

# Journal of Pacific Adventist History

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## Journal of Pacific Adventist History

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#### 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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Tobinabina of Abemama Island, Kiribati, wearing his medal bestowed by the British; and his friend, John Howse with his children, Joan, Elaine, Valerie, Eric and Fay.
  - The use of the SDA Church Logo is endorsed by the SPD.

## EDITORIAL



### RECORDING PACIFIC ISLANDS HISTORY IS IMPORTANT

Papua New Guinea like many Island nations of the South Pacific is an oral culture. We pass on information by word of mouth, and this is the way we retain our history and pass it on to succeeding generations. But oral tradition has several weaknesses. Firstly, information changes as it passes from person to person and even more so from generation to generation. This process makes oral tradition less authentic.

Secondly, oral tradition tends to leave out some important details of history and by so doing means that much of importance has been lost.

The same is true for the early history of the Adventist Church in many parts of Papua New Guinea and also in other parts of the Pacific Islands. Pastor Paul Cavanagh did an excellent work while serving at PAU in collecting old minutes and other records relating to the work of the church in Papua New Guinea. They are now in the Heritage section of the university library. He also assigned students to research the establishment of the church in various areas of the country as well as in the Solomon Islands.

I believe as a Papua New Guinean and an Islander, it is crucial for the younger generation of islanders to begin recording the history of the church, for since its arrival most of the living witnesses have died taking a wealth of information and experience with them.

So I was overjoyed when a retired expatriate and his wife took an interest in initiating the *Journal of Pacific Adventist History*. While we cannot retrieve history that has gone with those who have passed away, we can at least save what remains before it is too late. There are valuable living sources of information who can enrich our church's history of the Pacific Islands.

I believe it is high time for educated people in the Island Nations to wake up and do something about this urgent need to record our history, or our children will not know very much about the way God has used His servants in forwarding His kingdom in the islands of the sea. I thank the editor and his wife for the time they devote to this vital work for the church, and may it continue in the years ahead

Aaron Lopa D Min  
Professor in Practical Theology  
Pacific Adventist University



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## A REMARKABLE CHARACTER IN WAR & PEACE

### —Tobinabina of Kiribati, 1943-1945, 1951-1952

ZITA MILLER



Zita Miller, the daughter of *Pr & Mrs H C Mureh*, was born in New Zealand. On 5 August 1949 she married Graham B Miller, one year after his graduation from the Ministerial Course at the Australasian Missionary College, NSW. From 1949 until 1976, Zita served with Graham in church work at a number of locations and in a variety of positions in the Australasian Division (SPD). Following 2½ years of ministry in NSW, Zita and Graham were off to mission service in Kiribati where they were stationed on the island of Abemama.

It was in this isolated place that Zita took an interest in the culture and customs of the I-Kiribati people, enabling her to write so descriptively about her adventures in mission work among them. On completing 4½ years there the Millers transferred to Victoria in Australia, where they pastored churches until 1955. From 1959 Graham commenced a long and fruitful service in conference youth work, including 4 years as Dean of Students at the Australasian Missionary College. Zita and Graham transferred to Wairoa in Sydney on Graham's appointment as Youth Director for the Australasian Division in 1975. Unexpectedly and sadly, he passed to his rest in mid-1976. For a number of years Zita has resided in retirement in Auckland, New Zealand.

THE STORY BEGINS on the Kiribati (Gilbertese) island of Abemama, during the WW II Japanese occupation. Tobinabina, the local magistrate under the displaced British administration, is living a double life as he tries to juggle his responsibilities to King George VI with a minimal degree of cooperation with the invaders. Zita Miller writes:

It was a warm, still night, heavy with perfume and silence, a brooding silence. The cooking fires had died. The last small child had been hushed; even the waves on the reef seemed hushed. A shadow moved silently across the coral. Suddenly a door opened, spilling light and the sound of enemy voices across the village compound. The shadow melted between the tangled pandanus roots. A child stirred, the waves surged on the reef, a military boot kicked viciously at a glowing ember. The door closed again, and the sound of the boots died away. Silence returned.

The shadow moved again, in the direction of the house of Te Rua.

*Ko ni mauri* (blessings be on thee), Te Rua.

*Ko ni mauri ki*, Tobinabina. It has been dangerous, my son.

'Yes, my father, but there is much to do.'

