

# 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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- The experience and expertise of the editorial assistants who help prepare articles for publication are warmly appreciated.
- **Cover Picture**  
This is a typical bush chapel in the Solomon Islands. It is at Taifala in the East Kwaio district of Malaita
- Usage of the SDA Church Logo is endorsed by the SPD

## Editorial



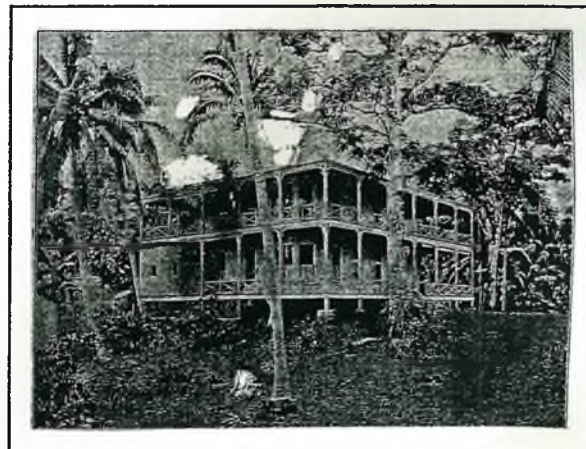
### THIS IS REAL HISTORY: EXCITING STUFF!

Appearing suddenly at the forest edge, three men came upon a rebel chief seated on a grassy patch talking animatedly with his excited supporters. A war was on, and strategies were being discussed. For days now there'd been skirmishes all over town, and casualties too. Rival candidates had been locked in combat over the kingship, and the struggle showed no signs of easing. Sizing up the situation quickly, the visitors felt, with some trepidation, that maybe this unexpected encounter was their opportunity to convey a real concern. Walking respectfully towards the group to seek an interview, they noticed that everyone was armed. As they moved closer no one moved and no weapon was raised. These were anxious moments! There was an exchange of introductions—then came acceptance!

Dr Frederick Braucht, superintendent of the Adventist Sanitarium in Apia Samoa, in 1899, explained why they were there. Unwanted incursions on to hospital grounds had been made by rebel forces, and they'd been seeking a rebel chief to clarify their position in the current conflict. "The Adventist Church," he said, "sought no involvement in the political affairs of the Samoan people." To underscore this position he stated that a mission flag would fly over the hospital, that a red cross would be worn by each worker, and that any sick or wounded would be in safe hands there. The doctor, volunteer worker Dudley Owen, and an interpreter were thanked for their message and told that the high chief of the rebels would be informed. Furthermore there'd be no more disruption of the work at the hospital. Encouraged by the chief's friendly spirit of cooperation, the visitors warmly bade everyone farewell, and with a chorus of goodbyes ringing in their ears hastened home. There was no more trouble. God had indeed worked on their behalf.

This is exciting history. It's really worth recording. They were brave ambassadors for God. The inspiration of their witness, and of what they accomplished, as well as of others in various islands of the South Pacific, is ours to own. May it send us forth to be just as brave in achieving the mission of the church.

Editor



The Samoa Sanitarium in Apia was the first building in the SPD to be erected as a Sanitarium. It was constructed by Merritt G Kellogg MD and Dudley Owen, a volunteer, and completed in 1897. Frederick Braucht MD served as the institution's physician and surgeon.

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## THE GOSPEL TO ALL THE WORLD

### Sharing the Good News with the Mountain People of Malaita in the Solomon Islands, 1990 and onwards

Baxton Ri'imana



**O**f the nine provinces of Solomon Islands, Malaita is the most heavily populated with 122,000 people. (Solomon Island census Office, 2000). The population of Malaita increased dramatically in June 1999, with 20,000 ethnic Malaitans fleeing the ethnic tension on Guadalcanal. Malaita is only about 50 kilometers from Guadalcanal. The main island of Malaita is about 160 kilometres long and 35 kilometres wide and over 12 local languages or dialects are spoken. English-based pidgin is the language commonly used for communication between language groups.

The climate is hot and humid with

an average daytime temperature of 28 degrees Celsius. There is relief at times from cool winds, and plentiful rain, usually ranging between 300 and 350 cm yearly. Heavily wooded mountain areas predominate and are drained by short, swift flowing streams. Agriculture is mainly confined to lower lying coastal areas and valleys although some higher inland locations are used. Copra and coconuts are grown and there is subsistence farming of sweet potatoes, taro, yams, bananas and vegetables.

The people are predominately Melanesians with a life expectancy of about 60 years. Most live in small rural villages with Auki on the western coast serving



*Baxton Ri'imana was born into a non-Christian home in the Solomon Islands. His early primary school education was obtained at Ofu School in the northwest of the island. In 1973 he completed his primary schooling at Afitara. He went to Betikama Adventist High School on the island of Guadalcanal, obtaining his Form 5 Solomon Islands Certificate in 1978. Three years later he received a Diploma of Theology from Sonoma Adventist College on the island of New Britain in PNG.*

*Baxton's service with the church commenced in 1982 when he was appointed to the southern island of Ulawa in Malaita Mission. His later service was in pastoral and evangelistic work on the main island, 1985—87, evangelism in Auki, the provincial capital, 1988-89, chaplaincy at Atoifi Adventist Hospital in the province of East Kwaio where he entered new areas in the interior, 1990—1995, as President of the Malaita Mission, 1996—2002, and field minister, 2002 onwards.*

*Baxton was married to Mary Angimomole of A'ama village at Ofu on 23 September 1983. They have five children: Derrick, Ellary, Jenter, Kerelie and Leerick.*

as the administrative centre. Many living in the mountainous interior hold tenaciously to their traditional practices, fiercely resisting the development the outside world offers them. Life could be said to go on as it has done through the ages, as young men carry bows and arrows and traditional clubs, while girls and women, naked except for traditional ornaments, dig gardens of taro, sweet potato and yams in their rainforest clearings.

Shells are used as a form of currency, and are exchanged to pay compensation, gain marriage rights, obtain favours from chiefs, and honour the dead at funeral feasts. Priests sacrifice pigs to the ancestral spirits on whom they believe prosperity and success in every day life depends.

Seventh-day Adventists established work on Malaita in 1942 when J.D Anderson and his wife arrived on the island. Since their time the Adventist message has attracted many people, and church companies have been formed in various parts of the islands.

Today the church membership stands at about 7,800 and a Seventh-day Adventist presence is felt in all the districts of Malaita. However there has been one area that has always been a challenge to the church and that is the villages of the non-Christian people, some 12,000 of them, living mainly in the interior of the island. I want to share with you my experience in taking the Adventist message to them, and the encouraging results that have come from this work.

### **My Personal Desire**

I was born into a heathen family in a little village called Biububulu in the interior of Toabaita in the northwest part of Malaita. My father was a priest and chief of the Kwaibale and Afoa tribes. I am the first born son in our family and according to our custom I would become the next priest and chief when my father died. My father taught me lots of things that a priest and chief should know—to give right speeches at appropriate times at particular events or ceremonies, to find edible plants in the bush, to speak to our dead ancestors and to predict the future by looking at natural signs.

I knew nothing about God. I believed that when men died they did not really die but they transferred from the village of the living to the village of the dead, and they would come back again to communicate with the living. In 1968 at the age of twelve I started school in the prep class at Ofu SDA Primary School. From then on I learnt about Jesus, His death and the plan of Salvation, the state of the dead and the glorious return of Jesus. I realized what Jesus had done for me. A fire burned in my heart to be educated then go back to the interior of Malaita and tell the people what I had learned and experienced.

### **My Experience at Atoifi Hospital**

In 1990 I received a call to become the chaplain of Atoifi Hospital. Atoifi is the only hospital on Malaita operated and run by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is situated in Uru Harbour in the eastern part of Malaita. My wife Mary, and I, accepted the call gladly. I believed the time had come to make my dreams come true. Atoifi would be the most suitable place to start a mission to the interior, in that I would have access to medical supplies, and would be acquainted with expatriates who could help to communicate the needs of the new mission project to the outside world and seek financial support.

At Atoifi I was privileged to meet with Dr Chester Kuma the CEO of the Hospital, Mrs Lorraine Hope, Director of the School of Nursing, and Mr Gary Macdonald, the Business Manager, and the rest of the dedicated staff.

### **My Plan for the Mountain People**

The first thing we did was to arrange for staff and students to pray three times a day. We prayed for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to get the message to the interior of Malaita. We also divided staff and students into small groups that met once a week. During our meetings we shared testimonies and personal experiences and shared prayer requests: entering into the interior of Malaita was our main request. After our praying program was well established we started the sec-

ond phase of the program, which was "Visitation". We committed ourselves to visit all the non-Christian communities in the mountains of Kwara'ae, Kwaio, Are Are and Fataleka.

The staff of Atoifi helped in carrying out this program. We moved from village to village to meet with people, give simple treatments to those who needed them, and establish friendships with the people. During the visitation we also identified their needs. We arranged cottage meetings in communities where the people were interested. They lasted for seven days. During the day we helped people in their gardens, helped them repair houses, and cut firewood for old people. The doctors and nurses gave treatments to the sick and we distributed clothing and household goods to the families. At night we ran programs to which people from all surrounding villages were invited. These programs were usually made up of singing songs, health talks, character building stories, and a good Bible doctrinal talk and personal testimonies. At the end of the week-long program we normally found many interested people.

The next stage was that when we found people interested we BUILT A CHURCH in that non-Christian environment. Interested people would come there for morning and evening worships. At times a 'pioneer', or volunteer missionary, would be sent to the new area to stay there to conduct Bible studies and a Sabbath School program and lead the interested people in witnessing to nearby villages. He would teach them to pray to God rather than to their ancestors. We would arrange visitors days in the big organised churches on the coast and invite the new interested people to be special guests. In some areas it took them six to seven hours to walk to the organized Seventh-day Adventist Church. By doing that we exposed them to bigger church families so that they could feel they belonged and have confidence in the church. Soon a baptism was organized and we baptised people in their own areas and invited relatives and friends to witness. Soon after this we had a new congregation.

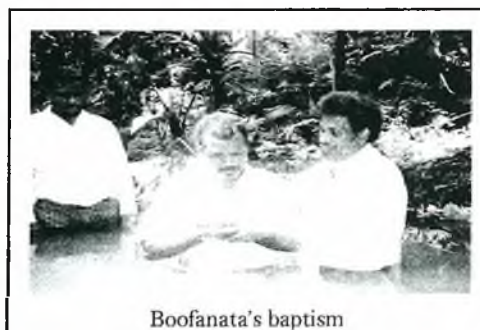
### The Opening of Kwaio Interior

Kafurum was the first community opened to the Adventist message in the interior of Malaita. In 1986 many houses and gardens had been destroyed by cyclone Namu and the community faced an acute food shortage. Atoifi assisted this community by providing food until their gardens were again established. During this time the people requested a small satellite clinic to be established to serve the health needs within their area. Administrators of Atoifi agreed to set up a clinic there with the assistance of the community. The person chosen to establish and run the clinic was Esau

Kekeubata. He was the first pioneer to Kafurum.

While running the clinic he also built a church building. People who were interested came to the church every morning and evening. Esau also gave them Bible studies and led them in witnessing programs in villages surrounding their own village.

In 1991 we had the first baptism at Kafurum. Jimmy Siulamo and Daniel Inisusu were baptised. During the ceremony I made an appeal to find out if others might be interested. Thirty very dirty adults in rags walked to the baptismal font indicating that they too, wanted to be baptised. The wife of the chief Inisusu said, "You came in so late that many of us have died." Today Kafurum has a satellite clinic, a church building, a school and an increased membership.



Boofanata's baptism

### Opening Up Kwara'ae

In 1991 the Kwaibaita Valley was opened to the Adventist message. Kwaibaita is a big river that divides east

Kwara'ae. In a little village named Mute Mute on the bank of the river, in the interior of Malaita, lives a man by the name of Timothy Boofanata. One Sabbath morning as usual he got his axe and knife and was going to his garden. As he was about to pass a big bull near his fence the bull called his name, "Boofanata, Boofanata, don't you know that today is the Sabbath and it is the Lord's Holy day that must be kept Holy?" Boofanata was shocked, as this was the first time he had heard an animal speak. He said to himself, "This must be the devil." The bull spoke again, "I am from the Lord." After that incident Boofanata came to Atoifi looking for a Seventh-day Adventist pastor. He met Pastor Bata Kaonia. Pastor Bata went to Mute Mute and Boofanata was baptised. This was the first Seventh-day Adventist presence in the whole of the Kwaibaita Valley.

In the month of September in 1992 when we were conducting a cottage meeting at Mute Mute, a Seventh-day member came and told us that a man by the name of Ruben Ruma from Darisaia in East Kwaio had requested that we visit his village. Dr Chester Kuma, Mrs Lorraine Hope and I visited his village and talked with him. He agreed that a week-long meeting be conducted at his village for his community. We arranged the program so that three local churches, Waefolonga, Ambitona, and Nazareth, helped in that outreach program. More than 60 church members came together, and during the day we worked with the community and at



night we ran meetings.

At the end of the meetings Ruben Ruma was baptised, along with several others.

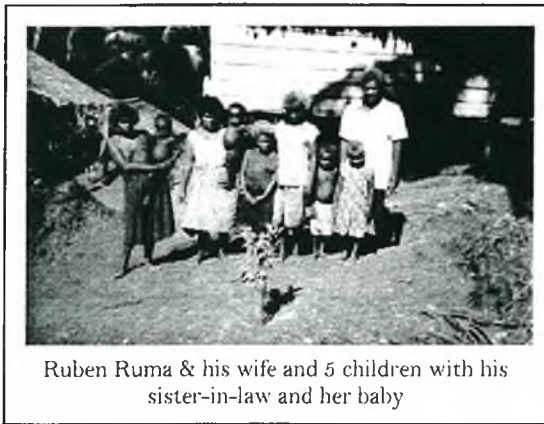
Joe Alfred, the first missionary to work in the Kwaibaita area was sent, with his family, on 28 June 1993 to Darisaia to care for the new members. Later on Mrs T Figua followed as the volunteer missionary. Today we have a permanent church building, a school, and the whole of Darisaia villagers have become Seventh-day Adventist Church members. The church became organized and many other little congregations are springing up in the area.

### Beginnings in Are Are

Our message entered Are Are through a young boy by the name of Vencent Rause. Vencent was born in a big village called Maniha in Takatak Harbour. His village and family were faithful members of the Roman Catholic Church. As he grew up he realized that his church was not caring for his people enough. The village was dirty, and pigs were every where. Many people died early. None of the children and young people could read or write. There was no health promotion, and at the same time no access to any clinic.

Vencent decided to invite the Adventist Church to come and set up a satellite clinic at Maniha, and told his plan to Matthew, his father. In 1992 Vencent and Matthew came to Atoifi Hospital. The trip was quite a long one. They started from Maniha and walked a day across the Are Are mountains and came to Raeao, an Adventist village. From there they caught an outboard motor boat to Atoifi Hospital where they requested that we visit Maniha and see their needs.

A week after their visit Dr Chester Kuma, two nurses and I visited Maniha, a Catholic stronghold. On arriving there we found the people were not friendly but we were safe in Matthew's house. At night a general meeting was held for us to explain to the whole village the purpose of our visit. Dr Kuma told the people of Matthew and his son's request. The people told us that they did not need the Adventists to set up a satellite clinic in their area. That night the whole village of Maniha was split: half the village was in favour of Matthew and Vencent who were wanting us to start a clinic and half were against the plan. As a result of the argument Matthew decided that people who wanted to support the



Ruben Ruma & his wife and 5 children with his sister-in-law and her baby



Joe Alfred



Vencent Rause

Adventists should start a new village and set up a satellite clinic. Early in the morning of the 21 October 1992, they led us to see a site for the first Adventist village in East Are Are. After walking for one and a half hours we came to the chosen spot. After the area was dedicated I led several pioneers and we ran a campaign in February 1993.

More than two hundred people attended our meetings. At the close of the meetings Matthew, his family, and several others were baptised. They soon transferred to the new location to live there permanently. Simeon Fataleka and his family were left behind to work there as the first pioneer workers at Sihua. Today we have a church building, with more than twenty baptised church members. We also have not just a satellite clinic but an established clinic.

### Entering Fataleka

Allen Iro was born in a village called Samoa in West Fataleka. His parents were heathen. When he was ten years old he attended the Abe Seventh-day Adventist Primary School. Allen was doing well at Abe, and in 1968 he was sent to Kwailabesi Primary School to do his grade four.

He studied there for two years, but he became discouraged and went back to his village in Fataleka. His father was a devil priest who believed in sacrificing pigs to his dead ancestors. Allen Iro helped his father, and in time became a devil priest himself.

In 1992 a politician gave a logging company permission to log the area where Allen's village was situated. Seeing Allen was a landowner he was entitled to work for the company. His work was loading cut logs onto a big logging truck. One day as Allen was loading a big log skidded and smashed his right leg. To human eyes Allen's leg was beyond repair and his life in danger. The logging company rushed him to Atoifi Hospital unconscious, and he was rushed into the operating theatre still unconscious. In his unconscious state he had a dream in which he saw angels watching over him. These angels reminded him of what he had learnt while attending Abe and Kwailabesi Schools.

Miraculously Allen recovered, although he was deformed. While at Atoifi he requested a meeting be conducted at his home village of Samoa. When he was discharged from hospital we followed

him and a campaign was conducted in his village. At the end of the meetings, after a careful Bible study, he and his wife were baptised. After his baptism we posted a pioneer at Samoa. Today Samoa is growing strong in the Spirit and in membership. We have built a church which was sponsored by the Cliff Morgan Roofing Project. Just in 2001 we established a bush school.



A Bush Centre at Kafolulae in North Malaita

**An Overview of the Past**

Through the history of Kwaio, Kwara'ae, Fataleka and Are Are, our Mission has probably provided more social services to the area than the Government. This is particularly true in the case of health services. In 1965 the Seventh-day Adventist Church built a hospital at Atoifi. The people of Malaita appreciate and congratulate people who have served at Atoifi Hospital—Australian nurses such as Brian Dunn who was speared through the chest with a length of concrete reinforcing rod at the door of his house and died 24 hours later; Lens Larwood who lost his life in a tractor accident; and others who have served in various lines of work.

Through their work at Atoifi nurses and doctors have made many visits to the villages in the interior of Malaita. Many in these isolated villages have come to Atoifi hospital as patients and while there they have heard stories and songs about Jesus.

Several bush children have come and attended Seventh-day Adventist primary schools on the coast. While students at these school (like Imbo School, and Afutara School), they have learned about true religion. Many have gone back to their villages and were never Christians again, but the message has remained deep in their minds. They have even told their family members about the message they heard from the Adventist Christians.

The entering of our work into the interior of Kwaio, Are Are, Kwara'ae, and Fataleka was made possible by the seeds of truth that were planted many years before by Atoifi Hospital, our schools and the faithful Adventist Christians on the coast.

**Converts Remaining Faithful**

In 1991 Malaita had fifteen congregations in the interior of Malaita with fifty baptised members. These fifty new converts, filled with the power of God which helped them live according to the Bible teaching, went through lots of struggles, yet they have remained faithful. They have witnessed faithfully, and the Lord has

rewarded them richly. At the end of 2001 we made a survey and found that we now have an Adventist presence in one hundred and ten new areas with three thousand baptised members. SDA's have become the main Christian denomination in the mountains of Malaita.

Kamuel Konainao is a good example of such witnessing. Konainao

was born in a heathen mountain village called Bolale in the bush of Toabaita North Malaita. After his conversion he built his house amongst the heathen people. He lived the Bible way. He was kind and helped the people. He visited them. He went and worked with them in their gardens. He told his people kindly that he did not eat pig. He explained to them the reason why he did not eat it. Every Friday he prepared for Sabbath. At sunset he called his children and they worshipped together in a little church. The heathen people were very impressed with his attitude. The more he was faithful the more the people loved him. Not long after that the whole community became Seventh-day Adventists. His church will be organized soon with seventy members.

The new converts in the mountains of Malaita found that sharing personal testimonies is a powerful method of witnessing. They go from house to house telling the people that they have found a new life in God, and that their God is more powerful than their dead ancestors. They worship God in love rather than worshipping their ancestors in fear.

When you meet a new convert in the mountains he will say, "I have seen God, I have felt the touch of his hands, I have heard his voice, and nothing will turn me away from such a real, personal God."

**The Past and the Present in the Interior**

More than seventy years ago the Seventh-day Adventist message landed on the shores of Uru Harbour in East Malaita. The pioneers were mainly from the Western Solomons. When those pioneers came they tried their best to take the message of salvation to the interior of Malaita but could not because of the very strong heathen practices and even cannibalism in the mountains. So the pioneers carried the message along the Malaitan coast. This left the interior of Malaita untouched, and Satan built himself a kingdom there. He ruled over the mountain people. The mountain people never went to school, never saw white people, and had a sad and hopeless future.

Their only hope was that when they died they would be released from this life, and they would then be worshipped by the living as dead ancestors. Today



we have five schools in the interior of Malaita namely at Darisaia on the border of Kwaio and East Kwara'ae, Kafurum in the bush of Kwaio, Kafolulae in North Malaita, Umaki in Northeast Malaita, and Rate school in Toabaita. They now enrol more than seven hundred children every year. These happy children sing, pray, and read about Jesus. They know the blessed hope of the Second Coming of Jesus.

