he eventually became principal. After six years at SAH at Strathfield, 1965 - 70,

he was appointed principal at Hamilton, NSW. He then returned to PNG to head up Kambubu High School 1973-78. His last posting was to Beulah College, Tonga.

He married Joy Heaton in 1944.

They had six children, two of whom were buried in PNG. They now live at Valentine, Lake Macquarie, NSW.

His musical talents, particularly his cello playing, has brought pleasure to many people over the years.

DAVID CALDWELL, THE SON OF A PIONEER ADVENTIST MISSIONARY, first served as a missionary himself, with his new bride, in Papua New Guinea shortly after World War II. Later in his educational career, with the children of the family reaching adulthood, David and Joy returned to serve once again in Papua New Guinea — this time as the Principal of Kambubu High School.

The account which follows outlines the six years that David and Joy spent at Kambubu from 1973 through 1978 and comes from David's hand. It shares something of the flavour of mission service in the educational ministry of the church at the time.

Overview

Before WWII, Kambubu was known as Put Put Training School. It had its beginnings in 1936. (See Chapman's article). With the withdrawal of expatriates in the face of the Japanese occupation Deni Mark, (one of the national teachers) was put in charge of the school but died in April, 1943.¹ A month later, accused of supplying information to the allied forces, the students and remaining staff fled and the Japanese took everything of value — essentially wrecking the place in the process. The school, reopened immediately

after the war, was renamed Jones Missionary College; and served as a training institution. Around 1970 the training section moved to Sonoma in the heart of the Gazelle Peninsula and Kambubu became a four year high school with a Building Construction course attached.

Geography

Kambubu High School, on the island of New Britain, is situated on St George Channel just south of Rugen Harbour, some 55 kilometres by water and over 70 by road from Rabaul. Across the water in the hazy distance can be seen the mountains of New Ireland, some peaks of which are as high as Mt. Kosciusko in Australia (2229m). Originally, all contact with the outside world was by boat from nearby Rugen Harbour but during our six years we slowly changed to road transport as operating the boat became uneconomical.

The trip to Rabaul

From Kambubu to the Warangoi River is about eight kilometres and must be done by 4WD or tractor-trailer in order to ford the Marambu River which lies about midway. We crossed the mouth of the Warangoi River by canoe, a service provided by the government, then took



Kambubu campus

our town vehicle out of its shed and set off to Rabaul via Kokopo. The boat trip to Rabaul took almost five hours; the trip by road takes a little over two, provided the rivers are kind! When the rivers are up they cannot be forded and the school at those times is cutoff from the outside world. Thus a trip to Rabaul is not just a journey — it is an adventure! As road transport took hold, the school acquired trucks and the staff bought cars and these were housed in garages at the river.

The Rivers

During 1976, a contractor was commissioned to build concrete fords on all the river crossings on our side of the Warangoi and he used a large pontoon to ferry vehicles and materials across. All on our side of the river were permitted to use this and there followed a period when we drove our vehicles directly from Kambubu to Rabaul. The extra convenience was short lived. Forging the Marambu was not for the ordinary sedan car and we were soon back to using the sheds at the river. The pontoon, after several breakdowns, finally disappeared in the big flood of 1977. (The cement causeways, incidentally, were all washed away within a matter of several years.) This disastrous flood opened six mouths to the Warangoi and inundated eighteen vehicles in their sheds, half of which were ours. After a complicated salvage operation we moved our point of crossing to the site of a previous short lived road bridge about a kilometer up stream. There we relocated our garages and finally, in 1978, with community and government support, our Building Construction class built a suspension foot bridge which did away with canoes and made life much easier. But there was one drawback: we then had to ford an additional river, the Sigute, between the Marambu and the Warangoi. On three Tuesdays a month my wife, Joy, and I would deal successfully with these rivers when we went to town on school business. We started our town day with eager enthusiasm soon after daylight but rarely arrived home before dark, always thoroughly exhausted. While we still relied heavily on boat transport Tuesday was also boat day, and my job was to see that everything was delivered to the vessel by the time it departed the Rabaul wharf. When we switched to truck transport things became much more flexible. Strong hands were always in demand so a careful roster was kept as to which students would have the privilege of going to town. The fourth Tuesday each month was a school holiday when staff were able to go to town. On these occasions it was almost certain to rain heavily and the rivers would play all kinds of mean tricks. Any story about Kambubu has to be a story about these rivers. While they greatly affected our contact with the outside world, the isolation they provided was a great blessing in operating a boarding school.

Communications

Every week-day, at a set time, we would make contact with Rabaul on the radio schedule from the unit in our house. At other times it was quite difficult to contact the outside world. Before we left, a radio telephone was set up and this improved matters considerably.

Student entrance to Kambubu

The Papua New Guinea Union Mission Department of Education in Lae had a formula which governed the number of students who would be admitted to Kambubu.

A quota was given to each of the following areas — Manus, Mussau and Emira, Bougainville, West New Britain, and the Gazelle Peninsula. The formula took into account the number of students in Adventist primary schools in each of the areas listed above and was biased slightly in favor of males (60:40 percent). In fact, during our time at Kambubu we enrolled only one girl from Western New Britain. The actual selection of students was based on academic performance together with a local character assessment. In addition, a few places were granted to students from outside the usual areas.

The School year commences

A skeleton staff and some students maintained Kambubu during the vacation, and school opened at the end of January. Then came an avalanche of boys and girls. They came from Mussau and Emira, Manus, Bougainville, West New Britain and the Gazelle Peninsula with an odd one from elsewhere. Students gathered in Rabaul and initially, our boat, Kambubu II, spent a busy week or so bringing them in. The previous year's students had been culled after two years of high school. With the new intake selected according to the formula mentioned previously, the junior school enrolment outnumbered the senior forms.

Registration

All students, on arrival, spent time working on the farm until registration day. Amazingly, most of the 360 plus students were present for registration and it was always a minor miracle for all the staff, both expatriate and national, to also have arrived. Each student had to have two uniforms, (the girls' were manufactured in Hong Kong), eating utensils, a bush knife and the year's fees or some guarantee thereof. It was a very busy time before classes commenced.

The work-study program

Our school operated a work-study program which was the envy of other boarding schools in PNG. Students worked each afternoon from Monday through Thursday and all day Sunday. Work was assigned by a small committee and although the bulk of the work force labored on the farm there were many other departments involved. Care had to be exercised to rotate the students equitably and jobs were reallocated midway through the year.

A typical school day

The school day began with early morning combined worship followed by breakfast. There were six periods before lunch with a short break after the third. Then came the lunch break followed by two more periods. Everyone then worked from 2:00 to 5:00 and each teacher was assigned a work department. Between the finish of work and tea time the students could care for their needs which, for the boys, mainly consisted of a game of soccer or basketball. After tea there was a short evening worship followed by two hours of study. Lights went out at 10:00 and, in theory at least, they all slept.

Weekends

There was no work after classes on Friday. After school, there was a hand-out of garden produce, coconuts and firewood and each tribal group then cared for its meals through till Saturday night. Saturday night those

with money would buy rice and other goodies from the school store. Those without funds either tightened their belts or “improvised”.

Sabbath

Sabbath was a special day. The principal always took the early morning worship. I took the school through *Pilgrim's Progress* both in its original and modernized settings. Sabbath School followed the standard format and the Church Service was shared round the teaching staff. Later in the afternoon came the “compulsory” Young People’s Meeting which ended with vespers. Saturday night was the students’ own unless we had prepared a concert or games evening.

There you have the typical weekly routine at Kambubu. It may sound like a monotonous grind but it should be noted there were a lot of other extras and one-off occasions that really added flavor to the school year.

The student diet

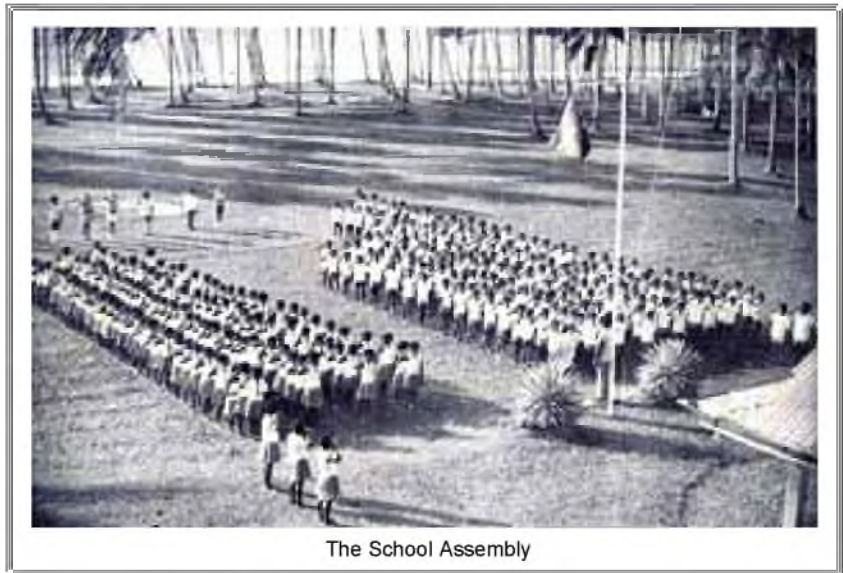
Breakfast was usually a drink of hot Milo plus biscuits, rice, and occasionally bread. For the other meals the students’ diet consisted mainly of kaukau (sweet potato), tapiok (cassava), bananas, and greens (Chinese cabbage and aibeka), pumpkin and coconuts. These food items were usually presented in the form of a stew liberally laced with coconut cream. The food, for the most part, was grown on the school estate but tinned fish (mackerel from Japan) and rice were occasionally provided as the budget allowed. The diet sounds somewhat austere but there were very few, if any, thin students at Kambubu.

A fulltime national cook was employed in the kitchen and an expatriate teacher was appointed as an advisor to the kitchen as his or her work-line responsibility. Some students were rostered to help prepare breakfast and students from the lower forms were also rostered to leave classes to assist in the preparation of the midday meal.

For a time we experimented with providing just two meals a day — a move driven by economics but one also congruent with village practice; but it did result in some complaining. During that time, the first meal was served during the recess break between third and fourth periods. Another complication was those expatriates who felt they still had to eat at midday so the noon recess was extended to thirty minutes during this experimental period.

Boys would often go fishing in their own time but the coast for miles in either direction was understandably fished out. For this reason assigning students to fish at night was not really productive and was soon discontinued.