Tobinabina adjusted his lavalava as he sat on the *te ba* (coconut rib) floor. Other shadows slipped in and sat down. Tobinabina smiled happily. Yes, there was much to do. Teuea's son was now five days old; he must be registered. Teuea's son, Tabos's dog tax, Aramea's marriage, old Ueuea's death - all must be recorded, all monies collected against the day when the British would return. The dangerous process must be repeated in each village and accurate records kept.

By day, Tobinabina was a translator for the Japanese, who never guessed his secret role as the mainstay of Gilbertese morale during the occupation. Never did he falter in his belief that King George VI would honour the Great Queen's promise to Tem Binoka, the former King of Abemama, that her navy would protect this island at all times.

'King George has promised. You will see. The Union jack will fly from the Government offices again.'

Another warm, still night. The island was heavy with a menacing silence as Tobinabina silently made his rounds. But something was wrong. Intuitively, he called out as he stepped into the moonlight: *Ko ni Mauri, Ne Buena.* Without awaiting the customary reply, he continued: 'Come, the fish are biting. It is time to get the nets out.'

'Do not move!' A torch was flashed in his eyes as four soldiers surrounded him. 'What you do here, eh?' A bayonet was shoved against his ample diaphragm. 'You tell quick. What you do here in middle of night?'

Tobinabina gazed blandly at the nervous officer. 'The fish are biting, Sir.'

'Yes? So what?' followed by another jab to the midriff.

'We need food, Sir.'

'Why you come to this house?' pressed the officer.

'This man has a large family, Sir, and he does not have the secrets of fishing.'

The officer looked indecisive. He was aware of the influence of the Chief *Kaubure* (Magistrate) among the islanders, and of his value to his own superiors. Yet he could not be sure the man was not up to something.

'Take him to the guard house,' he snapped.

As they departed, the unseen eyes and ears of the village questioned. Who had betrayed Tobinabina?

Three days later as the women gathered at the wells for water, whispering accompa-



Tobinabina and his family



nied the almost ritual washing of long, black tresses:

'Have you seen Neanga?'

'No! Where?'

'In the bush!'

'Ai-ya-a-a'

There was much clicking of tongues and raising of eyebrows. Neanga, of doubtful virtue and always willing to sell for a few coins, appeared several weeks later, silent and uncomplaining. Ai-ya-a-a, her punishment was just, they said. In time her wounds healed, but her face ever bore witness to her treachery by the two holes that remained where once her nose had been.

In the meantime, Tobinabina was confined and questioned incessantly.

'Where is the British flag from the Government of-fices?'

'*Ngham*' Which means 'I don't know', but can have the connotation 'nor do I care'.

'Where are the Government books?'

'*Ngham*'

'Where are your keys of office?'

'*Ngham*'

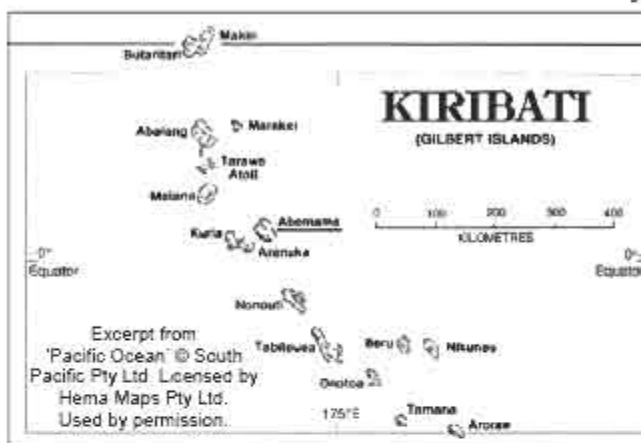
Several days later, for lack of evidence and because of his usefulness, Tobinabina was again released. He slept well and snored heavily, despite being closely watched for several months. No secret smile betrayed his double role. Who was to know what transactions were completed under cover of the fishing nets and the gathering of the toddy shells each night and each morning? The toddy was measured out carefully in front of the guards, and the empty shells rinsed and hung up to dry. When Tobinabina took the shells to collect his evening toddy, they would often contain sticky coins for the King and Queen of England. Surely they would not object to having a little toddy mixed with their taxes.