Under the Cliff Morgan Roofing Project we have built forty church buildings which house more than 3000 worshippers in different areas on Malaita. To be sure the interior will never be the same again.

### Problems Faced by New Christians

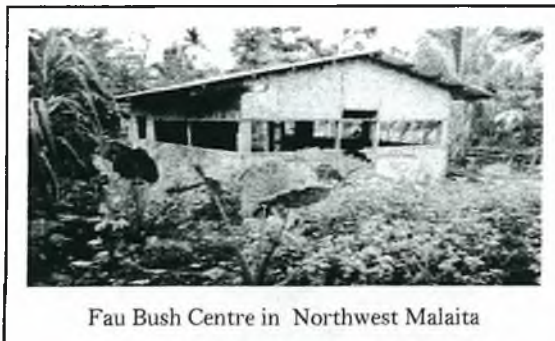
The new converts, when they are baptised, feel that they are a new people with new beliefs and new interests. They start separating themselves from the people of the village. They start keeping the Sabbath, a day which the village people never thought of keeping. They abstain from certain foods. They do not support the heathen people with their feasts and heathen ceremonies. In many communities this has caused problems for the new believers.

The freedom of movement and utterance of ladies in Christian villages has caused consternation in the heathen communities. This has come about because ladies have almost no rights in the heathen villages.

The people of the interior of Malaita have very few ways to earn a living. Their main source of income has traditionally been feeding pigs and selling them to other people to get the red shell money which could then be used to buy such items as salt, kerosene, and clothing. Some people also sold betel nut, lime and wild leaves to get money. Other people hunted for wild life in the bush or in the water and sold their catch to make a living. When they became Christians these old practices stopped. Now they have become poor because their only sources of income are now against their new beliefs.

### Observations and Recommendations

1. We have created an SDA presence in one hundred and ten new areas in the interior.



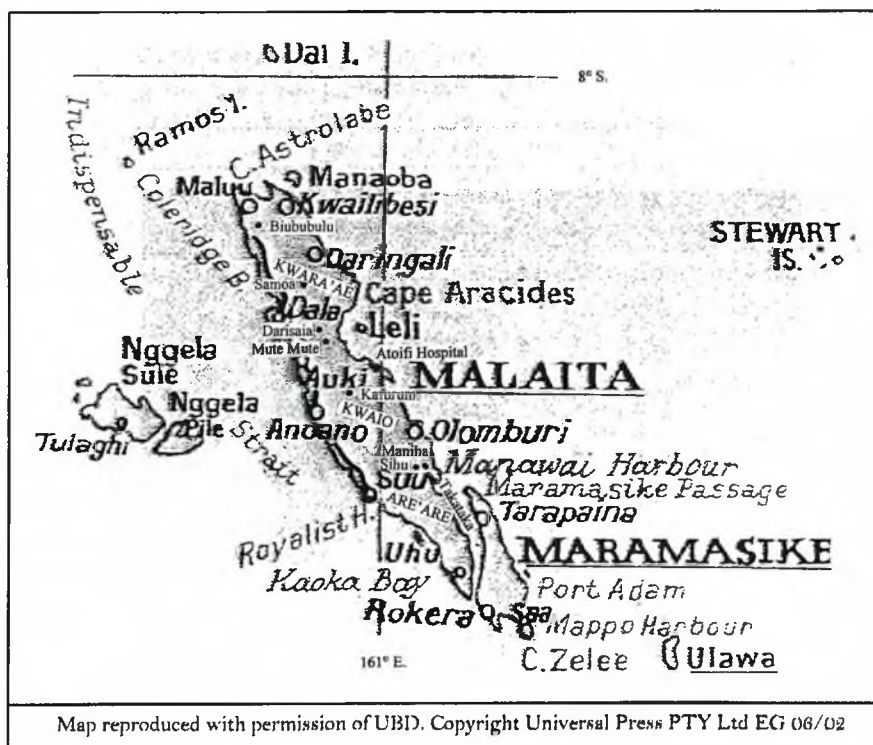
Fau Bush Centre in Northwest Malaita

2. We have sixty pioneers pastoring in the new areas.  
3. We have more than 3000 people baptised into the Adventist Church in the mountains.  
4. The Adventist Church is the only church that has a strong presence in the mountains of Malaita at this time. The above

evidence makes me think that the SDA Church will continue to be the leading denomination in the interior.

This prediction will come true if the churches and our friends help us provide the following:

1. We continue to have dedicated pioneers.
2. The local churches of Malaita own the program, and all organized churches support the pioneers with their little allowance to meet salt, kerosene and soap, and further that overseas friends help to establish a special fund to support pioneers who will be working in the mountains of Malaita.
3. We need to encourage the bush schools in the mountains to continue. Also we must patiently teach the people the fundamental doctrines of the church and how to read and write so that they can lead the established churches, and help to prepare future leadership for the coming generations of Malaita.
4. The people are rushing into our church but it is difficult to build churches for them. One of the biggest needs of the Malaita Mission is to build small semi-permanent churches for the new congregations.
5. Present to our churches a positive, Christ-centered message about stewardship so that the new converts know how to work to make a living and support the work of the gospel in the new areas.



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## A FORMIDABLE TASK

Advancing the mission of the church in Enga Province, Papua New Guinea. The varied work of a district director in isolated areas, 1959-1966

**Martin Pascoe**



*After graduating from the Ministerial Course at the Australasian Missionary College in 1936, Martin engaged in evangelistic work in the NSW Conference for 8 years until the end of WW2. In 1941 he married Joyce Willis from the Goulburn area.*

*In 1945, he was called to be District Director in PNG for the Kerema-Kikori area (4 Years), the Korela-Madana-Hula area (5 years), then President of the Papuan Gulf Mission (5 years). 7 years as District Dir. of the Wabag area followed. During this time the Sopas Hospital was established. From 1967 to 1974 he cared for the Moruma-Chuave district of the Eastern Highlands.*

*His wife gave much medical help to those in need. Her skill with maternal & infant welfare work was of great value and created much goodwill.*

*On returning to Australia in 1974 the Pascoes served in the Warwick-Stanthorpe district in Sth Old Conference. They retired at the end of 1981. They spent 9 months of volunteer service in Eastern Papua at Samarai & Milne Bay 1982-3*

*They settled in Cooran-bong in 1990.*

*They have 4 children, Doreen, Wilfred, Ruth Tame, & Merlene Judge.*

**E**arly in 1959, while on furlough in Australia, the call came for us to transfer from the Papuan Gulf Mission headquarters near Ihu, to the East Wabag area of the Western Highlands Mission, as district director. Pr A J Campbell, living just west of Wabag, would care for the western area from Wabag to Laiagam and beyond to the "uncontrolled" territory. We were to live at the Rakamanda mission station (12 kilometres east of Wabag) and look after the school there, as well as superintend the district work east to the Lai River at Wapehamanda, north to Kompiam, and south to the Tsak Valley. When Pr Campbell was on leave, we would care for both districts, with their ninety thousand Enga people and over fifty national workers.

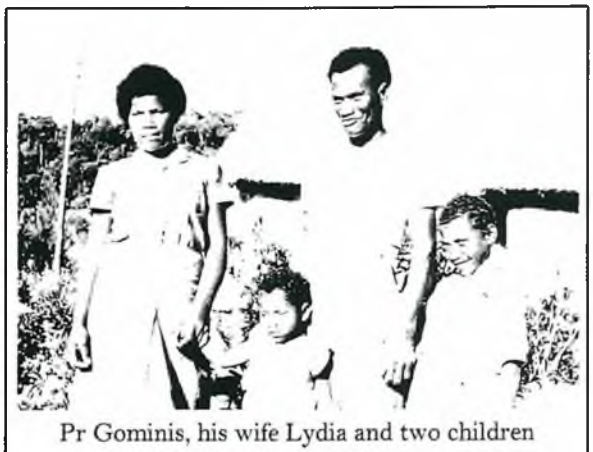
Our first task was to shift our goods by the mission launch, *Diari*. This took us on a five hour sea trip to Baimuru. From there a chartered DC3 plane took us to Wabag. The grassed airstrip at Wabag had been closed by wet weather for six weeks. But on the day of our arrival it was open, and our plane and five others were able to fly in. The next day the strip was closed again! We knew for sure that the God who controls the weather worked that out for us. Pr Campbell and some helpers were there to welcome us, unload the plane, and get things moving to Rakamanda.

We urgently needed a Landrover with which to negotiate the local road system. A good used one was secured in Port Moresby, shipped to Madang and dismantled. The pieces

were then flown to Wabag and reassembled. That long-wheel-base Landrover gave us good service for more than seven years, carrying mission workers, students, sick people, and many others – not to mention the various kinds of material needed on a mission station. Visiting the outstations regularly and without undue difficulty became possible, considerably reducing the walking time in that mountainous area.

We found the Enga people friendly and helpful. Although fights between clans were not uncommon, with spears, bows and arrows, tomahawks and stone axes freely used, our mission adherents were known as peacemakers; they kept out of the fighting. Because betel nut was uncommon in the area, the local people were more willing to listen to the gospel than the betel nut addicted coastal people.

From Rakamanda we were soon visiting our outstations and workers. Some were Highlanders, and some came from other islands. Pr Daniel at Birep was from Vanuatu. Atuken from Mussau was at Weor. My valued assistant director at Rakamanda was Pr Pitavato from the Solomon Islands. Pr Gominis from Mussau had been at Rakamanda for years; he became Pr Campbell's main



Pr Gominis, his wife Lydia and two children

assistant at Laigam soon after our arrival. Pr Sam Dick, also from Vanuatu, was another valued worker. When we arrived, his wife was so sick in the government hospital that she was sent home to die. But God worked a miracle for her, and she recovered. Pr Dick was able to work on until he went home to retire in 1966. He was a very effective worker, and helped many people to become followers of Jesus.

In 1958 Mr Doug Oemcke had been headmaster at Rakamanda, a grade 5 school. He had then gone to head the grade 6 Paglum School. As teachers became available, we were able to add further grades at Rakamanda, building a new school for the upper grades as well as upgrading the older building.

As the school had to be almost self-supporting, the many boarding students – none of whom could pay fees – had to work in the mission gardens and help on the station about five hours a day. The proportion of girls to boys was low, but this improved as parents began to realise the advantage of educating girls. Some of our outstations also ran small day schools, important feeders to the larger school.

There was always a great need for medical work at Rakamanda. Outpatients would come for help, often thirty or forty a day. Malaria, coughs, colds, pneumonia, dysentery, skin complaints, cuts, ulcers, burns, and casualties from fights were common. My wife and I did what we could for them. In 1964 a trained Papuan “doctor-boy”, Hark Kupare, came to help us, staying about a year after we put up a new dispensary building. The Public Health Department cooperated by supplying all medicines required. As our hospital became established at Sopas, we were able to refer the difficult cases to the doctors and nurses there.

### **Saving the Little Ones**

Maternal and infant welfare work was an added means to help the people. A district survey completed by the government doctor at Wabag showed that of every ten babies born, only four would live to the age of two years. When we arrived, we sent out word that every Sunday morning any babies brought to us would be weighed and any needed advice would be given to the mothers. Fresh bottled milk would be given daily to those that needed it. People liked the idea. Every Sunday morning there would be a crowd of mothers on our front lawn with babies to be weighed. Many little lives were saved through these



A group of teachers in the Wabag area—1960

contacts. There were a few who wanted to be given milk powder to take home and mix up themselves, but this was not allowed.

Prenatal care and advice was offered for mothers-to-be. Also short-term accommodation was provided for prospective maternity patients living long distances away. With a new clinic and better facilities, business was brisk at times. Over five hundred babies were born there in seven years, without the loss of a single mother's life.

### **An Evangelistic Emphasis**

A strong evangelistic program accompanied the educational and medical work. In every centre, worship was held at 6.50 each morning and again at sunset. Singing, prayer, Bible stories, and shared worship experiences helped keep people moving in the right way. Sabbath meetings were generally well attended; they were popular with even the most unsophisticated tribes people. But no weapons were allowed inside. It was interesting to see the arsenal of tomahawks, bush knives, and so forth, at the entrance to the place of worship. At worship, all were friends and all were safe.

A modified branch Sabbath School plan was adopted at that time. Early Sabbath mornings, little groups with picture rolls and maybe a plastic gramophone would visit selected places to sing choruses, pray, tell Bible stories, and invite people to attend the big Sabbath Schools and services. The leaders at Sopas found that this approach worked well for them too.

And those plastic gramophones! In USA an Adventist named Ford, anxious to help mission work, produced and distributed free those simple plastic gramophones, each with a set of sixteen Bible talks in the local languages. With no complicated internal workings, they were operated by finger only. Someone – probably Pr Campbell – had the talks translated by an Enga-



speaking teacher, and from that recording eight double-sided disks were made in USA and sent out with the gramophones. Hundreds of the machines came to Wabag mission to be used by workers and adherents throughout the district. People everywhere were amazed to hear a little machine speaking their own language and telling about Jesus, the One who made the Wabag mountains and valleys. The listeners wanted to hear them again and again, until the machines wore out and had to be repaired or replaced. How many will get to heaven as the result of the use of those machines, we will not know until Jesus comes. Many started on the right road because of those gramophones.

Our volunteer missionaries must not be forgotten. Many of those who cared for the worship program in new areas, visited among the people, gathered interested ones into the "class redi" and led them into church membership, were unpaid volunteers. Leaving their own places, finding their own food and walking miles to save others, their main reward was seeing the transformation in the lives of those they worked for. In return they received regular issues of soap, kerosene, laplaps, clothing for their wives and children, and a few basic things. But their work and sacrifice will have a full reward. Their contributions should not be forgotten, for without them the work in Enga would not be where it is today.

The story of two youths from what was the "uncontrolled" area west of Laiagam illustrates this volunteer service. Kiwila and Wanala were two strapping young men who came to Rakamanda School in Doug Oemcke's time to learn what they could. They stayed for probably no more than a year, and were anxious to go back home to tell their "wantoks" the good news they had learned. While no one except government officers could enter the "uncontrolled" areas, those belonging there could come and go at will.

It was not long before Kiwila and Wanala were telling their story in their home area of Muriraka, and gathering their hearers in worship. The response was encouraging, but opposition soon came from members of another group with contacts in Laiagam. The headman (luluai) told me this group had "greased" him to falsely complain to the young cadet patrol officer at Laiagam that the two young men had caused a riot. The officer had them arrested and jailed for six weeks. The first Sabbath they were forced to work like the other prisoners.

When news of their plight reached Pr Gominis at Laiagam, Pr Campbell was away on holidays. It was midweek by the time I heard about it. A quick trip to Laiagam ensued to see what could be done. While it was impossible to prove that they had been unjustly

imprisoned, I requested that they be given their lawful rights on their rest day. The officer was unsympathetic. These men were his prisoners, and they would work when he told them to.

Returning to Wabag, I called to see the young cadet's superior officer, the Assistant District Officer (ADO). He already knew about the situation. When I pointed out that the law was not being applied, he reluctantly agreed to honour the men's right to worship as they chose. Early the next week I heard that they had indeed been allowed to keep the Sabbath.

A week after this, Pr Gominis again sent word that the two young men had been forced to work on the Sabbath. This led to another interview with the Wabag ADO. Thanking him for his earlier intervention, I pointed out that his help was needed again to ensure that the rights of the two young men were respected. To his claim that in cases of emergency the law did not give rest day privileges, I suggested that grass cutting was not an emergency. He then claimed he had no copy of the law in his office! Asked how he as a magistrate and ADO could be without a copy of the law, he did not answer. Instead, he went into his office, and came back with the book in his hand. Now we both knew that he hadn't told the truth. Further asked if he would see the boys were given their rights for the remaining Sabbaths, he said, "No! I can't help you." Hearing this, I told him I would be taking the matter higher.

I walked to the post office and drafted a radiogram to the Administrator's Department in Port Moresby, outlining the situation and asking that it be examined in the light of recently affirmed United Nations and Australian Government statements. Again I requested that the two young men be relieved from Sabbath work.

The Administrator, Sir Donald Cleland, acted promptly when the radiogram reached him. His reply indicated that he would be in Wabag on the Friday of the following week, at which time he would see me in person. He said he had given orders freeing our men from any further Sabbath work. The news of the Administrator's impending visit took the officers at Laiagam, Wabag, and Mt Hagen completely by surprise. Needless to say, we were very happy with the way things were unfolding.

Before the time for the Friday meeting, Lady Cleland paid us a surprise visit at Rakamanda station. She came by car while her husband was meeting with the government officers. She very kindly greeted the local mission "meris" who crowded in to see her. She commented on their appearance, and on how happy they seemed. She told us that she had an Adventist helper

working for her in her home in Port Moresby. Every Sabbath she sent her car to take him to Sabbath services at the Ela Beach SDA Church.

Early that afternoon, while I was in Wabag to meet with the Administrator, the weekly mail plane arrived, bringing an unexpected visitor, Pr J B Keith, our Union Mission President. He planned to spend the weekend with us. He was immediately invited to take part in the meeting with the Administrator.

The first item discussed was the case of our two young men. The Administrator referred to the fact that prisoners cannot have all the liberties others do. I pointed out the aim of the administration was not merely to punish evil doing, but to rehabilitate prisoners so that they would want to be good citizens and abide by the law. Forcing people to break God's law, as they understand it, is most unhelpful. We should encourage people to keep God's law at all times if we want them to be obedient citizens. He agreed, conceding that it was time to clarify existing regulations, in the hope of avoiding further misunderstandings.

Later that afternoon, Sir Donald came to me quietly and said, "We had a good talk together today; I don't think you will have any more trouble." I knew exactly what he meant.

### **A Hospital is Established**

After the Sabbath-keeping matter had been so clearly dealt with, the Administrator asked Pr Keith about the mission plans for setting up a hospital in the Wabag area. The other government men present knew the mission had applied through the Lands Department in 1959 for a 15-acre special lease at Sopas; however, the District Services men, as agents for the Lands Department, had done nothing of any consequence. Now Pr Keith had a wonderful chance to outline the needs for a hospital, to summarise the SDA proposal, and to tell him of the long delay in dealing with the land application. I will never forget the Administrator's response, "Gentlemen, that plan has my full support." Then he told the others to get busy and see that land was made available as soon as possible. It was good to see how rapidly the land was bought and the lease effected. Thus God worked out two of our problems through the Administrator's historic visit to Wabag.

With the land secured, it wasn't long before Frank Aveling of Mt Hagan commenced the building work, with Ralph Murray and Cliff Butler as his main helpers. Logs had to be bought from native owners, hauled to the mill site on the hospital ground, and cut to order. A tractor had to be flown in from Madang. What a job it was to offload! A road had to be made from the main Wabag-Laiagam road to the hospital site and topped with river gravel. Stones had to be broken for making

piers for the houses. Then the buildings started to go up: first the doctor's house, and then the nurses' quarters, staff houses and wards. It took several years of hard work, but by September 1964 the new hospital was officially opened.

While all this work was going on Dr Roy Yeatts, who had given years of service at our Togoba Hansenide Hospital, began work at Sopas in a temporary shed, with the aid of Sister Linda McClintock and June Rogers. Somehow they managed to save lives and win friends. Other nurses to give valuable service between 1964 and 1966 included Ione Markey, Olive Fisher, Jan Fleming, Dorothy Schultz, and Ann Guizzardi.

Pr Campbell had left New Guinea before the hospital construction began. He was replaced by Pr L H Barnard. In 1964, the new mission plane arrived. As mission pilot, Len was able to pioneer mission work in the extensive "uncontrolled" areas as they opened up. It was in that period, too, that enthusiastic workers from USA gave service at Sopas. Outstanding among them were Doctors Farag and Wood, the latter replacing Dr Yeatts when he retired.

Our years at Wabag convinced us that God was guiding the mission work. Every person won to Jesus is a miracle, and we saw hundreds of such miracles. There were miracles in the restoration of the sick and there were miracles in making limited funds stretch far enough. And when money didn't stretch as far as we wanted, God made up for it by bringing more people to Christ than when we thought we had enough.