The Friday evening and Sabbath meals were the responsibility of the students who were divided into tribal groups and provided with garden food, coconuts and firewood on Friday afternoon. The girls’ groups shared a section of a long cooking shed while each group of boys had a hut in which to cook and eat. The students would usually make a stew for Friday evening and prepare their Sabbath meals in traditional stone ovens. Biscuits and hot drinks were supplied from the kitchen on Saturday nights with many students purchasing food items from the



The School Assembly

school store for this meal.

Discipline

School discipline always demanded a lot of our time. There was a list of penalties for breaking set rules but a discipline committee handled major misdemeanors. I came up with what I thought would save a lot of effort in handling routine infringements: we would work on a demerit system. Points would be imposed for breaking the rules and when a student reached 20 or more, he would be given a warning. When his points reached 30 he would be handed out a sizeable punishment such as a weeks hard labor or even asked to leave school; a decision to be made by the discipline committee. Everyone was enthusiastic about the idea. It put an end to a stream of fiddly little punishments. Then came the first candidates for the big punishment. Alarm bells rang through the student body. This day of reckoning came as a sudden shock. Those who had a large number of points began to panic. Concern replaced complacency and a deputation of the prefects and students came and begged for the old system of on the spot penalties to be reinstated. We dropped the point system as an idea, the time for which had not yet come!

Inter-tribal troubles

Serious fighting among students usually carried the penalty of expulsion but was gratifyingly rare. Still, there were endemic tensions between Mussau and Manus students that had to be carefully watched. One day a fight occurred between two boys from these groups and the flare up quickly became a raging conflagration. Action had to be both quick and fair. Being a Christian school, we got the two sides to sit down and talk out the problem and make such apologies as seemed necessary. Then we quietly took the two boys to town and sent them on their way home. This really stirred things up again. How could we punish after we had accomplished a reconciliation? Perhaps we had done things the wrong way round. It was something to remember in the future.

Holidays

Being a boarding school, the two term end breaks were very short, virtually just extended week-ends. However, the students had a holiday every fourth Tuesday — their shopping day in Rabaul.

Special Days

Sports: Once a year we held an athletic carnival and eventually devised a punishing marathon run and swim for the boys. We stooped as low as to include a lolly or biscuit scramble and with so many of the staff on motorbikes, we played an exhibition game of "motorbike soccer". For the last two years of our stay, we also held a swimming carnival at the mouth of Rugen Harbour. This was run along house competition lines but mostly involved team events. The grand finale was that the whole school swam about a kilometer across the harbour to the wharf. Not to participate incurred a loss of points and Pastor Neville shepherded the stragglers in his canoe. A harbor full of dark heads was quite a sight.

Devotional: Early each year a visiting speaker would conduct a Week of Prayer. Following on from this a baptismal class would commence with well over fifty enrolled but with usually around thirty to forty of them actually baptised and most of them from the junior forms with a few workers from the Matala Plantation. The baptism itself, conducted at the entrance to Rugen Harbour, was always a spectacular and moving occasion.

Pathfinders

About the middle of my tenure I was impressed to turn the whole school into a huge Pathfinder Club. It took some talking to get the staff behind the idea but eventually we succeeded. Once every fortnight we devoted the afternoon school session to a grand parade followed by class work. Representative school teams participated in regional Pathfinder fairs.

Class campouts

We also started a feature of each class spending a week end in a bush campsite that was developed some kilometres up the Kambubu River. This may have been a bit demanding on teachers but the students revelled in it.

Concerts

Sacred concerts were held in the chapel but on occasions a secular concert was held with the veranda as the stage and the audience on the field in front. Groups of students would perform skits and put on items but nothing appealed more than to have the expatriate teachers "let their hair down" and such items would draw extra applause. "Honey Bee, Honey Bee" brought the house down when the principal ended up with water in his face. The skit themes were mostly based on local topical issues such as, "How do you eat tapiok?"

Expatriate recreation

Study period was the time for tennis for the teachers. Picnics down at Blue Lagoon, some five kilometres south, were popular and on one memorable occasion we hired the boat and went across to New Ireland to a small secluded island and had a picnic that would render travel agents lost for words. ²

Plantation and School Industries

Our Matala plantation, between the school and Rugen Harbour, was not a school responsibility except that we made up the wages for the work force. It produced both copra and cocoa beans and was managed by a national. He worked under the supervision of an expatriate stationed at Sonoma who spent two days a week on the plan-

tation and over-nighted in our home. For the six years we were there, a logger harvested logs from our property of well over 3000 acres. These were shipped to Japan and we usually provided a team of students on loading days. The school operated a wood products industry which employed several permanent workers and mainly produced furniture and our special brand of wooden louvres. Joy ran a girl's sewing industry, filling pillows for Burns Philp stores and making patchwork blankets from off-cuts sent from Australia. For a while we also sold eggs in Rabaul.

The Budget

Managing Kambubu's finances was my responsibility. By some minor miracle we never fell into the red for my six years. This always came as a surprise to our union treasurer in Lae who invariably predicted overspending towards the end of each year. My wife cared for the accounting until a national was appointed to this position — Orina in 1977 followed by Johnny and Helen in 1978.

One-off Events

The airstrip: There had been racial tensions in the area and, as independence neared in 1975, church authorities in Australia decided that an airstrip should be built on Kambubu to enable the evacuation of staff if necessary. The farmland just across the Kambubu river was the only place suitable for this strip so new garden land was opened up on the plateau further inland where the problem of wild pigs necessitated the building of extensive fences. The logger's bulldozer and grader were employed to construct the strip and a huge drain had to be constructed to cross beneath it. The plantation manager was in charge of the project. Eventually our first plane arrived (and got bogged). This was quite an occasion! Although the strip was never used for its intended purpose, it occasionally did bring us welcome visitors and sometimes took me to union meetings in Lae. Today it has reverted to gardens.

The Queen's Visit: We naturally proclaimed a holiday the day the Queen visited Rabaul. We arranged transport for as many staff and students as possible but the school virtually emptied as boys found their way into town by any means they could.

Darker Moments

Tragedy struck when Tatsiana Plane, the wife of our manual arts teacher, contracted hepatitis and eventually died in Nonga Hospital at Rabaul leaving three young children. We never lost a student through these years but one boy had a long struggle with tetanus in the Vunapope hospital.

Emergencies

The sound that I dreaded most was a knock on our door in the middle of the night when Peni, our medical orderly, would come to ask me to take someone to hospital. More often than not it was someone from off our campus. I always trusted Peni's judgment in these matters and would hastily arrange the trip, which involved providing our own boat to cross the Warangoi and vehicle transport on the other side.

Personal Relationships

In a closed community like Kambubu there is always the problem of personal relationships. Most of these were



The band, proud with their instruments & in their uniforms

minor ones like persuading a teacher not to take a day off to go to town but there were regrettable occasions when, in consultation with the school board, some member of the staff would be asked to leave. On the whole we got on very well as a team. Personnel were always coming and going and no teacher who was there in 1973 was still there when we left in 1978. It also worried me when the tanks of drinking water for the students ran dry. The expatriates had plenty. How could you deny students begging for some of your drinking water?

Music

Being a musician, I was naturally going to do something for the school in that field. With financial help from Australian friends I gradually bought instruments from China till we had a well balanced brass band. The majority of the players were from Mussau. An appeal brought to light a set of old uniforms from our Adelaide Advent band. All but the coats were used and the effect was gratifying especially when we played in Rabaul and for the Kokopo Show.

Choirs were well established before my time. Kambubu and Sonoma consistently scooped the pool of prizes in the regional choir contests but the feelings between our two institutions and the attitude of other competitors were far from healthy. I was glad that these contests ended in 1973.

Magazine

A school magazine was started in 1976. It was called AKAAPA (light) and the product improved each year. Thumbing through my copy of the 1978 magazine still gives me a feeling of deep satisfaction; pride even.

Mysteries

We left Kambubu with two unsolved mysteries. What happened to Yogi our dog who disappeared suddenly? (The nationals all said he would make an excellent "pig dog"). And who killed and ate our pet cassowary, Cheepie, whose bones were found in the thicket in front of our house on our return from a town day? Dogs or hungry students? (Cassowaries are gourmet food.)

Memories

What I have written above constitute the bulk of my memories of Kambubu. I wonder what Kambubu remembers of Joy and me? The girls in the sewing industry will always remember Joy. The staff remember her because

she did the rounds of the markets and the freezer, buying for them on our town day. I would like to think that I am remembered for several things. Perhaps the Kambubu band, the music classes, those early morning Sabbath worships, the Pathfinder clubs and my rough art on the blackboard. These are things that I hope they remember of me. But I consider my crowning achievement to be the Kambubu school song which they still sing a generation later.

KAMBUBU

Down by the sea, waiting for me
Is the place they call Kambubu.
There you will find, true peace of mind
In the place where God has called me.
It's the school of the prophets in this dark land
And the light of the Gospel is in our hand,
Kambubu, blessed school beside the sea,
Kambubu, place that God prepared for me.
I always know that where're I go,
I will never e'er forget you,
Be so faithful to you,
Blessed school beside the sea.

It is not wonderful as far as lyrics go. The critics were few back then but it warms my heart that they still sing it today.

End Notes

- At its beginning, expatriates outnumbered national teachers at Kambubu. Today there are no Australian or New Zealand expatriate teachers there and the school has an entirely national staff with the exception of two families from the Philippines. During my years at Kambubu there was a mix of national and expatriate staff. The national teachers during my years at Kambubu were: Elijah B, Damson L, Reuben A, Ereman P, Dicks T, Narelle P, Martin P, Neville K, Zelma P, Ora P, Billy K, David B, Joseph P, Judy P, Elsie G, Joseph M, Nile P, Philip T.
- Expatriates at Kambubu during my tenure as principal: Ray Schultz (Manual and Building Construction), Robert Flynn (Agriculture), Greg Dawkins (Social Studies), Allan Robson (Agriculture), Peter Roberts (General), Glenda Roberts (English), Robert Gilchrist (Mathematics), David Webster (Science), Wallace Liggett (General), Fred Loriezo (General), Jasmine Loriezo (General), Barry Plane (Manual and Building Construction), Pak Lee (Commerce), Colin Bevan (Mathematics), Arch Steel (Science), Adrian Bell (English), Robert Walker (Manual and Building Construction), Colin Raethal (Manual), Arthur Clover (Agriculture), Graham Webster (Science), John Lewis (Mathematics), Jenny Lewis (English), George Roussos (Social Studies), David Potter (English). ●



Joy And David Caldwell—Farewell Kambubu

A Reflection in 2004

—a diminishing financial support and a dearth of expatriates challenge the growth of the Adventist Church in the Pacific Islands



BARRY OLIVER

Barry Oliver, PhD, comes from Goulburn, NSW. He completed a BTh at Avondale College, NSW, in 1972 & spent the next 5 years in ministry in Maryborough, Hervey Bay, & the Darling Downs, being ordained in 1976. He began mission service in 1979 when he was appointed district director, evangelist and university chaplain at Port Moresby, PNG. A year later he became president of the New Britain New Ireland Mission, stationed at Rabaul, remaining there for 5 years. The next year he taught theology and evangelism at Avondale College. He spent the next 3 years at Andrews University in USA obtaining his doctorate in Christian Ministry and Mission. He returned to Avondale in 1989 and while there pioneered a comprehensive evangelistic training process, entitled: 'New Life Down Under'. In 1997 Barry was appointed the General Secretary of the church in the South Pacific, a position he still holds.

