

# Journal of Pacific Adventist History

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# Journal of Pacific Adventist History

## Statement of Mission

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

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## Editorial

Seventh-day Adventists have a past in the Pacific worthy of record, and worthy of being shared. God has been directing His work for over 100 years, and exciting things have happened. He has guided the course of history in the islands towards the fulfillment of His purposes. He has suggested, influenced, and responded to human appeals, decisions and actions. Sometimes he has lead out Himself and caused particular things to happen. And Pacific islanders, expatriates, and others interested in the people of the Pacific, have been involved in God's acts of divine providence. What has been accomplished needs to be acknowledged, better understood and more widely appreciated.

People, places and events will be featured in articles and stories. On occasions there will be life sketches, book reviews and letters.

In this issue Ray Wilkinson tells of the challenge of establishing the church's first island regional institution to grant degrees. Mrs Rusila Beranaliva describes the early years of Dorcas activities in Fiji. How the Adventist Church first began in Papua New Guinea is well documented by Alfred Chapman. David Hay gives an account of the difficulties encountered by a national expatriate in bringing the Adventist message to another Pacific country. And Lester Hawkes shares his surprising findings on the meaning of the seventh day in several Papuan languages.

There is good reading for everyone. May you find your journey through the Pacific Islands rewarding and inspirational.

David Hay

Thanks to the editorial assistants and the reviewers who willingly share their experience and expertise. Their contribution is valued.

*"The church is making history. Every day is a battle and a march. On every side we are beset by invisible foes, and we either conquer through the grace given us by God or we are conquered."*  
E G White, *Testimonies to the Church*, vol 6, p 327.

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## **ESTABLISHING PACIFIC ADVENTIST COLLEGE: a new emphasis in island education. —The first principal's challenge.**

**Raymond  
Wilkinson**



As early as the mid 1960s some of us on the staff at Fulton College (particularly Glynn Litster, Bill Miller and myself) urged our Union Mission leadership and the Division Education Department to give serious thought to introducing a fully tertiary program to serve the needs of our island union missions. We recommended as a first step separating the high school and training programs at Fulton College, by constructing facilities for the training program on a

recently acquired dairy property less than a kilometre from the existing college plant. It was envisaged that the two campuses would share an administration, and some facilities. We were commended for our forward thinking, but told clearly that there was no money for such a move, and that there was no immediate plan for a tertiary program in the island section of the Division (at that time the Australasian Division of Seventh-day Adventists). It was

*Raymond K Wilkinson, EdD, a graduate of Avondale College, Massey University (NZ) and Andrews University served as principal of PAC (now PAU) from 1982 to 1991. Also principal at Kambubu Adventist High School, 1979-81, Sonoma College, 1972-76, deputy at Fulton College, Fiji, 1958-59, principal at Papaaroa Junior College, Cook Islands, 1956-57. He was education director of the WPUM from 1992-94.*

*Ruth taught Home Economics to the high school students at Fulton and to the teacher trainees at Sonoma and PAU*

*Since his retirement in 1995, he has been a volunteer at Fulton College, 1997 and at the Lay Training School at Aore in Vanuatu in 2000.*

*Ray and his wife Ruth have four children, Roy, Gwenda, Enid and Helen.*

*The Wilkinsons live in retirement at Coorambong NSW.*

felt that Avondale College could meet the need for tertiary trained island nationals for the foreseeable future.

The first clear intimation I received that such thinking was changing came in 1975 when Papua New Guinea Union Mission meetings were being held in Lae. I was attending as Principal of Sonoma College, the training centre for both the Papua New Guinea Union Mission and Western Pacific Union Mission, and Pastor Lance Butler, at that time our Division Treasurer was also in attendance. We met on an early morning walk through the lovely Botanical Gardens just opposite the Union office, and as we walked Lance asked me if I considered the time had come when we needed to plan a full tertiary program for the island unions. I assured him I considered the time had not only come, but that we were some years late in making such a move. He asked me if I thought we needed a new institution to be established, or if a tertiary cap on one of the existing colleges would suffice. I said that I thought a tertiary cap added at Fulton College would be the fastest way to get the program started. He gently disagreed with me, and I was quickly forced to concede that adding a third level to the already difficult mix of secondary school classes with post-secondary training programs at Fulton would only add further problems. Lance then gave me the first information I had heard about serious plans for a tertiary institution, telling me that he had already started to establish a fund to provide at least a foundation for the heavy costs that would be involved in planning, constructing and staffing a tertiary institution for the islands. We talked a little about where such a program could best be located, mention being made of the population dominance of Papua New Guinea in the Division's islands region, but the educational

lead that the central Pacific countries like Fiji had at that time. I was impressed then, and am still impressed by the vision that Lance Butler had, and his grasp of the situation in the various island nations.

The first substantial move toward the establishment of the new college was made at a meeting of Education and Division personnel in Honiara, in July 1977. At that time a clear decision was made to ask the Division to plan and establish a tertiary institution to serve the island fields of the Division. I was not at the Honiara meeting, as I was in the United States on a study program, but learned with some jubilation of the decisions being made.

The Division immediately established a planning program, seriously considering ways of gathering the necessary funds (a 13<sup>th</sup> Sabbath offering was dedicated to the program, more funding was built into the Division budget, and plans were made to borrow money from existing Division reserve funds so that land acquisition and a building program could be financed) and a search was launched to find a suitable site. Fiji, the Solomon Islands, and Papua New Guinea were considered as possible host nations. Because Papua New Guinea's population represented approximately 80% of the total for the region to be served, particular weight was given to looking at sites in that nation. Toward the end of 1978 Pastor Lester Lock, who had grown up, and then worked for most of his adult life in Papua New Guinea was asked to check out available sites. It was seen as desirable that the site chosen should have ready access for students and staff from other countries, have phone, power and water services available, have adequate arable land, and be reasonably near a commercial centre and other educational facilities. For those reasons special consideration was given to sites in the Markham Valley near

Lae, and near the capital, Port Moresby. The sites available near Lae were not considered suitable, so the search was concentrated near Port Moresby.

Pastor Lock was accompanied by Pastor Yori Hibo, President of the Central Papua Mission of Seventh-day Adventists, as he looked at two sites along the Sogeri Road, a little over 20 kilometres north of Port Moresby's business centre. One site was land owned by the Ilimo Farm, Papua New Guinea's largest poultry business. It had been used to grow maize for the farm, but was no longer in use. The other property was owned by the New Zealand Dairy Corporation, and had been run as a dairy, but because of problems with feed during the long dry season, and the high incidence of pests (particularly ticks and buffalo fly) the company had decided to cease its local dairy operation, and reconstitute milk from New Zealand milk powder.

The two men looked first at the Ilimo Farm site, and felt there were some problems, not the least of which was the need to construct an expensive bridge to give ready access to the property. They then looked at the dairy land, (called Tanuabada, meaning 'wide plain') and were impressed by a section of elevated land suitable for building sites, the well watered look of part of the land even during the dry spell, the ready access from a sealed road, the fact that power lines from the hydro power stations on the Laloki River went right past the site, that phone lines would be easy to link to the nearby Bomana Exchange, and that the water treatment facility for Port Moresby's domestic water service was just on the boundary of the property, providing easy access to a supply of treated water. The site was also close to Port Moresby's international airport (which was also on the north side of the city) and to the National Government offices at Waigani, and the University of Papua New Guinea. The two men became quite excited as they considered all the positive features of the land.

They talked to the manager of the Dairy Corporation in his office at what was at that time an ice-cream factory situated on the west edge of the property, and he agreed that if the men paid a deposit they could have an option on the site for ten days. Pastor Lock had no money with him, and Pastor Yori Hibo had only one Kina (at that time a little less than US \$1), but the manager graciously said that would be a satisfactory deposit. The money was paid, and a receipt given.

Pastor Lock immediately contacted the Division, and men were sent up from Sydney to give the site a thorough appraisal. Their report was

positive, and formal proceedings were initiated to try and acquire the site.

Securing the land was not a foregone conclusion by any means. The land was owned by the Koiari people living up on the Sogeri Plateau and in the foothills of the Owen Stanley mountains north of Port Moresby. Even if they would be willing to lease the land to the Church there were still major challenges to overcome. Private (non-government) groups were restricted to leases of not more than 25 years, far too short a period for such a major project as establishing a college. For the plan to be feasible the Government would have to agree to take out a long-term lease of the land from the landowners, and then sub-lease to the Church. But Government would be hard to convince that the Church should have the use of the land for a college, as other groups also wanted the site. The Forestry Department wanted it as a training centre and nursery. The Agriculture and Fisheries Department wanted it to sub-divide into blocks for a model farm scheme. Some influential government men wanted it to run a commercial piggery, and the Sogeri owners were of two minds over letting any group have it, thinking they might want to farm it themselves.

Pastor Yori Hibo was himself of part Koiari ancestry, and made it his mission to talk to his people about the blessings that would come if a college was established on their land. And when the time came for a decision to be made, the landowners told the Government they would lease the parcel of land on a long-term basis provided it was made available to the Seventh-day Adventist church to establish a tertiary training college.

In talking to our Church representatives the landowners asked that the College be called Koiari College, in honour of the landowners. It was Pastor Ron Taylor that explained to them that the church required the name 'Adventist' to be part of the official name, and that it was to serve a wider need than the local name would suggest, but as an alternative he suggested that the name of the whole estate be Koiari Park, and that became the official name of the estate. The name initially chosen for the College was South Pacific Adventist College, or SPAC. It soon became obvious that the name had a problem, in that the Pigin English term for 'drunk and disorderly' is 'spark', and the local pronunciation of SPAC was so close to 'spark' that a linkage was inevitable. People started to make fun of our farm workers and builders as being the 'spark line'. It was clear that a change was needed, and the official name was changed to Pacific Adventist College, or PAC

(which some termed 'pak', but at the College we always rendered it as separate letters – P-A-C).

The land officially became the property of the Church in 1979, and Phil Ellison and some farm workers moved in to care for the cattle (about 700 head) and begin an agricultural program. In 1980 groundwork began, with roads, building sites, and the lakes being formed. The initial plan was for one large lake on the western side of the main buildings, but it was found that it would be too difficult to produce just one level, and so the plan was adapted so that two lakes were formed, with a causeway in between.

The first appointment to the college staff was that of Brian Townend, as Librarian. He was able to work from Avondale College, where he had been Librarian, and began collecting and preparing library resources for shipment as soon as there was a library building on the new campus. Another early appointment was that of Carl Stoneman as the Clerk of Works, and builder. Carl was a tireless worker, taking an interest in the farm program, and overseeing the building of staff housing as well as carrying out his task as Clerk of Works for the contractors who were constructing the major buildings. Carol Stoneman, Carl's wife, served as a cashier and clerk for the program until the time that John Pocock, appointed as the first Business Manager, was able to move onto the new campus.

Near the end of 1981 I was asked to be the Principal of the new College, to oversee its planning and eventually its operation. My first visits to the College (in 1982) involved visits to government officers, the Papua New Guinea University, and businesses in Port Moresby. Great help was given to me by Dr Geoff Gibson, who was not only a long-time friend, but had also been a leader in the Papua New Guinea Government's education program for many years. He knew the right people, and was known and respected by leaders in Government and the education system of the nation. In fact I would give much of the credit to Geoff for the ease with which the Papua New Guinea Government accepted the concept of a church sponsored tertiary college, and even gave official standing by passing a special Bill in the nation's parliament to provide a charter for the new college.

Getting that Bill prepared was a major hurdle. The South Pacific Division prepared a draft, well considered by the legal minds and the officers of the Division, and then I took that draft to the Papua New Guinea Government's legal office for their consideration. Their review took some

weeks, then there were suggestions to take back to the Division, and the draft went backwards and forwards several times during 1982 and the first half of 1983. When the draft had been accepted by both the Division and the Government (with some reservation on the part of the Division, and possibly on the part of the Government also) plans were made for it to be presented to the Parliament. I was asked by Sir Barry Holloway, then Minister for Education, to prepare two speeches for him, one for when the Bill was first introduced, and another to use during any debate. I was also asked to be ready to attend as a resource person if needed. However, when the Bill was presented in the House it evidently met with wide approval, and the first I knew of its progress was a call from the Minister for Education's office to tell me it had been passed. From memory, the date was August 13, 1983.

In 1983 we were able to get down to the important work of planning courses, gathering staff, receiving student applications, and making plans toward the official opening in February 1984. The Division had been very helpful in appointing a skeleton staff of experienced people who were able to work on course structure and subject outlines. The library was becoming usable for library and office space, and the cataloguing of materials was going at a good pace – though there was no library shelving or other furniture at that time. In designing our courses we wanted to do our best to meet the actual needs of the region we were to serve, and not just follow the approach and courses that others had developed. For instance, we planned that our degree program would be in two modules; the first two years would qualify one for a diploma, then after some field experience (one or two years) the student would return and complete another two-year module to gain a degree. In accepting students there was some difficulty in working out what credit to allow for college level work completed elsewhere (for instance at Fulton College in Fiji) and also working out equivalent standards for entry from the many Pacific nations we were to serve, each with its own education system and terminal high school qualifications.

Once there were families living in the staff housing being constructed for the College we became the target for some of the gang raids for which Port Moresby is known (the so called 'raskol' gangs to use the Pigin term). The only communication we had between houses was whistles that we could blow, and we would use them to alert other families that there were intruders.

Some weeks there were several such intrusions, and we would be tired from chasing 'raskols' off the campus at night, and then having to put in a full day of work during the daylight hours! After a particularly vicious raid we were provided with better security for our houses and vehicles. But the problem of intruders was one that was always in mind—and to this day continues to be one of the problems for the College (now called Pacific Adventist University), despite heavy expenditure on security measures and personnel.