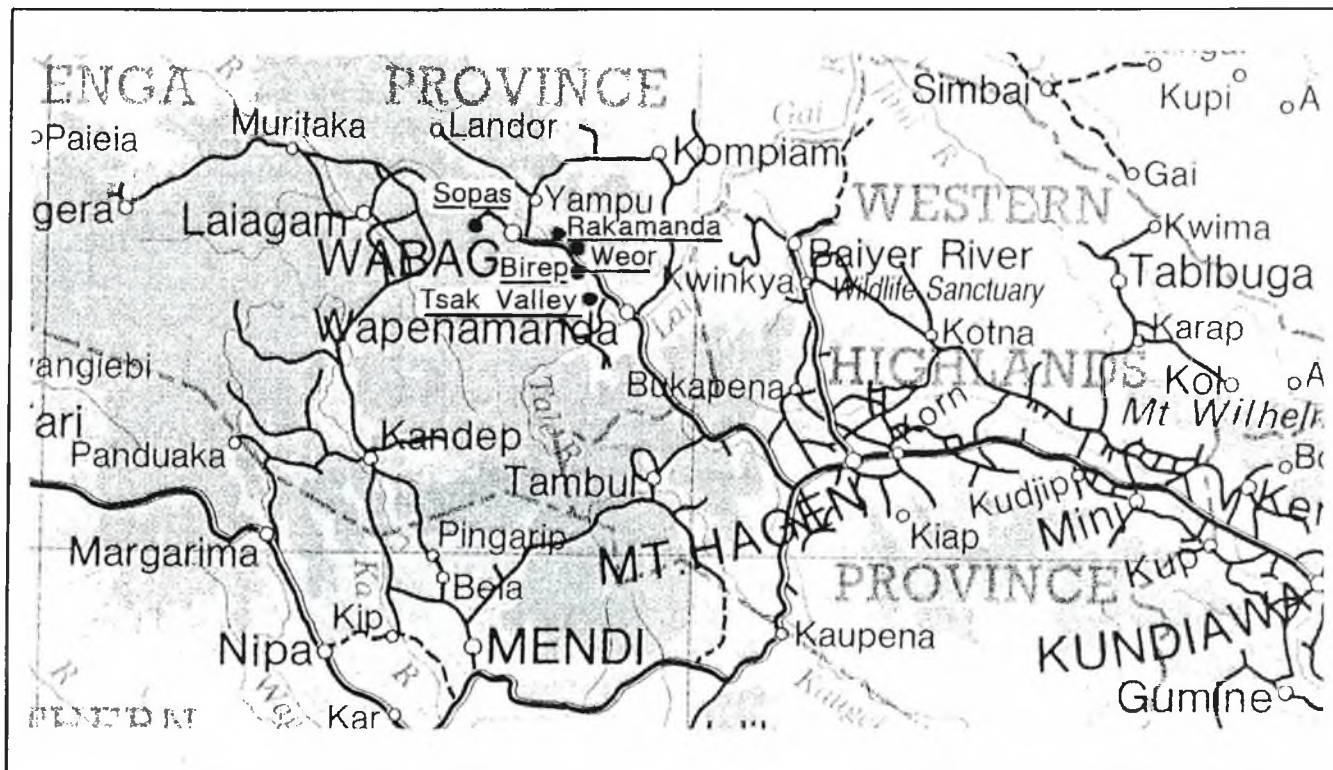
Here is one story of how God provided the unexpected. We were upgrading the school at Rakamanda, where both teachers and students needed light in the evenings for study. Lanterns and wood fires were not adequate. We needed a diesel engine, a generator, and wiring. Someone offered us a disused generator with a bent shaft. Once repaired, the generator was ready for service. Then one day in the mail we received a long brown envelope, with one end broken completely open. The letter was simply addressed, H M Pascoe, Missionary, New Guinea. The writing was very shaky, as of a very elderly person. And many postal marks showed that the letter had visited a number of island areas before reaching Wabag. Inside the envelope bank notes – real money, very old and crumbling, but with their serial numbers intact. Who sent it or why, we do not know. God must have spoken to this person, saying: "Post that old money you put away to that missionary in New Guinea whose name you saw somewhere. You don't need it. Post it for Me." And I can imagine the Lord saying to one of His angels: "You take care of that old brown envelope. Don't let the money fall out. Make sure it gets to Wabag to help



teachers and students at My school there.”

Those notes made it possible to buy a new Yanmar engine that drove the Rakamanda generator for a long time. I was never able to thank the donor. God, I

am sure, hasn't forgotten this loving act of devotion. I know that God has done and will keep on doing wonderful things to help finish his work among the Enga people.



Locations of places on the map: Sopas —5 miles west of Wabag; Rakamanda—5 or 6 miles eastward of Wabag; Birep—about 5 miles south-east of Rakamanda; Tsak Valley off main road and south of it about 3 miles or so from Wapenamanda

Exerpt from *Papua New Guinea*, © South Pacific Maps Ltd, Licensed by Hema Maps Pty Ltd.



## BREAKING NEW GROUND—Part 4

### —the influence of the Solomon Islands Mission in Papua, Papua New Guinea. 1921 and onwards

Alfred G Chapman



See CV Vol 1 # 1

#### New Guinea

So far, our attention has been focussed on Seventh-day Adventist mission work in Papua. It is now expedient to see the Mission development in the Solomon Islands and New Guinea for developments there had an influence on the course of events in

Papua. The 1901 visit of E H Gates to German New Guinea has already been noted. This was little more than a passing visit, though Gates noted that he

“ordered health publications to be sent to the missionaries and others in these islands”.<sup>1</sup> A more definite move was made at the Australasian Union Conference Session on September 16, 1914, when it was voted that “steps be taken as soon as practicable to open work in German New Guinea”.<sup>2</sup>

#### Solomon Islands

This was a year after the decision had been made to “open up mission work in the Solomon Islands as soon as possible.”<sup>3</sup> The Solomon Islands venture assumed more definite shape when G F Jones was appointed to open up the work there.<sup>4</sup>

Early next year action was taken to obtain a boat, thirty two feet long with an eleven foot beam for the

Solomon Islands<sup>5</sup> and a portable cottage was provided for G F Jones.<sup>6</sup> Eighteen months later an organ was provided<sup>7</sup> That there was a keen interest in the Solomon Islands is thus evident, even to the extent that the Solomon Islands Mission budget showed a balance of £797-2-5 as reported at the Session held in 1914.<sup>8</sup>

### Relation of Solomon Island Mission to Papuan Mission

The establishment of the Seventh-day Adventist Mission in the Solomon Islands is important for the Papuan story for two reasons. Firstly, the progress of the mission in the Solomon Islands was outstandingly different from the story of the mission in Papua. This led to a reconsideration of the methods used in Papua and also to the transfer of G F Jones from the Solomon Islands to Papua to try to invigorate the work there. The second great effect of the work in the Solomon Islands on the work in Papua was the growth of a corps of Solomon Islands missionaries who came to Papua. An illustration of the differences in the development of the field is shown by the statistical report of March 31, 1921.<sup>9</sup> In Papua, established in 1908, there were six church members, being the missionaries and their wives and the one baptised Papuan. In the Solomon Islands established in 1914, there were seventy-six church members. This difference is further emphasised by the report by H M Blunden of the position in the Solomon Islands in 1922:

Our work begun there only eight years ago, has grown to remarkable proportions in this comparatively brief space of time, so that today 1,800 adherents are definitely attached to our mission, fully 1,000 of whom are free from various forms of vice, and already 150 of these are baptized members of the church.

### Comparison of Early Seventh-day Adventist Work in Papua and Solomon Islands

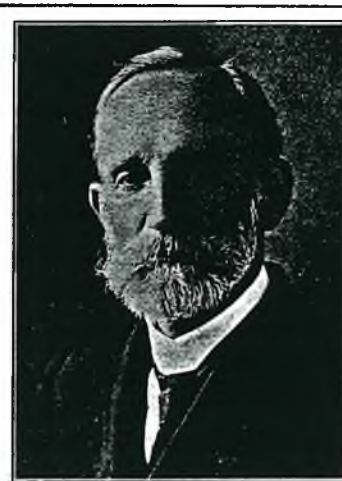
It is worth examining the factors that led to this difference. Although it is perhaps impossible to be too definite in weighting what influence each factor had, it seems fair to look broadly at three variables. These are the missionaries involved; the people of the area; the system followed. When we look at the missionaries we find that S W Carr came to Papua from the Fiji Islands where he had been engaged in successful mission work particularly centred on a school. It was his desire and effort to establish a broadly based mission program of educational, health and evangelistic activity, and while he was able to do some work in each of these lines he found he had to bend his activities to cater for the industrial work that had to be carried forward. Gordon

Smith was only in Papua for about a year and in a position subordinate to S W Carr so there is little to see in his contribution. A N Lawson, in Papua from 1911-1922, continued the pattern established from the beginning. While a school program was carried forward, it was limited by the need to run the plantation. Efforts were made notably in 1914 and 1917, to branch out in the mountains, but while land was obtained at Efogi there is little evidence that much was done there and the land desired nearer Kokoda was denied. Transport difficulties, of course, imposed limitations. G F Jones, who had been a missionary in various places since 1903, went in 1914 to the Solomon Islands. He was largely instrumental in the establishment and growth of the Seventh-day Adventist work there.

He came in May, 1921, to Papua, and worked there until 1924.

### G F Jones in Papua

G F Jones found the limitations imposed by the "Spheres of Influence" policy most galling. Though he did not limit the difficulties he faced in Papua to the effects of the



G F Jones

"Spheres of Influence" policy, he gave it a large place. In a report in which he speaks of the difficulties arising from the divided and unorganized nature of the society, the influence on the people of their traditional belief in spirits and sorcery, their adherence to their accustomed habits and rites, the multiplicity of languages, he says:

Worse than savages and mountains and chalk cliffs and rivers and scrub impeding our zealous advance, is the plan of other missions to prevent any other mission society from operating in Papua besides those who were here at the 'parting of the garments' in the days of the first governor<sup>11</sup>

Jones looked at the large areas in which the established missions had no work, even on the coast and his heart was stirred at the thought that tribes in the interior had no hope of hearing God's message. So he reported:

In January this year we began a more aggressive work among the Koiaris by obtaining a number of their boys and a few of their girls for our school.<sup>12</sup>



Jones attributed this success of this recruitment plan to the influence on the chief of one village of "our praying for and treating a chief's son who was dying, and of God's answer to our prayers on his behalf".<sup>13</sup> Jones also noted his extensive visitation of the people leading to a better understanding of their thinking, "After visiting about thirty of their villages, I became better acquainted with them and found out why home was such an attraction". I think it fair to say that Jones was a more aggressive and forceful type of worker than some of the earlier missionaries may have been. It appears that the decision was made in his mind, if in no council or committee, to be less bound by the restrictions which were imposed under the Comity Agreement. He argues the matter thus: "Is it right to allow this coercion [limiting their freedom to hear God's message] to be imposed upon the Papuan natives?" He dwells on the situation of the apostles under laws restricting their right to preach and their bold answer, "We should obey God rather than men". Jones makes the application to the Papuan situation:

Thus may we, with this word of inspiration and example of the apostles of Christ, not fear to fill all Papua with the doctrines of Christ. Unjust laws and grudging societies must not and cannot 'put the brake on' the work of the gospel at this time, and this scheme of theirs must suffer defeat for it is not in God's order of.<sup>14</sup>

The missionaries in Papua were aware of the methods used in other mission fields where missionaries were more free to make contact with heathen, stimulate in them an interest in the mission message and develop that interest through closer contact. In Papua, the rigidity of the Spheres of Influence policy mitigated against this type of development. As the Seventh-day Adventist Mission was unable to obtain land in places where people expressed interest in its program, it later began to obtain land where it could, by purchase of freehold or transfer of leases, thus establishing centres where people had little interest in it, hoping to build up an interest later. At times this led to the very type of competitive effort with the established denomination that the policy was designed to avoid.

### The Koiari People

The people of the Solomon Islands on the one hand and the Koiari people of the Bisiatabu area of Papua on the other, seem to have had one essential difference. There were many areas of similarity in the two societies and religions but in the Solomon Islands there seems to have been a readiness to investigate and accept new ideas, even though these were far reaching in

their implications. It should be remembered that the Koiari people were no strangers to new ways when S W Carr came among them in 1908.<sup>15</sup> There was an established plantation in the area. The Laloki Brown and Goldie Rivers had seen prospecting and scientific parties come and go. The London Missionary Society had had representatives in the area as early as 1881, though they had not remained long nor maintained the mission stations they established.

The Administration had had considerable contact with some of the Koiari people in its general patrol and exploring activity as well as on pacification expeditions which had followed certain murders. It may be inferred from these circumstances that the Koiari people were at least somewhat resistant to change, unresponsive to new ideas and ways, with a reputation for truculence. They were noted for their sorcery and were feared by the coastal people even much later. This was the group to which the Seventh-day Adventists directed their efforts in Papua for thirteen years before one convert joined their ranks to become established as the first Papuan Seventh-day Adventist.

It would appear that the slowness of the development of the Seventh-day Adventist mission in Papua, especially as compared with its development in the Solomon Islands, was due mainly to their first contact being with a people of differing temperament from which contact the Seventh-day Adventists were unable to branch out due to the restrictive pressures of the Spheres of Influence policy.

While the work in the Solomon Islands was forging ahead with a rapid growth in numbers of converts and a corresponding interest in school work, and in Mission service, the Papuan work began to show more hopeful signs of growth.

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- <sup>2</sup> *Ninth Australasian Union Conference Session Minutes*. Gore Hill, 16 Sep 1914, p 148.
- <sup>3</sup> *AUCEC Minutes*, 25 Sep 1913, p 117, No 8.
- <sup>4</sup> *ibid*, p 129, No 23.
- <sup>5</sup> *ibid*, 7 Feb 1914, p 156.
- <sup>6</sup> *ibid*, 8 Feb 1914, p 158.
- <sup>7</sup> *ibid*, 4 Jul 1915, p 284.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ninth AUC Session Minutes*, September 1914, p158.
- <sup>9</sup> *Australasian Record Supplement*, 17 Oct 1921
- <sup>10</sup> *Australasian Record*, 9 Oct 1922, p 26.
- <sup>11</sup> G F Jones, *Australasian Record*, 30 Oct 1922, p 91.
- <sup>12</sup> *ibid*, p 92.
- <sup>13</sup> *id*.
- <sup>14</sup> *ibid*, p 91.
- <sup>15</sup> *British New Guinea Annual Report, 1898*, p xii.

## ADVENTIST RESPONSES TO THE WAR IN THE SOUTHWESTERN PACIFIC—Part 1

Arnold Reye



*Now retired and living near Brisbane, Arnold Reye was born in Apia, Western Samoa, of missionary parents. Apart from an interest in Adventist church history, he can remember the impact World War II had on his parents and his young life. Using Western Samoa as a training base in jungle warfare, the US Marines commandeered parts of his school for officer accommodation. Thus his first year of formal schooling was interrupted. Because of this close contact with the American military machine, he has followed with interest the history of the War in the Pacific.*

*He spent forty years in education, most of which were in the service of the church. He was principal of: Lilydale Academy, Hawthorn Adventist High School, Sydney Adventist College and Brisbane Adventist College. In addition he worked in administration at all three levels of the church: local conference, Union and Division in the field of education.*

*Arnold gained academic qualifications from the Universities of Western Australia, Edith Cowan, and Monash and a PhD from Andrews University in the United States.*

*In his retirement, in addition to researching history topics, he devotes time to the ADRAcare Centre at Slacks Creek, Queensland.*

*Arnold & Mary's daughter, is Rowena Richardson.*

Like the dreaded Assyrian of antiquity, the Japanese military moved into the islands of the Western Pacific in the early months of 1942 with the rapidity and deadliness of the wolf descending upon the sheepfold. According to historian Stewart Firth, in response to this threat Europeans in the Solomon Islands, including missionaries, jostled to board the last steamer out of Tulagi. Planters and businessmen left their nationals unpaid and missionaries abandoned their converts. This undignified flight, suggests Firth, left the nationals feeling betrayed. Firth specifically mentions that all the Seventh-day Adventist missionaries fled south at that time. In contrast, Methodist missionaries remained at their missions in Rabaul and New Ireland—albeit it cost them their lives—and in Papua Anglicans and Catholics stayed at their posts.<sup>1</sup>

This article will explore the events associated with the Japanese drive toward Australia and their impact particularly upon Seventh-day Adventist missions in the Solomon Islands, New Guinea and Papua. There is no denying that in early 1942 Adventist missionaries withdrew from their mission stations in response to the advancing Japanese. Is there evidence, however, to suggest these missionaries were evacuated in a manner that caused the nationals to feel betrayed and abandoned? Did Adventist missionaries show less than reasonable prudence in the face of the Japanese advance?

Adventist missionary incursion into the South Pacific began in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The first wave began in 1885 when American Adventist missionaries settled in Australia and New Zealand.<sup>2</sup> During the 1890s the schooner *Pitcairn* made four voyages from America into the islands of Polynesia. As a consequence missions were established in Pit-

cairn, Tahiti, Cook Islands, Samoa, Tonga, and Fiji.<sup>3</sup> The second wave had its origins in Australia, focused on Melanesia, and began in 1908 when Septimus Carr entered Papua. This was followed by the New Hebrides (1912), Solomon Islands (1914), and New Guinea (1929).

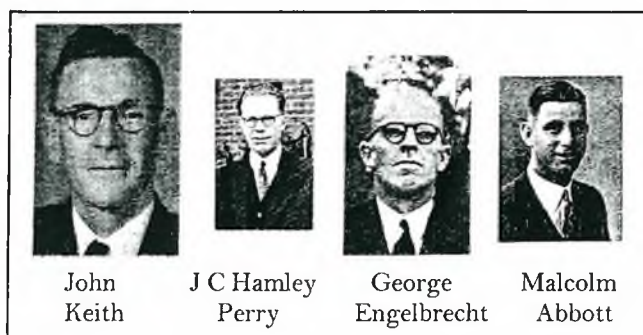
All the islands of the South Pacific were in some way affected by World War II but the Melanesian islands of the Western Pacific bore the direct brunt of Japanese invasion. In 1942 the Adventist church in Melanesia was organised around four missions: New Hebrides, Solomon Islands, Papua, and New Guinea. John B Keith was superintendent of the New Hebrides Mission with headquarters at Atchin. The Keith family was supported by five other European missionary families, three national pastors, and ten other national workers.<sup>4</sup>

Under superintendent J C Hamley Perry, the Solomon Island Mission had its headquarters at Batuna, on the island of Vanguna in the western region of the island group. The workforce in 1941 consisted of nine expatriate families and Miss E Totenhofer, three national pastors, and approximately 100 national licensed ministers, nurses and teachers. The Mission consisted of 24 churches with a membership of 1365 persons, 114 Sabbath Schools with enrolments totaling 4255, and 92 schools with enrolments of about 1000 students.<sup>5</sup>

In Papua there were ten expatriate families, plus the unmarried Eric Boehm and the veteran missionary, Mrs Alma Wiles. George H Engelbrecht was superintendent and headquarters were located at Mirigeda, some 26 kilometers from Port Moresby. This Mission had over 2000 Sabbath School members.<sup>6</sup>

The last of the missions to be organised, the New Guinea Mission, encompassed the former German New



John  
KeithJ C Hamley  
PerryGeorge  
EngelbrechtMalcolm  
Abbott

Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago. Headquarters was at Rabaul and the superintendent was E Mac Abbott. This mission was staffed by nine expatriate families, two Solomon Island pastors, and over 150 national licensed ministers and teachers. In 1941 there were over 2000 church members, and almost 4500 Sabbath School members.<sup>7</sup> Although not part of any of the above missions, the small group of Adventists in New Caledonia, just south of the New Hebrides, was cared for by a French lay worker, Miss C F Guiot.<sup>8</sup> Thus, at the outbreak of hostilities with Japan, the Adventist church had 72 expatriate workers in the islands to its north and in the path of the invaders.

### Japanese Intentions

Japan's expansion through military aggression began in 1931 with the occupation of Manchuria. In 1937 it pushed southwards into China and by 1941 advance elements of the Japanese army had infiltrated Indochina. This expansionism by Japan was condemned and resisted by the European colonial powers and by the United States. Finally, impatient with the prolonged diplomatic impasse over Japan's expansionist policy, on 7 December 1941 Japan attacked the US Fleet at Pearl Harbour. Simultaneously Japan launched a three-pronged thrust southwards. The western prong moved through Indochina and the Malay Peninsula to Sumatra and Java. The centre prong drove through the Philippines and the central islands of what is today Indonesia. The eastern prong moved southwards through the Marianas, Guam, and the Caroline Islands, toward the Bismarck Archipelago, Solomon Islands and New Guinea. The ultimate goal of all three prongs was the occupation of Australia, the establishment of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, and the elimination of United States economic and political influence in the western Pacific.<sup>9</sup>

Initially, Japanese success was spectacular. By the end of March 1942 they had captured Malaya, Singapore, the Philippines, Rabaul and the northern Solomons, and they had landed on the major islands of the East Indies and on the north coast of New Guinea. Paraphrasing Winston Churchill, the Australian war correspondent, Omar White, averred: "Never before in the field of human conflict has one nation acquired so

vast an empire in so short a time—and at so small a cost."<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, bombing raids had been conducted on Port Moresby, and the Australian mainland was bombed at Darwin, Katherine, Broome, Derby, and Wyndham. During the next three months Japanese reconnaissance planes overflew Townsville and Sydney, three 'midget' submarines raided Sydney Harbour, Sydney and Newcastle were shelled from the sea by Japanese submarines, and these submarines had sunk ships off the Australian coast.<sup>11</sup> War was real and Australians were keenly aware their defences were fragile.