He is married to Julie from Brisbane, a teacher, and they have three grown sons, Clayton, Randall (married to Hayley), & Brendon.

Barry continues to contribute to cutting edge research and writing, and has now published almost 100 significant articles. Major research has been in the area of the administrative structures of the SDA Church primarily from a missiological viewpoint. The Olivers reside at Cooranbong, NSW.

[Author's note: In distinction from the purpose of the *Journal of Pacific Adventist History*, this article is not primarily historical in nature. Rather it is a reflection on how future writers of history may look back on this period in the development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Pacific. Call it contemporary history if you wish!]

AS I 'PEN' THESE WORDS I am at about 35,000 feet over the Pacific Ocean. I have just spent 6 days on the island of Tarawa, Kiribati, located approximately 2 degrees north of the equator in the central Pacific. There we worked with the leadership of the local mission and some colleagues from the Division and the Trans Pacific Union Mission to conduct a field school of ministry and evangelism. The final night of the program saw 6 people make a decision for baptism. We concluded the field school with a very special communion service and a 'graduation.' There was a strong sense of commitment and purpose among the people.

Five weeks ago I was in Kavieng, provincial headquarters on the island of New Ireland, Papua

New Guinea. There also we worked with the local mission administration for two weeks conducting a field school of ministry and evangelism from Wednesday, 21 July to Sunday, 1 August. Remarkably, on the last night of that evangelistic series, 1500 people came forward to the podium in a public demonstration of their desire to be baptised and join the remnant church. It was an incredibly moving experience to see the Spirit of God moving in that way. I will never forget it.

The evangelistic program in Kavieng was one of a huge number of programs conducted in Papua New Guinea during this year, 2004. A number of local pastors and evangelists, together with colleagues from Australia and New Zealand have been sharing the good news of the gospel throughout the country. Some of the preachers were Pastors Tony Kemo, Justin Lawman, Murray Thackham, and Cranville Tooley. They too have seen with their own eyes the amazing movement of the Spirit of God. Scenes just like the one in Kavieng have been witnessed in cities,



An attendee at Kavieng



Pr Tony Kemo
Ministerial Association
Secretary, PNG Mission



A couple on Kiribati

A young family from Kavieng PNG

towns, and villages throughout the country. And not only in Papua New Guinea. Pastors Laurie Evans and Anthony Kent ran an amazing program in the main market in Honiara, capital of the Solomon Islands. Pastor Geoff Youlden is presently preaching in the new stadium in Suva. And these programs are just the tip of the iceberg. Each of our unions has an intentional strategy for outreach. In addition, we have 'Go One Million' and 'Sow One Billion.' 2004 has been the year of evangelism.

I wish Pastor John Howse, who planted the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Kiribati could see the church there today. I wish he could see the bright faces of the young people, meet the leaders of the church, attend a service as I did last night where 15 men were dedicated to go on a shoe string as volunteers to the outer islands.

I wish that Pr Septimus Carr could see the church in Papua New Guinea today. Even with all the hopes and optimism born of his zeal for mission, how could he have foreseen the vitality and size of the church today, when he etched out that fledgling mission station at Bisiatabu located a little inland from Port Moresby. Government census statistics tell us that in 2002, one in nine people in Papua New Guinea was affiliated with the Church—probably the highest proportion of any country on the face of the planet. And they are still coming—thousands at a time as we have witnessed in the last few weeks.

I wish I could stop the story right there. But I cannot. At the present time we as a church are facing a number of critical issues in the Pacific that need to be shared. Each of these has the potential by itself to rewrite the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Pacific radically. Put together, they just may well be explosive. Permit me to list some of them for you.

1. Changing leadership patterns. The church is endeavouring to place the leadership of the church in the hands of the national people of each Pacific country. This has long been the intention of the church but it has not proven easy. The very organisational structure which has been our strength in accepting a global commission and facilitating a global mission has within itself many implicit and explicit barriers when it comes to its implementation in the cultural contexts of the Pacific. It takes considerable education and experience on the part of our national island leaders to think globally as well as locally, and to obtain the mind set and skills to be able to prioritise and strategise in that context. Many who have been placed in positions of leadership have come to realise that the church is indeed complex, that leadership is not as straight-forward as they assumed it to be and have either declined further leadership positions or in some cases



Pr Lawrence Tanabose, Secretary of the Trans Pacific Union

placed themselves in circumstances which have disqualified them from leadership.

2. The withdrawal of a vital support base. With the reduction in the number of Australian or New Zealand based expatriates serving in the Island nations of the Pacific has come a considerable loss of what may be termed intangible support. When those expatriates served in the Pacific, a number of informal effects were generated. For example, on visits to their homes, missionaries would tell stories, share the needs, and raise the awareness of the churches in Australia and New Zealand about the needs of the Pacific. That is not happening now. There is a dearth of information at the grass roots and there is a rapidly declining awareness of the needs of the Pacific.

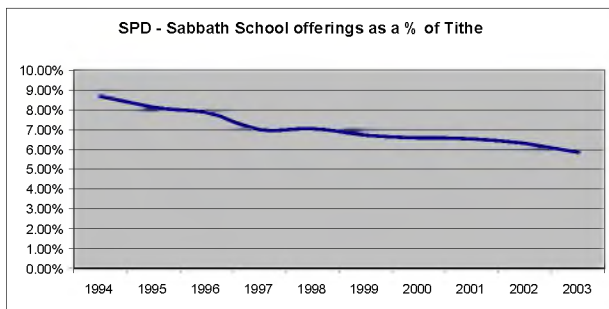
Along with this there is a concomitant decline in the number of volunteers and volunteer teams coming to the Pacific. And there is a dramatic decrease in the unofficial flow of funds that used to come direct to serving missionaries from family and friends who used to desire to support the work of the missionary by some direct giving as well as through the regular channels of the church. While the church has always officially discouraged this kind of giving on a large scale, and it still does, (and so it should if it results in decreased giving patterns through the regular channels), we who have served in the Pacific all know that our friends and families were generous in the past and know that many things were indeed accomplished through this means. With the withdrawal of expatriate budgets this source of support has gone, not to be replaced.

3. A Continuing Decrease in Mission Offerings. Our Division Treasurer, Rodney Brady, has recently drawn our attention to the alarming manner in which giving to mission has decreased in both real and proportional terms. The table below indicates that camp mission offerings which are used wholly to support our South Pacific mission territories have dropped dramatically in the last 6 years from over \$160,000 in 1998 to \$60,000 in 2003.

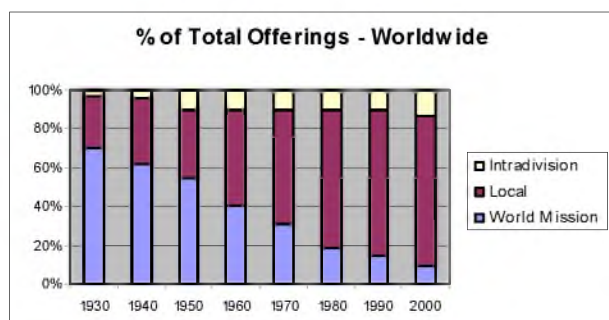


Pr Thomas Davai, President PNG Union Mission, & his wife Tioro

This next table shows how the regular Sabbath School offering has dropped as a percentage of tithe. Had Sabbath School offerings been maintained at 1994 levels as a percentage of tithe then in 2003 an additional A\$1.85 million would have been given and available for the work of fulfilling the mission of the church.



This final table shows that while world mission offerings have been decreasing in proportion to overall giving, support for local needs has risen dramatically. This has particularly taken place in those areas of the world which are resource rich, including Australia and New Zealand.



4. An Assumption by Many that the Pacific no longer needs Assistance. Many church members seem to have the idea that the work is finished in the Pacific. They have heard the success stories and assume that their support is not needed any more. Nothing could be further from the truth. The fields are ripe for harvest in many areas. There has never been a time of greater opportunity. Yet vital resources which could be given are not being given because of a totally unwarranted assumption that they are no longer needed, or that most missions are now able to finance their own operating and capital requirements.

Further, the resource support that is needed is the support which will build up the long term viability and sustainability of the work. There is the desire by some to give to certain projects which are easily identifiable and the results measurable. That is good and is not in any way being discouraged by what is being said here. But the greatest need of the Pacific is the systematic giving which can be utilised for training, supporting and resourcing our full time ministers, teachers and administrators. They desperately need to be supported and resourced. They have families; they have school fees; they need to be supported and resourced in their responsibilities so they can do the work they are trained to do. They are committed and effective. But they continue to need our support. We have scores of trained ministers who at the present time are not employed and cannot be employed because of lack of funds. Volunteers can perform a limited function but they do not generally have the background, education or personal resources that are needed to provide the kind of

sustainability that our church in the Pacific needs. If someone has some resources and were to ask me how they should direct them, I would counsel them to direct them into the preparation and support of fully trained, full-time workers rather than volunteers. Generally, that will be a more effective use of resources in the long term.

Then there are the resources for operating our schools, for fuel and outboard motors and school supplies. Anyone who visits the Pacific will know that the situation in respect to all these resources is desperate. Repairs and maintenance needs are so great that some former missionaries on returning to the fields of their former labour have been distraught. They have wondered why the division is not giving more. Well, the division is giving more than ever, but it can only give what it receives and that is a drop in the bucket.

Please allow me to give some counsel here. It is important that the major channel of funds be through the regular church organisation. That way, we can ensure that the funds are evenly distributed; distributed according to priorities of need; and insist that proper accountability measures are in place. The church organisation that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has developed over the years is the best vehicle for accomplishing all these things. To disregard that well developed system and bypass it can be perilous for both the recipient of the resources and the donor.