While the planning of the academic program was in progress there were some difficulties with regard to buildings and plant to contend with. The engineers and contractors were directly answerable to the Division, not to those of us on the site, and it took considerable time and manoeuvring to get problems checked and (if possible) corrected. An example of the type of problem met was the highly innovative (but very problematic) air control system for the library/administration building. It was based on many solar panels (some 120, from memory) on the sloping roof of the building to produce hot water, which in turn was used to produce cooling. If power went off and the water was not circulated the water in the panels would actually boil and we had to hose with fire hoses to try and keep them cool. The system did not prove as efficient as was hoped, and the weight of the water in the many panels began to strain the roof, which sagged, and began to leak in many spots (under the solar panels, so we could not get at the leaks!). Finally the panels were taken out and a more conventional air conditioning system was put in. The automatic checking machine put in the Library to prevent unregistered books being taken out never did work properly. We were told it had been wet with salt water on the way up from Sydney, and despite visits by the technicians from the manufacturers gave endless trouble. Some problems were to do with design, like the fact that the home economics room was given fly screening on one side, but not on the other! And in the science building an elaborate hot water system never did work properly – though we did manage to get the hot water disconnected from the toilet cisterns and connected to the wash hand basins in that same building. Another problem was that contractors did not seem able to keep to schedules, and when the college finally opened we had a whole village of student housing not ready for occupancy, and for the first half of 1984 had to put ten student families on the top floor of one of the men's

dormitories.

Fortunately Married Student Village One was ready (more or less) early in December 1983 when the first of our students arrived on a special flight from Fiji. Air Niugini had flown a charter flight for the Fiji Government, to take members of the Fiji Military for peace-keeping service in the Middle East, and to return others of the Fijian force back to Fiji. As the Air Niugini plane returned from Fiji to Port Moresby a number of our prospective students were able to get cheap flights across. That meant they arrived over two months before our official opening. But what a blessing that was to us! They worked with a will making up pre-fabricated library shelving and study desks for the library and classroom, helped to get the campus into at least a degree of order, and were a major factor in helping us be ready for the February 1984 opening.

We had prepared information brochures to give to each of the media entities—TV, radio, the two daily newspapers—and the Government. Despite that, each of the news items that told of our opening contained errors. One newspaper even reported our opening a week before the actual event! A major desire of the media seemed to be to stir up controversy between the College and the University of Papua New Guinea. Fortunately the Vice-Chancellor of the University, Doctor Elton Brash, was helpful and supportive of our plans, and there was little the media could do to initiate the hostility they thought would make good news! In fact, the University, and the Government's Department of Education were supportive throughout the time of my association with the College.

We were able to arrange for Papua New Guinea's Prime Minister, Sir Michael Somare, to officially open the College. Sir Michael had taken a personal interest in our project as the College took shape, often driving through the campus to have a look at the progress being made, and from time to time visiting with Doctor Geoff Gibson (who had trained him as a teacher many years before, and was a personal friend and an advisor in matters to do with education). With Division approval Geoff had built a house on the campus and was one of our early residents in the 'Faculty Village'. Sir Michael took an almost paternal interest in our program, and often visited Geoff, asking how 'our College' was progressing.

The day Pastor Yori Hibo and I were scheduled to meet with Sir Michael to ask him to officially open the College he was confined to his home, because he had sprained an ankle the day

before (playing golf with Ratu Sir Kamasese Mara from Fiji). When Pastor Yori and I went to Sir Michael's office we were informed that he was at home, and all appointments had been cancelled. 'Just wait,' said his Secretary. 'I'll check and see what you should do.' We waited, and soon the Secretary came across to tell us that Sir Michael still wanted to see us, and would be happy for us to visit him at home. We went to the Prime Minister's residence, and after a very friendly visit had Sir Michael's agreement to be the primary guest at our opening, and to perform the opening ceremony by unveiling a plaque, and cutting a ribbon.

The time for the opening of the College finally came. Doctor George Babcock (who had been my fellow student at Andrews University) came to represent the General Conference Education Department. The South Pacific Division was represented by Pastor Keith Parmenter, who had been our Division President through most of the planning and building stage, and Pastor Walter Scragg, the current Division President and Chairman of our College Board, Pastor Ron Taylor the

Division Secretary, Pastor Tom Andrews the Division Treasurer, and Doctor Gerald Clifford, Division Education Director, who had been a constant guide and help. One who could not be present (despite the fact that the bronze plaque that records the opening lists him as being there) was Pastor Lance Butler, who at that time was General Conference Treasurer, and at the last minute was kept away by the pressure of his work. Many other of our church dignitaries, and government and community representatives were also present.

It was a relief when the opening ceremony with all its pomp and formality was over, and we could settle down to the task of running classes and all the other features that make up a college program. In retrospect it is difficult to remember the difficulties of those early days. It is much easier to remember the wonderful staff and students, and to acknowledge the blessings God gave and rejoice in the blessing that the College and its graduates have been to the program of the Gospel.

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## **YEARS OF PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY:**

### **The commencement and growth of community services in Fiji from 1952 onwards.**

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**Rusila  
Beranaliva**



It was one of those lovely tropical mornings when I was travelling by bus from Fulton College to Suva. A cool breeze fanned my face as I admired the lush green foliage on both sides of the road, while above the horizon, white clouds hovered on the top of blue mountain ranges providing a magnificent sight that brought peace to my soul.

Life in the Suva mission station was lonely and boring for me when compared with all the interesting activities at College. Every morning I would sit under a large mango tree overlooking the city, watching big boats and small sailing ships coming in and out of the harbour, as I thought about my friends who were also away for the school holidays.

Oh, how I wished to be with them.

One morning when I was staying with my sister, Elesi, wife of Pastor Saimoni Nauluvula (now deceased), she asked me to help with the housework and cook lunch for my brother-in-law, for she was going out to do some charity work. I was happy to help my dear sister and besides it would give me something to do.

However I was inquisitive about this 'charity' work so when the last plate was placed on the shelf and the floor swept, I ran across the cassava patch to an old garage where some ladies were busy working. Quietly I entered and sat down. I noticed a number of workers' wives, including Elesi, together with Mrs C.S. Adams, an Australian lady and the wife of the



*Mrs Rusila Beranaliva, a graduate of Fulton College, served her people in a variety of positions in Fiji and in Sydney Australia.*

*She taught in the primary school at Fulton College in Tailevu for over 10 years until 1967. She was a receptionist and translator at Fiji Mission at Suvavou from 1968-1972. For the next eleven years she was the mission community welfare leader and director of the centre in Suva. From 1984-1992 she was a government community educator at Suva and Nausori.*

*When she and her husband transferred to Sydney, she became the director of the Greater Sydney Conference Community Centre at Parramatta from 1993-95. Since the beginning of 2001 she has been a bilingual community educator for the Bankstown and Cumberland Health Service.*

*Rusila is married to Filimone K Beranaliva who is a past president of the Fiji Mission and a CPUM departmental director. He pastored the Fijian congregation in Sydney.*

*They have four children, Simeone, Miriama, Salote and Ana.*

*The Beranalivas are now living in retirement in Sydney, NSW*

president of the mission. They were using a hand sewing machine, pins, and scissors as they busily sewed children's clothes and packed them into parcels. My sister was surprised to see me and was happy when I indicated that I had finished the housework.

"What is this charity work?" I asked her. She straight away quoted from Matthew 25:34-40, "...come ye blessed of my father...for I was hungry and you gave me food...I was thirsty and you gave me water...I was naked and you clothed me. Then the righteous will answer, when did I see you hungry and I gave you food... and the King answered 'Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these...you have done it to me.'" She also quoted Matthew 28: 19, 20, "Go therefore and make disciples, ...teaching them all I have said to you."

I gave a little giggle. It didn't mean a thing to me. I did not understand but little did I know that one day, down the track of life, I would be involved in this 'charity work' in my country. This work in the old garage, as far as I know, was the humble beginning of the welfare effort in Fiji. In 1959, twelve Dorcas Welfare Societies joined to form a federation under the leadership of Pastor and Mrs Coates. Mrs Beverly Phal was elected as the first federation president for a term of two years and it was under her able leadership that a new and lively interest was shown in the welfare work in West Fiji. At this time a welfare uniform was adopted; a welfare room was rented in Suva for £12 per month and this rent was raised by contributions from the societies in the federation.

As the years passed many expatriate wives came and went. They did 'charity work' in every possible way. Then in the 1960s came Pastor Barry Crabtree and his wife Norma, who was voted as Federation President at the biennial Welfare Session held in Nagia in 1961. In 1964 there came a new secretary treasurer for Fiji Mis-

sion, Mr Mervyn Blyde with his wife, Olive, who became Secretary of the Welfare Federation. Adi Torika was Assistant President, Mrs Hema, Assistant Secretary, and the Committee Members were Mrs Kamea, Mrs Nakasamai, Mrs Nailaiti and Mrs Rusila Beranaliva. At this session, plans were laid to incorporate welfare rooms under the youth centre being built at Suvavou, to close the room in Suva and to transfer the financial support to the new welfare rooms. The welfare work grew rapidly and its influential role was seen in new areas.

In 1961 the welfare work in Fiji was officially recognised and then organised as one of the church departments under the umbrella of what was then known as the Department of Lay Activities. The three-roomed centre was adapted to the needs of the field with one room used for an office, another for storage of supplies and the third a work room for the sorting of bags of clothing and supplies to be sent to the societies of the federation.

The work of the federation was divided into two sections: work in the welfare room and work of visitation in the field. Office and general work in the welfare room fell very heavily on Mrs Blyde and later on Mrs Lois Bailey so the Fiji Mission provided a secretary for two mornings a week.

Mrs Crabtree reports that "each society in the federation was expected to send in a report of work each month as well as their monthly financial support of the welfare room. In return, bags of clothing and supplies were sent for their use in visitation work. We greatly appreciated consignments of clothing which were sent regularly, mainly from New Zealand. There were scores of letters and requests which needed to be attended to from the 43 societies now in the federation.

"The work in the field was large. The aim was to visit every society each year, but it became impossible

to do this as the work grew so rapidly. The field was divided into seven districts: Suva, Lautoka, Wainibuka, Baravi Coast, Navosa, Cola North and Lau. Each district appointed a leader and a committee and held meetings throughout the year."

In 1969 when the Crabtrees left Fiji, the report was as follows:

"There were 104 Welfare Societies with 2,376 members. 697 of them were in uniform. Joining in the welfare work were 501 Methodists, 196 Catholics, 27 Assemblies of God members, 9 Jehovah Witnesses and 43 Indians, making a total of 776 non-Seventh-day Adventist ladies. That year 139 became baptised members, 97 back-slidden Adventists were brought back into church fellowship and seven non-S.D.A. societies became church companies.

"\$4,118.22 was donated by Dorcas members. They gave 19,221 hours of work and 32,617 articles of clothing as well as 59,552 from New Zealand and helped 16,687 people."<sup>1</sup>

In the 1960s the leadership of the welfare work in Fiji was handed over to national women who have served effectively and efficiently. These ladies were: Naomi Nasausila 1962-1972; Rusila Bera 1973-1983; Marica Matavuso, 1984-1985; Sala Ratulevu 1985-1987; Marica Tokalau 1988-1992; Atelini Lavava 1993-1995; Marica Tokalau 1996-today.

I would like to sincerely thank the expatriate wives for their loyalty and dedication in establishing and nurturing the welfare movement in Fiji for they set the pace and assisted us to continue the good work which has progressed amazingly. The Government of Fiji has registered it as one of the social agencies of the country to whom it can refer people for assistance.

"By 1965 the Mission committee had appointed Naomi Nasausila, as the first full time Welfare Leader for the Fiji Mission. She gave a strong lead in teaching courses in Child training, Nutrition and Cooking, Sewing and Club Management."<sup>1</sup>

She tells a story of the long lasting effect of small kindnesses done. One day on Vanua Levu the Dorcas ladies were visiting homes to care for the clothing needs of the people. While they were sitting sewing and mending, an Indian man came to the door selling egg plants. They noticed that his shorts were torn so they persuaded him to let them mend them.

On returning home his daughter and another Indian lady noticed his mended shorts. He told them what had happened and that the ladies would not take any payment. Immediately the two

women, interested in what had happened, went to find the Dorcas ladies. After learning about the objectives of the society, they both enrolled and as time went on brought other Indians along. As a result five of these women joined the Adventist Church and the grandsons of the old man and their wives and children are baptised members today.<sup>2</sup>

During this time many places were open to the welfare work where Seventh-day Adventist preachers were not accepted. Many lives were touched when the welfare ladies visited and helped the people. Slowly, through interaction with them, the Word of God penetrated so that many have made their decision to keep the Saturday Sabbath and prepare for the second coming of Jesus

The Dorcas ladies visited girls in prison. They taught them crafts and introduced them to the Voice of Prophecy Bible lessons. One young lady, who was sentenced for life, responded to the ladies. She changed from being sullen and unhappy to a pleasant, vibrant Christian. Recognising the genuine change in her life the authorities eventually set her free and asked the Adventist Church to care for her. I had the privilege of having her in my home where she became a part of the family and was baptised. Also the Blydes provided work for her in their home. A young Adventist man became interested in her; they married and had four boys. Now this lovely lady is one of the strong pillars of the welfare movement in her church, which shows what an enormous impact this work has had in changing lives.

When I was called to serve in the welfare work, my mind travelled back to the 1950s when I asked my sister in the old garage, "What is charity work?" At the time I willingly accepted leadership. I understood the words of Jesus in Matthew 25: 34-40 and the Lord's commission in Matthew 28:29,30. The welfare work was always to find new avenues to reach hearts in the community, so our mission for the 1970s was 'To venture into the community'.

Building on existing programs, the Dorcas women set out to develop educational programs to 'better the community's quality of life'. They chose such subjects as sewing, hand crafts, hygiene and sanitation, home improvement, good grooming, home gardening, food and nutrition, how to prepare and cook a balanced meal, how to turn handcrafts into cash, and vegetarian cooking using local foods.

The problem was how to put it all into

practice. Who could implement them and train others to take them efficiently to the community? We needed a building, a facility for training. As we prayed, God opened a big double door right in front of our eyes. At this very time, the Central Publishing house, which was on the same compound, was closing down, and Pastor Filimone Bera, Fiji Mission President, and his committee negotiated for the building to be given to the Dorcas Welfare Society for our Community Education Training Centre. How we praised God!