This sense of fragility extended to the church in Australia. In January 1942 church leaders developed plans for the evacuation of women and children from likely invasion areas within Australia. In urging the importance of its plan the Australasian Union Conference Committee acknowledged it would be no small undertaking, but stated, "We believe that, in the event of a crisis, the whole future of our denominational life would hinge largely on the successful solution of these difficulties [evacuation]." In particular, church leaders were concerned that school-age children have continuity in their education and be housed within Adventist homes.<sup>12</sup>

Japanese attacks on the Australian mainland during 1942 were, however, sporadic. It would appear that their very success created a problem for the Japanese. The speed of their conquest created logistical problems and the nerve of Japanese commanders failed when they considered the risks associated with invading Australia by leap-frogging New Guinea and the Arafura Sea. Without the support of land-based aircraft it was felt that their invasion fleet would be too vulnerable. Therefore, instead of pressing their invasion to Australia in the early months of 1942, the Japanese paused.

While the intent of the pause was to give the Japanese time to establish sea and air bases in a line from New Caledonia through Fiji to Samoa,<sup>13</sup> the pause also gave the United States the time it required to begin the fortification of Australia. Osmar White is of the opinion that had the Japanese pushed through to Australia in the first three months of 1942 they would have won their war.<sup>14</sup> When Japan did resume its thrust southwards toward Australia it did so through two fronts, Papua and Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. It has been suggested that had Japan concentrated her available resources on one rather than two fronts the outcome may well have been different.<sup>15</sup> As it was, Japan came close to victory.

### The Evacuation of Women and Children

In December 1941 the Australian government directed that all women and children be evacuated from Papua and New Guinea. In 1941 this was not a

simple matter. First, the news had to be disseminated by tele-radio. Not all mission stations and plantations, however, had tele-radios and messages had to be relayed by other means to isolated areas. Those to be evacuated had then to make their way, usually by small boat or canoes, to gathering points where they would be picked up by larger vessels and taken to a regional port such as Rabaul. All this took time.

Furthermore, the weather also played its part. Adventist mariner, Captain Jack Radley, had recently taken command of *MV Ambon*, a new 83 ton vessel built for coastal and inter-island trade conducted by the merchant company, W R Carpenter. Radley's diary<sup>16</sup> of the time records that on the 17<sup>th</sup> December his ship was chartered to collect women and children from stations along the north coast of New Britain and to bring them to Rabaul. This should have been a simple task, but a severe storm had the *Ambon* tossed around like a cork. Radley noted that had it not been an emergency he would have kept his ship in the safety of Rabaul Harbour.

As it was the round trip of about 700 kilometres took nine days. High seas forced the *Ambon* to reduce speed and on several occasions it was necessary to take shelter from the winds coming out of the northwest. The slowness of the trip meant that Christmas 1941 was spent at sea. Despite the fact that wives and children had just been separated from husbands and fathers, and there was no guarantee they would be reunited, there was carol singing and the Christmas spirit prevailed. Despite Radley's best efforts, however, the delays caused by the incessant gales meant that when he arrived back at Rabaul the last ship from that port had already sailed for Australia with its load of evacuees. Fortunately for his passengers, the Australian government brought in two DC3s and the evacuees were flown to Australia. Just in time, however, for within days Rabaul was subject to bombing by the Japanese prior to its occupation on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January.<sup>17</sup>

It was on the 5<sup>th</sup> January 1942 that the Adventist missionary families in the Solomons first learned of the Japanese invasion of the Pacific. This news was accompanied by a directive from the British government that all women and children were to be evacuated. The mission president, Hamley Perry, was with the mission vessel *Melanesia* at the Amyes Memorial Hospital, Western Solomons, when the government directive was re-

ceived. He immediately took the *Melanesia* back to Batuna where the missionary wives quickly packed their personal effects. By the 9<sup>th</sup> of January Perry had proceeded to Gizo, there to await the arrival of the Burns Philp steamer *Malaita*. When the *Malaita* arrived on the 12<sup>th</sup>, the Captain initially refused to take the women and children as he carried some Japanese prisoners and they occupied the lower deck where the majority of cabins were located. Later that day he relented provided the women were prepared to sleep on the floor of the ship's music room. Thus, apart from their personal belongings, the women also took mattresses on board. Early evening the *Malaita* left Gizo Harbour bound for Tulagi. Perry's log recorded that the *Melanesia* accompanied the *Malaita* out of the harbour where the men folk waved last good byes to their wives.<sup>18</sup>

At Tulagi Mrs Ruby Ferris and her baby daughter joined the missionary wives in the music room. She recalled that the *Malaita* was overcrowded and the captain warned her that before the journey was over she would be sitting on No. 6 hatch eating only bread and treacle. Although wartime, trade must continue and the *Malaita* sailed to Sydney via Norfolk Island where she shipped a cargo of passionfruit. Enroute she sailed through a cyclonic storm that added considerably to the discomfort of the women and children. Ruby Ferris remembers one night seeking relief from the stuffy music room and the nauseating smells from the ship's galley. While standing by the rail she was suddenly blinded by a bright light. Evidently a sailor's glowing cigarette alerted a passing Australian warship and for a few minutes there was tension on both vessels. On the *Malaita* passengers and crew were mustered in the lounge room and given survival kits, but eventually the tension eased and things returned to normal. Normal in those times included the ever present fear of Japanese submarines. Although anxious to get to Sydney, the brief call at Norfolk Island provided a welcome relief and the opportunity to enjoy the wholesome food provided by the islanders.<sup>19</sup>

Church administrators were most appreciative of



The *Melanesia*

the manner in which women and children were evacuated. The Union Conference voted: (1) to convey this appreciation to Prime Minister, John Curtin, and to forward a cheque for £100 as a contribution toward the expenses involved; (2) to write letters of thanks to the captains of the ships that brought the evacuees back to Australia; and (3) to



write to the newspapers expressing appreciation of "the splendid care taken of women and children."<sup>20</sup>

### The Evacuation of the Men

The evacuation of women and children appears, however, to have been perceived by administrators at Wahroonga as essentially precautionary. In December 1941 they talked positively in terms of "maintaining the work at our mission stations in the Island field as far as possible notwithstanding present war conditions. . ." This included the men staying on even if their families had moved south. As a sweetener, the men were promised a short furlough annually until such time as conditions improved. In the case of Eric Boehm, however, there was no sweetener. Boehm was due to return to Australia to marry his sweetheart, but was advised his marriage plans were being placed on hold and he was to stay on at his Papua post for the time being.<sup>21</sup>

While leaders at Wahroonga hoped war would not interrupt the mission program, they had given consideration to its possibility. In June 1940 the Union Conference convened a meeting at Rabaul with representatives from the three western Pacific missions. This meeting prepared plans in the event of the region being threatened by war. At that time the Japanese were not directly perceived as the threat, rather it was felt that Germany might seek to reclaim its former New Guinea territories. The record of the Rabaul meeting indicates that the three mission superintendents had each held informal discussions with senior government officials in their regions. They had, therefore, an appreciation of such key issues as the evacuation of mission personnel and the use of mission vessels to convey missionaries, traders and others from outlying areas to major evacuation centres. To this end, the meeting engaged in a thorough evaluation of the mission fleet and the development of a comprehensive maintenance and upgrading plan. It was recognised that some ships were unseaworthy, one was grossly underpowered, and several needed engine replacements. The total cost of repairs and up-grading was estimated to be about £2000 and the Union Conference was requested to make this sum available as a matter of urgency. In addition to improving the status of the boats, the meeting also devised plans for stockpiling fuel, lubricants, food and medicines.<sup>22</sup>

Of greater importance to the Rabaul meeting was the development of plans for the continuance of Adventist programs in the three missions in the event that evacuation of Europeans became necessary. It was agreed that in each mission a national person would be appointed as assistant to the superintendent as a means of training indigenous leadership. This involved the

early transfer of two capable Solomon Islanders to the Papua and New Guinea missions. Apart from general supervision of the respective mission programs, specific training was to be given in financial management and the reporting systems employed by the church. Plans were also made for establishing sealed reserves of silver currency to be drawn on only in emergency. These reserves along with tithes from the local church members would be used to pay national pastors and teachers. As a message of reassurance, the Union Conference representatives were advised that some groups of church employees had already been appraised that while every effort would be made to maintain their wages, in the event of an emergency the availability of cash could not be guaranteed. Without exception the national workers had responded that they would stay at their posts even if there were little money or none at all.<sup>23</sup>

These plans made at Rabaul were by and large implemented. Upon leaving Papua early 1942, Charles



Charles Mitchell

E Mitchell told readers of the *Record* that "we organized our native workers, placing one as Superintendent," and in each district "appointed a district leader with a committee to advise and to carry on [the work]." Mitchell noted that while the nationals were sad at the possibility of losing their white missionaries, those chosen to carry extra responsibilities had undertaken their tasks "with zeal and courage, and I believe, with determination to do their best." Robert H Tutty confirmed that "even before the evacuation of the Europeans responsibility was placed upon the natives."<sup>24</sup>

By late January 1942, the rapidity of the Japanese advance to New Guinea and the North Solomons convinced church leaders that all missionaries should be withdrawn from areas threatened with invasion. The Union Conference Board of Missions therefore advised its missionaries that "they were to use their own discretion as to when it would be advisable for them to leave their various stations."<sup>25</sup> While the missionaries appreciated the confidence shown in their judgment, it did place them in a quandary. Loyalty to their work and love for their national congregations were in conflict with the desire to be with their families and in a place of safety. Furthermore, there were other factors that made decision making difficult.

First, the missionaries were mindful of the possible impact their leaving might have upon the morale of their national brethren. Writing of the missionary team in Central New Guinea, Alec J Campbell put it this way: "We agreed that if the invaders occupied Central New Guinea (and anything could happen at any time, depending on the turn of events) we would

be imprisoned. We felt if this should happen in the midst of our own teachers and people, though they would no doubt remain loyal, it would be a very discouraging experience for them; that they would be better if they stood alone in preference to having such an experience."<sup>26</sup> This stance revealed good judgment. Apart from the issue of morale, had the missionaries been imprisoned, there would have been considerable temptation on the part of their national friends to provide covert assistance. Such assistance would have involved considerable risk.

Second, missionaries found it difficult to exercise their discretion because communications were limited. For example, it was several months after the event that Alec Campbell learned the Mission Board had left the decision to him. The rapid fall of Rabaul, where the New Guinea mission had its headquarters, meant that this communication from headquarters was never forwarded.<sup>27</sup> Cyril Pascoe, located on Bougainville, wrote that "but for occasional news which filtered through as a messenger brought a letter from friends who owned wireless sets, we knew little of the affairs taking place in war zones."<sup>28</sup> As a consequence, while the Japanese bombed Rabaul, Pascoe blithely went about his missionary duties including an extended patrol along the northern coast of Bougainville.

Third, at times the missionaries had little input to the decision-making process. Robert Frame recalls that following the initial bombings of Port Moresby, all able-bodied Europeans, including missionaries, were drafted into the military. Of the four Adventist missionaries then located at mission headquarters near Port Moresby, Frame and Ward Nolan were assigned to a medical unit, George Engelbrecht was assigned to other duties and Charles Mitchell was declared unfit. Soon after, however, the three draftees were called to military headquarters and told the army did not want missionaries in the service. They were told to leave Papua immediately. Upon enquiring whether transport was available for their evacuation, they were advised there was no room for civilians on military transports and that they were on their own. At this point they decided to use the mission vessel, *Diari*, for their trip south.<sup>29</sup>

Fourth, by leaving it to the volition of the individual missionary, the Mission Board made it difficult to coordinate the evacuation of its personnel. As a consequence, the Mission Board did not always know where its missionaries were. For example, in February 1942 it was able to advise church members that most of the women and children had arrived back in Australia, as had Colin Sharpe and Aubrey Hiscox, but the report confessed that there was no word concerning the



Cyril Pascoe

whereabouts of six of its New Guinea missionaries: Abbott, Atkins, Brennan, Campbell, Gander and Pascoe.<sup>30</sup>

### The Flight Home

The stories of how those who stayed until the last made it back to Australia makes interesting reading. As alluded to above, early 1942 Cyril Pascoe<sup>31</sup> visited his churches and mission stations largely ignorant of the rapidity of the Japanese advance. Upon his return to his headquarters near Kieta, he found a letter from the New Guinea administration advising that all women were to evacuate immediately. Evidently female missionaries had been given a choice and Mrs Pascoe decided to stay with her husband. Even then they did not expect the Japanese to land on Bougainville and directed their efforts to preparing emergency depots in the bush and planning for an extended period of isolation. Within days, however, the Pascoes were advised that Mrs Pascoe was to leave immediately on a steamer then waiting in Kieta. A very hurried leave-taking took place.

Soon after, however, Pascoe was informed by the district officer that New Guinea was under attack by Japanese naval and military units and that all Europeans were to leave Kieta by the next afternoon. Pascoe called his staff together, placed a national worker, Tati, in charge and then spoke to all those on the mission urging the need to endure to the end. The next day Pascoe reported to Kieta where all seemed quiet and almost anti-climactic. Early afternoon, however, the situation changed dramatically. A message came through that the Japanese had landed nearby and were advancing on the town. In understatement Pascoe wrote: "There was only one thing to do—not wait to be caught!"

Aided by a heavy rain squall Pascoe and others were able to leave Kieta by truck. The driver was so keen to get away from the exposed port area that Pascoe feared he would do them damage as they careered around corners and raced through the town while still protected by the squall. Some twelve kilometres down the coast they met up with a small launch, the *Herald*, which had quietly slipped out of Kieta crewed by some national boys. While hugging the Bougainville coast they were illuminated by searchlight and inspected by a low-flying plane, but were not molested by the Japanese. Probably the small size of the *Herald* reduced its value as a military target. While its smallness proved one blessing, it also created a problem for the *Herald* was definitely too small to attempt the journey to Australia. Fortunately, Pascoe and his companions were able to rendezvous with the *Bilua*, a schooner belonging to the Methodist mission.



For the journey south the *Bilua* was stocked with what provisions they could acquire and with water. Mr Luxton of the Methodist mission had a pocket compass and Cyril Pascoe had a map of New Guinea held together with sticking plaster. Sharing their navigational resources, together Luxton and Pascoe plotted a southwesterly course across the Solomon Sea to Samarai in Papua. The *Bilua* left Bougainville on Sunday, January 25, and arrived at Samarai on Friday morning the 30<sup>th</sup> and just in time to see Jack Radley and the *Ambon* leave on their dash to Cairns.

At Samarai the *Bilua* reprovisioned, but unfortunately no charts were available for the journey along the south coast of Papua from Samarai to Port Moresby. As it turned out, this leg of the journey proved more demanding than had their traverse of the Solomon Sea. Several times they were forced to seek shelter from strong gales. On the second occasion they found themselves in company with another small boat. Pascoe reported that this craft managed to foul the *Bilua*'s anchor and then proceeded to "wind herself affectionately about our boat by means of the locked chains." Both boats were then driven toward a reef.

Fortunately, the affectionate nautical clinch was unravelled in time to prevent the vessels being cast onto the reef. At another anchorage they misjudged the tide and found themselves aground. In order to refloat their boat they had to unload forty cases of fuel. The final drama was provided by the weather. As they approached Port Moresby the wind was so strong that they made little headway, but finally port was made and the group gave thanks for an interesting but safe passage. At Port Moresby Pascoe left the *Bilua* and joined the Adventist group travelling south on the mission launch *Diari*.

The 12.4 metre *Diari* was the vessel used in the Papua mission. During the first week in February, those missionaries located at missions to the east of Port Moresby made their way to headquarters at Mirigeda. On 5 February, two days after the Japanese commenced their bombing of Port Moresby, George Engelbrecht and his party left Mirigeda, boarded the *Diari* and headed westwards around the Gulf of Papua on the first leg of a circuitous 1600 km journey to Cairns.<sup>32</sup> The most direct course to Australia was to head directly south west from Port Moresby across the Coral Sea. Given their limited navigational skills, the size of their craft, and potential problems with the engine, it was considered prudent to sail westwards along the Papua

coast and then make a dash of just over 200 kilometres across the Torres Strait at its narrowest. This way they would never be too far from land. Furthermore, they were scheduled to pick up Laurie Howell at Vailala and Eric Boehm at Orokolo along the Gulf.

When the *Diari* arrived at Vailala they discovered that Eric Boehm had walked eastwards from his station and was waiting with Laurie Howell. Furthermore, both men had been invited to travel south on the Australian Petroleum Company ship, the *Potrero*. After discussion with Engelbrecht, Boehm and Howell accepted the invitation as this eased the accommodation pressure on the small *Diari*.

The trip along the Papuan coast was not without its drama. Not long after leaving Port Moresby there was a tremendous explosion just a few hundred metres from the ship. Fortunately, the explosion caused no damage to the *Diari*. They were not able to determine the cause, but speculated it may have been a mine or a bomb from a high flying Japanese plane. On another occasion, in a rough sea, they had to cut the engine in order to make repairs to an overheated bearing. While the engine was being repaired, they put up with two hours of rough and very unpleasant drifting. In addition to concern for the engine, during their journey along the Papuan coast Engelbrecht's party of twelve had to contend with days of squalls and heavy seas and the constant threat of collision with one of the many reefs that festoon these tropical waters.

Eight days after leaving Port Moresby the *Diari* arrived at Thursday Island. There they cleared customs and were able to procure charts for their journey south within the Great Barrier Reef. This leg of the journey took six days and included the worst weather encountered. Furthermore, at Cape Flattery further repairs to the engine were required. For the last two days of the trip the engine required constant attention, but with

careful nursing saw them through to Cairns. These missionaries gave thanks to God for their safe journey. As Charles Mitchell noted: "He brought us through rough and stormy seas, numerous reefs, and other dangers. We feel that we understand a little better now what Paul meant when he spoke of being in peril by sea and land." The second mission ship to be sailed south was the twenty-five-year-old ketch *Melanesia*. During



The *Diari*

January, apart from getting the wives and children to Gizo and seeing them off on the *Malaita*, Hamley Perry proceeded with the normal tasks associated with supervising the mission. This included relocating workers,

handling church discipline issues, paying national workers, and conducting meetings. On the evening of 25 January, back at headquarters at Batuna, Perry and several others listened to the BBC news and discovered the Japanese had occupied Kieta on Bougainville, just over 300 kilometres away. In addition to this worrying news, Perry received word that the government wanted all missionaries out and the Union Conference directed that the *Melanesia* be brought south.<sup>33</sup>

Convinced the Solomon Islands was a specific target of the Japanese, Hamley Perry decided it was indeed time to get his team out. The next day was spent provisioning the *Melanesia*. This involved ensuring fuel tanks were filled, thirty 200 litre drums of additional fuel stored in the hold, and a reserve 450 litre tank of fresh water and two small boats lashed to the deck. The *Melanesia* left Batuna on the evening of the 27<sup>th</sup> bound for a hideout that had been established at Ysabel (Santa Isabel) Island. On board were five Adventist missionaries and six women who had turned up unexpectedly. The men were decidedly uncomfortable at the prospect of their company all the way to Australia. Fortunately at Ysabel they encountered another vessel that was able to take the ladies direct to Tulagi where they embarked on an evacuation steamer.<sup>34</sup>

Getting his team together proved no simple task. At Ysabel they waited for John Howse to arrive from Choiseul Island in the west on his mission launch *Dudavatu*. A week later they were able to leave Ysabel and head for Malaita to add David Ferris to the party. At Malaita they discovered that Ferris, having received a garbled message and concerned at the non-appearance of the *Melanesia*, had the previous day taken his mission launch, the *G.F Jones*, across to Tulagi where he hoped to gain a berth on the steamer *Morinda*. The *Melanesia* party hightailed it to Tulagi and on the way was relieved to encounter the *G.F Jones* and two other Adventist mission launches. Most of all they were relieved to catch up with Ferris.

Ferris, too, was relieved to see the Perry party. He had arrived at Tulagi the previous day in time to watch a Japanese bomber attempt to destroy the *Morinda* as she approached the Tulagi wharf. The *Morinda* turned about and zigzagged away from Tulagi Harbour. Good fortune, however, was with the *Morinda* for despite having about a dozen bombs dropped none struck the vessel and she escaped unscathed. She later tied up at another wharf and in excess of 120 people embarked, including David Ferris. Unfortunately, the *Morinda* carried lifeboats for only 100 passengers and over 20 persons were put off. David Ferris found himself one of those back on the beach. Commiserating at his plight, one of the national pastors put his arm around Ferris



David Ferris

and said, "Do not worry, come back to Malaita, we will look after you." Fortunately, the arrival of the *Melanesia* meant he did not have to seriously consider that option.

Unlike the New Guinea and Papua teams, Perry and his team of six did not have the luxury of hugging a coastline. Perry therefore sought advice from some New Zealand army officers at Tulagi. They recommended that the *Melanesia* sail directly south on a heading for Sandy Cape, Fraser Island. Pointing to red flags on a map and representing areas already occupied by the Japanese, the officers advised early departure or they ran the serious risk of being cut off by the enemy. Setting course for Sandy Cape was, however, easier said than done. As a result of their time in the islands the members of Perry's team had acquired experience with boats, but no one was an experienced navigator. Furthermore, the only charts available to them were the ones used many years earlier by master mariner and missionary, Griffith F Jones. The *Melanesia* party was therefore pleased to put its confidence in "the Pilot above who could guide us across the ocean."