5. Low socio-economic capacity. Everything that we have said above is compounded by the decreasing socio-economic capacity of many economies in the Pacific. Currency devaluation has played havoc with church budgets in such places as the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea. Whereas, for example, the Papua New Guinea Kina was worth \$1.30 Australian just a few years ago, it is now only worth about 48 cents. This means that prices have almost tripled due to currency fluctuations alone. The situation is even worse in the Solomon Islands. Civil unrest has complicated this situation robbing the people of the opportunity to grow and market cash crops from which they derive their income.¹

Meanwhile expenses continue to escalate, both for individual, families and the church. In this context tithes and offerings go down. Despite all this our people are being faithful to the Lord. The majority continue to return a faithful tithe and give what they are able. The economic situation is having its impact, however. It seems that in Papua New Guinea this year total offerings will downturn after some years of steady increase, due no doubt to the state of the economy. Baptisms continue, but they continue especially in those areas where resources are very few and the people do not have the capacity to give what they would like to.

6. The Challenge of Education. In the early years of our work in the Pacific one of the most effective evangelistic methodologies was the establishment of schools. Our schools have served us well over the years. But today we have closed so many of our schools, particularly primary schools, that our education system is only a shell of its former self. Our primary schools used to be the backbone of our education system. Both in the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea we have had no option but to hand most of those schools back to the village people to operate. They cannot afford to pay the level of school fees that are needed to operate a school and the missions do not have the resources to operate them without school

fees. If school fees are not paid, missions are then forced to utilise other operating funds to pay teachers wages and the whole operation of the mission thus rapidly becomes untenable.

In this context the church, both in the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea has approached the respective governments with a request for assistance to meet the spiralling costs of education. This has resulted in the government of the Solomon Islands now paying teachers' wages, and the government of Papua New Guinea agreeing to commence doing so in 2006. Of course this brings its own set of challenges. Leaders must be vigilant to see that the special character of our schools is maintained. We need to ensure that our Adventist ethos and mission is a high priority for education personnel and administrations of the missions and unions.

7. The Difficulty of Finding Expatriates Willing to Serve in the Pacific. I have the greatest admiration for the wonderful band of people who have left their homelands and are currently serving alongside the local leadership in each country across the Pacific. Many of these people come from other countries of the Pacific. They have been willing to leave their families and homes to serve God in far away places with great distinction and sacrifice. Then there are also people from Australia and New Zealand and elsewhere who are serving. I visit many of them with reasonable regularity and encourage them and spend time with them. They are a unique group of people.

But there are far too few of them. It is getting more and more difficult to fill positions in the Pacific, despite the fact that there are fewer positions to be filled than there used to be.² I know that there may be reasons why people feel they cannot serve God in a place where he may call them, but I sometimes wonder where has that spirit of commitment, adventure and sacrifice gone. Where is that willingness to launch out into the unknown and sense the excitement of being surprised by God. This church will be the poorer because too many are now choosing easier options (if there is such a thing). The Pacific is in need of capable, educated, committed people who are as willing to let God perform miracles in their lives as were the pioneers of yesterday. I stand in awe of their commitment and I am praying for that same spirit of the pioneers to take hold of all of us.

8. Loss of sense of mission. Is this predicament due in some respect to a loss of a sense of destiny for this church and its message? Are we fulfilling Christ's words with reference to Laodicea—the love of many growing cold? Have we lost our mission?

I guess I am expressing myself openly here because I am one of the fortunate few who continually see the needs and opportunities first hand as I visit our people and our churches around the Pacific. I am continually astounded by the wonderful Christian hospitality and warmth that is shown toward me by God's people. It is indeed a wonderful privilege to belong to the family of God. But there is so much more that can be done. Nothing that has been said here

should be read as if somehow we are not subject to and dependent on the leading of the Spirit of God. This is His work and we can be confident in Him. The point is, He has entrusted to us our work. We are remiss if we neglect His commission and spurn His trust.

The church was forced to close Sopas Hospital in the Enga Province of Papua New Guinea and I would not be honest with you if I did not tell you that we are in danger of closing Atoifi Hospital in the Solomon Islands as well. Events surrounding the death of Lance Gersbach have been the catalyst for a number of critical issues which must be addressed urgently if Atoifi is to remain viable. Fulton College is also facing some critical challenges at this time. We are doing everything possible to maintain these institutions and we are confident in God's leading.

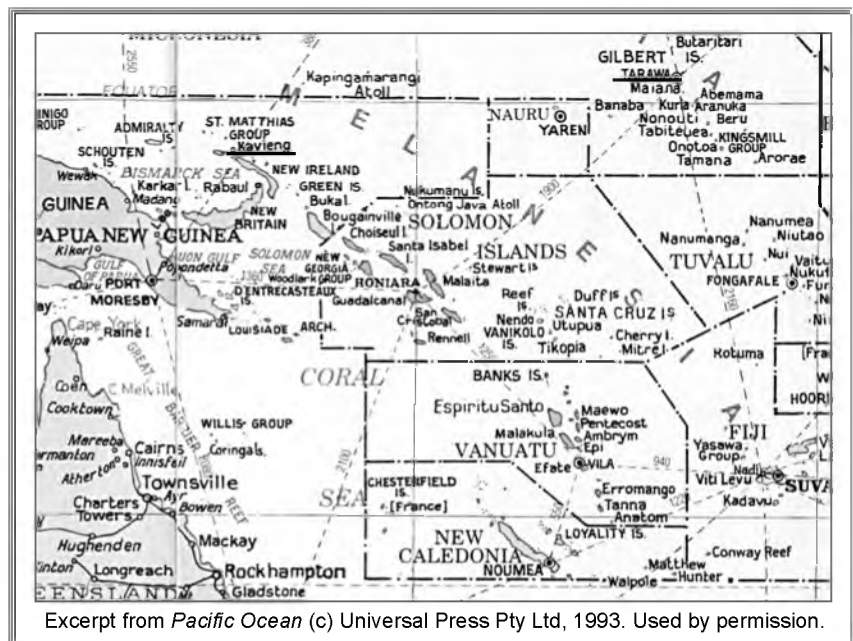
You see, I cannot help but wonder how future generations of historians will view this period of the Church in the Pacific. Will they see it as the time the Adventist Church lost its focus and splintered into many smaller, ineffective and short-lived local or National Churches? Will they see it as a time when large swathes of members were removed from the church by other denominations and sects who were able to offer more attractive options. Or will they see it as a critical time of change when the church membership in the South Pacific Division demonstrated its capacity to reignite and reinvent its passion for mission and pool its human and financial resources to strategically position itself to reap and nurture the harvest that the Holy Spirit is bringing to the church? Every stage of the history of the development of the church in the Pacific has had its challenges. Today the challenges may be different in some respects, but they need to be met.

Meet them we will—the Lord has a thousand ways.

References

1. Currency values in some Pacific Territories compared with one dollar A\$ at 1 March, 2005, were:

SBD	0.19	Solomon Island dollars
WST	0.52	West Samoan Tala
TOP	0.70	Tongan Pa'anga
FJD	0.80	Fijian dollars
2. In 2005 there are 62 expatriates serving the church in the Pacific Islands. For example, 32 are in education and 7 in departments. 20 years ago in 1985, 66 were in education and 12 in departments. ●



Master-ji

—an Indian teacher's service in the Fiji SDA Mission

KENNETH SINGH



Ken first started school at Fulton Primary and went on to study in Suva at the Marist Brothers High School. He gained his teaching qualifications (BA, Dip Ed) at Sydney University where he was later awarded an

MA degree in linguistics.

He began a career in education as a teacher of English as a Second Language in TAFE (NSW) and the NSW Adult Migrant Education Service. He also lectured in this field at Armidale College of Advanced Education (NSW) and King Mongkut's University of Technology (Thailand). On entering the field of adult education, he served as a co-ordinator of continuing education programs at Sydney and NSW Universities. He now lives in Hobart, Tasmania.

FIJIAN DAYS, 1934-38...The title caught my eye as I browsed through the *Journal of Pacific Adventist History* on the Internet. I discovered with interest that the article was Mrs Irma Butler's account of her experiences in Suva with her missionary husband, Pastor Ted Butler. My interest grew as I recognised the names of many family members who were involved in the work of the SDA Mission at the time, particularly my parents about whom Mrs Butler writes: "Narain Singh was a great help, and he became a very dear friend, as did his wife Dorothy."¹

To my surprise, there was also a picture of my father with a group of his students from the Samabula Indian School, all formally posed with arms folded in the fashion of the time. The image led me to reflect that Dad's years of service with the SDA Mission deserved more than a passing mention — hence this brief article. I trust that it will reveal something of his unusual background, his teaching commitment and the way these qualities helped the Mission to pursue its educational goals in Fiji.

Although he was the son of indentured Indian immigrants, Narain Singh was one of the earliest in his generation to adopt what might nowadays be called a multicultural outlook. To some extent, this was an accident of birth since he and his twin sister Phyllis were born in 1909 in the inner-Suva suburb of Naiqai,² close to present-day Albert Park. His playmates were drawn from what was then an ethnically mixed neighbourhood of Indians, Fijians and other Pacific Islanders. A result of this early formative experience was that he grew up to be fluent in Hindi and Fijian and could manage basic communication in Samoan or Tongan.

His formal schooling in English was something of an ecumenical journey beginning

with a preliminary year at St Anne's Catholic School for Girls (little boys were also admitted in those days), thence to the Marist Brothers' School, via the Methodist Boys' School to the SDA Mission School in Toorak as set up by Pastor Cyril S Palmer. In fact, young Narain boarded with the Palmers, remaining with them for a year or so when they were transferred to Buresala Training School on Ovalau Island. Besides schoolwork, his chores at Buresala included keeping an eye on young Nelson Palmer and minding the canteen that sold staples such as soap and kerosene.

In 1922, when Pastor George Masters arrived to take charge of the SDA Indian School at Suva, he began preparing Narain and a few other local candidates for the Preliminary Cambridge Exam — the first Indian school in Fiji to do so because until then it had been open only to white students from the Suva Boys' Grammar School. As a teacher and mentor, Pastor Masters would continue to play an important role in the coming years. Through his good offices, Narain was able to spend three and a half years at Avondale Missionary College where he



Students from Fiji at Avondale, 1925. Oliver Whippy, Sisari Lewa, Narain Singh



Arthur Dyason and Narain Singh, c. 1945

completed High School and a year of Teacher Training. The new boy from Fiji never forgot the panic he felt on being asked to solve an algebra problem at the blackboard in front of a class of curious (and possibly sceptical) Aussie students. Fortunately, he was good at figures and managed to acquit himself honourably.