That was one side of the double door. The other was the need for money to renovate the facilities for the centre and this came from a Japanese Government Aid Grant to Fiji of \$20,000 which was allocated to us. Renovation was completed and we praised the Lord again. The centre was established with a three-fold purpose; firstly to be a training place for our welfare women; secondly to be a training venue for the people of the surrounding areas as the need arose; thirdly, to be a sanctuary for our welfare women where they could seek and find God, be well equipped with the Word of God and be spiritually filled before going out to the community. This centre and these programs are continuing to open doors to new areas for God's work.

God certainly works in mysterious ways even using natural disasters to further His cause. Some years ago two of our senior pastors were chased from the island of Kadavu for the people did not

wish to accept our message there. A few years later cyclone Meli hit the Kadavu Group. It was the worst cyclone that Fiji had ever experienced and Kadavu was devastated. The government referred this problem to the Seventh-day Adventist Church to lead the nation in physically helping as well as rebuilding the morale of the people, and directed the whole nation to send all of their gifts and donations to the S.D.A. Headquarters. A group of twenty Adventist men and women sailed there in the mission boat to distribute basic needs and to assist in any way possible to bring comfort and spiritual blessing to the people at such a trying time. The people of Kadavu had no choice but to accept the Adventists. They were really grateful for what the church did for them and since then they have accepted our message and our ministers on the island. Now the Seventh-day Adventist work is thriving there.

Today the Seventh-day Adventist membership in Fiji is 20,000 and there are 6,000 Dorcas Welfare members. As the work continues to grow, we believe wholeheartedly that the Lord will continue to bless. Let us always pray for God to use the opening wedge of welfare to open doors that people may learn the truth about Him and prepare their lives to meet the Lord when He comes.

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- <sup>1</sup> Facsimile to David Hay from Norma Crabtree, 29 Jan 2001. Letter from Olive Blyde, 29 Mar 2001.
- <sup>2</sup> Miss Naomi, *AR*, *Operation Mending*, 15 Apr 1968, p 6.

## **BREAKING NEW GROUND:**

**the entrance of the Adventists into Papua New Guinea.**

**—Patience and perseverance. Overcoming the “spheres of influence” policy to establish the first mission station at Bisiatabu, 1908-1914.**

**Alfred G  
Chapman**



### Efforts to Establish a Base The First Personnel

On June 1, 1908, Pastor S. W. Carr who had been in charge of the Buresala Training School in Fiji, left Sydney on the *Moresby*.<sup>1</sup> He was to spend three weeks travelling to Port Moresby via Brisbane, Solomon Islands, Woodlark Islands and Samarai arriving at noon on Friday, June 13. With him went Mrs Carr and Bennie

Tavodi, a Fijian who, after some education at Buresala had had six months of special training in Australia. Mrs Carr was the twelfth European lady in Port Moresby when they arrived. The decision to begin Mission work in Papua had been taken in 1907, enabling the request to be made to S. W. Carr to leave Fiji to lead out in the enterprise. Financial arrangements were set out in

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*He was the principal of Bautama in Papua, 1951-55, CSUM College (Kabiufa) in the Eastern Highlands 1956-57, Belepa Central School in the Papuan Gulf, 1958-61, and a teacher at Kabiufa from 1968.*

*Alfred's wife Betty taught Home Economics at the CSUM College.*

*The Chapmans had three children, Kenneth, Margaret and Delys.*

*Alfred passed to his rest on 18 April 1983.*

*This article (used by permission) is an excerpt from his thesis entitled: Seventh-day Adventist Mission Education in Papua New Guinea, 1908-1914, and was submitted as part of the MA requirements for a degree in history at the University of Queensland, Australia, in December 1983. (Other excerpts will be published in later Journals.)*

*His wife Betty lives in Cooranbong, NSW.*

Minutes of the Australasian Union Conference Session Meeting held on September 13, 1908 by which the Sabbath School donations in 1909 for the second quarter Special Project were to go towards a boat for the New Guinea Mission and the Sabbath School donations for the fourth quarter were to go to the New Guinea Mission.<sup>2</sup> Earlier, the Australasian Union Conference Executive Committee had allocated the funds necessary to support the New Guinea Mission.<sup>3</sup>

### The Search for a Site

When Pastor Carr had found accommodation in Port Moresby, he began to look about for a location where he could establish a mission station. He realised the desirability of locating where he would not be in direct conflict with the London Missionary Society which was on the south coast. When he came in contact with the manager of the Itikinumu Plantation, Mr Greene, and was invited by him to go inland to Sogeri, he thought he should follow that lead.<sup>4</sup> On horses loaned to them, they made their journey which was slowed up by the difficulties of crossing the Laloki River swollen by rain. Pastor Carr, his wife and Bennie were made welcome at Itikinumu from which as a base, they visited surrounding villages. At last they were cheered when a group of villagers from a few miles away indicated that they would like to have a mission in their village. This was what the missionaries had been waiting for so they went gladly to explore the possibilities. After explaining their purpose in establishing a mission, the missionaries waited while the Papuans discussed the matter, finally indicating their desire to have the mission set up and promising to provide the necessary land.

### The Struggle for Land

On returning to Port Moresby, Pastor Carr made application to the Administration for lease of the land which would need to be bought from the Papuans by the Administration. This application was made

by Pastor Carr in his own name. In passing this on to be dealt with in Melbourne by the Australian Government, Staniforth Smith, Commissioner of Lands stated:

...an application from Mr S. W. Carr for a lease of 150 acres of land in the Sogeri district about twenty miles from Port Moresby. The applicant, who is a Seventh Day Adventist [sic], desires the land for agricultural and pastoral uses, and for school and general mission purposes.

As this involves a matter of policy the Land Board has made no recommendation regarding the application.<sup>5</sup>

### The Sphere of Influence -

#### a. Seventh-day Adventist Understanding

So began what the Lieutenant-Governor, J. H. P. Murray was to call "the apparently interminable correspondence on the subject of 'Spheres of Influence'."<sup>6</sup> A considerable portion of this correspondence arose from Seventh-day Adventist applications for land which they wanted for school and general mission purposes. It may be worthwhile to notice first a misapprehension as to what was involved in the 'Spheres of Influence'. It seems clear from the correspondence on the part of the Seventh-day Adventists that they thought there was a law which prohibited the purchase of land by one mission in the territory or sphere of another mission. Thus in a memorandum to the Prime Minister, the Minister for Home Affairs sought clarification of a point raised in a letter to him from a Seventh-day Adventist adherent who had heard of the difficulties the Seventh-day Adventists were having in obtaining land for mission purposes in Papua.<sup>7</sup> This letter stating the difficulty continues:

Have you got access to the by-law or regulations under which these impediments are placed in the way of freedom of operations as compared to the encouragement extended to the three favoured organisations mentioned.

The same viewpoint is taken by the Secretary of the Adventist Board of Missions when writing to the Minis-

ter in charge of External Territories, he states:

With few exceptions, the approaches that we have made to the authorities in Papua for leasehold land have met with a refusal, the grounds being that they were unable to grant us leases of any kind because of an ordinance that came into existence some years before during the tenure of office of Sir William McGregor, when the Territory of Papua had been divided among the three mission bodies who were then operating in New Guinea.<sup>8</sup>

Again in the same letter we have:

It is very difficult for us, as mere laymen, to understand why in the view of such a definite statement [*clause 116*] right in our Federal Constitution, that such an ordinance could have been passed restricting the work of any mission body...The reason for this application which we are making to you now, to have this ordinance repealed.<sup>9</sup>

Again, G. F. Jones, missionary in Papua, wrote as follows:

There is another obstacle there which I want to tell you about. Papua has been divided up amongst the favourite denominations, and the garments were all parted before we got there... They had divided it from the coast where most of the natives are, right up to the tops of the mountain peaks, although they are not working it all... It is a most unjust law to the natives...<sup>10</sup>

### **b. Government Understanding**

So there was on the part of Seventh-day Adventists a long held belief that it was a matter of law, that an ordinance, regulation or bylaw existed under which the government excluded all save three or four missions from Papua. The government disclaimed any such ordinance or law, holding the view that the Mission Societies which had made the 'Comity Agreement' of June, 1890, had made a mutually acceptable working arrangement. This had been strengthened as a means of ensuring law and order by the policy adopted by the Papuan Government and approved in 1896 by the Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr Chamberlain):

that land should be granted to only one mission in any village.<sup>11</sup>

This policy was endorsed by the Minister (the Honorable Alfred Deakin) in July, 1908.<sup>12</sup> The position of the Commonwealth Government regarding spheres of influence was expressed in a memorandum in these words:

...the Government has never *formally* accepted the arrangement, though acting upon the principle of the system from motives of convenience. It has always been considered by this Department that it would be most undesirable to have competition between missions or to have missionaries teaching different faiths to the same natives<sup>13</sup>

The position seems to have been that the Commonwealth Government, while it did not wish to have competition between missions, was not willing to bring in an ordinance to this effect but relied instead on a ministerial directive limiting the right of missions to obtain leasehold land from which to carry on their activities.

### **Preliminaries to a Decision on the Application**

We thus find that in answer to Staniforth Smith's covering letter sent with Carr's application for 150 acres of land in the Sogeri District, the statement:

I presume no objection to Carr as settler nor to his voluntary efforts to improve natives by teaching but would strongly deprecate any Government encouragement, or even recognition of establishment of new mission as creating undesirable precedent.<sup>14</sup>

There might be no law formally dividing Papua into spheres of influence and giving legal force to a private arrangement between missions, but the private arrangement on the other hand was in the eyes of the Commonwealth Government not just a pious wish. It was a tool which the Government felt it could use and was determined to use to prevent the possibility of denominational conflict entering the Papuan scene.

More than this, it was a tool by which undesirable missions, or missions holding views which conflicted with the more generally accepted beliefs of society could be excluded<sup>15</sup> This emerges clearly from correspondence in which the Administration in Port Moresby is requested to:

write officially, stating that before deciding his application fuller particulars are required as to the form of religious teaching which it is proposed to impart to the natives. Whether the teaching will include the observance of the sabbath, the avoidance of work on Saturdays and also the avoidance of all medicines and medical attention.

This request was complied with and in due course S. W. Carr wrote to explain the Seventh-day Adventist position on the issues raised.<sup>16</sup> Seventh-day Adventists believe that all should be taught to observe the Sabbath, which observance does include the avoidance of work on Saturdays except such as may be necessary to *do good on the Sabbath day* by caring for the sick and assisting others in emergencies. Seventh-day Adventist attitudes to medicines and medical attention can be learned from the institutions they have operated, such as the Battle Creek Sanitarium in Michigan, United States of America; the Sydney Sanitarium and Hospital recently opened in Wahroonga, New South Wales and

The Carr family: Arthur, Edith, Ivy, Septimus



the College of Medical Evangelists at Loma Linda, California. At these institutions nurses were trained, patients were treated, medicines and medical help were administered.

### Efforts to Continue the Comity Agreement

Some idea of the pressure on the Government to rigidly enforce the 'Comity Agreement' may be obtained by study of a letter from the London Missionary Society, which had begun work in Papua over thirty years earlier and which had been allocated the section around Port Moresby where Carr's application sought land and opportunity to begin mission work.<sup>17</sup> In it the following points are made:

1. That the London Missionary Society is endeavouring to extend its work towards the inland area of Papua.
2. That Seventh-day Adventist beliefs are disruptive in nature.
3. That religious liberty is generally desirable but that because of the 'infantile condition of primitive races' restrictions are necessary in Papua.

With regard to the first point raised it seems fair to comment that while the London Missionary Society had an extensive work in its sphere of operations, it did not by any means cover the whole. The land particularly in question was in the vicinity of Port Moresby, being about thirty miles inland at Bisiatabu, and to indicate plans to extend inland by way of the Kemp Welch River considerably increased the distance, and the probable delay in arriving. At the time there were established rubber plantations near Bisiatabu and a recognised track between Sogeri nearby and Port Moresby.

Certain Seventh-day Adventist beliefs are different from those held by the majority of Christians, though there is a large body of common belief. This is not the place to enter the field of

doctrinal discussion but historically, when a small group has held distinctive beliefs they have frequently been labelled disruptive as the forbears of the London Missionary Society themselves might testify. To set up and enforce the spheres of activity for the missions was to ensure that the very conflict it

was designed to prevent in the short term would arise in severe form in the long run.

The view that holds the primitive races to be 'infantile' is not today as popular as it was in the time it was expressed, but even taking for granted that it is true it was not necessary to draw the conclusion that restriction of religious liberty was the best answer to the 'infantile condition of primitive races'. It is arguable that a sounder approach would have been for all to act in charity, preaching the message which they felt it their responsibility to bring, taking care not to provoke sectarian strife, and allowing the Papuans to develop through the making of a choice in an atmosphere of understanding.

Be this as it may, the stage was set for the protracted efforts on the part of the Seventh-day Adventists to find a foothold for mission work in Papua and later to extend their operations to wherever they could find people who were willing to listen to them. The no less protracted efforts of the London Missionary Society and to a lesser extent the Anglican Mission, to protect their rights as holders of spheres of exclusive mission activity began also. These efforts were bound to conflict, and the conflict often centred on the leasing of land. Thus the Government was drawn into the position of having to rule on whether or not a mission could operate in the Territory and it did this through its power to grant or withhold lease of land.

### The Lease Granted

This particular application by S. W Carr for the lease of land in the Sogeri district "for agricultural and pastoral uses, and for school and general mission purposes", was finally granted.<sup>18</sup> Advice was sent from Australia that at that stage no question of policy was involved. The application was of an individual settler for a piece of land and this was to be granted on ordinary conditions. There was

no recognition of a mission body or its activities. Policy matters would only arise should “an application be made for any purpose in the spheres of operation of existing missions.” It was clearly stated that “these spheres must be respected”

### The Transfer of the Lease

The matter rested thus for the next few months until it was raised in a rather more acute form by an application by Carr for a transfer of the lease from himself to the Australasian Conference Association Limited of New South Wales.<sup>19</sup> Why should this be? What was involved? There was the possibility that an effort was being made to circumvent the ‘Comity Agreement’ and the Government policies in relation to it by having Carr, a private settler, apply as a dummy for the Seventh-day Adventist Mission. Was this in fact done? While superficially this could well appear to be the case, it is not borne out by the following points. On the original application it was clearly stated that the land was required for “agricultural and pastoral uses and for school and general mission purposes.” The land application was not treated in the first place as a regular, private lease.<sup>20</sup> It was recognized as involving a matter of policy. This viewpoint was later changed and it was granted as not involving a question of policy.<sup>21</sup> Had Carr desired to use the dummy approach he could have continued without his further application. It was quite in order for him to seek “to improve natives by teaching” which would have allowed him to work as a missionary, though under this approach the Administration would not have recognised the Seventh-day Adventist organisation behind him.