The *Melanesia* began its journey from the Solomons to Australia on the 10<sup>th</sup> of February. As they left Tulagi they looked across with concern at four small mission boats they had to leave with their national crews. The missionary team, now constituting the crew, was put on two-hour watches and all took turns at the wheel and on lookout duty. At night, in particular, a careful watch was necessary to avoid collision with reefs and low-lying islands. Furthermore, because it was unwise to use running lights, vigilance was necessary to avoid other vessels that may be sharing the same Coral Sea. Like the *Diari*, the *Melanesia* suffered its share of mechanical failure. In its case it was an overheating propeller shaft bearing. While repairs were effected, Perry organised his crew into pumping fuel oil from 200 litre drums to the fuel tank. Unlike the *Diari*, however, this work was accomplished on what Perry described as "a remarkably quiet sea."

While God showed his Providence on a number of occasions on this journey south, it was a small thing that impressed John Howse with the enormity of God's hand of care. Small in the form of a 6 mm fuel injector screw. Forced to stop the engine for repairs, Howse and Charlie Tucker cleaned the main fuel filter and bled the injection heads. Instead of starting sweetly the engine stalled and it was discovered that one small screw had not been properly secured and had disappeared, probably into the bilge. As the smaller of the two, Tucker volunteered to try and squirm into the space below the engine and to grope in the slush and sludge in the vain hope of finding the screw. Howse



described it as looking for the proverbial needle in a haystack. Without the screw, however, the *Melanesia* was crippled.

While Tucker pulled himself under the engine, Howse prayed that a miracle would happen. The engine was mounted on two timber supports and Tucker gripped one of these to lever himself under. As he did so his fingers touched the small screw and he gingerly picked it up and passed it out to Howse. The miracle for Howse was that the ship was rolling in the swell and yet the little screw had not rolled off to disappear irretrievably into the bilge.<sup>35</sup>

Navigating by dead reckoning, that is, estimating the daily distance travelled by using a log-line, leaves considerable room for error. The course set for the *Melanesia* had it gradually converging with the Australian coastline. There was concern that if their navigation was out they would encounter the Great Barrier Reef. This concern was heightened by the onset of darkness. Furthermore, the weather had deteriorated considerably and the ship was buffeted by high winds and heavy seas. To ease their anxiety, those with computational skills sat down and reworked their dead reckoning calculations and finally concluded that they could relax somewhat as the Reef was most probably behind them. While they felt confident they had successfully passed the southern end of the Reef, they still spent an anxious night for the storm provided no respite. Perry noted that it had been the worst night any of the party had experienced at sea.

During the next day the sea gradually abated and about 2.00 pm on the tenth day since leaving Tulagi land was sighted. Perry's log records that the sighting of land caused the men to articulate their hidden fears. "How do you know it is Australia?" "How do you know it is not New Guinea?" "Suppose the enemy is already there, What?" Their navigation had, however, been nigh perfect for they entered and anchored in Hervey Bay which lies between Fraser Island and the mainland. Perry reported the crew met in the ship's cabin that evening and spent time in prayer, praise and thanksgiving.

Drama, however, for the *Melanesia* was not over. Four days were spent at Burnett Heads obtaining customs and medical clearance and sending telegrams to wives and to the Union Conference. The latter requested that Perry convey the *Melanesia* to Sydney and so the intrepid sailors began a leisurely sail down the eastern Australian coast. Unfortunately their arrival off Brisbane occurred after dark and it was decided that they would anchor in the lee of Moreton Island.

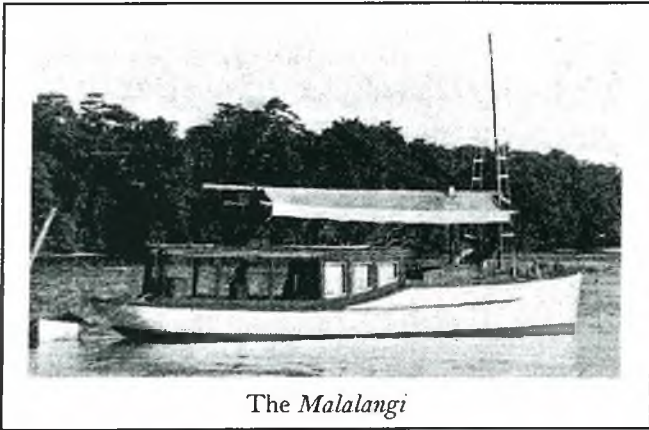
Just as they reached their proposed anchorage the *Melanesia* was illuminated by a powerful land-based searchlight. Guessing that an explanation was required,

they launched one of the small boats and Perry and Cormack rowed to the shore. There they were questioned by a military officer and discovered they were in a prohibited area. He expressed surprise that they had not been met at sea by a naval vessel. When asked how they had come into their anchorage, Perry was advised that their course had taken them straight through a minefield. While Perry talked with the officer, Jim Cormack conversed with the soldiers. The soldiers confided that two six-inch guns had trained on the *Melanesia* and the soldiers had their hands on the firing mechanisms awaiting orders to fire. Because they were not expected and the time of their arrival had been at night, there was deep suspicion that they were Japanese. The rest of the journey south, however, proved uneventful and the *Melanesia* arrived in Sydney Harbour on Sabbath, 28 February 1942. The final words in Perry's log were: "Our Heavenly Pilot had brought us into a haven of rest. Praise Him, Praise Him."

Unlike their compatriots who travelled south on the *Melanesia* and *Diari*, those missionaries who were located on the New Guinea mainland followed a different route when it came time to evacuate. Japanese troops occupied Lae and Salamaua in early March, but were not considered an immediate threat to the Adventist missions which tended to be inland. The Japanese did penetrate about forty-eight kilometres up the Markham Valley from Lae, but unusual flooding by the Markham River forced the Japanese back to the coast. This gave some breathing space. In early April, however, the commanding officer at Port Moresby advised Alec Campbell that the Australian Government was making a final evacuation of expatriates from an airfield in the western highlands and that unless he left then he could not expect any further assistance.<sup>36</sup>

In the early months of 1942, Campbell had decided to remain at his post until he was convinced that it was unwise to remain any longer. The official invitation to join the last party out, plus word that the Japanese were imprisoning some missionaries, convinced Campbell that the time was right. He therefore placed the mission program in the hands of national leaders and began his trek into western highlands. On the 16<sup>th</sup> of April Campbell was joined by David Brennan and the next day the two set out from the Kainantu Mission accompanied by some national workers. Two days later, having crossed the Ramu-Purari divide, they arrived at Bena Bena, near Goroka. Here it was Stanley Gander's turn to bid his mission family goodbye.

From Bena Bena the group made its way across the Gafuka Valley and across the 2440 metre divide between the Gafuka and Mairi valleys. While the hearts of the missionary group were heavy at having to leave their national friends, they did have time to enjoy the

The *Malalangi*The *Veilomani*

beautiful views and scenery of this part of New Guinea. None of the party had previously trekked through this part of the highlands and they were impressed by the friendly greetings they received. They were also impressed by the large numbers of New Guineans living in these highland valleys. As Campbell noted: "We had a deep feeling that our trek westwards was a

providential one, and for the sake of the gospel we desired to make the very best of it." While on their way out of New Guinea these intrepid missionaries were already thinking about their plans for this area upon their return.

From the Mari Valley the group walked down to the Chimbu and then made their way up the Whagi, that great valley that lies between the Bismarck and the Central Ranges. After nine days of toil, the group reached its destination, Mount Hagen, having walked all of 480 kilometres. While awaiting their aircraft, Campbell, Brennan and Gander walked a further 160 kilometres around the area and assessed its potential for Adventist missions upon their return to the highlands of New Guinea.<sup>37</sup> These were not persons abandoning their flocks, but committed missionaries exercising prudence in the face of unique danger and planning beyond the immediate toward the possibilities offered by the future.

Unfortunately, not all Adventist missionaries were able to successfully evacuate the war zone. In March 1942 church leadership, with a note of concern, advised they had not heard from Pastors Abbott and Atkins.<sup>38</sup> Located on Mussau Island when the Japanese launched their southward thrust, Arthur S Atkins was the most northerly of the New Guinea group of Ad-

ventist missionaries. Toward the end of January 1942, accompanied by Trevor Collett, an Adventist self-supporting missionary, Atkins began his evacuation on the small mission launch *Malalangi*. Atkins had arranged to travel as far as Put Put (now Kambubu) on New Britain and then to join a party leaving for the south on the larger mission vessel, *Veilomani*.

As the *Malalangi* group approached Put Put they saw the *Veilomani* leave port ahead of them. After a brief call at Put Put the *Malalangi* charged south and eventually caught up with the *Veilomani*. The latter had slowed in order to permit the smaller craft to catch up. The two vessels then proceeded south together, keeping close to the coastline. Unfortunately, they were surprised by a Japanese destroyer. As the occupants of the two mission boats escaped to the shore, the Japanese proceeded to stave in the *Malalangi* and set fire to the *Veilomani*. Atkins, a chronic asthmatic, was in ill health and this harrowing experience convinced him he did not have the strength to continue his escape.

While the rest of the party eventually succeeded in reaching Australia, Atkins was conveyed back to Put Put by native canoe. Collett, a nurse, elected to remain with and care for Atkins. Both were imprisoned by the Japanese and held at Rabaul.<sup>39</sup> At Rabaul Atkins' health deteriorated further and eventually he was admitted to the Japanese-controlled hospital where he died on 13 March 1942. In a letter to his wife, Collett advised of Atkins' death, but also reported that "the Japanese were very kind to him, and they did all they could for his comfort."<sup>40</sup>

Also imprisoned at Rabaul were two other Adventists, Len Thompson who had worked for the Australian government, and Mac Abbott, the superintendent of the New Guinea Mission. As leader of the work in New Guinea Abbott felt it was his responsibility to be the last Adventist missionary out of Rabaul. Furthermore, he felt there was a continuing role for himself providing assistance in the Rabaul hospital. Unfortunately, Abbott was still in Rabaul when the Japanese landed and he became a prisoner of war.

Even greater misfortune was to befall Thompson, Collett and Abbott. They, with other civilians and captured soldiers, were placed on a Japanese ship, the *Montevideo Maru*, with the destination of Hainan Island in the South China Sea. Nine days into their journey,

Trevor  
CollettLen  
ThompsonArthur  
Atkins

while near the Philippines, the *Montevideo Maru* was torpedoed and sunk by a US submarine on 1 July 1942.



Most of the Japanese crew and all 1053 prisoners were drowned.<sup>41</sup> Abbott, Atkins and Collett were the only Adventist missionaries to lose their lives as a direct result of the war.<sup>42</sup> The rest of the Adventist missionaries in New Guinea, Papua and the Solomon Islands evacuated safely and were later able to return to their mission stations.

### The Tulagi Affair

In that Stewart Firth strongly implies that Adventist missionaries were part of an undignified exit from the Solomon Islands through Tulagi, this assertion deserves more attention. Is there evidence that supports in any way Firth's judgment? Fortunately, documentary evidence is available that tells another story. In addition to the Superintendent, Hamley Perry, five other missionaries—Barrett, Cormack, Ferris, Gosling and Howse—each independently prepared reports on their experiences. These reports make several things clear about the evacuation: (1) the return to Australia was in harmony with the volition provided by the Union Conference and in response to the express directives given by British civil officers; (2) it was carried out in an orderly and planned manner; (3) there was a clear transfer of responsibility from expatriate to national leadership; (4) leave-taking from their 'national families' was sad, but confident; (5) the missionaries cooperated with British authorities in the use of Batuna as a major rendezvous point for other Europeans in the western Solomons; (6) Adventist mission launches were used to bring outlying people to Batuna and were part of the flotilla that conveyed them to Tulagi for evacuation by steamer; and (7) it was always intended that the Adventist male missionaries would ferry themselves on the *Melanesia* to Australia.<sup>43</sup>

The only Adventist missionary in the Solomons to attempt evacuation on a commercial vessel was David Ferris. It came about this way. Stationed at Kwailibese on the northern end of Malaita, Ferris attempted to keep informed on the international scene by monitoring wireless communication. From this communication Ferris judged that things were 'getting difficult'. He therefore decided to take the *G F Jones* down the coast to Auki and there confer with the British District Officer. The DO requested that Ferris convey the *G F Jones* to Tulagi and to take with him the nursing staff from the Church of England Hospital at Foandu. As it turned out, the nurses found their own way to Tulagi and Ferris sailed without other evacuees.

When he arrived at Tulagi, Ferris was met by British military personnel who immediately impressed the *G F Jones* into government service and directed him to board the evacuation steamer *Morinda*. When it was discovered that the *Morinda* was overcrowded, some

missionaries and civilians, including Ferris, were disembarked. In his report Ferris noted that "to my knowledge, all the officials remained on board."<sup>44</sup> Here was a case where government officials placed their own safety before the safety of civilians. Fortunately the naval officer who had taken charge of the *G F Jones* temporarily released it back to David Ferris so he could return to Malaita. This temporary release of the vessel was on condition that the national crew return the boat to Tulagi as soon as Ferris reached his mission station. As previously noted, the *G F Jones* fortuitously met up with the *Melanesia* well short of Malaita. After the departure of the *Melanesia* the *G F Jones* and several other Adventist mission vessels came under military control.

David Ferris's report on his evacuation records that upon learning that he had to leave the *Morinda* several young men offered to change places with him. While Ferris greatly appreciated their gallant gestures, he noted "of course I could not accept."<sup>45</sup> Although initially disappointed, Ferris accepted the situation and determined to make the best of things. When he met up with the *Melanesia* his fellow missionaries were delighted. One of their real concerns when they discovered that Ferris had left Malaita was the loss of an experienced sailor. Without the expertise Ferris provided they felt decidedly undermanned to sail to Australia. God, however, had providentially restored him to the *Melanesia* crew.<sup>46</sup>

It would appear that the assertion by Stewart Firth that Adventist missionaries abandoned their flocks and were part of the melee of people fleeing the Solomons had its genesis soon after the events outlined above. That is, Firth appears to have accepted unquestioningly what some others had asserted during the war years. As the fighting drifted away from the Solomons, the Union Conference was keen to have its missionaries return to their mission stations. They chaffed at the reluctance of the British authorities to permit the return of civilians. To this end the Union Conference drafted a Memorandum<sup>47</sup> to the British authorities then located in Fiji. In the Memorandum it was noted that in 1943 Pastor Norman A Ferris had met with a Major Sanders, District Officer for Malaita and then on leave in Sydney. Ferris sought information about the Adventist mission on Malaita. Major Sanders was far from helpful and advised Ferris that "he had no information to give him, and further, that inasmuch as our missionaries had abandoned their stations and native followers, they had forfeited their right to retain their mission following and, in consequence, would not be permitted to return to the group."

The Union Conference advised the British High Commission for the Western Pacific that they found Major Sanders' remarks deeply offensive and contrary

to the facts. They therefore sought clarification as to whether the remarks were a personal opinion or represented the position of the British authorities. In an effort to clarify matters, the Memorandum set out some basic facts concerning the evacuation of Adventist missionaries from the Solomons: (1) that Adventist missionaries left the Solomons when directed to do so by British officials; (2) that the decision to evacuate Adventist male missionaries using the mission ketch *Melanesia* had been arrived at in consultation with British administrative officials; (3) that contrary to the reports of 'certain officials', the *Melanesia* had sailed from the Solomons on 12 February 1942, two weeks after the Methodist Mission vessel, and several days after the large civilian group on the *Morinda*; and (4) that David Ferris had been required to remain behind at Tulagi while officials of the Solomon Islands Administration had made their escape on the *Morinda*. The Memorandum named the senior British civil officer who sailed on the *Morinda* and suggested he could be invited to confirm the veracity of the Adventist account. Although the Memorandum did not say so explicitly, the implication was clear. Some British officials, either through religious prejudice or as an attempt to justify their evacuation ahead of civilians, had circulated false reports with regard to the evacuation of Adventist missionaries from the Solomon Islands in February 1942.

#### Notes & References

- 1 Stewart Firth (1997) "The War in the Pacific," in Donald Denoon, ed. *The Cambridge History of the Pacific Islanders*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p 298.
- 2 For details concerning the early work of Seventh-day Adventist missionaries in Australia and New Zealand, see S Ross Goldstone (1980), *The Angel Said Australia*. Warburton, Vic: Signs Publishing Company; S Ross Goldstone (1983), *Nothing to Fear*. Auckland: North NZ Conference; Peter H Ballis, ed. (1985), *In and Out of the World*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press; and Arthur J Ferch, ed. (1986), *Adventist History in the South Pacific: 1885-1918*. Wairoonga: SPD of Seventh-day Adventists.
- 3 See Dennis Steley, "Advances and Reversals in Polynesia: 1890-1918," in Ferch, *Adventist History in the South Pacific*, pp.164-73.
- 4 *SDA Yearbook 1942*. Washington, D.C.: R & H Publishing, p 62.
- 5 *Ibid*, p 63; "Our Island Field—Australasian Division," *AR*, 25 May 1942.
- 6 *SDA Yearbook 1942*; "Our Island Field," *AR*, 25 May 1942.
- 7 *Ibid*.
- 8 *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing, s.v. New Caledonia and Loyalty Islands.
- 9 Joan Beaumont, "Australia's War: Asia and the Pacific", in Joan Beaumont, ed. (1996), *Australia's War: 1936-45*. St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, pp.26-53. See also, *The Historical Encyclopedia of World War II*. London: Macmillan Press, 1980, s.v. Japan.
- 10 Osmar White (1945), *Green Armour*. Ringwood, Vic. Penguin Books, p17.
- 11 Clem Lloyd and Richard Hall, eds, (1997), *Backroom Briefings: John Curtin's War*. Canberra: National Library of Australia, pp 46-48. John Robertson (1981), *Australia at War 1939-1945*. Melbourne: Willaim Heinemann, p24, noted that between January and June 1943, 11 ships were sunk off the Australian east coast, including the Australian hospital ship, *Centaur*, with the loss of 268 lives.
- 12 Australasian Union Conference Executive Committee Minutes, 23 January and 30 January, 1942.
- 13 Samuel B Griffith (1963), *The Battle for Guadalcanal*. New York: Bantam Books, p18. Harry A Gailey (1995), *The War in the Pacific: From Pearl Harbor to Tokyo Bay*. Novato, CA: Presidio, p174.
- 14 White, *Green Armour*, p18.
- 15 Robertson, *Australia at War*, pp.23-24.
- 16 Rose-Marie Radley (n.d.) "The Japanese advance toward Rabaul, Dec. 1941, and the departure of the last evacuees." The account is drawn from Captain Radley's diary.
- 17 Radley's diary reveals that following the initial Japanese bombing of Rabaul he made several coastal trips for Carpenters. The *Ambon* was then chartered to convey supplies and the Navy secret code to the Western Solomon Islands. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January Radley learned that Japanese forces had landed at Rabaul and Kavieng. Denied his home port, Radley sailed his ship south to Samarai on the eastern tip of Papua and then to Cairns and Townsville. The *Ambon* was signed over to the navy for the duration of the war.
- 18 J C H Perry, "Report of Evacuation of Solomon Islands," Unpublished document in the possession of Dr Graeme Perry. Besides Mrs Perry, the other wives evacuated from Gizo were Mesdames Barrett, Cormack, Gosling, Tucker, and Howse. Merle Howse was due to give birth to her third child and was fortunate to be assigned a cabin. Diary, John T Howse, 12 January 1942. While the Solomon Island wives had several days in which to prepare for evacuation, this was not the case in some parts of New Guinea. Stan Gander, for example, reported that he and his wife had but two hours notice. S H Gander, "News from New Guinea," *AR*, 6 April 1942.
- 19 Interview, Arnold Reye with Mrs Ruby Ferris, Victoria Point, Queensland, 20 January 2002. Ruby's husband, Norman, was already in Australia having returned for health reasons.
- 20 AUCEC Minutes, 31 December 1941.
- 21 AUCEC Minutes, 27 December 1941.
- 22 Minutes of the Superintendent's Conference, Rabaul, 9 and 10 June 1940, South Pacific Division Avondale College Heritage Collection (SPDACHC). Those present at Rabaul were S V Stratford and Reuben E Hare, representing the AUC, and W N Lock, E Mac Abbott, Arthur L Pascoe, Norman A Ferris, Cyril Pascoe and A P Carr representing the three missions. Stratford and Hare presented a detailed report to the Union Conference.
- 23 *Ibid*.
- 24 C E Mitchell, "Papua to Australia on the 'Diari,'" *AR*, 30 March 1942; R H Tutty, "Snapshots of Native Ministry in Solomons and New Guinea," *AR*, 14 June 1943.
- 25 AUC Officers, "Our Missionaries as Affected by the War". AUCEC Minutes, 27 January 1942.
- 26 A J Campbell, "Leaving New Guinea," *AR*, 13 July 1942.
- 27 *Ibid*.
- 28 Cyril Pascoe, "Flight from Bougainville," *AR*, 14 Sept 1942.
- 29 Letter, R H Frame to A C Reye, 23 January 2002.
- 30 AUC Officers, "Our Missionaries as Affected by the War."
- 31 Pascoe's account of his leaving Bougainville was published in three issues of the *AR*, 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> September, 1942.
- 32 C E Mitchell, "Papua to Australia on the 'Diari,'" *AR*, 30 March 1942. Robert Frame recalls that after the major repair to the engine bearings, it was decided to head directly south to Bramble Cay and thence along the Torres Strait islands to Thursday Island. E-mail, Robert R Frame to Arnold C Reye, 28 May 2002. The *Diari* was impressed by the military and later returned to Papua where it was used by the ANGAU Medical Department. See also, Eric A Boehm, "Evacuation from Papua." SPDACHC.
- 33 J C H Perry, "Solomon Islands to Australia on the 'Melanesia'", *AR*, 30 March 1942; Perry, "Report of Evacuation of Solomon Islands." On board at that time were A R Barrett, Jim Cormack, John Gosling, Hamley Perry, and Charles Tucker. A R Barrett, "Events Leading Up To, and During the Time of Our Evacuation from the Solomon Islands," SPDACHC. John Howse had been about business as usual visiting stations along the coast of Choiseul and paying his national workers. On the 25<sup>th</sup> January the local government officer boarded his ship, advised him of the Japanese landings at Rabaul, and requested that he leave the Solomons. Two days later the directive to withdraw was confirmed by the Union Conference. Diary, John T Howse, 25 and 27 January 1942.
- 34 *Ibid*. One condition imposed by the government for the return



of the *Melanesia* to Australia was that no nationals be retained on the vessel.