As Tobinabina had confidently predicted, the British finally returned to Abemama. As the grey submarine surfaced and the familiar white uniforms were seen, Tobinabina unwrapped his lavalava, took off the old navy-blue one he always wore underneath, and turning it inside out and right way up he ran the Union Jack to the top of the Government flag pole. He then opened the wooden box hidden under the coconut trees, drew out a clean lavalava and white shirt and his belt of office. When the British officers landed, Tobinabina was there to welcome them in his official capacity as Chief Magistrate of Abemama. After solemnly shaking hands, he addressed the nonplussed naval officer:

'Sir, on behalf of the people of Abemama, I, as Chief Kaubure, welcome your return to this Colony, and wish that you would pass to King George VI -with our compliments- our taxes and all monies due, which we have collected on his behalf during the occupation. You will discover, Sir, that everything is in order; the books have been kept up to date, with all births, deaths, marriages and taxes duly entered and accounted for as requested by His Majesty.'

To the astonishment of the British officers, the books had been meticulously entered to that day's date and

*'What you  
do here eh?'*  
*A bayonet  
was shoved  
against his  
ample  
diaphragm.*



monies were correct to the last halfpenny. For this heroic effort, Tobinabina was awarded the Medal of the British Empire by a grateful King and Government. The day he received this award from the High Commissioner for the South Pacific was the proudest moment of his life.

Editor's Note: The John Howse family arrived at the island of Abemama late in 1947. There they erected a house and established a mission station. Before long Howse began a firm friendship with Tobinabina, and in 1948 conducted Bible studies with him which led to his baptism and membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Following the departure of the pioneering missionaries, Graham and Zita Miller arrived late in 1950. They found Tobinabina still living on Abemama and now working for the Adventist Mission. Zita Miller resumes her story.

#### Night of Miracles

The day of days arrived. Listening to the radio, I heard the voice I had been longing to hear:

'VQXL calling Tarawa... VQXL calling Tarawa...' It was the *Fetu Ao*. She would be home within twenty-four hours. What excitement! The announcement produced a flurry of work on the mission compound on Abemama. So much to be done, but where to start? Tobinabina arrived to find me racing around madly. His eyes sparkled when told the exciting news, then he got to work. Before long, however, I began to get under his feet as I dusted wildly around the coconut rib walls. He watched for a few minutes, then patiently remarked:

'Why do Europeans always rush, Madam? We Gilbertese take life much more slowly.'

Momentarily, I was stopped in my tracks, duster poised above the bookcase.

'I really don't know, Tobinabina. It must be inborn. We live by the clock, not by the sun as you do.'

He digested this for a moment before commenting mildly, 'It wastes a lot of time, Madam.'

I opened my mouth to speak, then shut it again.

He continued, 'We Gilbertese eat when we are hungry, sleep when tired, and gather copra only as the ship comes into the lagoon.'

'Yes, Tobinabina,' I mumbled.

'We have time to play, sing, dance, gossip and tell stories to our children. We're a happy people, Madam.'

I had to agree.

Then his brow crinkled. 'I think, though, that we are a weak people, Madam.'

I looked at him in surprise. 'Why do you say that, Tobinabina?'

'We're not strong like the European. He's not afraid to say what he thinks, and fight even when outnumbered, Madam.'

This conviction must have been formed during the years of war and occupation.

'But we are like water, Madam. We take on the colour of the bottle we're in. When the bottle changes, we change too. It's easier than fighting,' he concluded philosophically.

I looked at him, a man who always stood for what he believed. Not all Gilbertese were like water.

'You didn't take the colour of the bottle, Tobinabina,' I remarked.

'No, Madam. The Holy Spirit gave me the power to change. The Lord took my weakness and made me strong.' His face shone with the joy of his first love.

Chastened by this exchange, I endeavoured to continue my chores more sedately. The intention lasted until I looked at my watch. Then the frenzy returned as I began rearranging the matting, the furniture, everything that could be re-arranged... until finally I collapsed into the nearest chair. How utterly crazy! Tobinabina was right. There is always tomorrow. Suddenly, I remembered my new friend Esther. A bike ride would be good. I needed a break.

'Tobinabina,' I called. 'How about we visit the lady Esther to make sure she is well again?'

He reacted enthusiastically. He loved to meet with people and sow seeds for his Lord. As we rode through the village, it was clear that the shy sullenness that had first greeted us had abated, particularly since the ginger beer disaster! Now friendly arms waved and wide smiles accompanied the usual questions:

'Tobinabina, where are you going with *t'aine*? Why? Aiya!'