The explanation given by Carr for acting as he did was that when the application was made the Australasian Conference Association Limited was not yet incorporated. This meant that the Seventh-day Adventist organisation had no legal body to hold land in Papua at that time. Land in Australia could be held by the various Conferences of Seventh-day Adventists which had been set up from 1886 onwards, or by Associations formed for specific purposes. The Australasian Conference Association Limited was in the process of formation at about the time that Carr came to Papua and this was to be the general association to hold land and conduct business for the denomination so the land in Papua was to be taken up privately until the Australasian Conference Association Limited was incorporated. Now that this had been done it was to take over the role for which it was formed, and which it has since filled.

An early result of this application for transfer was to clarify the extent of existing mission activity. Although the lease was within the London

Missionary Society sphere of influence there was said to be no London Missionary Society activity in that particular district. Arising from this it was considered in Port Moresby Administration circles that perhaps there was no policy involvement. It is even noted that “it may be considered that the position is no different from what it was when Mr Groom wrote his memorandum” [of November 6, 1909, noted above].<sup>22</sup> The Minister, however, sought more details of the activities so far carried forward by Carr on the lease, as well as information on the intentions of the Australasian Conference Association concerning the use they proposed to make of the land, and of their general intentions regarding mission work in Papua.<sup>23</sup> The relevance of the first of these details is undoubted as if the improvement conditions of a lease were fulfilled, the lease could be transferred without question, but if the lease was not improved a transfer could be made only subject to the approval of the Lieutenant-Governor. The provision for transfer of an improved lease, became important at a later stage in the expansion of the Seventh-day Adventist Mission and tended to nullify the control of mission activity which could be effected by the Administration control of land. Advice was forwarded to the Minister that ten acres had been cleared of heavy timber, and rubber, fruit trees and vegetables planted while two or more houses had been built. Two European families—Mr and Mrs Carr, and Mr and Mrs Smith and one or more Fijian teachers were in residence.<sup>24</sup> There does not appear to have been any effort at the time to explain what the Australasian Conference Association had in mind for the lease should it be transferred to them, or to outline their general approach in mission activity as they proposed to carry it forward in Papua. This may have been due to the fact that Mr and Mrs Carr signified an intention to call on the Minister while they were in Australia. This visit, however, was never made.

### Efforts to Achieve the Transfer

A more general approach to appraising the authorities concerning Seventh-day Adventist mission activities with the hope of thus obtaining favourable consideration is shown by the testimonials forwarded to the Minister. From Tonga came two. One commented on the law abiding character of the Seventh-day Adventist Mission and its people, and the strong educational work they carried forward, which was greatly appreciated by the Tongan Government.<sup>25</sup> The second, while noting these points added that Seventh-day Adventists “never attempted to interfere with the Native policy adopted by the British Government.” In elaborating on the educational work of the Seventh-day Adventists in Tonga, the British

Agent states that the “large majority of the younger generation of natives who speak English were taught English in your schools”.<sup>26</sup> From Samoa came a statement which praised the benefits of the Sanitarium established by the Seventh-day Adventists. These should have served to acquaint the Commonwealth with the type of activity that was carried forward where opportunity existed.<sup>27</sup>

In June, 1911, a party of Federal Parliamentarians visited Papua and one of them wrote concerning the visit made to the Seventh-day Adventist mission at Bisiatabu. Carr explained his failure to visit the minister as being due to doubt whether he would be received. The comment on the mission at Bisiatabu is: “The work accomplished is very gratifying.”<sup>28</sup> From this point an interest in the lease transfer was revived and continued until the transfer was authorised in February, 1914.

Among the high points in the intervening period are the statement (already noted above) by Carr as to why the lease application had not been originally made by the Australasian Conference Association Limited and the statement by Carr concerning development as at May 2, 1912. Between twenty and twenty-five acres had then been cleared and planted to rubber, pineapples, oranges, lemons, limes and bananas. From ten to fifteen young men were signed on as employees with some other casual labourers. The conditions of work were as set out in the regulations. In addition, instruction was given to the workers in reading, writing, singing, Bible and first aid. Medical work was carried out on the station, and treatment of snakebite, malaria and New Guinea sores is noted. Special attention was given to agricultural handicrafts.<sup>29</sup>

An important minute is that of October 25, 1913, which notes that the “Australasian Conference Association Limited does not accept the ‘spheres’ as a condition of the lease.”<sup>30</sup> From the Seventh-day Adventist viewpoint little could have been more crippling than for them to have agreed to recognise that the Comity Agreement was a valid arrangement to be binding on them. Their viewpoint since the early 1850’s is that they have a message to preach “to every nation and kindred and tongue and people.” Had they been willing to accept a compromise under which they were allowed a limited area in the sphere of the London Missionary Society they would have found themselves hamstrung, with no honourable way to carry out what they envisaged as their mission. There must have been considerable pressure to do so, though details are not clear.

### The Transfer Granted

The slow movement of the application through the channels, the numerous requests for

1 further single items of information must have been most exasperating to Carr and the Seventh-day Adventists generally. The Lieutenant-Governor on September 3, 1913, December 5, 1913, and finally by urgent telegram of February 18, 1914, sought news of decision. It must have given some satisfaction to the official to be able to reply to his last request by telegram on February 19, 1914 “Re Reverend Carr wrote you sixth Minister approved transfer.” And indeed, it had been decided on February 5, 1914. Consent had been granted on the deposit of a Memorandum and the Articles of Association of the Australasian Conference Association Limited.<sup>31</sup>

### References

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- <sup>3</sup> *Australasian Union Conference Executive Committee Minutes*, 30 Jun 1908, p.68.
- <sup>4</sup> Carr, S. W. *AR*, 10 Nov 1958, p.2.
- <sup>5</sup> *CRS A/14/2024*. 5 Mar 1909.
- <sup>6</sup> *CRS A 518, Item A923/1* 30 Aug 1933. Murray to Prime Minister.
- <sup>7</sup> *CRS A 518, Item A923/1*. Part I, 25 Aug 1930.
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- <sup>9</sup> *ibid.* p.6.
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- <sup>11</sup> *CRS A 518, Item A923/1*. Part I. p.2. 1 Apr 1927.
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- <sup>14</sup> *CRS A/14/2924*. Atlee Hunt, 2 Apr 1909.
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- <sup>19</sup> *ibid.* S. Smith to Minister of State for External Affairs. 7 Aug 1910.
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- <sup>22</sup> *CRS A/14/2924*. Hunt memo 10/4871. 29 Aug, 1910.
- <sup>23</sup> *ibid.* Minister. 5 Sep, 1910.
- <sup>24</sup> *CRS A/14/2924*. Smith to Minister. 15 Oct, 1910.
- <sup>25</sup> *ibid.* T. Roberts, Agent/Premier and Auditor General. Tonga. 13 Sep 1909.
- <sup>26</sup> *ibid.* Hamilton Hunter, British Agent, Tonga. 15 Sep 1909.
- <sup>27</sup> *CRS, op. cit.* Thomas Trood, Agent/British Vice Consul. 10 Sep 1909.
- <sup>28</sup> *ibid.* Foenando, 11 Nov 1911.
- <sup>29</sup> *ibid.* Carr, 30 Apr 1912.
- <sup>30</sup> *CRS, op. cit.* 25 Oct 1913.
- <sup>31</sup> *ibid.*

*Our mission...is Crystal clear. Up and down the nations, and throughout the cities and villages of earth, wherever men are found, we must speed—despite unprecedented, harassing conditions—bearing God’s final overtures of grace. What a privilege.*

LeRoy Edwin Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, (R & H Pub Assn, Washington DC, 1971) p 640.



## A NATIONAL EXPATRIATE OF NOTE

**Tavita Niu of Samoa.**

**Beyond hostility and heartache, the Adventist Message was established in an isolated Pacific country.**

### David E Hay



*David Hay BA, Avondale College, began his island service in 1958 in Western Samoa as principal of the Apia Central School. From 1964-65 he was the district director on Savaii. He became president of Samoa Mission, 1966-74, of Tonga, 1975, of the WPUM, 1975-80, the Cook Islands, 1981-87, and Tonga & Niue, 1988-90. He was secretary of the CPUM from 1991-93 and president from 1994-95, & in '96, president of Kiribati & Nauru Mission.*

*While in Samoa his wife Fay taught practical subjects to the wives of those attending the Vailoa Lay Training School.*

*They had two children, Sandra and Allen*

*After his wife's death in 1990, he married Cecily Leach, Director of Primary Teacher Education at Fulton College, in 1994.*

*He authored a book on Samoa, The Isles No Longer Wait.*

*The Hays retired to Hamlyn Terrace, NSW.*

Few South Seas islanders have achieved the distinction attained by Samoan expatriate, Tavita Niu (1921-1986). He was a student of the Vailoa Training School in Samoa in the early 1940s. In 1949 he became the second Pacific islander to permanently establish the Seventh-day Adventist church in another Pacific country. To enter the isolated atolls of the Ellice Islands in 1946 was a very difficult venture. Resolutely he established his base and despite formidable opposition to his presence, nurtured an interest in Bible truth among a few of the islanders. His was a noteworthy accomplishment. It entitles him to a place of honour among Adventist missionaries who through the years and in many parts of the world, have extended the frontiers of biblical understanding.

The Ellice Islands, comprising five coral atolls and four reef islands, lie between five to eleven degrees south of the equator in the Central Pacific. They were renamed Tuvalu, meaning "eight standing together"—referring to the eight permanently inhabited islands of the group. The country gained its independence from Britain and membership in the Commonwealth of Nations on 1 October 1978. The British monarch became the Head of State and was represented by a Tuvaluan governor-general. The prime minister presided over a cabinet responsible to an elected parliament of one-chamber.<sup>2</sup> Each atoll elected its own island council and was responsible for its own affairs.

The country's colonial history commenced in 1892 when Britain

linked its new territory to the Gilbert Islands lying to the north, to form a union known as the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Protectorate.<sup>1</sup> Headquarters were established first on the island of Abemama, later on Ocean Island and finally on the island of Tarawa. District Officers were appointed to administer strategic areas, with one located on the island of Funafuti to care for the Ellice Islands which had a Polynesian population of approximately 3000. (3226 in 1895)<sup>3</sup>

Christianity had arrived thirty years earlier. From 1861 Polynesian nationals of the London Missionary Society (LMS) successfully evangelized the people. Elekana from Manihiki Island in the Cook Islands had storm-drifted to the southern island of Nukulaelae. Four years later on completion of his missionary course at the Malua Training School in Western Samoa, he went to live on the island of Nukefetau. At the same time, Matatia arrived on Funafuti and Ioane went to Nukulaelae. Both were Samoans. Some months later an additional two Samoan couples joined the others: Kerisome went to Nui Island and Peni to Vaitupu. Finding both culture and language similar to their own, the Samoans prospered in their missionary endeavours. It is of interest that before long they exercised considerable influence over their parishioners. Commenting on this unique development in Ellice society a Tuvaluan writing on 'The Old Order' states:

The Samoan pastors also introduced their own life style and even made codes of laws to re-

place the traditional ones of our society. In trying to enforce their codes they became active participants in the management of the people's welfare. They succeeded in putting the people under their complete and dominating influence. Whatever custom was considered unsuitable by the pastors was abrogated. This practice finally destroyed much of the wealth of the culture and traditions that were once the social machinery of our ancestors lives. The pastors, besides being the new symbols of authority, used to threaten the people with their divine power to kill anyone who might dare go against them. The former fear of the wrath of the unknowable for disobeying any chiefly authority was continued with the pastors' presumed power to cause death to anybody who revolted against their new code of laws. This fear assured the people's obedience to their new religious leaders who, instead of educating them to fear God, educated them to fear their commands. They made themselves little kings in the islands of Tuvalu.<sup>4</sup>

At a later time when Roman Catholic missionaries entered several islands in the Gilberts, sectarian rivalry arose. Now and again tempers flared and violence broke out. Desirous of curbing hostile acts and maintaining peace, the colony's administering authority enacted a 'Closed Districts Ordinance' on the 8th of December, 1936.<sup>A</sup> Sections 3 and 4 gave the high commissioner authority to "declare any island or part of an island to be a closed district", thus effectively excluding all people entering there unless they were; "(a) Natives of the closed district; (b) Government officers or persons acting under the orders of the high commissioner in the course of their duty; (c) Licences."

Within a few months two Gilbertese islands—Arorae and Tamana—were declared closed. Four and a half years later in July 1941, on the recommendation of the colony administration, Assistant Western Pacific High Commissioner H Vaskess proclaimed eight of the nine Ellice Islands as a closed district.<sup>A</sup> It would seem that such a move pleased the established church and its Samoan pastors. As there were no adherents of a different religious persuasion living on any of the islands, and as the ordinance kept new religions out, the LMS would maintain undisputed control. However, there were some people who showed an interest in Adventism on the island of Funafuti. There was another dimension to this situation, one which the colonial administration eventually came to recognize as highly significant and needful; the recognition of the people's right to choose

their own religion.

Progress in establishing the Adventist Church in South Pacific countries since the first voyage of the Pitcairn in 1891 had been both rapid and impressive. Only three unentered countries remained. During the mid-1940s the Australasian Division approved entry into two of them. On 21 September 1945, John T Howse, who had been a missionary in Samoa and the Solomon Islands was appointed director of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Mission.<sup>5</sup>

One year earlier, Samuelu Vailopa's attempt to share Adventism with others on his wife's island of Nui had met with stiff resistance from local authorities. In 1931 he had sailed from his home island of Vaitupu for Samoa on the LMS ship *John Williams*. After attending the LMS preparatory school at Lelumoega for a year, he entered the Adventist Training School at Vailoa at Saluafatu Bay where he was baptised. He desired to witness among his people. When the opportunity arose he returned to Tuvalu and opened a school on Nui. The venture was short-lived and Samuela left for work on Ocean Island in the Gilberts.