At Avondale, the opportunity to mix with Australians on easy and equal terms gave him the social skills and self-assurance he was to need later when working with them as colleagues in Fiji. Indeed, one of his closest companions was Arthur Dyason with whom he had the occasional friendly wrestling match on the Avondale lawn. Pastor A P Dyason was later to become founding Principal of Fulton College and the old bonds of friendship no doubt promoted the good working relationships needed during the challenging years of the College's establishment. In addition to providing intellectual and spiritual training, Avondale also taught him the discipline of work: he joined the College painting crew under the watchful eye of Mr Stelter, a tradesman of the old school who demanded high standards.

Late in 1928, with the Sydney Harbour Bridge half-way to completion, Narain sailed back to Fiji and the following year joined the teaching staff of the SDA Indian School. Though only twenty, he had earned the title of *Master-ji*,³ which was the way that Indian people young and old would continue to address him for the rest of his life. His school was located at Samabula, a suburb about 3 miles from Suva. As the headquarters of the Indian Mission, it was a substantial site⁴ consisting of day and boarding schools for girls and boys and staffed by both expatriate and Indian teachers. In addition to teaching in the day school, he was housemaster to the resident Indian boys. By 1941 the school was teaching over 140 students and had achieved a respectable academic standard. Nevertheless, it came to be regarded as a liability because of financial problems and an unsatisfactory rate of religious conversions.⁵ The land and buildings were thereupon sold to the colonial government for use as a military base.⁶

The Fiji Mission then embarked on a more ambitious educational project: the establishment of Fulton Training School (now Fulton College) in Tailevu, about 30 miles (50 kms) from Suva. It was an amalgamation of a number of Mission schools including the one from Samabula. From the beginning, Narain was involved in this task about which he commented:

Fulton at first was built on a temporary basis with wooden army barracks and army lorries for transport.



A group of teachers at Fulton College, 1956. Front (from left): Paul Ramswarup, Eva Edwards, Ken Gray, Adeline Hema, Narain Singh. Back: Babu Ram Sharma, Saula Sicu, Ifremi, Ram Brij.

Some other tools and materials were bought second hand from the army also. It was only much later that modern buildings were built on a permanent basis and now occupy the original site of the modern Fulton College.⁷

Meanwhile, such was the demand for the old school in Samabula that local residents persuaded an Indian benefactor to donate land on which the Mission built a new day school and appointed Narain Singh as Head Teacher.⁸ He was there for a year or so during the school's establishment phase and in 1944 was recalled to Fulton to take charge of its Indian Section. This consisted of a primary school and boarding facilities for young men and women attending the college. Although he later held positions of senior responsibility in Suva, I believe that his work at Fulton was personally the most demanding of his career.

In addition to classroom teaching, meetings and college accounting work during the day, he remained on call as housemaster for the Indian boys' dormitory. In those days there were often difficulties with food (both quality and supply) and he had to deal with the usual issues of school discipline while standing *in loco parentis* for the younger boarders. At the same time he participated in the religious and communal life of the college, conducting worship, supervising campus clean-ups, operating the little store and periodically taking groups out to pick *rourou* (taro leaves) as a supplement to the meagre school rations. I was old enough by then to remember how some elderly Fijian folk from the neighbouring village used to come to Fulton for Sabbath service. As they sat in a small room at the back of the hall, he would stand in the doorway and quietly interpret the sermon into Fijian for them.

When Fulton's Indian Section was amalgamated with the Fijian and Pacific Island sections in 1949, Narain had students of diverse nationalities under his care. He played an increasing role in college administration until 1956 when he left to take up a position as a school principal in Suva where he remained until retirement in 1969. It was a source of special satisfaction for him to have his former mentor, Pastor George Masters, present for his retirement ceremony. After spending his twilight years with his family in Australia, Narain Singh passed away at the age of 89.

In his overview of Indian Adventist Schools in Fiji,⁹ Ram Brij draws attention to factors that thwarted the full



Retirement at Suva 1969. George Masters front row, 2nd left. Centre Narain & Dorothy Singh

development of these institutions. They included staff shortages, financial pressures¹⁰ and the expectation of quick returns in the form of Christian converts. But it is also clear that during their lifetimes these schools were held in high regard by their local communities, a fact that speaks well of the teaching staff, both Indian and expatriate.

I believe that Narain Singh's special contribution was the thread of continuity that he was able to provide to the Mission's educational efforts in Fiji over the years. His credibility as a 'Master' did much to promote the standing of the SDA Mission in the eyes of Fiji's Indian community and his ability to build bridges between cultures helped to create at Fulton a microcosm of the multicultural society that remains the ideal for many who live in

Fiji and Australia today.

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¹ Irma Butler, 'Fijian Days, 1934-1938: Reminiscences', *Journal of Pacific Adventist History*, Vol. 3, No. 2, December 2003, p 3.

² In Fijian, Naiqaqi means 'The crusher', a reference to the fact that this was the site of Fiji's first sugar mill. It was established by Brewer and Joske in 1872 and remained in operation for three years.

³ In Fiji Hindi the term 'Master' denotes a male teacher (schoolmaster) and conveys some sense of the moral leadership that Indians expect from their teachers. 'Master-ji' is a polite form of address for males, a female teacher would be addressed as 'Teacher-ji'.

⁴ It had originally been a pineapple farm owned by Brewer and Joske, the same enterprising pair who built the sugar mill.

⁵ Ram Brij, 'The Struggle to Survive: Indian Adventist Schools in Fiji 1913-1956', *Journal of Pacific Adventist History* Vol. 1, No. 2, December 2001.

⁶ By 1942, the Japanese invasion of the Pacific had reached the Solomons and its continued advance was felt as a real threat in Fiji.

⁷ Narain Singh, 'Recollections of early Fulton College' (MS, 1988).

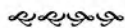
⁸ About twelve years later, this school in turn was considered unviable and sold off to the Gujarat Education Society.

⁹ Ram Brij, op cit.

¹⁰ Unlike other religious denominations, the SDA Mission did not accept government grants to help run its schools. ●

Vanuatu

We pay tribute to the early missionaries who commenced the work in Vanuatu often in difficult & trying situations.



Right: The mission house built by Ross James

Below right: Some of the missionaries:
L to R, Andrew & Jean Stewart; Ross & Mabel James; Norman & Alma Wiles; Jope & Torika Laweloa, & children



Ross & Mabel James on their wedding day





Establishing the First Permanent Base of Operations in Vanuatu—Part 8 (final) Big Bay Santo Island and Ambrym Island

LES PARKINSON



See CV in Vol 1 No 2

Synopsis: Norman Wiles died of blackwater fever on 5 May 1920 at his home at Tanmaru on Malekula. Alma Wiles, assisted by an island captain of a recruiters ship, buried him there. Subsequent unrest by the village people was calmed by Andrew Stewart on a visit to Tanmaru. He told them a replacement would arrive to continue Wiles' work. Nicholson visited the area regularly until the Parkers arrived back in Atchin in 1923.

SANTO ISLAND.

WHEN ROSS AND MABEL JAMES SETTLED IN AT BIG BAY the Presbyterian Mission was already established on North-west Santo, at Hog Harbour on East Santo and at South Santo where they operated a training school. Other mission bodies that operated there were the London Missionary Society and the Melanesian Mission.

Stewart had decided to set up a mission in the Big Bay area because of the need of the people but in making this decision he stretched both his lines of communication and his budget to breaking point. In the hill country on either side of Big Bay were numbers of primitive people who lived in a nomadic, semi-savage condition. He secured a block of land of 80 acres near the head of the wide bay. It contained a number of coconut and other fruit bearing trees.¹

The James arrived on 10 July 1919 with the two mission launches, *Eran* and *Rani*, which carried the supplies for the beginnings of the new mission station.²

There were no houses on the property and Stewart and Jope Laweloa assisted them in erecting a native style building and a small kitchen. As soon as the missionary couple were under cover Stewart and Laweloa left for Atchin.

The building they erected was eighteen feet by twelve feet (5.486m x 3.658m) with a native style kitchen having a few sheets of iron for a roof. The initial expense of the mission, according to Stewart was £5 (\$10). Stewart said that Ross and Mabel James were prepared to live that way until they were sure that the mission was in the most suitable locality for that part of the field.³

The site chosen was on an elevation and faced the trade winds. At the back of the property there was a small river and on the property there were three springs.

James soon realised that the area for the mission station had been under the influence of the Presbyterian



Ross James with a group of nationals at Big Bay

mission for over twenty years, but the people had been left to themselves for about six years.

James reported that not long after he and his wife were settled in their home that a Presbyterian missionary visited their old mission station in an endeavour to revive interest. The reaction of the people to his overtures was far from reassuring and some said that they were no longer interested in what he had to say because 'Mr James was their missionary'.⁴

Within a few months James had erected a school building and was busy making seats of cane as there was no timber in the area. In October 1919 James was holding meetings in three villages each Sabbath morning.

The isolation, loneliness, dangers and lack of materials at the station are revealed in his article written about November 1920:

From twelve miles across the Bay comes news of two shooting affrays. One man was killed, the other shot through the hand. A few miles inland, to the west, two others were killed with tomahawks ... The population is small, for instance, after eleven hours constant walking inland recently in search of a village of 'school people', I found eight men, eight women and a few children. I have not been able to go again on account of erecting the mission house. It is now habitable, though we have planks for windows and doors. We are very thankful for this comfortable home.⁵

Apparently James and his wife used hydrotherapy as a means of treating the many ailments of the ni-Vanuatu people, for he wrote that they had recently worn to threads a set of fomentation cloths.⁶

Jope Laweloa, who was assisting Ross James, went down with black-water fever. He recovered after two



The Pacific

weeks and not long afterwards it was necessary for him to return to Fiji. He and his family travelled via Australia arriving in Sydney on January 30, 1921. It was also time for Ross and Mabel James to return to Australia on furlough and on 23 February 1921 they arrived in Sydney on the *Pacific*.⁷ Donald and Lilian Nicholson cared for the station during their six months absence from the field.

On 15 August 1921 Stewart and Harold Blunden arrived on the mission vessel *Eran* and after one day of rest they were taken across the Bay to visit the mountain tribes on the Sakao Peninsula. On board were also three men from the Big Bay mission station. When the vessel was safely anchored the three nationals walked the three and a half hours journey up the mountain range to ask if Tingaroo, the great chief of the Sakao Peninsula tribes, would allow his people to come down to the coast to sell fruit and vegetables to the Europeans and to talk with them. Blunden wrote:

This chief has a price of fifty pounds [\$100] on his head for killing some natives in his domain ... [the] people are a fine strong tribe numbering many hundreds ... They live along a ridge of a high hill on this peninsula, and have their roads well guarded for fear of invasion.⁸

The three nationals returned about three o'clock with a



Calvin & Myrtle Parker; Donald & Lilian Nicholson

request that the missionaries wait until the following day as it would be impossible for the mountain people to come down in the late afternoon and return home the same day. After a

conference the Europeans decided to stay the night. They took the sail from the *Eran* and rigged it behind and above them for a shelter. They then gathered leaves for beds and covered these with the canvas awning from the boat. They used another spare canvas to sleep under. A fire was lit near their feet and after worship they lay down to sleep.