- 35 Diary, John T Howse, 17 February 1942; J T Howse, ANZAC Day talk given Avondale Memorial Church, 25 April 1987.
- 36 A J Campbell, "Leaving New Guinea," *AR*, 13 July 1942 and 20 July 1942.
- 37 *Ibid.* For security reasons, Campbell's published account did not include the name of their Highlands destination, but Alwyn Campbell confirms that his father was evacuated through Mount Hagen. e-mail, Alwyn Campbell to Arnold Reye, 24 Jan 2002.
- 38 H E Piper, "Our Missionaries," *AU*, 30 March 1942.
- 39 S V Stratford, "News from New Guinea," *AR*, 13 April 1942.
- 40 S V Stratford, "Atkins", *AR*, 9 June 1942.
- 41 Neville Threlfall (1975) *One Hundred Years in the Islands: The Methodist/United Church in the New Guinea Islands Region 1875-1975*. Brisbane: Trinity Press, p145. This account of the fate of Abbott and Collett has been challenged by some nationals who aver they did not see any prisoners board the *Montevideo Maru* and who assert that the missionaries were beheaded by the Japanese. The list of civilians captured in the Rabaul area and lost on the *Montevideo Maru* included E M Abbott, T D Collett and L C Thompson. The list is based on Japanese documents and given in Douglas A Alpin, ed. *Rabaul 1942*. Reprinted 1994. Broad-beach Waters, Qld: Pacific Press, pp 292-3.
- 42 *Ibid.*, p 149. Threlfall notes that there has been a suggestion the missionaries did not embark on the *Montevideo Maru*, but were kept in Rabaul and eventually executed. He states, however, that fellow prisoners who did not go on the ship later testified that the missionaries did embark and sail from Rabaul.
- 43 D A Ferris, "Escape from Malaita ahead of Japanese invasion, 1942," SPDACHC; "Statement by J Gosling re Evacuation from the Solomon Islands," SPDACHC; "Statement by D A Ferris re Evacuation from the Solomon Islands," SPDACHC; "Statement by J C H Perry re Evacuation from the Solomon Islands," SPDACHC; A R Barrett, "Events Leading Up To, and During the Time of Our Evacuation from the Solomon Islands," SPDACHC; James E Cormack, "We Escape the Japs," SPDACHC; and J Howse, "Report on Evacuation, 1942," SPDACHC.
- 44 "Statement by D A Ferris re Evacuation from the Solomon Islands," SPDACHC.
- 45 D A Ferris, "Escape from Malaita ahead of Japanese invasion, 1942," SPDACHC.
- 46 A R Barrett, "Events Leading up to, and During the Time of Our Evacuation from the Solomon Islands," SPDACHC; James E Cormack, "We Escape the Japs," SPDACHC; and J Howse,

"Report on Evacuation, 1942," SPDACHC.

- 47 President, Australasian Union Conference, "Memorandum Re Evacuation of Seventh-day Adventist Missionaries from the Solomon Islands," n.d., SPDACHC.



## ESTABLISHING THE FIRST PERMANENT BASE OF OPERATIONS IN VANUATU—Part 3 Further progress on the island of Atchin 1916–1921



### Cultural dance

When Andrew and Jean Stewart arrived at Atchin at 9 pm on April 29, 1916 the Vanuatu Mission under the leadership of Calvin Parker had entered the bush villages of Lalip and Rel on Malekula and the coastal village of Matanavat on

North-east Malekula and the Big Nambus village of Tanmaru on North-west Malekula. Before returning to Australia and being transferred to Fiji he acquainted Stewart with the field.

As the months came and went Stewart, like Parker saw rays of hope but at times questioned whether the work of the mission was making any impression on the people of Atchin Island.

His first introduction to the culture of the Atchinese was when he noticed that the natives in a village on one side of Atchin were working at cutting out large

drums from the trunks of hard durable trees. He was interested in how they were made and hollowed out and was amazed that the sound when the drum was beaten vigorously could be heard for several miles. These drums were about eight feet in length and cultural figures representing human faces were cut on the upper end and painted. When finished they were planted obliquely in the ground.

The completion of the drums meant a celebration and when Stewart met no response to the ringing of the bell for day school and hearing the beating of the drums and the accompanying singing and shouting he walked across the island to where the sounds were coming from.

In the village he witnessed the final rehearsal of one of their 'plays', which they called the 'fish dance'. He said that there were about fifty or sixty boys, youth and men assembled on the large dancing ground and divided into groups according to size. Each group represented shoals of fish of different kinds. He watched as a 'shoal' of small boys first darted off quietly in a zig-zag manner up and down in unison with the beating of the smaller drums. A large 'shoal' of bigger ones came out, and before long were in close pursuit of the smaller. These were followed by another group representing a huge shark. Suddenly everything was accelerated by the most vigorous beating of the large and small drums.

Stewart remarked:

The old men are the monitors and zealously instruct the younger ones in these old customs. Friday was the day appointed for the ceremony and the women were busy all the week bringing large quantities of food from the mainland, for they expected many visitors from the surrounding districts.<sup>1</sup>

The celebrations continued all Friday night and ended at sunrise with the 'fish dance'. The date of the dance was not recorded but it is estimated to have been in September 1916.

When the mission bell rang on Sabbath for morning worship not one Atchin male attended. After the Stewarts had breakfast the bell was rung a second time for the women's meeting and not one Atchin woman attended. The Stewarts decided to walk around the island and as they did so they found men and boys lying asleep along the beach and all the women and children they met had reddened eyes from lack of sleep. During the days that followed Andrew and Jean continued visiting around the island and by mid-week many men and women were asking when it would be Sabbath.

After ringing the bell at half-past six on the following Sabbath morning Stewart looked toward the beach and there he saw men and boys gathering. At

the sound of the second bell they walked up from the beach and entered the church. By the time the meeting was ready to commence the little church was filled to capacity.

Stewart wrote:

After the closing hymn we asked for some to pray and Mairo and Meltekeiek, men of about forty years, offered prayer, one in Atchinese, the other in Pidgin English [Bislama]...these men prayed for help, not only for themselves, but for the missionaries and all the people of Atchin.<sup>2</sup>

When the bell rang for the meeting for the women most of the women attended the one on the compound and also separate meetings in various places around the island. They enjoyed singing the hymns that Andrew Stewart had translated into their language.

Early in January 1918 Ross James and his wife Mabel arrived at Atchin and they were soon involved in attending to the needs of the sick and wounded. A quarrel on Atchin resulted in one man having a finger fractured and badly lacerated. James amputated it. From a neighbouring island another man had part of his hand shot away in an encounter with a Malekulan 'bush tribe'. Ross James was also involved in teaching and translating songs into the Atchin and Ambrym [Baiap] languages.

On October 10, 1920 Donald and Lilian Nicholson arrived at Atchin. They had had previous mission experience in the Solomon Islands.

At this time Andrew Stewart observed that the attitude of the Atchinese toward mission work had changed dramatically since the Parkers and Carrs first arrived on the island. Stewart felt that a most friendly relationship existed between them and all the people on the island.<sup>3</sup>

When Pastor Harold Blunden the then Lay Activities Secretary of the Australasian Union Conference visited Atchin in September 1921 he wrote in the *Australasian Record* of evidences of a coming change in the attitude of the Atchinese. He put this down to a new style of house being built, and as an illustration, he spoke of:

Malresres who had built a house on land joining the mission property. He observed: that the house was built on a pattern which was evidently superior to anything to be seen in the villages, having doors and windows and walls made of limestone plaster, that here was a decided lack of the usual care in looking after the dancing grounds, that Atchin was now a safe place in which to live, that the strangling of the elderly by a member of the family had ceased. He also saw that Malresres wore calico at all times and

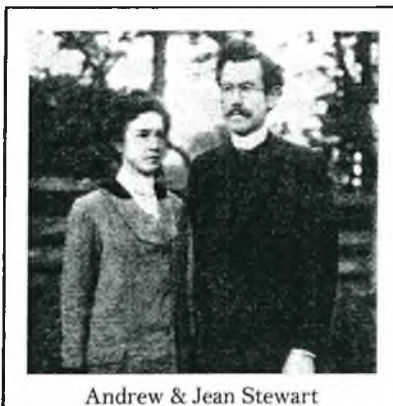


was ridiculed for doing so. Blunden was told that when Malresres was absent from Atchin for six months working on an inter-island steamer that part of his rations consisted of tobacco which he constantly refused to touch. The European crew did their best to force him to use alcohol but this he also refused.

When given washing to do the crew intentionally left money in the pockets to test his integrity. He returned the clothing to them and asked that the money be removed otherwise he would not wash the clothes.

Blunden further commented that at meetings held at Atchin that Malresres testified and prayed intelligently and should soon be ready for baptism. Others who were progressing toward baptism were Metic, Meiek Semmi and Meiek Woraim.<sup>4</sup>

Ross and Mabel James returned to Atchin from furlough in October 1921 and settled once again at Big Bay and Donald and Lilian Nicholson who were caring for the station moved to Atchin and worked with Andrew and Jean Stewart until the Stewarts returned to Australia in December 1921 on the *Pacificque*. The vessel arrived in Sydney on January 15, 1922. Naomi travelled with her foster parents to Sydney.<sup>5</sup>



Andrew & Jean Stewart

During the absence of the Stewarts in Australia, Donald Nicholson cared for Atchin and North-east and North-west Malekula and was the first to make contact with a tribe of bush people who later settled at Espiegles Bay. He also encouraged the beginnings of outreach on the island of Ambrym.

Andrew Stewart writing relative to the progress of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on Atchin during the nine years of mission influence said:

After about nine years' work on the island of Atchin, six of which has been our privilege to be connected with the mission, we see indications of the desired change, the most encouraging being the attitude of many of the young people. From a state of semi-savage living and almost nude condition, they had been converted to clean, kind, happy young people with evidence of a spiritual experience. Sabbath is observed by a number of people on the island and the home life and social conditions are much improved.<sup>6</sup>

#### References

- <sup>1,2,3</sup> A G Stewart, *Australasian Record*, 13 Nov 1916.
- <sup>4</sup> H M Blunden, *AR*, 23 Jan 1922.
- <sup>5</sup> Editorial, *ibid*.
- <sup>6</sup> A G Stewart, *AR*, 30 Oct 1922.

## PIONEER AUSTRALIAN MISSIONARIES TO FIJI: Arthur & Louis Currow (1901-1904 & 1903-1906)

Stephen J Currow



When E D Sharp advised the Foreign Mission Board that on health grounds he was unable to accept the call to relieve John Fulton in Fiji, the Board requested that the Australasian Union Conference find someone, even though the position would continue to be funded by the North Pacific Conference.<sup>1</sup> In response to this, the 1901 Australasian Union Conference Session appointed Arthur Currow to ministerial and canvassing work in Fiji<sup>2</sup> on a salary of £1.15/- per week.<sup>3</sup>

After two shattered dreams, the rejection by Ethel May Lacey in favour of marrying Willie White<sup>4</sup> and Morse's

letter declining denominational endorsement for studying towards a medical degree,<sup>5</sup> Arthur appeared set to make a meaningful contribution to the church as the first Australian Adventist missionary to Fiji.<sup>6</sup> Already in the seven or eight years he had been an Adventist, Arthur had been influential in the conversion from the Salvation Army of his elder brother Louis,<sup>7</sup> and the conversion of his younger sister Miriam. Both Louis and his family and Miriam and her family would also serve in the Pacific—Louis with Arthur in Fiji and Miriam on Pitcairn and Norfolk Islands.<sup>8</sup>

#### Arthur's Arrival in Fiji

Arthur sold his land, including a

Stephen J Currow, DMin, a graduate of Avondale College, Trinity College of Music (speech), Andrews University, and Fuller Theological Seminary began his service in South NZ as pastor and chaplain from 1981–84. He spent the next 2 years in the South Queensland Conference as Assistant Youth Director and chaplain. He commenced mission service in 1987 when he was appointed Chair of Theology at Fulton College, Fiji. On transferring to Pacific Adventist University (then College) in PNG in 1993, Stephen taught in the Department of Theology for the next 3 years. During 1996 and 7 he pastored the Papatoetoe Church, Auckland in the NNZ Conference.

From 1998–2002 (August), Stephen was located at Avondale College where he was a Senior Lecturer in Ministry & Mission, Director of both Theological Field Education and the Institute of Church Ministry (2001–02). He is now on the faculty of Newbold College, England.

He is married to Narisa (Stanton). They have two daughters, Chelise and Chanel.

During recent years he has authored a variety of articles and prepared papers for conferences, workshops and seminars on current issues, particularly involving church growth and nurture of members.

He holds membership in The Alban Institute and Australian New Zealand Association of Theological Schools.

small three-bedroom house, 120 fruit trees and over 100 young grape vines, adjacent to Mr Fletcher's store in Cooranbong,<sup>9</sup> boarded the USS Hauroto in Sydney on 25 September (8.30 pm)<sup>10</sup> and arrived in Suva on 2 October 1901 (7.00 pm), never to live in Australia again.<sup>11</sup> With his background in printing,<sup>12</sup> nursing,<sup>13</sup> ministry<sup>14</sup> and canvassing,<sup>15</sup> John Fulton greatly welcomed Arthur, especially as his printing skills were urgently needed for the ongoing publication of the new evangelistic paper, *Rarama* meaning light<sup>16</sup>

As in any expanding mission with fledgling resources, Arthur's job description soon expanded beyond ministry and canvassing. In just a few months, he was also giving simple medical treatments<sup>17</sup> and was busy fundraising for the building and outfitting of a new mission launch to replace the cutter *Cina*, meaning lamp, which had recently been wrecked on a reef.<sup>18</sup> Arthur challenged the locals to give sacrificially to the project and then urged the Australasian churches to show economy in Sabbath-school expenses so that the largest offering yet could be given to purchase the urgently needed launch.<sup>19</sup> The Napier Church was one church to respond to this challenge.<sup>20</sup>

Arthur had also stepped into the role of teacher at a school for children and also a school for young men. It was obviously only a temporary assignment, as the Polynesian Committee searched for another teacher to respond to the call to Fiji. But when the search proved unsuccessful, the Committee wrote to John Fulton requesting he allow Arthur to continue teaching. Arthur liked the work and was considered by Fulton to be "a good labourer for the islands."<sup>22</sup>

When C. H. Parker returned to Fiji in July 1902, he was reassigned from Suva Vou to the Lau group to commence Adventist mission work in the eastern islands of Fiji.<sup>23</sup> This allowed Arthur to continue living in what had been Parker's house on the Suva Vou compound.<sup>24</sup>

As the impact of the tropical conditions took their toll on John Fulton's health, he requested relocation to Avondale where he planned to continue work-

ing on the translation and publication of an abridged edition of *The Great Controversy* in Fijian. This request was granted and the Fulton family left Fiji around October 1902. However, John Fulton, from the distance of Avondale, remained the Superintendent of Fiji Mission. The Parkers continued as the missionaries in the eastern islands and Arthur as the missionary based in Suva.

During his first year, Arthur learnt the Fijian language<sup>25</sup> and observed the customs and lifestyle of the islanders. In his letter to the *Good Health* magazine, Arthur upholds the Fijians as positive proof of the principles advocated by the magazine. He commends their simple diet which was free from complex combinations of food laden with "condiments, sweets and grease". He also applauds their practical dress code, free from the restrictions of contemporary fashions. Arthur envied the simplicity of their life and noted the freedom from disease wherever the Fijian was separated from "the corrupting influences ... and enslaving forms of civilisation."<sup>26</sup> He also clearly differentiated between the role of Christianising and westernising the people of Fiji when he wrote, "If our civilisation cannot put us in the enjoyment of better health of mind and body, and make us better morally, then our so-called advancement is not worth the trouble and expense of acquiring it."<sup>27</sup>

In a letter to Willie White Arthur described his work as "very pleasant" and giving "constant joy," yet expressed his frustration at his inability to respond to the many requests created from the interests aroused through the Adventist literature. He laments that "the isles shall wait (patiently and long) for the law." This same letter outlined the financial conditions of the church members and requested a donation of £2 or £3 from Ellen White and Willie White's family toward the construction of the Suva Vou church. This request was in response to Ellen White's commitment "to put something into every church."<sup>28</sup>

E H Gates, as Secretary for Missions, visited Suva Vou in January 1903



confirming Arthur's account in the letter to Willie White. During the Gates visit, Arthur "briefed Gates on work in Fiji, translated for him at meetings and expressed his anxiety for another white teacher to come so he (Arthur) can visit the islands."<sup>29</sup>

Fulton, writing on Fiji from Cooranbong, also notes that "a very cheering report comes from the work in his (Arthur's) district."<sup>30</sup> "Brother Currow has a very busy life visiting different parts, printing, preaching and tied down with a school for children and another for young men ... (and) helping to erect a church in Suva Vou."<sup>31</sup> Fulton also notes that the Avondale Press had donated a larger press to save "time and wearing labour" in the printing of the *Rarama* in such a hot climate.<sup>32</sup>

The building of the launch proved to be quite a challenge. Fifteen months after the thirteenth Sabbath offering, the launch was still being outfitted. The problems included sending a 10 hp motor from the USA, when the boat was only built for a 6-8 hp motor, and supplying steel and bronze fittings instead of just bronze fittings. These steel and bronze fittings were deemed in Fiji to be only suitable for fresh-water, yet the US supplier and the Fijian importer of the fittings claimed that they had provided what was required. The Adventist books were ready to be sold, but until the launch was completed, there was no way of travelling with them.<sup>33</sup> The launch, named *Adi Suva* (Queen of Suva)<sup>34</sup> by the ship-builder, eventually commenced service after another three months.<sup>35</sup>

Another report, towards the end of 1903, describes Arthur's work on the *Rarama*, as well as his teaching, church building and general missionary work. The church was soon to be dedicated and there had been three baptisms on the previous Sabbath.<sup>36</sup>

### Louis' Call to Fiji

Arthur, in true missionary style, dreamed of ways in which he could reach not only the 93,000 Fijians, but also 2,500 Europeans and the 20,000 indentured Indians, many of whom at the end of their contracts were getting residential status.<sup>37</sup> With his nursing background and his desire to integrate the medical and gospel work,<sup>38</sup> Arthur thought that treatment rooms offer-

ing medical missionary work could be such a key, despite the free medical treatments offered by the government to the citizens. Consequently he suggested this evangelistic opportunity to his brother, Louis, who with his wife Lizzie and Arthur, had trained as nurses in the first intake at Summer Hill.<sup>39</sup> Louis and Lizzie volunteered to come and were appointed as the first self-supporting medical missionaries to Fiji,<sup>40</sup> despite Fulton's publicly expressed concern regarding the difficulties of self-supporting work in that country.<sup>41</sup> Louis,



Hydrotherapy staff at the Hamilton (NSW) Turkish baths c 1900.  
Back Row: (L to R) R A Natrass, Miriam Currow, (later Minnie Adams), Alice Booth (Later Mrs Rowe)  
Front Row: Dr Rand, Lizzie & Louis Currow  
"Historic Photo Gallery", *Australasian Record* 11 Aug 1969, 7.

Lizzie and their children George (3 yrs) and Miriam (1 yr), along with Eva Edwards under appointment to work with the Parkers,<sup>42</sup> and John Fulton, visiting for two months, sailed on USS *Manapouri* from Sydney 23 September 1903 (10.30 pm) via Lautoka and arrived in Suva 2 October (4.00 am).<sup>43</sup> This voyage, two years after Arthur's arrival brought the second group of Australian Adventist missionaries to Fiji. It was quite an eventful trip with the ship encountering a heavy gale including mountainous waves, strong north-easterly winds, seasickness and damage to the boat's hatch.<sup>44</sup>

Louis' family's travel costs from Melbourne amounted to £18 and were authorised as Mission expenses.<sup>45</sup>

Louis took little time in placing advertisements in both local newspapers, the *Fiji Times* published on Wednesday and Saturday and the *Western Pacific Herald* published on Tuesday and Friday. These advertisements over the next three months varied from the initial advertorial<sup>46</sup> to the block advertisement which described the range of services offered by both Louis and Lizzie<sup>47</sup> to the later ones which tried to create a need for health services and offer massage as a solution.<sup>48</sup> The address listed was always PO Suva.