Around this time, Raimund Reye, a well-known missionary serving in Samoa, suggested a helpful plan for entering the Ellice Islands. He recommended to the church leaders in Sydney that an official approach be made to the Western Pacific High Commission for Adventists to commence work in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony and that Tavita Niu a Vailoa Training School graduate and pastor-teacher, to proceed to Funafuti as a paid national worker. As Tavita's father, Niu, an Ellice Islander from Nukulaelae had planned to return home once more, to transfer land to members of his family, it would be advantageous for Tavita to travel there at this time.

Reye's innovative plan was approved and on 4 April 1946 S V Stratford, the Division Secretary wrote to Henry E Maude, Acting Resident Commissioner of the Gilbert and Ellice Island Colony requesting information on "the best procedure to follow" in commencing church operations there.<sup>6,7</sup> Replying from the commission's headquarters in Suva where he was working, Maude, after consulting with the high commissioner, informed Stratford of the government's approval of the residence of one or more missionaries in the colony. Such approval, he said, would include compliance with section 21 of the 1917 Ordinance and the 1927 Passports law. He also stated that "the entire Ellice group with the exception of Nanumea island", had been proclaimed a Closed

Tavita Niu



District and no missionary would be permitted to land there without a permit issued by the resident commissioner. The church's mission vessel, however, would be free to move about the colony provided it entered at a recognized port of entry and complied with the usual formalities.<sup>8</sup>

### Entry Into the Ellice Islands

Tavita Niu was well prepared for national expatriate service. During the 1935 year-end holidays, Lokeni Lefitu, a Samoan-Niuean student had aroused his interest in eschatology being taught at the Vailoa Training School. A few months later on 5 May at fourteen years of age, he left home and entered the school.<sup>10</sup> During his stay of almost seven years he proved to be a keen student of the Word and was baptised.<sup>9</sup> He graduated in 1942 and married Fetu.<sup>10</sup> After serving the church as minister-teacher at the school, and in Vailele, an outer suburb of Apia, Tavita, Fetu and baby son Tautasi, sailed for Suva on the *S.S. Matua* in January 1946, on their way to the Ellice Islands.<sup>11</sup>

Surprisingly, opposition to Adventists entering there arose quickly. Within days of Tavita sailing from the shores of Samoa protests were being made. On board ship, Tavita fell into conversation with an LMS missionary on his way to England for furlough. They naturally focused on items of common interest. Before long it became clear that Tavita was headed for the Ellice Islands—a Closed District! Once the ship berthed at Suva, the missionary, armed with this information, lost no time in contacting officials of the Western Pacific High Commission. Reminding them about the Closed Districts Ordinance he asked that Tavita and family be denied entrance there.<sup>11</sup>

On the 29th of January, the secretary of the General Assembly of the Samoan Church (LMS) wrote to the Western Pacific High Commissioner protesting about Adventist plans to enter the Ellice Islands. He stated that the church (SDA) had appointed a white person to work there and had also sent an Ellice Islander on the *Matua*, in January to prepare the way for him. "Our protest", he said, "is not in the spirit of church rivalry, but because we believe that the present homogeneity of the small and scattered islands of the Ellice group

will be unhappily and unnecessarily disturbed."<sup>12</sup>

On becoming aware of the SDA request to enter the Ellice Islands, the District Officer at Funafuti sent a telegram to the resident Commissioner at Tarawa. He said, "It would be unfortunate if present religious unity group is disturbed and recommend district remain closed to other mission."<sup>13</sup>

These exchanges may have had some effect in delaying Tavita's outward travel. It was months later, in mid-August, before the Acting Resident Commissioner in Tarawa advised the District Officer (D.O.) in Funafuti on permit procedures. He stated: "Permits should bear the usual endorsement prohibiting propaganda likely to cause breach of the peace...I am suggesting to the High Commissioner that the permits should be issued on arrival of the parties in the colony".<sup>14</sup> In October he was finally given permission to travel. Tavita, however, had profited from his prolonged stay in Suva. He had not only obtained printing experience in the church's *Rarama Press* at Suva, but also improved his teaching ability.

Providentially, Tavita's father Niu, had set out earlier in 1946 for the Ellice Islands. But on this second visit unforeseen circumstances kept him in Fiji for some time, so he was still there when Tavita arrived. In the 1930s he had arrived in Samoa from his home island of Nukulaelae and had married Taio, a Samoan lass from the village of Afega, ten kilometres west along the coast from Apia. After embracing the Adventist faith through the efforts of both Thomas Howse and Raimund Reye, they were baptized by the latter in 1935.<sup>15,16,17</sup>

After an uneventful week's journey from Suva on the government cargo carrier *Awahow* in October the missionary party came to Funafuti, the administrative centre for the Ellice Islands.<sup>17</sup> They contacted relatives who lived near the village of Vailele. Apete welcomed them. (Tealofaga, married to Apete, was either a sister or niece of Niu). To his surprise, Tavita found six members of the extended family interested in the Adventist message—a situation traceable to Niu's earlier contacts.<sup>11,18</sup> Encouraged by this discovery, Tavita with gratitude in his heart for God's leading, commenced family worship and visits to nearby homes.

After only two weeks on Funafuti, Niu accompanied by Tavita and his family sailed for the southern island of Nukulaelae to meet other members of the family. However, Niu's stay on his home island was brief for he returned to Funafuti on the next boat to arrange for the allocation

of his lands among family members.<sup>17</sup> The transfers proceeded without objection and were officially registered by Niu who felt opposition to Tavita's stay on the island would lessen because Tavita was now a landowner. Later events, however, indicate Niu's action failed to exert any significant influence on the people's attitude towards him.

The arrival and subsequent activities of Niu and Tavita had not passed unnoticed by the people on the island. Before long they realized father and son were attempting to establish a new religion, especially when they observed some of Tealofaga's family keeping the seventh-day Sabbath. Angered by the prospect of religious division with its resultant social disharmony, they agreed together on the 8 November, 1946, to permit only the LMS mission on the island. No other mission would be welcome.<sup>19</sup>

On Nukulaelae Tavita built a family home of local materials and visited the people, endeavouring to create an interest in the Adventist Message. Even though he toiled tirelessly progress was minimal. The people were resolutely opposed to the introduction of a different religion. Some months later, after exhausting all avenues of approach to the people, he set out alone, in June 1947 to join Niu and his extended family on Funafuti, hoping to make a more successful impact there. But his task was made much more difficult by the people's agreement allowing only the LMS church on the island.

A few days before Tavita's return to Funafuti the Adventist Church's superintendent for the Colony, John Howse, had arrived there on his first visit. The newly built 65 foot boat, *Fetu Ao*, with its Fijian crew had sailed into the lagoon on June 1 on its way north to Tarawa in the Gilbert Islands.<sup>20</sup>

Howse had been kept busy during his one day stay. He had inspected a newly constructed minister's house on Apete's land and expressed appreciation for a task well-done. Meeting with a group of fifteen islanders he had listened attentively to their request for a teacher and a school<sup>20</sup> but had made no promises. Spending time with Niu's relatives he had encouraged them to grow in their understanding of the Word. In talks with some of the older residents he had been surprised to discover some expressing ignorance of the Closed Door Ordinance preventing his stay there as well as the conducting of religious services.<sup>21</sup> It is possible that these folk did not see Howse's stay as contravening the island's November 8, 1946 one-mission agreement for he was not staying to set up a new religion: he was only passing through.

Their position, probably, was one of cultural hospitality.

After completing visits with government officials in Tarawa, and signing on Samasoni, an experienced seaman from Nukulaelae, as boatswain, Howse returned to Funafuti, arriving there on June 25.<sup>20</sup> Here Niu joined him on his way home to be with his family in Western Samoa.

Before departing for Suva the next day, Howse was informed by the acting D.O. that his request to station a mission representative on the island to care for the mission adherents was not permitted under the provisions of the Closed Districts Ordinance of 1936. Also he was made aware of the November 8 agreement forbidding the establishment of any other mission on the island.<sup>19</sup>

On the journey south the boat called at Nukulaelae. Here Howse and Niu visited Fetu and son Tautasi.<sup>20</sup> Although the November 8 Funafuti agreement would make the establishing of the Seventh-day Adventist Mission difficult indeed, both visitors agreed that Fetu and Tautasi should join Tavita there and permission should now be sought for the family's permanent stay on the island.

On Funafuti at this time Tavita organized regular Sabbath School meetings in the new house on Apete's land with between twenty to thirty people in attendance. Feeling these meetings contravened the island's one-mission-only policy, the people angrily demanded their discontinuance. When the acting D.O., however, informed the island's magistrate that legal action against those claiming to be Seventh-day Adventists was out of the question because they were all Ellice Islanders the people reacted with dismay.<sup>19</sup> Frustrated in their attempts to stop the new mission, but still determined to fight on, they pondered their next move.

Anxious to avoid sectarian strife the acting D.O. suggested a course of action to his superiors in Tarawa. In view of the attitude of the Funafuti people he wanted the Seventh-day Adventist Mission to be asked to confine its activities entirely to the islands where they were permitted to enter. In support of his recommendation he cited the action of the Sacred Heart Mission in honoring the spirit of the Closed Districts Ordinance.<sup>19</sup> The government replied two months later stating that if the D.O. ascertained that the people did not wish to have a new mission amongst them, then the Seventh-day Adventist mission should be informed.

Within a few weeks two meetings were held to

consider the people's views on the arrival of the new mission. As the July 21 gathering revealed that definite views had not been formulated, and that the people present were not truly representative of the community the acting D.O. suggested another meeting be called and a secret ballot be taken. Subsequently the island's magistrate requested a ballot and August 11 was agreed on. In communicating events to the secretary to the government, the acting D.O. concluded his remarks by saying that a new mission would be detrimental to the best community interest of the Ellice people.<sup>23</sup> The colony's acting resident commissioner wrote to the Western Pacific High Commissioner's acting high commissioner in Suva on September 11, reproducing in full the D.O.'s two page letter of July 24. He also added the results of the August 11 ballot. Of 123 eligible voters 85 registered their views—84 expressed opposition to the new mission and one supported it. In concluding his letter he recommended that Howse be informed of the results, as well as being told that there would be no amendments to the Closed Districts Ordinance, or any permit issued to Adventist missionaries to enter the Ellice Islands.<sup>24</sup>

Of interest are the perceptive remarks of the D.O. in his next communication to the resident commissioner in Tarawa. Deploring the narrow thinking of the people influenced by their pastors towards an extreme course of action he cited a recent incident occurring on the northern island of Nui. There the elders desired to expel Vaitupu islander Samuela Vailopa as they feared the Adventist mission might make his home a base for launching an invasion on their religious supremacy. Although not ignoring cautions against disturbing social tranquillity, the D.O. wrote: "I cannot but feel that the entry of the Seventh-day Adventist Mission may shake the Ellice Islanders from their present early Victorian false piety. The inhabitants of this district are exceedingly narrow in outlook and extremely intolerant of anything not approved by their native pastors. I must agree with Mr Cowle that the influence of the pastors in matters which properly are the province of the Administration is still by no means negligible."<sup>25</sup>

In the ensuing months opposition to the presence of both Howse and Tavita intensified.

When Howse, with his family, again reached Funafuti on September 28 on a voyage northward from Suva, the D.O. unlike his predecessor, refused to issue a permit for the *Fetu Ao* to call at Nukulaelae.<sup>20,26</sup> On completing repairs to the boat and assisting Tavita with Bible studies, Howse set out for Abemama and Tarawa on October 2.<sup>20</sup>

Once Howse had settled his wife Merle and five children on a newly arranged lease on Abemama he sailed off to Tarawa. There he sought permission from the resident commissioner under the provisions of the Closed Districts Ordinance, to visit the adherents on the islands of Nukulaelae, Nui and Funafuti. As Ellice islanders only approved of the LMS Mission his request was refused. He was, however, permitted to anchor off the three islands so adherents could visit on board, provided the resident commissioner could be assured there would be no political repercussions.<sup>27</sup>

Such permission, however, did not sit well with the islanders. Advising the secretary to government in Tarawa of the situation, the D.O. on Funafuti referred to the implacable opposition of the people to the ship anchoring off shore for they regarded such a move as tantamount to Seventh-day Adventist missionaries landing on the island. However, as Funafuti was the official point of entry for ships arriving in the colony from Fiji, he would permit the *Fetu Ao* to anchor there for customs purposes only. Howse's movements on shore were to be confined



Niu & John Howse on Funafuti

within the boundaries surrounding the district office, and no permission to conduct religious services would be forthcoming. Adherents could, if they wished, meet with him on the boat.<sup>28</sup> In an aside, he mentioned he would delay for as long as possible a boat passage requested by one named Niu from Nukulaelae in the interests of maintaining peace. Although he couldn't prevent his arrival on Funafuti to lead Adventist religious services as requested by the new converts, he felt his presence on the island at this time would bring strong protests from the LMS church committee. This Niu refers to Tavita Niu who earlier had returned to Nukulaelae to be with his family and relatives for awhile. Eventually he obtained passage for Funafuti, arriving there early in 1948.

Before long, however, a growing number re-

sented Tavita's intrusion into their traditional religious society. Still keen to implement their one-mission-only policy they lost no opportunity to murmur about his religious activities and to whip up ill-feeling against him. Although steadfast in his religious purpose of spiritually nurturing the new converts and of visiting others who showed an interest in Bible truth, Tavita wisely avoided any action which would escalate the worsening situation. Daily gathering his family around him he earnestly sought for wisdom and strength from God to live His life and share His message.