At ten o'clock the next morning between fifteen and twenty men and women approached carrying bundles of sweet potatoes and yams. Donald Nicholson had asked them to bring these down to trade but his main purpose was to get in touch with them. However, before the day was out he was sorry that he had not stipulated how many bundles he wanted. He had to buy a ton of sweet potatoes and yams. These were purchased with safety pins and matches. Three boxes of matches or two safety pins bought about a dozen pounds of vegetables. The men wanted matches for their pipes and the women safety pins to attach to a piece of string and then to hang them from holes that had been pierced in their ears.

Blunden described the men as being very muscular and with pure black woolly hair. They stood about five feet nine inches tall and their dress consisted of a leather belt about two and a half inches wide with one or two pouches fixed to it. Over the front part of this belt hung a piece of cloth about five inches wide and nine inches long.

The women were also physically well built but not as tall as the men and the married women had the two upper front teeth knocked out to indicate their married state. They were tattooed on the chest and shoulders and in some cases the design was very artistic. They were practically nude.

The men and women had one thing in common and that was that the partition between the nasal passage had been split open and a ring of bamboo or some such material was inserted to hold the place open.

Lilian Nicholson, being the only European woman was able to get very close to the ni-Vanuatu women and break down their fears and when the *Eran* left five hours later the missionaries and nationals were on very friendly terms.

As it was very close to the time for Ross and Mabel James to return from furlough the Nicholsons travelled on the *Eran* with Stewart and Blunden to Atchin. They ran into extremely bad weather and a strong tidal rip that almost caused the mission vessel to founder. They were thrown about like a cork. The tide-rip lasted for about fifteen minutes and it took them three hours to travel fifteen kilometres. Altogether it took them seven days before they reached Atchin. A journey that normally would have taken two days.⁹

Ross and Mabel James returned to Big Bay in late October 1921. No further information is recorded for the Big Bay district until the end of 1922.

AMBRYM

The first contact the SDA Mission had with Ambrym was in the month of March 1915. It was late on a Friday afternoon. Cargo belonging to Calvin and Myrtle Parker, which had come from Australia on the *Makambo* had been off-loaded onto the beach at Atchin. Two young men from the village of Baiap, on Ambrym, were on Atchin at the time and, seeking work, approached Calvin Parker offering to carry the cargo from the beach to the

mission house. The two men were David Bambu and Peter Loloa.

Parker informed them that as the sun was about to set the cargo would remain on the beach until Sunday morning. The young men shook their heads in disbelief and thinking to help the missionary told him the cargo could be stolen or, if it were to rain, be water damaged. To their amazement Calvin Parker agreed with them and then told them that Saturday was God's day. Parker told them that as the Bible records that no work was to be done on God's Sabbath the cargo would remain on the beach until Sunday morning.

When Sunday dawned David and Peter once again approached Parker volunteering to carry the cargo to the mission compound. Not one box or carton had been stolen and it had not rained during the period. When the two men returned to Ambrym and their village of Baiap both were full of news of the new mission at Atchin. They told the astonished people that no work was done from sunset on Friday until sunset on Saturday. David and Peter were then questioned closely by the older people and when told of the worship pattern from sunset on Friday until sunset on Saturday and the school that was conducted by Mrs Parker, the older people told the now astonished young men that the people of Baiap once worshipped on Saturday.

On returning to Ambrym from the canefields in Queensland Australia with Lily his aboriginal wife, Caleb from the Baiap area had brought with him a book entitled *The Coming King*. Convinced it contained truth, he shared it with others and a number of people had accepted its biblical messages.

According to J Graham Miller there were three defined areas on Ambrym.

The first on the eastern end where the people spoke the same language* as the Paamese ... By 1916 there were no heathen in the more than one thousand that made up the population. [*There are variations in the language.]

The second area was in north Ambrym and the number of non-Christian villages outnumbered Christian villages.

The third area of population was in the southwest, along the coast from Dip Point to beyond Linda. In 1916 the Christian and non-Christian villages were about evenly divided.¹⁰

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was first established in the third area in 1922, and within two years was working in the second area. The first area was not entered until about 1950.

Three major happenings contributed to the establishment of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on Ambrym.

The first was the return of labourers from the canefields in Queensland who had in ways unknown made contact with the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The second was the destruction of the Presbyterian Hospital at Dip Point in December 1913, and with the departure of Dr Bowie there was no Presbyterian resident missionary left on Ambrym.

The third was when young men from the Presbyterian village of Baiap, of their own volition, requested to be allowed to attend the Seventh-day Adventist school on

Atchin in 1918.

Ross James wrote:

During the last six months, another field has come under the influence of our work ... From a village not far from where the [[Presbyterian] hospital stood [Dip Point] we brought three bright boys, at their own request, to attend school on Atchin. The three were keen students and made good progress. They underlined everything in their Bibles that impressed them.¹¹

These young men were instructed by Andrew Stewart, Norman Wiles and Ross James. James recorded that before the three returned to Baiap he printed a tract for them in their language. He gave them twenty copies to distribute among their own people.

There is no record of whether there was a printing press on Atchin or whether a draft copy of the pamphlet, consisting of eight pages of print and two illustrations was sent to Australia for printing. The pamphlet was titled 'Talk of Jesus Return'. The missionaries hoped and prayed that this pamphlet would be seed that would grow and eventually reap a harvest.

A few years later Donald Nicholson had Ambrym and the village of Baiap in mind when he wrote:

In facing the situation here, [Vanuatu] we were impressed to pray earnestly for an open door that would bear a fruitage in harmony with the purpose of God, and for nearly two months we prayed and pleaded with the Lord for evidence that indicated His will; and in the assurance that came through from letters from the Union Conference, we had the confidence that the prayers of others were ascending too, for this needy field ... One evening just as the sun was setting, a letter was handed to us and as I read it tears streamed down my face ... The burden seemed to lift as I read a request from a boy at Ambrym asking for school privileges.¹²

Nicholson made his way to Ambrym and as a result twenty-four young people returned to Atchin with him and, as he instructed them, they accepted every doctrinal point and discarded tobacco and unclean foods. He was of the opinion that the evidence before them indicated the leading of God's Spirit. He felt that there was no other way to account for the movements that had taken place that year.¹³

About June or July 1922 he made another trip to Ambrym and on arrival at Baiap he said another surprise awaited him. As the vessel came into the anchorage he



The village of Baiap, Ambrym, NH. (Vanuatu)

noticed about a hundred people waiting on a point of land that jutted out into the sea. These were men and women who had formerly attended the Presbyterian Church. This group had decided that they wanted the Seventh-day Adventist Church to be established in their village. They were already resting on Saturday and observing it as best they knew how and were working in their gardens on Sundays. Nicholson did not make any proposal to them about establishing a European presence among them. In any case it was not his responsibility as he was holding the fort at Atchin until Stewart returned from furlough.

Nicholson reported:

Up to the present time I have not taken the responsibility of making a proposition to these people. I think it is a case of waiting on the part of each side, but now they have taken this stand without any help or solicitation, they have made manifest their purposes. The people in neighbouring districts are watching the stand that these people have taken and are waiting to join them.¹⁴

FIRST DECADE ENDS

The first decade from 12 June 1912 when Calvin Parker and Harold Carr disembarked from the *Makambo* at Vila until 12 June 1922 closed with no baptisms. During this period of time missionaries were stationed at Atchin from 1913; Matanavat from 1916; Big Bay on North Santo from 1919 and Tamaru from 1920 for a period of approximately five months when the Wiles' lived at Tamaru on the North-west coast of Malekula. Nicholson,

while on Atchin, cared for both North-east and North-west Malekula and from late 1921 a growing interest at Baiap on the island of Ambrym.

The interest that was developing on Ambrym from approximately 1915 but more so in 1921-22 would prove to be during the next and following decades, a force that propelled the progress of the Seventh-day Adventist Mission throughout the whole of the islands of the Republic of Vanuatu. Whilst a spiritual harvest would be reaped, at the same time, the lives of ni-Vanuatu teachers and members would be threatened. The following decade would see the opening of a much needed Central School, on the island of Aore, for the education and training of ni-Vanuatu men and women and fill a great need in the mission for ministers, teachers, office workers, boats' crew and nurses throughout Vanuatu.

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New Hebrides (Vanuatu)

Places of interest in the two articles on Vanuatu have been underlined.

Parkinson: The James set up the mission station where the village of Malao is today on Santo. Other places on Malekula are mentioned. The work began on the eastern side of Ambrym.

Thomson: The Thomsons were located at Port Stanley on Malekula. They were dependant on mission boats to travel to the various islands.

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A Letter to Mother

God's care during the 1951 Christmas Cyclone Malekula Island, Vanuatu

SHIRLEY THOMSON



Shirley Boyd Price Thomson was born at North Fremantle, WA on 6 March, 1924.

She was educated at Fremantle Adventist School, Stott's Business College and West Australian Missionary College (Carmel) in 1941-42.

For the next 5 years she worked in the Wholesale Dept of the Sanitarium Health Food Co. in Perth.

In 1946 she married Alec Thomson, a young minister who had graduated from the Australasian Missionary College in 1944 and who was serving in Western Australia.

In 1948 their Mission field service commenced when they were appointed to Vanuatu (New Hebrides). Shirley was able to travel extensively with her ship's captain husband when they were stationed in various islands of the Pacific.

She enjoyed meeting with people in Vanuatu, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Fiji, Tonga and the Marshall Islands.

After some time their two daughters, Michelle & Claire were born and she supervised their education.

On returning with her husband to Australia in 1973, she assisted Alec in his work among the churches, mainly in W.A. Since 2002 the Thomsons have lived in retirement at the ARV at Victoria Point, Brisbane, Queensland.

DEAR MOTHER,
Once more we have been on the rolling waves. We arrived home on Tuesday evening, 18 December, stayed on Wednesday, and today, Thursday, are on the trail again.

We have brought our wireless with us this trip. This being the cyclone season, it is not a good time to be traveling around with no news of cyclones etc. Alec connected the wireless up, and it is going very well. There are wires criss-crossing the roof, one up the air-vent to the aerial, and one out to the kitchen to the drain.

Pastor A W Martin has been at Aore, conducting a teachers institute for all who were able to be there. Pastor Alfred W Martin has returned to Fiji, and we are taking the teachers home to Paama, Epi and Lopevi in the *Eran*. We have something of a crowd aboard, as we also have some students returning home for part of their vacation.