Louis, as a masseur, was prepared to treat all forms of acute and chronic disease by "rational methods".<sup>49</sup> Initial advertising offered treatment for rheumatics, dyspepsia and indigestion, with later advertisements recommending tonic treatments, to be administered in homes, for nervous complaints.<sup>50</sup> Massage, combining both the use of water and electricity, was the main method of treatment, with Louis claiming that it would accomplish amazing results.<sup>51</sup>

### The First Fijian Council <sup>52</sup>

During this visit to Fiji, John Fulton convened the first Fijian Church Council in Suva Vou, on 2-5 November 1903. Expatriate delegates to this Council were John Fulton, the Parkers, Arthur Currow, the newly arrived Sister Read, Sister Edwards, and Louis & Lizzie Currow and Sister Peoples who was en route to America. Fulton was the chairperson and Arthur was appointed as the secretary of the Council. Unlike the custom of other denominations where one or maybe two island brethren joined such councils, this Council was well attended by them. The meeting started with worship based on Acts 15, followed by Fulton's remarks that under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, similar decisions needed to be made in Fiji. The agenda was presented and a sub-committee of C. H. Parker, Pauliasi Bunoa and Arthur Currow was appointed to draft resolutions.

While awaiting the subcommittee's recommendations, the group discussed the medical work. Louis Currow reported on his first three weeks, in which he had given 66 treatments, 29 of which were free; for the other 37 he earned £10.15s. Louis was asked to express his desires and make suggestions for the work. Following that discussion, the meeting voted that:

- the medical work be known as the *Fiji Medical Mission*, and take the form of health education for whites and the island people;
  - islanders would be charged a nominal fee which could be paid in cash or labour according to the ability of the individual;
  - in order to give the work a public standing, rooms were to be secured in Suva as soon as advisable;
  - Louis would also be responsible for the health foods and sanitary supplies;
  - the *Rarama* would run free advertisements advertising Louis' medical ministry amongst the people.
- In the subsequent meetings of the Council, twelve other resolutions, as recommended by the sub-committee, were passed. These included:
- adopting the Fijian name given by outsiders, *The Church of the Seventh Day*, as the official denominational name in Fijian;
  - requesting that the Australasian Union Conference unite Fiji with Samoa and Tonga;
  - developing publishing strategies to encourage people to become canvassers of literature on a commission basis; targeting the Solomon Islanders living in Fiji so that the truth would return with them

on their return home; commissioning publication projects including four new tracts in 1904 and a hymn book containing not less than 100 hymns;

- organising Sabbath School programs, facilities and reports as well as arranging for the publication of the monthly Sabbath School lessons in the *Rarama*;
- endorsing the Union Conference's action to appoint a teacher and establish the Polynesian Mission Training School in Fiji, which, in the interim, would continue to operate at Suva Vou;
- abstaining from the cultivation, sale or use in any way of the island drink *yagona* and tobacco and pledging to discard all things classed as unclean and unsuitable for food;
- separating from idolatry, riotous feasting and worldly pleasures which are contrary to the spirit and practices of the gospel;
- shunning debt as leprosy;
- defining marriage with unbelievers as being "unequally yoked" and denying ministers the ability to marry parties divided in religious belief,
- exhorting faithfulness in tithing, returning to the Lord His own,
- conducting meetings at sunset to welcome in and close the Sabbath and
- acknowledging by praise and thanksgiving the goodness of God and gratitude for the presence of the Holy Spirit in the meetings.

Parker perceived that the Council "sat together in heavenly

places; for not a note of discord marred the sweet influence of the Spirit."<sup>54</sup> A number of these actions were subsequently endorsed by the Australasian Union Conference.<sup>55</sup>

### Arthur's Marriage

Arthur left Suva on USS *Rokotino* on 14 January (11.30pm), bound for Auckland<sup>56</sup> for a three month break.<sup>57</sup> On 8 March 1904, Pastor Baker, Arthur's fellow student from Australasian Bible School days<sup>58</sup> and now acting President of the New Zealand Conference, <sup>59</sup> officiated at Arthur's marriage to Margaret Elisabeth Reid in Napier, New Zealand.<sup>60</sup> On the day he arrived in Napier, Pastor Baker received an urgent request from the Kaeo Church.<sup>61</sup> Within a fifty-mile radius, interest had been aroused amongst 5000 Maoris. Baker, concerned that he didn't have the resources to meet this exciting opportunity, shared the matter with Arthur Currow, who expressed interest in the project. He obviously explained to Baker that he was not due back in Fiji until 20 April and proposed that he could stay another month to make the visit to the Maoris worth-

### Mr. & Mrs. L Currow

#### MASSEURS

Are prepared to treat all Forms of  
Acute And Chronic Diseases.  
Tonic Treatments for nervous  
complaints administered in homes  
Address— Suva P.O.

An early advertisement. *Western Pacific Herald* 20 October 1903.



while if Fulton was prepared to print the *Rarama* at Avondale and send it to Fiji for distribution. Consequently, Arthur sent a letter to Fulton and Baker sent a letter of request to Gates, which in Gates' absence was forwarded to Fulton.<sup>62</sup> Apparently, Arthur's letter to Fulton also expressed discontent regarding some issues in Fiji, revealing an attitude which Fulton didn't appreciate.<sup>63</sup>

### Arthur's Return to Fiji

Arthur and Elisabeth left Napier on 17 March. The Napier Church expressed their disappointment at the loss of such an active member.<sup>64</sup> However, in Auckland a few days later, Arthur received a reply from Fulton. Fulton's position, as described in a letter to Irwin, was to tell Arthur to return at once to Fiji and recommence the publication of the *Rarama*.<sup>65</sup> Apparently, Elisabeth and her family were also not happy about Arthur considering the trip to Kaeo.<sup>66</sup> Consequently, Arthur and Elisabeth boarded the USS *Moura* in Auckland on 23 March 1904 (2.10 pm) and arrived in Suva on 27 March 1904 (4.00 pm).<sup>67</sup>

While Arthur was away, Parker visited Suva in March 1904, and with Louis Currow, met E H Gates on his tour of the islands, made an itinerary to the Ra Coast and also supervised the building of a new cutter to service the eastern islands.<sup>68</sup> Louis was the major donor for this cutter.<sup>69</sup> Parker noted that the Suva Vou school students were working in their gardens awaiting Arthur's return.<sup>70</sup>

Also in progress, awaiting the final £50 expected from the first quarter 1904 thirteenth Sabbath School offering, was the Suva Vou Church building. In promoting the offering through the *Record*, Arthur, in his role as both overseer of the Suva Vou church and Treasurer of Fiji Mission,<sup>71</sup> reviewed the financial circumstances and sacrificial commitment of the Fijians and requested support from Australia and New Zealand.<sup>72</sup>

In addition, Arthur faced a number of important issues: adjustment to marital responsibilities, readjustment to Fijian cultural context, his wife's culture shock, a backlog of work, additional roles due to not only the existing lack of personnel but also the transfer of a worker to the Lau group, an increasing interest from literature distribution but limited human resources to meet the enquiries, temperamental health<sup>73</sup> and the attitudinal complications which had surfaced in New Zealand.

### Challenges for the Medical Work

In the meantime, Louis' work continued to be blessed by God. In March 1904, Louis reported to Gates that "he had all the work he could do." Louis also reported that a prominent dentist in Suva had offered him the privilege of opening treatment rooms in his centrally located house. God was giving him favour with all classes—Fijians, whites and Indians—as he was helping them both physically and spiritually. In his first four-and-a-half months, Louis had earned £80.11s.1d and still given almost a third (142) of his treatments free. Louis noted that many of the Indians showed enthusiastic appreciation for the medical work and it was hoped that a spiritual foothold could be gained amongst them through this activity.<sup>74</sup>

A new development in the medical missionary

ministry was advertised by way of public notices in the Fiji Times. Louis and Lizzie advised the residents of Suva, Levuka and Lautoka of the limited opportunity for indoor patients with chronic disease to be treated at their Suva Vou Health Home. They claimed that this residential experience would assist nature in restoring the sick.<sup>75</sup>

However, despite the positive results and glowing testimonials, Louis faced some serious challenges. In a letter to Irwin, the Union Conference President, Louis highlighted the serious opposition from two of the four doctors and two dentists already operating in Suva. The two opposing doctors were also government medical officers, entrusted with the responsibility of administering the law. When one of these officials found Louis administering treatments

to one of his patients, as requested by the patient, he abused Louis by calling him a charlatan and an unqualified man. He also set about to visit other patients of Louis and turn them against Louis. Louis, although operating within the ordinance and supported by the favourable doctors and dentist, had no documentation to show the authorities if they were to ask for his qualifications. Consequently, as a Conference employee, albeit self-supporting, he requested the Union Conference President to take steps to confirm his claim to be a duly qualified worker.<sup>76</sup>

Louis and Lizzie later found a home and land, belonging to a patient, for lease on the outskirts of Suva. Here they continued to serve both Europeans, indentured Indians and Fijians. They treated the Europeans in the house and the Indians and Fijians in the out-houses. Amongst the Indians, Louis continued to have

#### PUBLIC NOTICE

**W**e beg to inform the Public of Suva, Levuka, Lautoka and other towns, that we are prepared to take in a limited number of INDOOR PATIENTS, for all forms of Chronic Diseases, at our

#### SUVA VOU HEALTH HOME.

Acute Diseases also treated by the most Modern Up-to-date methods.

We employ Hot Air, Vapour, Russian Electric Sitz, and Massage. Baths, Salt Glows, Saline Sponges, Dry Electricity, and General Massage. These methods, coupled with a corrected dietary and delightful surroundings, all assist Nature in restoring the sick.

Terms: Two Guineas.

Correspondence invited.

L Currow, Masseur.

Suva Vou Health Home advertisement. *Fiji Times*, 7 May 1904.

good results. He longed for the day when some "present truth literature" would be available for these very needy souls. Again, Louis testified that they had "not really been idle one day" since they began. Despite the challenges, their prospects were bright, and their hope and confidence were in God.<sup>77</sup>

### Fulton Returns to Fiji

The complications which arose as Arthur and Elisabeth were leaving New Zealand set the stage for the relationship between Arthur and Fulton to deteriorate. Fulton didn't appreciate the letter that Arthur sent on his return to Fiji. Subsequently, Fulton transferred Arthur to the Ra Coast. Arthur wrote to Fulton in May, telling him that, instead of relocating as requested, he had settled in his mind to spend the rest of the year at Suva Vou until those who were planning to come were prepared. Fulton felt this decision was sudden, unexpected and something like an explosion.<sup>78</sup>

Susie Fulton with her children Agnes and Georgie, and accompanied by Edith Guillard, returned to Fiji<sup>79</sup> during May 1904. On her arrival, she wrote at least two reports back to John Fulton. Fulton's letters to Irwin quote from these reports, accusing Arthur of appearing not to do any work, not attending Sabbath School, only preaching once a week on Sabbath morning, allowing mission equipment to deteriorate in the tropical conditions, leaving the mission compound overgrown with weeds, agitating discontent amongst the nationals by continuing to contact the Fijian who had been transferred to the Lau group, planning to use the money raised in Napier only for work in the Suva Vou district and employing a house-help. Susie Fulton also feared that Louis would side with Arthur and compound the problem.<sup>80</sup> In her first five days back in Fiji, she summarised her perceptions of Arthur as "I have married a wife, please excuse me."<sup>81</sup>

At the Committee Meeting of the Australasian Union Conference, 31 May 1904, "portions of a letter from J E Fulton were read, showing that Arthur Currow was taking a course which was likely to prove detrimental to the work in Fiji, and refuses to follow instructions sent to him. In view of this Brother Fulton thinks it desirable for him [Fulton] to return to Fiji at the close of the present school term."<sup>82</sup> Only then was action taken to reappoint John Fulton to Fiji at the end of the current Avondale School term. John Fulton, accompanied by his daughter, Jessie, returned to Fiji on the USS *Manapouri* in July 1904 to join his wife and son who had returned prior to this decision.<sup>83</sup> Also on the vessel was Stephenson, a British Adventist missionary who had already worked in Samoa, en route to pioneer the work in Rotuma.<sup>84</sup>

In the meeting, 9 August 1904, a second "letter

from J E Fulton was read, referring to the condition of affairs in Fiji, particularly to the course pursued by Arthur Currow, against whom he makes charges of continued neglect of duty, and harsh conduct towards the natives."<sup>85</sup> Action was then taken to recall Arthur Currow from Fiji. Also at this series of meetings, action was taken to refer Arthur's wages for the period while he was in New Zealand to the Conference Committee who later decided to pay him only half wages for this time.<sup>86</sup>

In September, Georgie Fulton fell sick and died unexpectedly. Arthur secured the child's coffin from Suva and during the funeral service led in the Scripture Reading.<sup>87</sup>

When Anna Hindson, the Sabbath School and Youth Secretary for the Australasian Union Conference, visited Fiji on 7 November, in transit from Sydney to the United States with her family, they were met in a boat by Arthur and Elisabeth. Around town they also met Sybil Read and the Louis Currow family. They then proceeded to Suva Vou, enjoying the excitement of seeing the reality of projects, including the church building and the launch, for which they, along with many other Sabbath School members, had given sacrificially. The printing press was now located in one of the rooms in Fulton's house. Anna Hindson noted that there were now four organised churches throughout the Fijian Islands, representing about 150 Sabbath-keepers.<sup>88</sup>

### Arthur's Departure

A few days later, 11 November 1904 (2.30 pm), Arthur and Elisabeth sailed from Suva to Auckland on the USS *Navna*<sup>89</sup> and returned to Napier. The next mention of Arthur and Elisabeth is in Parker's report from the Fiji Mission to the 1906 Australasian Union Conference Session where he expressed concern at being the only expatriate missionary in Fiji. Arthur Currow had been recalled, Louis had returned due to poor health and John Fulton had been appointed as President of the New South Wales Conference.<sup>90</sup> Arthur had been so keen to ensure that his first church was a success.<sup>91</sup> Despite Arthur's contribution to the breakdown in the relationship with Fulton, his return to self-supporting medical work for eight years suggests that he viewed this recall from Fiji as a major disappointment.

### Developing Buresela

The needs of the Polynesian Mission Training Institution continued to be discussed. Because of the limitations of the Suva Vou site, the decision was made in February 1905 to relocate the interim training institution to leased land at Buresela. This decision meant



that many of the missionaries would also relocate from Suva Vou to Buresela. Plans for the relocation of some of the houses were made.

When considering how the mission at Suva Vou would continue, it was decided that Louis Currow would lease the house and land at Suva Vou at a price which would not only pay for the land rental at Suva Vou but also contribute to the land rental of the new property. It was also hoped that Louis could assist the local church, so as not to look as if the Church was abandoning the Suva Vou mission.<sup>92</sup> This arrangement lasted for about nine months when Louis decided that due to impaired health he also must leave Fiji.<sup>93</sup>

### Louis' Departure

Sixteen months after Arthur and Elisabeth departed, Louis, Lizzie and their two children sailed on the AUSN *Pilbarra* from Suva on 8 March (4.30 am)<sup>94</sup> and arrived in Sydney 15 March 1906. He was assigned to work with the Marrickville Mission.<sup>95</sup>

### Arthur's Reappointment

Significantly, when the 1912 Australasian Union Conference Session, under the Presidency of John Fulton, considered a request to have a worker in the Lau Group of Fiji, Arthur was reappointed to Fiji.<sup>96</sup> Although this call from John Fulton was eventually rescinded,<sup>97</sup> it appears to have healed the disappointment of his initial recall from Fiji and given him enough confidence to return to ministry in New Zealand. In 1919 Arthur requested a transfer to Fiji. This was not considered advisable.<sup>98</sup> Consequently he went to California where he studied the pre-medical course at Pacific Union College and then re-entered ministry in California again under the Union Presidency of John Fulton,<sup>99</sup> where he was subsequently ordained.<sup>100</sup> In 1927, Arthur again applied for work in Fiji but no place was available.<sup>101</sup>

The same persistence that Morse and Fulton seemed to encounter appears to have enabled Arthur to eventually realise the dreams which had shattered prior to his appointment to Fiji: he was able to gain further medical training and combine the health and gospel work in California; and after the death of both Willie White and Elisabeth Currow, Arthur, in December 1955 married May Lacey, his sweetheart from the Australasian Bible School days, at age eighty-three and eighty-two respectively, and they enjoyed nine sunset years together.<sup>102</sup>

### Louis' Legacy

Subsequent to his return from Fiji, Louis was appointed to ministry in Queensland, where he was ordained in 1916,<sup>103</sup> then back to New South Wales, North New Zealand and Victoria.<sup>104</sup> In 1928, Louis's son, George, was appointed to the Navosa School, Wainibuka, Fiji, but was unable to go due to his wife Dulce's health.<sup>105</sup> In 1951, Louis' granddaughter, June, and husband, Lin Burns, were called to Fiji where Lin worked for six months with John Schuler in the Suva School of Evangelism as choirmaster with a Fulton College choir.<sup>106</sup> In 1987, Louis' great-grandson, Stephen, was appointed to Fiji as the chair of the Theology Department at Fulton College where he served for six years, before transferring to Pacific Adventist University as a lecturer in the Theology Department for another three years.

### Conclusion

One hundred years after the ministry of Arthur and Louis in Fiji, Fijian Seventh-day Adventists still adhere to the decisions of the first Fijian Church Council regarding *yaqona*. Villages with a significant Adventist presence still conduct opening and closing Sabbath meetings. Twelve hymns translated into Fijian by Arthur<sup>107</sup> are in the current Fijian hymnal. The influence of one of Arthur's converts, Ratu Meli from the Ra Coast, can still be traced.

Insights can also be gained regarding missionaries and mission processes. Lessons can still be learned regarding the complications of making administrative decisions from a distance. Administrative styles, including power-plays, usually have implications for staff morale.

"Compounditis," including the perceptions as to who is working the hardest, spouse reports, and relatives as work colleagues, can also be an emotionally-draining experience. The health consequences of being a missionary in unfamiliar tropical conditions still need to be addressed. Preparation for cross-cultural ministry requires more than the idealistic dream of working for God. Culture shock



Arthur Currow & May Lacey White Currow's wedding day, December 1955.

still happens. Missionaries are human. Marriage is an adjustment and newly-marrieds can benefit from a new assignment. Issues of accreditation and public credibility cannot be assumed or taken for granted. Mission is restricted when vision focuses only on the immediate

view at the expense of the “big picture,” as illustrated by Fulton’s attitude to the potential of the visit to the Maoris and Arthur’s attitude to the work in Lau and Ra at the expense of Suva Vou.

Yet the highlights of this research were the insights I gained regarding Arthur and Louis’ strategies for mission.

- Consider Arthur’s careful delineations of the need to Christianise but not westernise. Although he may have portrayed a romantic view of the Fijian lifestyle that he saw in the honeymoon stage of his mission service, he clearly was able to separate conceptually the Christian message from the “corrupting influences” of westernisation.
- Consider both Arthur’s and Louis’ commitment to and practice of integrating the medical and gospel work. Even then, Arthur felt it was too easy to not have enough of a spiritual dimension in our medical work and too little practical Christianity in our gospel work.
- Consider the desire expressed initially by Fulton<sup>109</sup> and endorsed at the first Church Council to expose the indentured Solomon Islanders to “present truth” knowing that if they were to be converted, on their inevitable return to the Solomon Islands, they would continue the spread of the Great Commission in their yet un-entered homeland.
- Consider also the desire to reach not only the Fijians, but also the Europeans and indentured Indians. Although there is no subsequent record of the success of the outreach to the Europeans, this is an area that is too often overlooked in mission today.

Despite the issues which arose in Fiji, Arthur in his application for sustentation affirmed that “ever since he received the message, it has held him in service.”<sup>110</sup> The motivation for Louis’ ministry, especially in these pioneering years in Fiji, seems to be encapsulated in the words of the following song which Louis wrote in 1895, on the eve of becoming an Adventist.

#### A LOVE FOR SOULS<sup>111</sup>

Give me a love for souls  
A love that dares to die  
A passion, Lord, for dying souls  
To fit them for the sky,  
My heart washed white and clean  
In Jesus’ precious blood  
As day by day I walk with Thee  
Make me a saviour, Lord

Give me Thy blood-washed robes  
Thy spotless purity  
The image of Thyself impart  
Oh make me just like Thee  
Give me the Holy Ghost

And make me love the fight  
Be satisfied with nothing less  
Than bringing souls to light.

Teach me to save lost souls  
And stop their mad career  
To stand upon the precipice  
Of grief and black despair  
To cry, look up and live!  
Oh, sinner, turn and flee!  
Look to the Christ of Calvary  
He’s calling now for thee.