Matters soon came to a head. Frustrated by their efforts to curb Tavita's evangelistic endeavors, LMS members decided on drastic action. On December 20 a delegation told the D.O. they wanted all Seventh-day Adventist supporters banished from the island! Even on being informed that no legal right existed for such action they still clung to the idea, offering to fund fares to a far away place like Abemama in the Gilbert Islands. Desirous of preventing possible disturbances on the arrival of the *Fetu Ao*, the D.O. sought advice from Tarawa on the possibility of prohibiting the boat from calling at Funafuti.<sup>30</sup>

Confronted with two delicate issues the administering authority sought to solve matters with careful and patient diplomacy. At stake, on the one hand, was the right of a predominantly one-mission society to inflict punitive action on others of a different religious persuasion, and on the other hand, the right of an individual to religious freedom. Although recognizing society's obligation to maintain peace among its citizens, the resident commissioner informed the D.O. that banishment of dissenters was not the way to achieve it. He was asked to ascertain reasons for LMS hostility against Seventh-day Adventists as well as advise on whether he thought a visit of the *Fetu Ao* would really create disturbances once he stressed the need for peaceful behavior and religious tolerance.<sup>31</sup>

Two weeks later the D.O. telegraphed Tarawa that LMS hostility was caused by religious prejudice and that now the people better understood the need for peace and religious tolerance, there would be no need to refuse restricted permission for the visit of the *Fetu Ao*.<sup>32</sup> Even Spivey and Fowles, representing the LMS missions in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, expressed regret over the intolerant attitude of their members toward Seventh-day Adventists in the Ellice Islands.<sup>33</sup>

The spirit of intolerance abated to some extent, but Tavita continued to suffer verbal abuse. Before long threats of violence were made. Oppo-

nents became increasingly irritated over the constant stream of visitors listening to his explanation of scripture. Aware of the deteriorating situation, Tavita decided to share his concerns with Howse on Tarawa. Leaving early in March, 1948, he arrived there on the 8th. On the same day he and Howse discussed developments on Funafuti with the resident commissioner.<sup>34</sup>

Realizing the colony's chief administrator still approved of Tavita staying on the island, and in view of the need for careful handling of the volatile situation there, Howse decided to take Tavita with him on the *Fetu Ao* which would leave Tarawa on Wednesday March 24. Nine days later, on the first of April the boat anchored in the Funafuti lagoon.<sup>20,34</sup> All on board prayed earnestly for God's guidance in the difficult days ahead. And difficult days they were!

Next day's discussions with the D.O. left no doubt in their minds as to how the people felt about the return of the *Fetu Ao*. Annoyed and angry they again expressed disapproval of the new mission, stating they had their own mission and that it was adequate for the island. As if this tension over Tavita's situation was not enough, Howse discovered he was without a permit to land. Denied fellowship ashore, he met with the new converts on board the boat on Sabbath.<sup>20,34</sup>

Allowing time for tempers to cool, Howse and Tavita sailed off to Nukulaelae the next day to bring back Tavita's wife and child. Returning on Tuesday they soon discovered the hostility of the people had not lessened, for only Fetu and Tautasi were allowed ashore. When Howse pressed for approval of Tavita and his family to stay on Funafuti, the D.O., knowing the Island Council objected to the request, telegraphed Tarawa on Wednesday for clarification of their immigration status.<sup>35</sup> The resident commissioner recognized that there were lawful grounds for refusing permission to enter a Closed District, but he was not sure that it was "politics to do so".<sup>36</sup> He was faced with a problem—how to permit religious freedom and at the same time maintain a peaceful society. His counsel addressed both issues. Friday's reply stated Tavita would not need a permit as he was classed as a national of the Ellice Islands but his wife would need one.<sup>37</sup> At a village elders' meeting held on Monday the 12th, the D.O. clarified the Colonial Government's position on Tavita and his family, and guided discussions leading to approval for their stay on his uncle Apete's land.<sup>34</sup> Although thankful for God's leading in surviving the crisis, they knew the struggle to establish the SDA Mission was far

from over.

Aware hostility still thrived in a large section of society, Tavita moved cautiously in advancing his work during the remaining months of 1948. He gathered together the new interests to strengthen their faith in the scriptures, he encouraged some to further explore the Word during public evangelistic meetings in homes and opened a six grade elementary school in his home with Fetu and two boys as assistants. He even managed to share the message with people on the northern islands of Vaitupu, Niutao, Nanumea and Nui while travelling on government cargo boats.<sup>17</sup>

In all his activities he was not unmindful of the darker side of human nature as well as the protecting care of God. Often his life was threatened as this incident illustrates:

One morning he saw a crowd of men approaching his home. He had heard rumours of threats, but had not taken them seriously. Now these men were coming, armed with knives and sticks. Tavita and his wife knelt in prayer. The leaders of the party came to the house, looked in the door, and for some unknown reason turned away. When the supplicants arose they saw their would-be assailants slinking away. The Lord had delivered them.<sup>38</sup>

Tavita had told the people he was prepared to give his life for his faith and to seal his testimony with his blood. Such a stand, wrote Howse, greatly strengthened Adventist work on Funafuti and "made more of the folk there give thought to the message."<sup>39</sup>

Early in 1949 Tavita's house on Nukulaelae was burnt to the ground. Fortunately his Adventist relatives, Luteru and family, who were visiting from Funafuti, escaped unhurt. The perpetrators of the offense confessed to being motivated by religious prejudice in carrying out the act.<sup>40</sup> Perhaps it was with a real sense of relief from constant tension that Tavita boarded the *Fetu Ao* on February 9 as a crew member to attend church meetings in Suva from the 20th to the 23rd of the month. As Howse understood Tavita's plight, he discussed with him possible strategies he could implement on his return to ease the constant hostility.

The *Fetu Ao* on its next voyage north arrived at Funafuti on Monday March 21. Hearing of a disastrous fire which befell Alefaio, a recent convert, Howse accompanied by the District Officer, Penitala, hurried off to inspect the damage. His house had been completely destroyed while he and his wife had been sharing the scriptures in another home. Providentially the children had es-

caped unharmed. Tavita met with the faithful—those who had braved opposition and fully accepted the Adventist message. They had not been intimidated by threats of violence or loss of possessions. Bible truth centered in Jesus had changed their lives and they were prepared to follow their convictions. Over time they had grown spiritually and now several were ready to become members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Tuesday 22 March 1949, was a memorable day. At sunrise about three kilometers south of the government offices and away from the village, Howse secretly baptized seven people in the Funafuti lagoon at Luamanifi. There were three couples: Apete and Tealofaga, Alefaio and Sialofi, Lutelu and Leitu, and Sepola, Alefaio's daughter.<sup>17,20</sup> Later in the day, Howse sailed for Nui Island.

The months ahead were times of trial. Even with the D.O.'s continued emphasis on tolerance towards others who differed in their religious convictions, there were those who intensified their opposition to Tavita and the new mission. Stone throwing interrupted home meetings and ugly threats of violence restricted visitation. Some murmured against Seventh-day Adventists working on Sundays and others expressed alarm at an expanding school enrolment.

And now a new and unexpected issue arose. People were discussing Tavita's Ellice Islands connection. A person acquainted with him in Samoa stated that Tavita was the son of Niu's wife by her former Samoan husband, and that Niu had adopted him on the death of his own child renaming him Tavita.<sup>41</sup> Although admitting to the resident commissioner that Tavita was not an Ellice Islander by blood, Howse emphasized he had been adopted by Niu and was his son. Later on Tavita himself told the D.O. at Funafuti he had been adopted according to local custom in Samoa.<sup>42</sup>

Not slow to take advantage of Tavita's weakened status the people agitated on several occasions for his removal from the Closed District.<sup>42</sup> Legal advice received from Tarawa in October by the D.O. added strength to their demands. Tavita was "not" it stated "a native of the Ellice Islands Closed District and that even if he was legally adopted by an Ellice Islander he still would not become one." Furthermore he was to leave the District as soon as possible.<sup>43</sup> Ten days later on October 27 Howse arrived in the Funafuti lagoon on the *Fetu Ao*. Aware of the almost total lack of religious liberty on the island he was anxious to do what he could to improve the situation. In-

formed by Penitala of the people's insistent demand for Tavita to leave, Howse, recognized Penitala's predicament. He was also aware of the constant threat of danger Tavita faced by continued service on the island so he made arrangements for him to take furlough in Samoa. He was to leave on the arrival of suitable shipping due in a few weeks time. To have taken him away immediately could not only have affected the morale of the members but also have been hailed as a victory by his opponents. In December after tender farewells by members, Tavita and his family sailed out of Funafuti lagoon on their way to a well-deserved rest.<sup>11</sup>

In view of the developments on Funafuti, the church administrators in the Central Pacific Union Mission decided to transfer Tavita to Abemama Island in the Gilberts on completion of his furlough. There he would assume leadership of the newly established school in place of Samuela Vailopa who had returned to Nui Island because of prolonged sickness.<sup>20</sup>

Tavita and Fetu were outstanding in their devotion to their work despite the difficulties they encountered. Plagued by almost daily tension and frequent hostile acts, they drew strength from God who assured them He was with them all the way. One series of night attacks in September, 1949 persisted for more than two weeks.<sup>34</sup> Each night volleys of missiles—stones, rotten coconuts and anything movable, rained down on their home startling the occupants out of their sleep. As no protection came from the local authorities, Tavita obtained permission for his family to shelter nightly in the nearby government compound.<sup>44</sup>

Nothing lessened their confidence in God's plan to have His witnesses in the Ellice Islands. Already He had established His church on the island of Funafuti, and in His time He would raise up believers on the other isolated atolls. God's blessing was evident and His work would advance. Tavita and Fetu could leave the Ellice Islands with a sense of achievement feeling they had implemented the Apostle Paul's counsel to young Timothy when he told him to, "Fight the good fight for what we believe."<sup>45</sup>

### Epilogue

Persecution continued on Funafuti. Without a pastor Seventh-day Adventist members were harassed and threatened. They were denied involvement in community affairs, their gardens were destroyed, houses were damaged and some were brought before village councils and condemned.<sup>46</sup> Eventually they were driven from their homes. Seeking refuge on Papa Elise (now known

as Funangongo) a small islet south of Funafuti, they stayed there for several years. They endured many hardships. However, one year when there was a severe drought on Funafuti they were blessed with an adequate water supply.

During these difficult times Tui, a new convert, Apete, Lutelu and Alefaio proved true shepherds of the flock. Tavita buoyed their courage from time to time with letters from Abemama.

All rejoiced at the news of the repeal of the Closed Districts Ordinance in 1954.<sup>48</sup> When Siaoisi Neru, a Samoan minister arrived shortly afterwards the members returned to Funafuti.

Hostilities persisted for some years but the Ellice Islanders came to accept them as a fact of life. Religious liberty was a reality and Seventh-day Adventists were there to stay. Today there is a district organization and headquarters for Tuvalu with members located on most of the islands. District Director Afaese Manoa, a Tuvaluan, composed the country's national anthem and also attended the London conference as one of the signatories of the Independence Document.

Tavita returned to Samoa from the Gilbert Islands in 1955. For the next four years he assisted with the development of a large school in Apia as well as pastoring the church there. Ordained to the gospel ministry in 1958, he commenced a long and successful service in youth, pastoral and district leadership.

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- 7 Letter, S.V. Stratford, AUC Secretary, to H E Maude, Esq. Acting Resident Commissioner, Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony, 4 Apr 1946.
- 8 Letter, Maude, to S.V. Stratford, 30 Apr 1946.  
Maude was sympathetic to Adventist missions. He served in the Gilbert & Ellice Colony, first as Lands Commissioner (1934-1941), and later as Resident Commissioner. When Howse was about to leave for Funafuti on his first voyage in 1947, Maude told him personally in Suva, to teach the people the true meaning of Christianity. During the 1940 decade while Maude was serving as the Resident on Pitcairn Island, he gave five pounds for a dictionary indicating the people could use the money as they wished. Later he discovered the Pitcairn Islanders had made it available for gospel work in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands.
- 9 Alwyn K Gersbach, *AR*, 11 Oct 1986. p14.  
Tavita Niu was baptized in 1939.
- 10 Letter, Tavita Niu to David E. Hay, Dec 1981.
- 11 Notes prepared by Tavita Niu for Hay, May 1983.