Monday 24th: Hope you have a very happy Christmas and New Year. We are sitting out a cyclone!!!! And is it blowing!!!! But to get to the story.

We left Malekula for Paama in good weather – sunny, rather windy, a few clouds around the horizon and not much sea – for a run of about six hours. About three-quarters of the way across, we ran into a storm. It rained and it blew; the ship rolled and tossed – some folk were sick, babies cried and yelled and so did one of the women! By the time we were nearing Paama, with darkness coming, visibility was practically nil. I think we were all praying – I know I was – that the light would hold long enough for us to anchor – it was marvelous the way it did.

Actually, we should have been there in plenty of time, but that storm had slowed us down. The rain ceased just as we were anchoring at the island. In fact, we almost missed it, for the wind and tide had driven us off course considerably. Paama is not a big island by any means, and it had been hidden by rain and cloud. Well, the sun had set ages before but the rosy reflection from the overcast sky gave enough light to see. We anchored and the light faded!

On Friday Alec and Captain Isaiah



Isaiah, Annie & their children and their two adopted orphans

worked pumping out the ship and cleaning up in general, while the other folk unloaded all their luggage. All Thursday night it had rained and blown in spasmodic gusts, and I tell you, I was scared.

On Friday it seemed better. The sky lightened and the gusts did not seem so bad. Anyway Alec and I went ashore. Alec took the Sabbath Vesper meeting and made arrangements for the Ordinances on Sabbath morning.

We came back to the ship, and that night it was really wild. I was almost sick with fright. I didn't say anything much to Alec, because he had been up once during the night. After a hefty gust, I asked what he was going to do, and he said we would stay there, as they had been here in worse weather in the *Eran* (an open cockpit boat 28ft long). So after that I didn't say any more, but the thought of worse storms with the *Eran* didn't comfort me



Alec & Shirley Thomson—1948



The Eran-1945

at all.

Anyway, Friday night was enough for Alec. The barometer had been gradually going down, so as soon as it was light enough, we up-anchored and headed for Port Sandwich on Malekula. After all the wind we expected to have rough seas, but it was really good considering what we had experienced so recently. We arrived about ten o'clock, anchored, and settled down to a quiet time. Sabbath here was good, and sometimes we were tempted to wonder if we had taken fright at nothing. Yesterday afternoon, however, it really started to get under way. So far no news of a cyclone had come from the wireless, but the barometer had been going down further and further. Now it is down the furthest it has been. Right now I am sitting alongside the wireless, awaiting confirmation of our diagnosis – a cyclone. I have just heard the report, but nothing about a cyclone. “Good weather at Santo, wind 1.4 knots” and here I think it must be about 50 knots!

We had a good laugh this morning. There was a medium-sized open whale-boat anchored close to the shore, and early today about a dozen or more boys appeared and cut a track up from the shore into the bush. Some more appeared carrying poles to use as rollers. Then they started to strain, gave a yell and a heave, until the boat began to move. You'd have thought the boat had taken fright and was being chased by them; it just shot up through the trees. All that could be seen were the straining black legs and the flash of the white soles of their feet as they went. Long after they had vanished from sight you could still hear their yells.

We have one precious match left, and have decided we won't use it yet. We may cook something for dinner tomorrow. I have been sitting on the back step of our kitchen-cabin, watching the wind whip the waves up and dash them into the bush, and the poor old coconut palms with all their fronds pulled out in the same direction – they are beginning to look very dilapidated. While I was sitting there thinking of our one match, I was wishing I could be home with you right now, instead of just waiting...waiting to see what a cyclone will do.

I think it was last Monday that I was writing this letter; on Monday afternoon the wind really began piping and howling around the rigging, whipping the spray off the waves over the sea, making it, as the islanders aptly say “smoke.”

The wind was coming in strongly where we were, and then the anchor started to drift, so Captain Isaiah and Alec decided to go around the small point of land. This would give some shelter for the night. We managed that,

but the small anchor drifted again. It was getting late so they put down the big anchor, and that held well.

We settled down for the night. It was, without exception, however, the most terrible night I have ever spent. The wind just roared. It sounded as if all the demons of hell had been let loose. About 10 o'clock it became even worse. The ship would snap back on the anchor chain, and the whole ship would shudder. The trouble was that our diagnosis was wrong; a hurricane goes anti-clockwise, but a cyclone goes clockwise, and this was a cyclone. Usually, out here, a hurricane starts in the south-east and finishes in the north-east. But this was indeed a cyclone, starting in the south-east, going clockwise, to finally finish in the east. It is the first cyclone we have ever heard of out this way.

We were anchored in a place where we would have been sheltered had it been a hurricane, but because of the cyclone we did not get that shelter. Anyway back to our story. The wind was evidently hitting the hill behind us and then bouncing down on the ship. We'd hear that terrible roar and down it would come on to the cabin roof, bang! bang! It was as though someone was jumping up and down on it. The ship would shudder and we could feel it going down into the sea. As soon as that gust was over, up it would bounce again like a rubber ball.

Alec stayed in the wheel house from 1 o'clock until daylight with the engine running almost all the time in case the anchor chain broke. Most of the time from the wheel-house window he couldn't see the mast a few feet in front of him for the rain and the spray; even the lightning did not help. At daylight he was exhausted, so Captain Isaiah took over. However the wind changed to the west and we began bumping on the reef near the shore. You see, we had expected the wind from the opposite quarter, the east. Then they tried to pull up the anchor to get out to another place where we could have shelter. The anchor was stuck, caught in the reef and they could not move it, and we were being smashed up and down on the reef. They tried and tried to get the anchor up, but to no avail. The wind roared from west to north for about an hour. We didn't have a hope.

The waves started crashing in from the open sea, and the ship had landed well and truly on the reef. The Captain was afraid the wind and sea would turn her over, so it was decided that we should take a small box of what we needed and go ashore. We took the mission cash box, our wireless and a few clothes.

The boys tied a big rope to the back of the ship and went ashore and tied the rope to a tree, and then pulled the dinghy back to the ship by the rope. They'd never have been able to get back otherwise. The wind and sea were dreadful. Alec and I went ashore, others went back to get Isaiah and another boy. (They were just getting into the dinghy when the shackle on the anchor broke, but we only knew this later). Fortunately the big rope tied to the back was caught around the reef, and kept the back of the ship out to sea. The nose turned around to shore, the rope broke and she came riding in nose first, a little further on every wave just as though Some Invisible Person was steering her in. I believe there was, but not visibly.

We stood on the beach, holding on to some of the bushes along the shore, and watched her for some time. Alec and Isaiah were heartbroken. Alec couldn't wait to watch any more. He said he couldn't bear it any longer so we left, leaving her in God's charge. The last I saw of her



The *Ka Seli* up on the shore and the *Nakalaji* at its dedication earlier.

through a veil of spray was the wind wrapping its arms around her. She was still bravely coming in on each wave.

The wind whipped the spray into our faces, and it felt as though we were being pelted with pebbles. We could not walk against the wind, but staggered from one substantial-looking stump to the next, over all the limbs and trees that had been torn down and uprooted, and were still being flung about.

At last we arrived at the French Government Officer's residence. They were very good to us. Half their roof had been torn off, and everything was wet. They didn't even have dry beds or bedding. Glass doors and windows had been broken, glass littered the floor. To walk, one had to be most careful.

Later we asked if we could sleep. They gave us a bed, put a mackintosh over the wet mattress and found one dry blanket from somewhere, and we tried to sleep. We hadn't had much sleep for days, but couldn't sleep, for as soon as we'd shut our eyes, we'd see our ship being smashed to pieces. We were given a sleeping draught that night and we slept like the dead, and I'm afraid we almost wished we were.

Wednesday morning the wind had eased off; the cyclone was finishing. Poor Alec was still asleep so I left him sleeping and went for a walk to see where the boys were. They had already gone down to see the ship. After Alec awoke we walked down to see how much of her was still there. I was sure the hull wouldn't break up, but thought that if that terrible wind got under the roof it would lift the cabin completely off. You can imagine the thrill we got to see her "sitting up like Jackie", high and dry of course, but tucked up against the trees (or what was left of them).

As far as we could see there was no damage done except for the copper which had been ripped off the bottom. The Captain and crew now commenced living on the ship but we continued to live at the government place, but went down to the ship morning and afternoon.

There was quite a lot of cleaning up to do, as the wind had whistled the spray and rain under the window frames and doors; everything was wet and had to be dried out. We sent a message to Aore for help, and on Friday afternoon the mission flag-ship, the *Nakalaji*, arrived.

Today, Sunday, they have been working, digging the sand away and getting things ready to get her off. We are hoping there will be no irreparable damage done to her on the side we cannot yet see.

Several ships have been washed ashore, a couple are mission, and the damage to local houses and gardens is

terrific. The bush is no longer bush. The ground is covered with branches, uprooted trees, leaves and fruit. The trees that are standing have very few leaves and very few branches. It looks as though some giant children have been playing and poking dry sticks into the ground. Now almost a week later, the hills are brown, and it appears that everything has died from a terrible drought. You never saw such a sight.

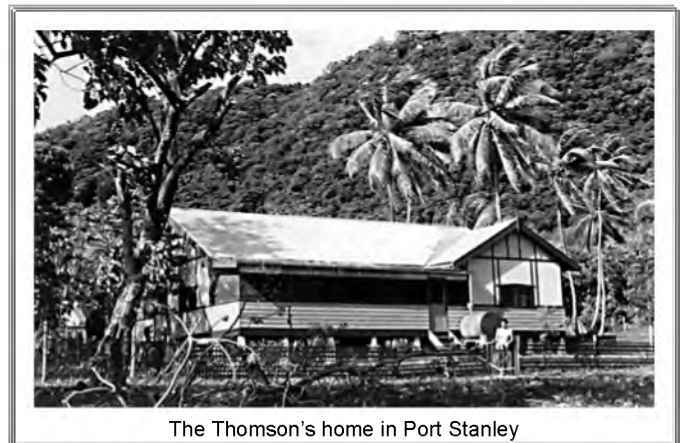
Monday 31st. The folk here are all digging sand away from the *Ka Seli* so that she can be dragged and pushed out into the water.

We heard this morning that 87 people are dead on Epi. The deluge of rain and force of the wind caused large landslides, and many folk were buried alive. One family was in their house, and a landslide just took the house into the sea, drowning the man. They didn't say about his family but I guess they are numbered among the 87. It is a sobering thought, to think of 87 souls being swept into eternity in just a few seconds. It makes one realize that one must be prepared continually to face our great Judge, doesn't it? We haven't heard how the other islands fared as yet.