#### Notes & References

- 1 “Fiji,” *Foreign Mission Board Minutes 4*, General Conference Archives, 20 June 1901, 16.
- 2 “16<sup>th</sup> Meeting, Sunday 28 July - Report from the Committee on the Distribution of Labour,” *Union Conference Recorder*, 31 July 1901, 93.
- 3 *Australasian Union Conference Minutes*, SPD Archives, 24 Apr 1902, 145; Auditing Committee’s Report, AUC Minutes, (1897-1909) SPD Archives, 8 Jan 1903, 201.
- 4 “Life Sketch of May Lacey,” *Australasian Record*, 3 Nov 1969, 12
- 5 G W Morse was on the sub-committee of the Australasian Medical Missionary & Benevolent Assn. reviewing Arthur Currow’s request. He wrote to him to advise him of the committee’s decision. “Letter to Arthur Currow,” *Letter File Sydney Adventist Hospital Heritage Room*, 27 February 1899. Around this time, the church endorsed H E Minchin, J S Reekie & A W Semmens to study medicine at Sydney University & Dorees Reekie at Melbourne University. *Minutes*, AMM&B Assn, 17th Meeting, 29 Dec 1898 & 21 St Mtg, 19 Feb 1899, SAH Heritage Room.
- 6 In Fiji, Arthur joined the Fulton family from USA via Auckland., (see Robert Hare *Fulton’s Footprints in Fiji*, 33-60), accompanied by Edith Guillard from Napier, (ibid, 61) & the Parker family from USA (ibid, 92). Ephraim Hathaway, a half-caste Fijian who had become a SDA on the goldfields of NZ & attended Avondale in 1898 prior to his return to Fiji, had also been a licensed minister in Fiji from 1899-1901. *Hathaway, Ephraim, Service Cards* SPD Archives.
- 7 Louis Currow, *Affadavit Regarding William Booth and the Sabbath*, declared at Ballarat Vic, 10 May 1934 in front of F A Cooper JP; declared at Melbourne Vic, 10 Sep 1936 in front of J R Partridge.
- 8 Miriam Adams, “By Faith Alone,” Six part series *Australasian Record*, 30 Apr - 4 Jun 1956.
- 9 “Advertisement,” *UCR*, 1 Sep, 1901, 15.
- 10 “Shipping,” *Fiji Times*, 3 Oct 1901, 2.
- 11 ibid & *Western Pacific Herald*, 4 Oct, 1901, 5.
- 12 J E Fulton, *Letter to W. C. White*, 27 Nov 1901. After Arthur left school at the age of 14 he spent 2 yrs in a print shop & a further 2 yrs in a publishing house. He also managed a daily newspaper. When he became an Adventist after reading the *Great Controversy*, he was soon employed at the Bible Echo Publishing Company. He also attended the Australasian Bible College. See Ernest Lloyd “Full of Years” *Review & Herald*, 13 Aug 1959, 6.
- 13 Arthur, along with Louis and his future wife Lizzie Hubbard, was in the initial nurses training class at the Summer Hill Sanitarium in 1896. See Bert Clifford and Noel Clapham, “Health & Healing” in Noel Clapham, *Seventh-day Adventists in the South Pacific 1885-1985*, 79. Arthur also spent 1899 in nurse training at Summer Hill. See G W Morse’s letter to Arthur Currow 29 Feb 1899 and UCR, 1 Nov 1899, 15.
- 14 Arthur attended Avondale School for Christian Workers in 1900 & 1901 doing the Biblical and Normal Course. Some of the fees needed was paid by the E. G. White Education Fund.
- 15 Throughout his denominational service, Arthur spent six years canvassing. See Arthur Currow’s *Sustentation Fund Application Blank*. Most of this appears to have taken place prior to his appointment to Fiji. Certainly, Arthur spent the summer of



- 1899/1900 canvassing in South Queensland (see UCR, 1 Nov 1899, 15) and was appointed to canvassing in Parkes, NSW at the end of 1900 (see UCR, 1 Nov 1900, 15 and Canvassing Reports Dec 1900 - Jun 1901 UCR, 1 Jan 1901, 8; 1 Mar 1901, 10; 1 Apr 1901, 8; 1 May 1901, 10; 1 Jul 1901, 10; 1 Aug 1901, 11) until his return to Avondale School for Christian Workers.
- 16 John Fulton, *Letter to W. C. White*, 27 Nov 1901, 2.
- 17 Fulton, "The Work in Fiji," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, 15 Apr 1902, 17.
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- 19 A Currow, "The Situation in Fiji," UCR, 1 Mar 1902, 9.
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- 21 *Polynesian Committee Report*, Avondale College Heritage Room, 1902, # 17.
- 22 "Suva Vou, Fiji," *Medical Missionary*, May 1902, 214.
- 23 C. H. & M. G. Parker, "UCR, 15 Oct 1902, 4.
- 24 Hare, 147.
- 25 Parker, & Parker op cit.
- 26 A Currow, "A Letter From Fiji," *Good Health*, 1 Dec 1902, 192.
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- 30 Fulton, "Cause in Fiji," *Advent Review & Sabbath Herald*, (R & H), 14 Apr 1903, 14.
- 31 ibid.
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- 33 Fulton, "Report from Fiji to the Australasian Union Conference Session," UCR, 11 Sep 1903.
- 34 Hare, 157.
- 35 UCR 1 Nov 1903, 8.
- 36 Fulton, *Fiji, R & H*, 26 Nov 1903, 19.
- 37 The official population estimates as at Dec 31 1902 are recorded in "Vital Statistics," *Fiji Times*, 12 Dec 1903, 2. Europeans - 2,548; Half-castes - 1,571; Indians - 19,876; Polynesians - 1,886; Rotumans - 2,195; Fijians - 93,384; Others - 465 totalling 121,925 people.
- 38 Currow, *Letter to E G White*, 4 Jul 1897, 4. EGW Research Centre, 4 Jul 1897, 4.
- 39 Hare, 155.
- 40 "Distribution of Labour," UCR, 22 Sep 1903, 24.
- 41 "The Work in Fiji, - Report to Union Conference" UCR, 1 Sep 1901, 6.
- 42 "Notes & Personals," UCR, 1 Oct 1903, 7.
- 43 "Shipping," *Fiji Times*, 3 Oct, 1903, 2.
- 44 "Shipping," *Western Pacific Herald*, 4 Oct 1903, 4; & "Notes & Personals" UCR, 1 Nov 1903, 8.
- 45 "Trial Balance" *AUC Minutes*, SPD Archives, 1903 # 234.
- 46 "Local & General," *Western Pacific Herald*, 16 Oct 1903, 4; and "Local News," *Fiji Times*, 21 Oct 1903, 2.
- 47 Mr L Currow, Masseur, is prepared to treat all forms of chronic disease—rheumatics and Dyspepsia and indigestion...by rational means." *WPH*, 16 Oct 1903, 3; *FT*, 17 Oct 1903, 3.
- 48 "Are you run down? Feeling Out of Sorts? Massage will Benefit You. For terms, address L. Currow Masseur, Suva PO."
- 49 "Mr L. Currow, Masseur," *WPH*, 16 Oct 1903, 4.
- 50 Advertisements commencing *WPH*, 20 Oct 1903, 5.
- 51 Advertisements commencing *FT*, 20 Jan 1904.
- 52 E H Gates, "Council Meeting in Fiji," *R & H*, 3 Mar 1904, 14-15; "Council Meeting in Fiji," UCR 15 May 1904, 2-3.
- 53 Hare, 157.
- 54 C. H. Parker, "Council Meeting in Fiji" UCR, 1 Dec 1903, 8.
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- 56 "Shipping," *FT*, 16 Jan 1904, 2.
- 57 W. L. H. Baker, *Letter to Gates*, Napier, 3 Mar 1904.
- 58 *Avondale School for Christian Workers Register*, Avondale Heritage Room. 24 Aug-14 Dec 1892; 1 Feb-Nov 6, 1893; 4 Apr-Sep 21 1894.
- 59 "Conference Session Report," *AUC*, SPD Archives 1 Mar 1904, 4.
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- 62 J. E. Fulton, *Letter to G A Irwin*, E:GWRC, 13 Mar 1904.
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- 66 Baker, *Letter to Irwin*, E:GWRC, 25 Mar 1904.
- 67 "Shipping," *Fiji Times*, 30 Mar 1904, 2.
- 68 "Notes from the Field," 4<sup>th</sup> Sabbath Reading, May 28, 1904.
- 69 "The cost of this cutter was provided by Louis Currow (£40) with the remainder (£20) being donated by people in Australia. See C. H. Parker, "Fiji," UCR, 15 Feb 1904, 2, and Gates, "Notes from the Field," 4<sup>th</sup> Sabbath Reading, 23 Apr 1904.
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- 71 Secretariat, "Fiji Mission," *SDA Yearbook*, 1904, Washington DC: General Conference, 1904, 59.
- 72 "Suva Vou Mission, Fiji," UCR, 15 Mar 1904, 5.
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- 79 Hare 156.
- 80 Fulton, *Letter to Irwin*, 19 May 1904.
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- 90 "Report of Fiji," UCR, 1 Oct, 1906, 33.
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- 99 Secretariat, "Southern California Conference-Licensed Ministers," *SDA Yearbook*, 1922, Washington DC: GC, 1922; "Pacific Union Conference," ibid 56.
- 100 *Secretariat, ibid*, 1926, 73.
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- 108 "Currow, Arthur—Obituary," *R & H*, 2 Jul 1964, 24.
- 109 Fulton, "The Work in Fiji—Evening After Sabbath, Jul 12" Union Conference Session Report, UCR, 22 Jul 1901, 21.
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# LETTERS

## Out of Date Use of the Name, Gilbert Islands

I'm curious about the map used on the *Journal of Pacific Adventist History* letterhead (and also on the back cover of the June 2002 issue). It shows the central group of I-Kiribati islands identified as Gilbert Is and the outer areas, including the Phoenix and Line islands, as Kiribati. By way of contrast, the same map does not show Tuvalu as the Ellice Islands. The name Gilbert Islands is not a current term. It's a colonial name that disappeared with full independence in 1979.

I don't suppose I'm the first one to comment on the use of the name Gilberts. It struck me as being a bit anachronistic.

Thanks for the journal. Keep up the good work. I must get around to writing my Kiribati memoirs.

—David Potter, Avondale College, NSW.

*You have made an interesting observation. Kiribati is the local language form of 'Gilbert', and by retaining the separate language names after receiving independence in 1979, the country was able to use 'Gilbert' for the western islands. "Kiribati...comprising 3 groups of coral atolls: the 16 Gilbert Islands, 8 uninhabited Phoenix Islands, 8 of the 11 Line Islands & the volcanic island of Banaba" "The Wordsworth Encyclopedia" vol 3., 1995, p 1205. (Helicon Publishing Ltd.) Current maps show this usage, eg 'Pacific Ocean' (Hema Maps, Australia 2000) 'The World' (National Geographic, USA, 1997), 'Kiribati' (Land Division, Government of Kiribati, 1999).*

—Editor

## READERS' COMMENTS ON THE JOURNAL

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"The *Journal* is very informative." PT—Solomons

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"It's really educational." JP —PNG

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"God has blessed and led through the years." MD —Vic

"I like your lineup of editorial assistants." FP —NSW

# RABAUL ERUPTS



My experiences at Sonoma Care Centre during the Rabaul volcanic eruptions 1994

Ken A Boehm

## BOOK REVIEW

Published by  
Heather & Robert  
Dixon, Morisset  
NSW 2264.  
1999

Obtainable from  
the author  
RMB 5477  
The Ridgeway  
Gosford 2250

0243 653033

Price \$10

In September 1994 the twin volcanoes of Tavurvur to the north, and Vulcan to the south of Simpson Harbour erupted and Sonoma College was catapulted into situations for which we had no preparation. Ken has accurately recalled incidents during those hectic days and recorded them in a booklet that is entertaining and educational. He has taken the opportunity to emphasize the lessons that can be gained from such an experience.

*Rabaul Erupts* also provides entertaining reading. Without this account there would not be a personal record of an event that may have been small on a world scale but dramatic for those who were there. I recommend it to those who can enjoy the vicarious experience that a first hand account provides.

Ray Hobson, Principal of Sonoma College, 1994  
(now Lecturer at PAU.)

Ken Boehm has always been an excellent story-teller and in his book *Rabaul Erupts* has captured the feelings of despair, fear and confusion at Sonoma for the first three days after 19 September 1994. I remember these events only too well. He follows the story from beginning to end giving the credit to those who were the true heroes.

Ken's book is an important record of Sonoma's little recognized involvement in the 1994 eruptions at Rabaul and is an important historical document for the Seventh-day Adventist Church's presence in PNG.

Ian Littlewood, Head of Education at Sonoma College, 1992—94 and Principal, 1995—98.

## Rose-lee Power



## *The Keeper Of Our Heritage*

Greetings. They say, "the heart of an organization's memory is in its record" (American Archives Assoc.) the SPD Avondale College Heritage Room holds a wide variety of documents that reflect the story of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific region. Recently we re-catalogued a collection of hand-written/typed reports, letters and notes about the Adventist responses to the Japanese invasion of the islands during World War II. These make very interesting reading—I am not so sure I would have been as brave as they. We also house the original shipping charts used by a small group of missionaries to sail to Australia. What courage, next to no navigational knowledge, but they made it with the help of God. Another source of information is diaries; one that was recently found useful was a 'Village Book' from Telina - Solomon Islands (1915-1928); another was a diary possibly written by Lundt (1946-1947). Do you keep a diary? I sometimes wish more people did. They provide so many observations and answers! Since last writing we have received several current magazines, an 1871 'Encyclopaedia of Gardening' (found in the old College barn when it was pulled down), songbooks (1960-1970s), several photographs, and some wonderful old gramophone recordings of various choirs. If you would like to donate material or do research for yourself, please contact me, I would love to hear from you. SPD Avondale College Heritage Collection, PO Box 19, Cooranbong, NSW 2265 Email: rose.power@avondale.edu.au Phone: 61 2 49 802 133 Fax: 61 2 49 802 133 Rose-lee Power, Supervisor



## LIFE SKETCHES

Alwyn Jonah

Alwyn Jonah was born at Batuna in the village of Baneho on the island of Vangunu in the Western Solomon Islands on 13 December 1942. He was baptised on 3 October 1963. He gained his primary education at Betikama on Gudalcanal in grades 1 & 2, 1956-58, at Kukudu on Kolombangara in the Western Solomons in grades 3-6, 1959-63. For the next two years he attended the Sopas Health School located near Wabag in Papua New Guinea. There he gained the qualification of a public health educator.

He commenced his service for the church as the Medical & Temperance Secretary for the Western Solomon Islands Mission in 1965. Following 5½ years in this position he transferred to the Bougainville Mission in PNG in 1970 where he served as a district director until the end of 1976. In 1977 he upgraded at Sonoma College. From 1978-1982 Alwyn served as the Temperance and Health Director of the North Solomons Mission. The next two years he was a chaplain at Sopas Hospital. His remaining years were spent in the Central Papuan Mission. He served as a church pastor, 1985-1987, a district director, 1988-90; again as a church pastor, 1991-97. Towards the end of 1996 his health deteriorated and in 1997 he returned to the Solomon Islands. He had served for a total of 33 years, 28 of which were as a national expatriate in PNG.

Alwyn and Peppy Jogo were married on 10 May 1965 and they had five children, Jujeth, Dalai, Jenifer, Sorensen and Zuill.

Alwyn was kind and patient and a valuable missionary whose service was appreciated by all who knew him. He passed to his rest early in 2001. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on...their deeds will follow them." Rev 14: 13.

Aurere Hlau

Aurere Hlau was born in 1934. His home village of Harona is in the Ihu District of Gulf Province in PNG. He was baptised on 24 Jan 1952. He gained his primary school education at Belepa (grades 1-3 from 1949-51), at Bautama (grades 3 & 4 from 1952-1953) and at Kabiufa (grades 5 & 6 from 1954-56). He took an upgrading course in Primary Teaching at Sonoma College in 1975.

He commenced a long and faithful period of service for the church in education and ministry (altogether 34 years) in 1958 on his appointment as a teacher in the Damera School in South-west Papua. After four years there he served in 15 more schools—many as headmaster or senior teacher. They were SWPM, Belepa (1962-63); Western Highlands Mission, Birep (1964-66); SWPM, Mapaio (1967); Koumaio (1968-69); Aivau (1970-73); Kiberi (1974-75); Iori (1976-77); WHM, Habare (1978-79); Kaidik (1980); Alak (1981); Togoba (1982); Madang Manus Mission, Phihon (1983-84); Kwoea (1985); Central Papua Mission, Manalogo (1986-89); Church Minister, Iomare (1990-92)

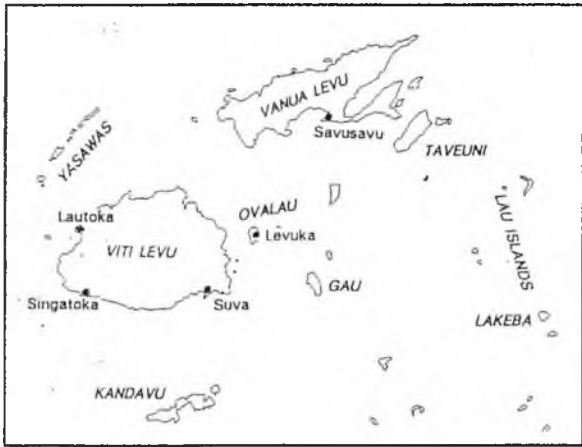
Aurere married Kairone Mahaitape from the village of Aivau on 27 December 1957. Seven children were born to this union: Ismael, Ephraim, James, Collin, Ellen, Harry and Betty.

He passed to his rest prior to 20 November 2001. Faithful and loyal in his teaching responsibilities, Aurere served his God well. He was respected by his pupils and enjoyed his work. He sleeps awaiting word from the master: "Well done, good and faithful servant...come and enjoy your Master's happiness."

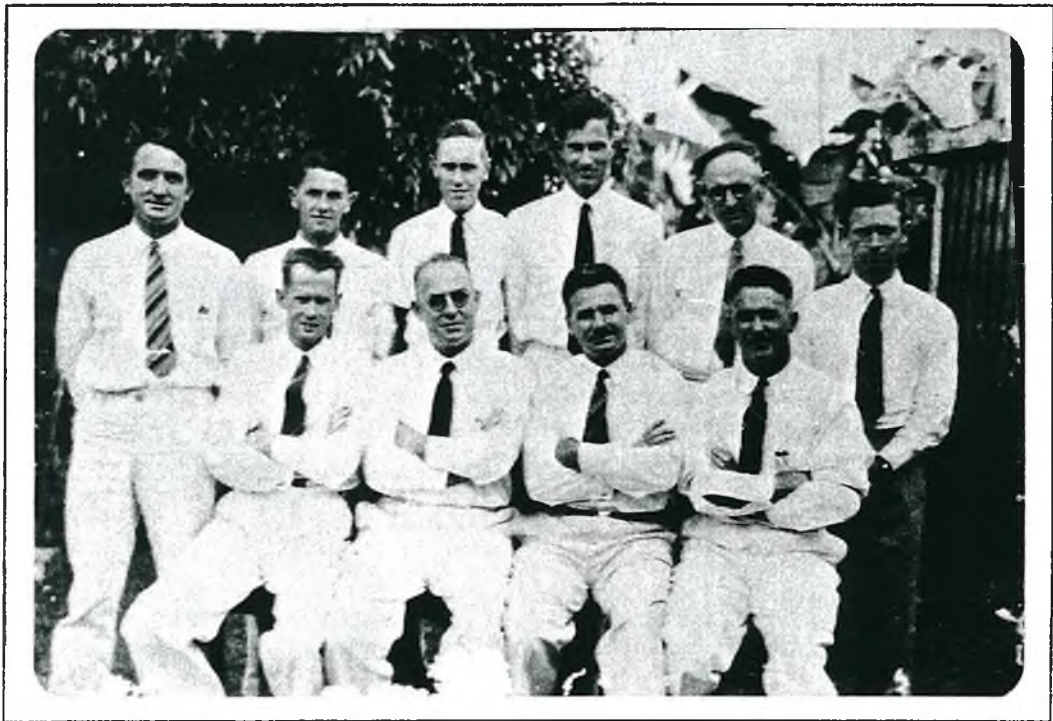
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p 35	Stephen J Currow		





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 \*  
 \* *These men, together with their* \*  
 \* *wives, moved forward in faith,* \*  
 \* *trusting in God's providential* \*  
 \* *openings, to advance His king-* \*  
 \* *dom in the islands of Fiji.* \*  
 \*  
 \*\*\*\*\*



(1944)

Back L to R : Stan (& Mary) Pennington, Frank (& Jean) Gifford, Hugh (& Royce) Dickens, Arthur (& Norma) Jacobson, Walter (& Christine) Ferris, Jack (& Wilma) Rowe. Front L to R: Roy (& Ivy) Stratford, Arthur (& Laurie) Dyason, Leonard (& Enid) Wilkinson, Ken (& Dorothy) Gray.