- <sup>12</sup> Letter, Rev J D Copp to The High Commissioner, 29 Jan 1946. Kiribati National Archives. (KNA)
- <sup>13</sup> Telegram No 140, Dist of Funafuti to Resident Commissioner, Tarawa, 14 Aug 1946. File CF 41/3/2 KNA.  
The telegram also stated that Niu wouldn't need a permit.
- <sup>14</sup> Telegram No 147, Acting RC Tarawa, G & E Island Colony, to DO Funafuti, 16 Aug 1946. KNA
- <sup>15</sup> Letter, John T Howse to Hay, Sep 1988.
- <sup>16</sup> Ronald W Taylor, AR, 25 Oct 1965.
- <sup>17</sup> Notes prepared by Tavita Niu for Hay, Oct, 1983.
- (1) Niu first returned to his homeland in 1940. Three families who were relatives became interested in his Adventist teachings before he returned to Samoa. They were Apete & Tealofanga, Alefaio & Sialofi, Lutelu & Leitu.
- (2) The ages of the missionary group were: Niu 68, Tavita 26, Fetu 22 and Tautasi 4 months.
- (3) Tavita brought 3 school pupils to the Vailoa School in 1950 - Litia Luteru, Sepola Alefaio & Teaukapi.
- <sup>18</sup> Notes by Valo Kalone, District Director, Tuvalu, for Hay, 1991.
- <sup>19</sup> Letter, Act D.O. Funafuti, to Sec of Govt. G & E Is Colony, Tarawa, 30 Jun 1947. KNA
- (1) The native magistrate, who in view of the people's Nov 8 agreement approving only the LMS mission, had asked the DO's advice on what action could be taken against supporters of the new mission, was informed that no legal move could be made by either the Island Council or the Colony Government for individuals were entitled to hold any religious beliefs they desired. The D O also stated it would be very difficult indeed to persuade new mission supporters to move away from their island as some were land owners.
- (2) To acquaint himself with marine navigation Howse took lessons offered free by the Lyttleton (Port of Christchurch, N.Z.) harbourmaster in 1946. The *Fetu Ao*, built by the Lars Halvorsen shipyards in Sydney Australia, was a sturdy craft of 65 ft in length. Named *Fetu Ao* by Howse's parents, Thomas & Edith, the boat was dedicated in Sydney on April 19, 1947. After a long voyage with Howse, Capt. Reece and an island crew on board, the boat arrived in Suva towards the end of April. There to welcome the ship were Howse's wife Merle and four children who had arrived earlier on March 18 from Auckland. While in Suva a 5th child was born.
- <sup>20</sup> Letter Howse, to Hay, 11 Feb 1992.  
AR, 23 Jun 1947, p8.
- (1) Samasoni had gained experience while serving on an over-seas ship transporting copra. Howse found his knowledge of the Pacific Islands invaluable. He was baptized at Abemama on the 29 Jan 1949. He remained with the *Fetu Ao* until Howse left the colony in Oct 1950.
- (2) Niu departed from Suva for Apia on July 2.
- (3) During his September stay at Funafuti, Howse conducted a study on Daniel 7 with some of the interests.
- (4) The Samoan missionary paper *O le Tala Moni* had also played a part in explaining Bible truth.
- <sup>21</sup> Note, Copy to District Officer, Ellice Islands by Govt. Officer, Tarawa, Gilbert Islands, 10th June 1947. KNA
- <sup>22</sup> The Funafuti Island magistrate supplied this information on SDA's interests to the D.O. Funafuti who passed it on to the Secretary to Govt., Tarawa, on 30th June, 1947.
- <sup>23</sup> Letter, Acting D.O. Funafuti, to Sec. to Govt. Tarawa, 24th July, 1947. KNA  
While most of the islanders present remained silent, there was considerable discussion between 5 or 6 of those opposed to the entry of a new mission and one, who although not one of the converts, felt that a new mission would benefit the people. Included in the D.O. comments was this statement: "The most vociferous opponents were two old men who, I understand, are retired LMS pastors."
- <sup>24</sup> Letter, Act RC of G. & E. Is Colony, Tarawa, to Act HC W.P. H.C. Suva, Fiji., 11 Sep 1947.
- <sup>25</sup> Letter, D.O. Funafuti, to R C of G. & E. Colony, Tarawa. 3 Sep 1947. KNA  
Samuela Vailopa had been educated at the Vailoa Training School in Samoa in the early to mid 1940's. He also worked on Tarawa and for awhile on Ocean Island. On 23 March 1949 Howse took Samuela on board at Nui Island to take him to Abemama to care for the school, but he returned to Nui with his family on October 26, 1949. Married to Siene from Nui Island, he died in Auckland, N.Z., on 26 October 1987.
- <sup>26</sup> Letter, D.O. Funafuti, to Resident Commissioner, G. & E. Colony, Tarawa, 1 Oct 1947. KNA In defense of his action the D.O. stated that a licence could only be issued to enter islands of the Closed District on the approval of Island Councils and at the time of Howse's request this could not be obtained. He also stated he had asked the Resident Commissioner's permission for Howse but doubted a reply would be received prior to Howse's departure for Abemama.
- <sup>27</sup> Letter, R.C. of G. & E. Colony, Tarawa to Sec to Govt. 14 Oct 1947. KNA
- <sup>28</sup> Letter, P J Roberts, Sec. to Govt. Tarawa to D.O. Funafuti, 17 Oct 1947. KNA.
- <sup>29</sup> Letter, D.O. Funafuti, to Sec. to Govt., G. & E. Colony, Tarawa, 1 Dec 1947. KNA.  
In her March 1948 article in the *Missionary Leader* Mrs Merle Howse states that Tavita Niu was on Nukulaelae prior to March
- <sup>30</sup> Telegram, D.O. Funafuti, to Sec. to Govt., G. & E. Colony, Tarawa, 30 Dec 1947. KNA
- <sup>31</sup> Telegram, Sec to Govt. G. & E. Colony Tarawa, to D.O. Funafuti, 8 Jan 1948 KNA
- <sup>32</sup> Telegram, D.O. Funafuti to Sec. to Govt. G. & E. Colony Tarawa, 21 Jan 1948 KNA
- <sup>33</sup> Spivey, J H, Beru, Letter to the Act R.C., G. & E. Colony, Tarawa, 7th Feb., 1948. KNA  
Fowles, B J, Apia, " " " "  
" " 17 Jun 1948. File CF41/3/1 KNA  
However, both LMS missionaries stated in their letters that they regretted the presence of SDAs in the Ellice Islands.
- <sup>34</sup> Letters, Howse to Hay, 11 Feb & 10 Apr 1992.  
On 2 Apr Howse went ashore to talk with the D.O.s Cartland and Lake about Tavita's entry into Funafuti. The *Fetu Ao* departed for Vaitupu Island on April 12.
- <sup>35</sup> Telegram, D.O. Funafuti, to Sec. to Govt., G. & E. Colony, Tarawa, 7th April, 1948. KNA Nukulaelae island magistrate Kaitu, came aboard the *Fetu Ao* to discuss Tavita's entry into Funafuti at the time Howse was to transfer the family there.
- <sup>36</sup> Notes on bottom of office copy of telegram No. 78, 7 Apr 1948. KNA
- <sup>37</sup> Telegram, Sec to Govt, Tarawa, to D. O. Funafuti, 9 Apr 1948. KNA
- <sup>38</sup> G Branster, AR, 11 Apr 1949.
- <sup>39</sup> Howse, AR, 11 Oct 1948.
- <sup>40</sup> Howse, *Missionary Leader*, Sep 1949.
- <sup>41</sup> Telegram, D.O. Funafuti, to Sec. to Govt. G. & E. Colony, Tarawa, 22 Feb 1949. KNA  
Funafuti people requested D.O. to refuse permission for Tavita to return to the island from Suva.
- <sup>42</sup> Telegram, D.O. Funafuti, to Sec. to Govt. G. & E. Colony, Tarawa, 22 Sep 1949. KNA  
In a note to the Sec to the Govt. in Apr 1949, the RC stated that if trouble on Funafuti over Tavita's status continued then his wife's permit should be withdrawn. In effect this would mean Tavita would also have to leave the island.
- <sup>42</sup> Telegram, Sec. to Govt. Tarawa, to D.O. Funafuti, 17 Oct 1949. KNA  
Perhaps the dilemma faced by the colonial administration in dealing with SDA presence in the Ellice Islands was never more clearly expressed than at this time when the secretary to government wrote to the resident commissioner on 12 Oct 1949, stating:  
"I feel that we should clearly re-state our policy regarding the S.D.A. and the Closed District Ordinance. On the one hand we have adopted the attitude that this has been confirmed by the H. Cr that the SDA's entered this Colony fully knowing of effects of the Closed District Ordinance and that they were not wanted and would probably cause strife in the Ellice Islands District. On the other hand it is recognized that the Closed



## AN UNUSUAL PRACTICE.

**Traditional seventh day rest among the peoples of Papua, in New Guinea.  
—Evidence in tribal languages.**

**Lester N  
Hawkes**



*Lester Hawkes, a graduate of the Sydney Sanitarium (SAH) served in the Pacific Islands for 30 years. First appointed to Aroma in the Papuan Mission, PNG, he was a district director from 1946-48. He transferred to the Eastern Highlands for the next six years. There he built the Omaura Hospital and established a nurses training school. From 1956-59, he served on Pitcairn Island then ten years at Rabaul as a Departmental Director at the BSUM. From 1975-78 he was President of the Eastern Highlands and departmental head at CSUM from 1978-80.*

*The Hawkes have 3 children, Lyndon, Kenneth and Robyn.*

*While at Omaura, Freda was a nurse educator and during her time in PNG provided obstetrical care for the women.*

*The Hawkes now live at Cooranbong NSW.*

I am sure that very few people—even among Seventh-day Adventists—have thought of the seventh day being observed as a day of rest in traditional heathen societies in the islands of the Pacific. I for one, certainly had not imagined it possible until I was confronted with the evidence. It is this evidence I now wish to present.

In 1946 I arrived with my wife, Freda, at the small medical post on the dry sands of Aroma Beach in Papua, some 120 kilometres east of Port Moresby. Our home, located almost within the village of Pelagai, was at times, battered by sand storms. Actually we couldn't have been situated nearer to the people we were to serve. As no one spoke English we quickly began to learn how to communicate in a language they understood. It didn't take long to learn *Police Motu*, the 'lingua franca' of Papua. After only nine weeks, and with God's help, I presented my first sermon in the language!

Some months later I discussed with the local ministers and mission staff, an outreach plan I wished to implement among the villages. It particularly involved letting the thousands of people know that something special would occur on a particular Sabbath day. As we were talking together in *Police Motu*, it was decided that the meetings would take place on *Laga-ani Dinana*, the Motuan name for the Sabbath day. (A literal translation of the words would be 'The Day to do Nothing').

I objected, pointing out that the

adherents of the London Missionary Society (LMS), would be sure to think we meant Sunday, seeing that was their 'rest day'. But Pastors Oli and Tauku as well as others, quickly corrected me saying, "No, they will know the meeting is to be on Sabbath. They understand which day it is because *Laga-ani Dinana* is the name given to that day."

Again I objected, stating that the words, *Laga-ani Dinana* simply mean Day of Rest, and their rest day is Sunday. *Laga-ani* means 'rest' or 'do nothing', and *Dina* means 'day' while *na* is the definite article 'the'. This means the words become 'rest-day-the' which translates as 'The Day of Rest'. But the ministers clarified the situation stating that Adventist terminology was not being used. They went on to say that they were simply using the Motuan name for the day called 'Saturday'!

I was amazed! Then another thought came to me. I asked for the name for Saturday in the Aroma language. In reply I was told that it was *Mara vakula*, meaning the same as in Motuan—the 'Day of Rest', or more literally, 'Day to Stop Nothing'. "Well then," I said, "if both the Motuan and Aroma languages designate Saturday as 'The Day of Rest', why is it that the Papuan people worship on Sunday? Why don't they call Sunday *Mara vakula* or *Laga-ani Dinana*?"

The answer was as surprising as it was unexpected. "People all along the Papuan Coast have traditionally observed the seventh day of the

week as a day of rest," they explained. "Every day of the week has its own name in all the languages, and the day you call Saturday is known as 'The Day of Rest'."

I wanted to know the whole story. What I discovered that day motivated me to investigate the matter further. In pursuit of my goal I was advised to visit Kualua, a man dwelling in the village of Egalaua, about a kilometre away along the coast. I had met him previously, but on this occasion I went to his home. He was in his late forties or early fifties. His wife and his son, Varaloka, who was employed as an Adventist village missionary, were also present.

In the early days of Australia's administration of Papua, the Governor, in concert with various missions, formulated a plan in which the whole territory was divided into Mission 'Spheres of Influence'. The division was intended to eliminate the problem of overlapping mission work. The Anglicans were granted one area, the Methodists another, and the LMS the southern coast of Papua and so on. It was his 'Gentleman's Agreement', backed by the government of the day, that made the beginnings of Adventist work so difficult for pioneers like the Carr and Lock families. Interestingly enough, the LMS had been granted the area where Kualua lived.

Kualua told me he remembered well what occurred on the arrival of the first LMS missionaries on the Aroma Coast. He said they were amazed to discover the people were observing a weekly cycle, and that the seventh day of each week was set aside as the *Mara vakula*. It was not a worship day as such, but rather a day when people did not go to the garden or perform other work. Sometimes it was used for village discussions and conferences.

Desiring to bring the situation into harmony with LMS thinking, the missionaries told the people that while they were correct in setting aside one day a week without work so they could conduct their affairs, they were actually one day out in their reckoning. "You hold your *Mara vakula* one day too early! You must change and hold it on Sunday," Kualua told me that as he returned to his home he thought a lot about what he had heard that day. That night as he slept, he experienced a vivid dream.

This is what he told me. "A man in bright

white clothing came into the room where I was and said that my family and I were not to change the day along with the rest of the village people. You must continue to observe your traditional day of rest until another white man comes who will teach you to observe the same day as you have always done," he said.

"After a few years had passed by Pastor Ross James arrived in the Aroma district where you are now living.<sup>1</sup> When he came to our village my family and I asked him to talk to us. I had not forgotten the dream of earlier years so we were curious to know what day he observed. Confidently he told us that he observed the seventh day and not the first! After plying him with further questions we were convinced that he observed the *Mara vakula*. That was good enough for us so we decided to attend his mission."

This explains how Seventh-day Adventists secured a foothold in the Papuan area of Papua New Guinea.

Following his service in Australasia Pastor Ross James moved to the United States of America where he lived and worked for many years. He did however, visit Australia in 1985. During his stay I met him at a meeting of retired workers held in the Waitara Church in Sydney, and on that occasion I recounted the events I have mentioned in this story.<sup>2</sup> I then asked if he had any recollection of what I had been telling him. His face lit up as he looked at me and said, "Sure, I do remember that day very clearly. I can recall Kualua and his family and the way Adventist work commenced in the Aroma district." He went on to say that once Kualua realised that he observed the Sabbath day on the day his people had traditionally kept, a large part of his clan became regular members of the Adventist Mission.

So the story I had heard from Kualua and Varaloka was now confirmed by the actual Adventist minister who had been involved. It also dawned on me that all these things had occurred a mere fifteen years before my wife and I began our church work on the Aroma Coast. And having heard so much I wanted to go even further. It was truly remarkable that these people should even know of the week as a unit of time, particularly as everyone knows that a week is not marked out by either the sun or moon or any other astronomical phenomenon.

My investigations brought to light some interesting details. Thirty kilometres down the eastern coast from Aroma I found the Domara people had a name for the seventh day that also meant 'Day to do Nothing'. In the Hula district near Port Moresby, the people there used *Puka Omana* for Saturday, and it means 'Day of Rest', or 'Day to Stop Nothing'. Among the Papakaka tribes living inland from Hula the word for the seventh day is *Koe Pogina*, and it has the same meaning.

There was one place where the local name for the seventh day of the week also included the connotation of being used as a day for worship, as well as a day of rest. That was among the Koiari people who live in the hills behind and to the east of Port Moresby. However, it contained no more than a mere hint of worship. The basic meaning was to cease from labour.

The last time I was in the Papuan Coastal area was in 1980, and while there made it a point to ask about the *Laga-ani Dinana* concept. I hoped I could add to my information on the subject. Unfortunately both Kualua and his son Varaloka had passed away. I did, however, meet Kualua's wife who now was a very old lady. Among the younger people there was no knowledge or memory whatsoever of the existence of a traditional week, nor could I find anyone who knew of the original names for the days of the week. They had been using the English names (Sunday, Monday etc) all their lives. But it was a different story when I sat with the older men and quizzed them about the past. Their eyes brightened. They were thrilled to think that someone knew some words from their language, words which they thought were completely forgotten. They confirmed everything I have written about in this article.