While we were all digging out sand and trying to lever the ship out a bit with poles, a thunderstorm came up, and the lightning struck a tree about fifteen yards from the ship. The boys on that side felt the heat of it, and the crack of thunder nearly split our eardrums. Satan was having another try to finish us and the ship! He couldn't succeed in drowning us and breaking the ship to pieces, so he had a go with lightning and missed again. Surely "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him and delivereth them."

Tuesday 1st January. The ship is out – floating! Praise the Lord! They refloated her last night, New Years Eve, and now the *Nakalaji* is towing her to Aore. She will have to be recoppered and repainted, as the copper is ripped off the bottom, and the paint is scratched about badly, but apart from that, there seems to be nothing seriously damaged. Our first port of call is Port Stanley to see how things are at home. We are all alive and unhurt.

Isn't God good! ●



The Thomson's home in Port Stanley

The New World of Today's Mission Treasurer

RODNEY BRADY



Rodney grew up in Melbourne Vic. After leaving school he studied accounting part-time at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. He then obtained a diploma in business from Avondale College. He received a post-graduate diploma in accounting in 1987 from the Warrnambool Institute of Advanced education & an MA in leadership & management from Avondale in 2001. He is a member of CPA Aust. & of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

He was called to serve the church in the positions of accountant in Vic, 1980, in Tasmania in 1982, in North NZ in 1985 & North New South Wales in 1988. He also managed the Adventist Book Centre in Tasmania for two & a half years.

He served as an accountant for Adventist Media in 1989 & financial controller for Signs Publishing Co, Vic from 1990. Four years later he was called to the CPUM in Suva, Fiji to serve as treasurer. He returned to Victoria to serve as treasurer in 1998. He was then appointed associate treasurer (1999) & chief financial officer (2000) for the church in the South Pacific. He serves on boards, trusts & committees in a variety of capacities & in many countries.

His focus is to ensure the church makes the best use of its financial resources and assets to fulfil its mission.

He is married to Kathryn and they have two children, Sharyn and Michael.

WHEN I WAS A UNION MISSION TREASURER I enjoyed attending functions where the work of the pioneer missionaries was recounted. It was a testimony to honour the sacrifices of those who started a work in hostile and difficult circumstances. In the pioneer days of mission work they had to endure much: long periods of difficult travel; no accommodation and having to build the home they lived in; losing loved ones; suffering tropical diseases with no prospect of returning home for care; no easy forms of communication or social networks. I visited the graves of those that never left their field of service.

In the footsteps of the pioneers my wife and I felt embarrassed to be described as missionaries. We lived in a comfortable home with television in the lovely city of Suva. It was just a few hours flying time from Australia, with a phone we could call home on when we chose. For recreation we could enjoy the lovely tropical beaches or stay at nearby resorts. We were paid regularly and the church cared for us well.

However, the challenges for treasury staff in mission service have probably never been greater. While the physical challenges may not be as great as the pioneer missionaries the mental challenge is enormous. The following is the list of just some circumstances the modern missionary treasurer has to cope with:

- **Inadequate resources.** The Pacific Mission field is operated at an annual total cost expressed on a per member basis of just A\$85, with the amount over that coming from the Division. This money is used to finance expatriates, operate almost 5,000 churches and companies with over 300,000 members, operate 3 tertiary institutions and a school system with around 20,000 students. It really is a case of making a little go a long way with the Lord's blessing. There are huge pressures trying to allocate resources across so many high priority areas of need. With opportunities that the pioneers could only dream about, the today's missionary treasurer has to cope with the frustration and agony of closing



Representatives of the nearly 50 men, women & children who lost their lives in the mission field. Herbert William Adrian, died in a car accident in Fiji. Pearl Tolhurst, aged 28, died of complications from the Spanish influenza in 1919, in Tonga. Brian Dunn, speared at Atoifi Hospital. They gave their all—would we?

schools and reducing workers for the sole reason of finance.

- **Modern Pacific economies.** Modern times have the church operating in an environment of devaluing currencies, inflation rates that can exceed 20%, currency controls, financially stressed governments, broken promises, fights over land titles, escalating lease costs by today's landowners and unstable economies.

- **An escalating wages bill.** The Pacific now has two economies, that of the growing and fast changing urban areas and the subsistence rural areas. The ma-

majority of our members and growth is in the rural areas. The church workforce by necessity is now better educated with most now not living a subsistence lifestyle. The result of the changed lifestyle for church workers is a bigger wages bill.

- **Nationalisation.** Pacific countries restrict the employment of expatriates with an expectation that local staff should be used when available. Treasury work is a specialised area and there are not enough qualified members willing to work for the church, so, the church is dependent on expatriates for senior financial leadership. It is not uncommon to wait over a year to get a visa for a treasurer. That places pressure on staff waiting for the treasurer to arrive and then on the treasurer as he tries and catch up when he does arrive.

- **Technology failure.** Modern finance is reliant upon technology. In the Pacific a treasurer has to find ways of working despite a phone system that may not work; unreliable internet; computers that fail in tropical conditions; and then waiting for long periods of time to get them fixed; despite unreliable infrastructure that sees electricity supply fail intermittently and plane services that can throw into chaos the best time management plans.

While the physical surroundings may be more comfortable than the pioneers, today's missionary treasurers

still endure the same sleepless nights experienced by the pioneer missionaries. Spouses share that burden.

Today's mission experience is different. There are new demons to face. Out of the difficulties and frustrations comes an enormous sense of satisfaction of serving the Lord and actively contributing to a work that the devil is desperately trying to frustrate and destroy. Not only is the Pacific the church's priority it is also the devil's. Today's missionaries are willingly putting themselves in the devil's firing line wearing the armour of God.

Today's missionary has much to cope with. One of the hardest things to contend with is the disinterest from their home base. When they return home on leave few church members, and sometimes even family, are interested enough to find out about the exciting work they are doing. Then they see this expressed in the financial support that they desperately depend on to finance budgets. Camp mission offerings have halved over the last five years. Bequests are increasingly left to the good social work done by ADRA in preference to Mission work. World Mission giving is less than a dollar per week per member living in the comfort of Australia and New Zealand. It leaves them with the big question— what value does the church place on its Mission field and the sacrifice the missionaries are making? ●

Life Sketches

Zonga Hite was born in the village of Nusabuta in the Solomon Islands c. 1901. He was educated in the village primary school for 4 years and in the district school for 2 years. In 1923 he received his Teachers Licence, in 1928 his Missionary Licence, and in 1952 his Ministerial Licence. He was united to Zitu in marriage in 1931.

He began a long and fruitful service for the church in July 1923 when he was appointed the village school teacher at Kakia. From 1925 to 1928 he taught at Inus (Bougainville); from 1929 to 1936 at Ionu; from 1937 to 1945 at Pezuku (Pejuku—Marovo), and from 1946 to 1950 at Katorasele. Following a year of sickness he was appointed a sub district director at Katorasele until 1955, when he transferred to Nuatabu as the sub district director and served there until 1961. From 1961 to 1964 he served as district director.

Five children were born to Zonga and Zitu: Naru, Helen, Wale, Ketili & Nambi.

Zonga passed to his rest in March, 2003. He was known and respected as a faithful teacher who sought to introduce his pupils to the Master Teacher and Saviour. He awaits His Master's call to life!

Nathaniel (Amet) Japeth It was on the island of Atchin off the coast of Malekula in Vanuatu, that Nathaniel Japeth was born in 1923(1928?). His early education was obtained on Atchin and in later years on Aore Island. He commenced his long and valued teaching service for the church on Atchin in 1946. Three years later he transferred to Big Bay on the northern island of Santo. Following a further year there he didn't resume service for the church until 1956 when he again taught school on Atchin. Approximately 5½ years later he moved to Amapelao on the island of Malo, and in 1962 & 1963 he taught at Port Stanley on Malekula.

Subsequently he taught at Espiegle Bay on Malekula 1964-65; at Winn 1966; as a teacher trainee at Aore 1967; at Linbul on North Ambrym 1968; at Atchin 1969, & 1971-72; again at Amapelao 1974-76; and once more at Atchin 1977-81.

Nathaniel married Nellie in 1945, and they had 6 children: Friendly, Merrelin, Alet, Fay, Alice and Mabel. Nathaniel is remembered for his perseverance in the work God had called him to do. There are many in Vanuatu who benefited from his Christian life and teaching. He passed to his rest on 25 December, 2003.

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Pacific Earthquakes and Tsunamis are Not New

Although the Boxing Day 2004 Tsunami is the most devastating on record, this powerful destroyer has, in the past, brought problems to Pacific Island nations.

- 1 **San Cristobal**, southern-most island in the Solomon Islands
At 6:15 am on 4 October 1931, a severe earthquake occurred off the south coast of the island. Mr Ernie Palmer who was on board the *Mendana*, a two-masted sailing boat becalmed in the waters approximately half a mile off shore, watched events unfold. He saw the mountain sides slip into the sea and disturb the waters below 240 feet. Soon great waves formed and raced towards the shore where they inflicted incredible damage. Altogether, 20 villages located between Cape Surville and Cape Sydney were destroyed, and people swept into the tree-tops died there from exposure and broken limbs. Later, thirty-eight bodies were found with one girl's body caught by her ankle in a nut palm tree more than 20 feet above the ground. It was difficult to know how many people died as survivors fled inland.
- 2 **Tanna**, a southern island in Vanuatu
Some time ago in 1878, as the result of an earthquake, a 40 foot wave destroyed part of the shoreline of the island.
- 3 **Samoan Islands**
Another 40 foot wave hit the coasts of these islands in 1917. It resulted from an earthquake in the Kermadec Islands located north of New Zealand.
- 4 **Krakatoa**, a volcanic island situated in the Sunda Strait, Indonesia
A violent eruption in 1883 caused tsunamis which led to the deaths of 36,000 people on the nearby islands of Java and Sumatra.
- 5 **Other Islands**
Hawaiian Islands— on 2 April 1863 a 60 foot wave hit the southeast coast of the island of Hawaii causing 81 deaths and the loss of two villages. A 30 foot wave, generated from an earthquake in Chile on 22 May 1960, killed 60 people in Hilo. In 1968 an earthquake on Tinakula Island in the Santa Cruz Group in the Solomons, generated a tidal wave which affected those islands. In 1975 an earthquake on Bougainville Island was felt in the Shortland Islands and created a tsunami which damaged houses, wharves and canoes.



Compiled from information supplied by the Office of Meteorology, Brisbane, Australia and the *Wordsworth Encyclopedia*, 1995