I asked them to tell me more about the seventh day. Eagerly they explained that it was a time to abstain from general work such as gardening, etc. They spoke of it as a most enjoyable day. Occasionally they might go fishing, or hold a village conference (on topics of importance to all, or whatever struck their fancy at the time). However, I could detect no suggestion at all that the observing of the day had any overtones of worship.

To locate a group of unsophisticated people with a knowledge of a weekly cycle was amazing in itself, especially when no time unit is indicated by any natural phenomenon. It would seem that

the weekly time unit has been handed down to them since the earliest days of their culture. It certainly predated the knowledge of the elderly people. It was a well established time unit long before any Europeans arrived in Papua New Guinea, and before any missionaries came. And to think that they had, in ancient times, decreed that one day in seven be set aside for a totally different purpose from the other six, is even more surprising. Obviously a weekly day of rest was important to them. Of more than passing interest is the significance of the rest day they selected. It was the day God had set aside for rest at Creation: the day He asked all people everywhere to observe down through the centuries of time.

Most students know that the word 'Sabbath' is found in the names for Saturday in many of the European languages. For example, *Sobato* in Polish, *Subbota* in Bulgarian and Russian, *Sabbatum* in Latin, etc. This is true even though very few people still worship on that day. (Even such unlikely places as Egypt and Borneo have the word for 'Sabbath' as the name of the seventh day in their languages). So the Papuan names, and the selection of the day, would seem to date back to before the introduction of Sunday worship in Europe. To find the week and the Sabbath in these historic places is interesting enough, but to find the week and the seventh day of rest in unsophisticated lands is quite a different thing. People there had not been contacted by anyone who knew these concepts. If there had been any influence at all it probably would have been Sunday that would have been taught. To me it is evident that the seventh day rest preserved in the languages of Papua had its origins in the world's early days when people everywhere knew of the day God had set aside for rest and worship.

#### References

- <sup>1</sup> As far as I could ascertain, this would have been December 1931.
- <sup>2</sup> I had known Pastor Ross James when I was a child. At the time he was serving in the Victorian Conference.

*History is the witness of the times, the light of truth, the life of memory, the teacher of life, the messenger of antiquity.*

Marcus Tullius Cicero, 106-43 BC, Roman Statesman. T Walter Wallbank & Arnold Schrier, *Living World History*, 2nd ed. (Scott, Foresman & Co, Chicago, USA) 1964, p 18.

## Life Sketches

### Leonard Victor Wilkinson (1906-1997)

Len was born on 19 December 1906, to Frederick and Gertrude Wilkinson at Gisborne New Zealand. Six years later the family moved south to Hastings where Len attended primary and high school.

He was baptised there in 1922 by Roy Allan Anderson. In 1924, encouraged by his parents, he went to the Australasian Missionary College, graduating the following year from the Biblical Academic Course. He became a literature evangelist and in time developed a close friendship with Enid Hare who taught at the church school at Quirindi. Almost a year and a half after his appointment as Erwin Roenfeldt's assistant in Perth, Western Australia, Harold Baird married Len and Enid on 5 December 1928.

Their service in the Pacific Islands commenced in 1931 when he, Enid and Valma (born in 1929) arrived at Navuso School in the Wainibuka district on the eastern side of the main island of Viti Levu in Fiji. Later that year their second child Raymond was born in Suva. Two years later the Wilkinsons transferred to Buca Bay on Vanua Levu, the second largest island. There Len cared for the newly established Vatuvonu Intermediate School. In 1935 they moved to the island of Ovalau where Len was principal of the Buresala Training School.

After his ordination to the gospel ministry at Nukulau on 18 July 1937 he moved back to Vanua Levu where he engaged in field ministry. In December of that year, a third child, Beryl, was born. In September of the following year he was appointed superintendent of Fiji Mission.

The Wilkinsons went on furlough in September 1939, and during that time Vernon was born. The next year Len became a Bible teacher at the Australasian Missionary College. He resumed his mission service in 1941 when he again took up the leadership of the Fiji Mission. Because of long standing health problems he was transferred to New Zealand where in 1945 he was appointed principal of Longburn College. On the completion of seven years of service there, Len entered private employment in Hastings. For twenty-seven years he served as the senior elder of the Hastings Church, and during this time he was on the conference executive committee for two terms.

In 1989 he and Enid made their home in Hamilton but moved to Bethesda Home and Hospital in Auckland in 1995 because of increasing medical problems. It was there on 10 August 1997, in the company of Valma and Beryl that Len

passed peacefully to his rest.

A talented violinist, Len not only was first in the whole of the violin section in the 1920 Gisborne Eisteddfod, but he also served as a leader of the second violins in the 60 member Hastings orchestra.

At times his trusty Douglas motor bike didn't serve him too well. On one occasion while canvassing he had to push it seven miles to reach home.

Warm-hearted and friendly, Len showed a genuine love for the island people—a characteristic which marked his entire service for the church. And they loved him too. Commenting on the students reaction to Len's announcement of his coming transfer to Buca Bay, staff member, Eva E Edwards wrote: "...there was sobbing all over the room, boys as well as girls, big and little alike. There was no singing that day."

Whether teaching youth, nurturing members or administering the work of the church and its educational institutions, Len gave of his best. He served his church well.

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### Teeta Mooa (1947-2000)

Teeta was born on the island of Kuria in Kiribati on 13 December 1947. In 1973 he married Atenata. Four children were born to this union—two boys: Teitioaake and Toakaritika, and two girls: Teitiaki and Rereintaake. Atenata died on 13 September 1995. Later he married Pena and one child, a girl, Taarita, was born to them. Teeta passed away in the Tarawa hospital at Nawerewere on 20 February 2000.

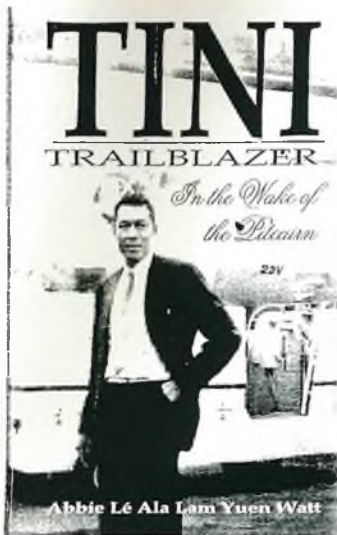
Teeta completed his primary education and two years at high school at Kauma on the island of Abemama. He attended Fulton Missionary College where he was awarded a certificate on the successful completion of his ministerial course.

Over the years from 1973 to 1998, Teeta served his church as a field minister and departmental director. He was stationed on Kuria in 1973, on Tabituea North in 1974 and at Betio in 1975. He was in departmental work at Korobu from 1976 to 1986. From there he went back to Betio from 1987 to 1991, then to Bikenibeu on Tarawa from 1992 to 1995. His last place of service was on Kuria from 1996 to 1998.

Of a quiet disposition he was respected by church members and village people alike. He loved his Lord and served Him wherever he was called to minister.

Unfortunately during his latter years he suffered from ill health.

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Abbie Le'ala Lam Yuen Watt. *TINI. Trailblazer in the Wake of the Pitcairn.* Brushton, NY: Teach Services, 2000. 118pp, Maps, Glossary.

Cost: US\$8 + postage. May be obtained from Adventist Book Centre, 58 Freeman's Drive, Cooranbong NSW 2259, Australia or Teach Services, Inc. 254 Donovan Rd, New York 12916-9738 USA.

For too long we have been 'burying' our denominational history. Minutes record who worked where but they never capture the 'blood and sweat and tears' nor the torrents of prayer that our early workers expended to penetrate the ignorance and especially the 'custom', of the Pacific's beautiful people. Abbie Lam Yuen Watt, has ensured that Samoa will not lack a human face.

We were swinging around the inner reaches of Pago Pago harbour, heading to Satala and our mission compound. Used to the left, we were on the right-hand side of the road, in an open Jeep—notorious for its lack of hand holds, and our driver appeared to be on first-name terms with his guardian angel. The deep harbour lay a few feet to our right. On our left mountains climbed to the sky. The road was narrow and winding. There was the best part of a full turn in the steering wheel to take up the slack before the front wheels acknowledged any hint of a change in direction! We had met Pastor TINI and his war surplus JEEP.

If you have seen the mountainous terrain of Tutuila you will grasp the challenge presented to Tini and the family, when they were required to leave the vehicle and take to the mountains on foot. To carry food, their rudimentary bedding and equipment enough to run a 'Mission effort' would have been daunting. But that is how Tini's energy won the hearts of American Samoa. Mrs Watt, portrays so many examples of this man's dogged persistence that one might be tempted to think that family bias had overcome objectivity. She draws her pictures well, and in some aspects, I believe she may have understated reality.

For example, to visit islands like Manono, and Manu'a as well as places like Wallis island, was not a task for a faint-hearted man. Where other churches were firmly established it often required delicate negotiation to get permission. Stoning was not unknown if you transgressed protocol. Mrs Watt fore-

goes this angle, but I am convinced that Tini often risked his person in his enthusiasm for souls.

In maintaining the Tini family program, distance, weather, and foreboding circumstances were swept aside, but one shadow never departed—MONEY. Tini and Fuea had a large family and were on Mission wages, something never generous in any currency. They went wherever the call came and his weary Jeep took them. The author talks about picking up the parts and putting them back in the Jeep during a journey, but anyone knowing war surplus machinery will know that it is an expensive business, especially in an isolated place like Samoa. 'The work' never suffered, so Tini must have been one of our best managers of money!

The Spirits in our sophisticated society would be laughed off as superstition. Yet our island people do NOT laugh. They know Spirits are deadly real. Although the story unfolds a degree of humour in the circumstances that provoked the 'ghost stories' I think that even 'Spirits' could not deter Tini. For indeed 'we wrestle not against flesh and blood...'

Tini had great skill in relating to different people and persuading them into the gospel 'net'. This is illustrated by the winning of Papu and his wife, on Tutuila; by Matila the convict's conversion on Upolu; by his truck challenge on Manono; as well as many other instances.

Balance in a rocking Jeep on the edge of the notorious Mafa Pass. Sink to your thighs in a quagmire of mud at a river crossing. Quake, as a party of young men advance on you in the wee, small hours.

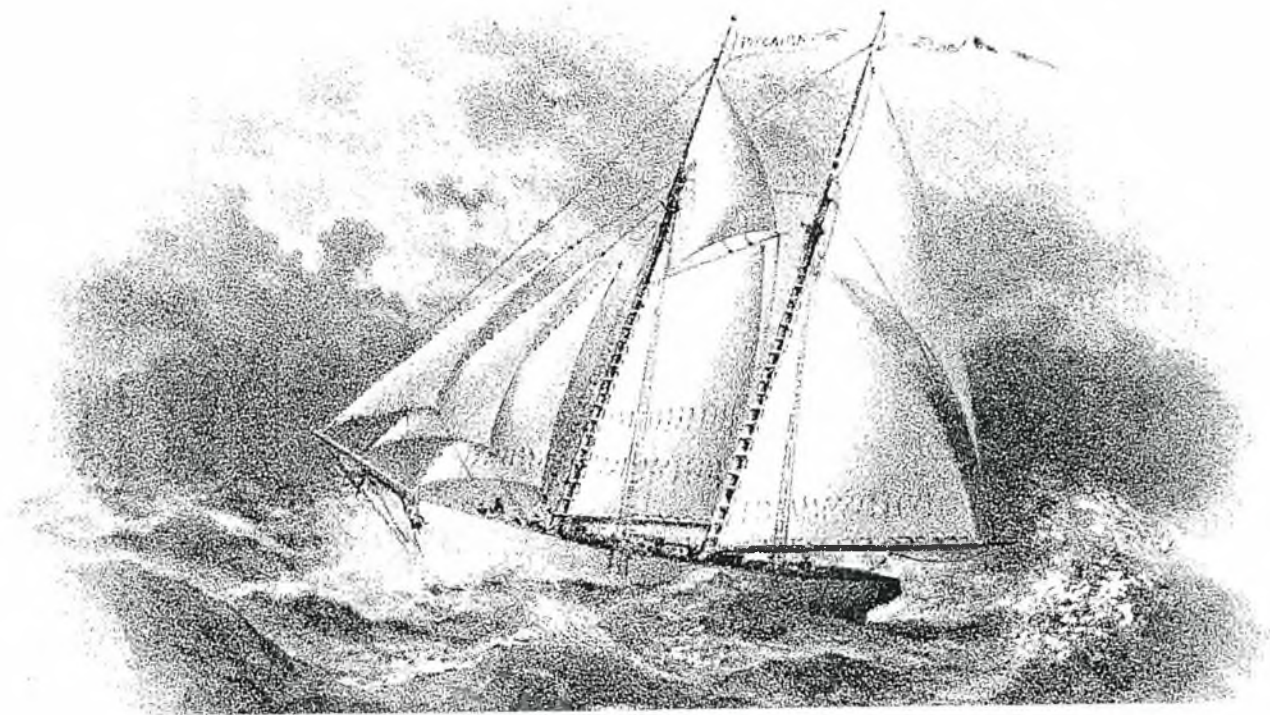
Maps are provided to aid the reader in a better knowledge of location. Beware though, the map of Savaii in the back, is a 'mirror image'. A glossary is also provided to give information to those unfamiliar with Samoan, and provide a little nostalgia for those who have been exposed.

Where the established churches were firmly entrenched and had bolstered their flocks with 'information' and 'facts' from any source BUT the Bible, the going was always bound to be tough. Readers, you will miss something powerful, if you neglect this little book and forego the privilege of getting to know my friend and true soldier of the Cross—TINI INU!

Reviewer: Neil Hughes. It was during his service as an expatriate teacher at the Adventist Central School in Apia from 1959 to 1962 that he became personally acquainted with Tini Inu Lam Yuen. At that time Tini was serving as a Mission departmental director and evangelist.

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It all began in the Pacific Islands  
when the *Pitcairn* arrived  
in 1890