A fresh, green carpet was beginning to spread along the edge of the lagoon, around the coconut palms and through the sprawling feet of the pandanus. Most families had cooking houses by the lagoon. Here, too, the beautiful canoes were kept. The aged members of the families had their houses right on the beach where the old men loved to



The school children on Abemama. Tavita Niu from Samoa, their teacher is on the left of the picture.

gather to speak of the fishing, the canoe-making, the copra, the prices, the old days. For a week or two Madam's ginger beer disaster had been discussed with amusement. Then it was back to the sour toddy, the gambling, or the witchdoctor's latest prognostication. And the old women sat to watch the *kamaimai* cook the bread, baby-sit and gossip about what interested them: the fish to be cleaned and sun-dried, the octopus to be deprived of their succulent rings, the copra to be gathered and processed, the coconut to be grated, and the toddy that would be collected. There was much to be done, but no great urgency about its completion.

Arriving at the village of Tobonimai, we found Esther looking like a princess as she nursed her tiny son. He gurgled and cooed as babies do. The wound had healed cleanly, and with a dusting of powder he looked like a cherub. The red hibiscus bud behind the tiny ear matched the perfection of the full bloom behind his mother's. His grandmother sat nearby gently waving a large fan.

Tobonimai and Tobinabina discussed the news of the day. Would the *Fetu Ao* arrive in the morning or in the afternoon? Why did Pastor Miller not say? There was still some doubt about the new missionary's ability to sail the ship, he had yet to prove himself as a captain and navigator.

That night as I lay under my net, watching the shadows from the kerosene lamp dance on the walls, I thought of my sailor out in all that vastness, seeking a landfall on a low coral atoll. I asked the Lord to still the wild wind that could so easily drive the ship onto a reef. But the blustery conditions meant I could rest knowing I need not listen for the menacing footstep that might spell harm for a lonely missionary wife. Tomorrow my love would be home, and all such anxiety would disappear.

Next day, waking early, I pushed the blinds aside to see the day that would, I trusted, reunite us. It was to be a holiday. The *Fetu Ao* was coming home and the school children would spend the day in the tops of the coconuts. The first to sight the homecoming ship was to be given a precious tin of powdered milk from our store.

The westerly, which had stilled for the dawn, was now tacking back and forth deciding whether to give way to the trade wind or blow it out of existence. Tobinabina rode back and forth from the village with the latest communique. Hour after hour it was the same:

'There is still no sign of *Fetu Ao*, Madam.'

After I had expressed my gratitude, he would return to



The wharf on Abemama near where the missionaries lived.

his vigil, undeterred by the mutterings of the local witch-doctors, who had declared that the ship would not return.

I sat on the seawall to watch the late afternoon tide beating against the reef. I wondered about the attraction of the sea. To some like myself, she was a fearsome leviathan, but to others, an alluring mistress. To stand upon the shore and listen to the murmuring of the waves is to be drawn within an enchanted circle. What of my sailor out on those restless waves? Had he become another victim of her enchantment?

Tobinabina joined me in watching a squall abruptly collapse and disappear over the southern tip of the island. The drought was about to break. The rains of several weeks ago had produced a shimmer of green over the white coral. Soon the coconut palms and pandanus would have feet swathed in plush viridian.

'There is still no sign of *Fetu Ao*, Madam.'

Sunset was now approaching long past the time for entering the dangerous channels of the lagoon. With the westerly beginning to blow again I resigned myself to another lonely night.

'Don't worry, Tobinabina. The children can watch again tomorrow.'

'Yes, Madam. They won't mind another holiday.'

Dejected, I returned to the house to set the trap for one last time. I set the bottles in their appointed places, those containing mercurochrome and gentian violet being strategically placed. With the full moon, the village men would return to their haunt. Who knew whether tonight they might direct a drunken rampage towards the lone missionary's house? Other nights I had slept curled up inside the warmth of the promises of the Lord, but tonight I felt less secure. If only the ship had come!

Creeping under the net, I asked my Lord to double His guard and lift the *Fetu Ao* on angel's wings over all the reefs being lashed by the fury outside. With the lamp producing a cosy glow, sleep came at last.

Next, I was sitting bolt upright. There were footsteps approaching over the shingle, no other sound, just steady footsteps advancing in the dark. Out came tomahawk and scissors, just in case!

'Are you there, Madam?'

Almost collapsing with relief, I suddenly remembered... 'Don't come in, Tobinabina,' I yelled. 'It's dangerous.'

'Do not fear, Madam. I won't walk into your trap,' came his amused reply.

I looked at my watch: one o'clock. Someone must be very ill. Throwing back the net I jumped out and grabbed for some clothes.

'The ship is coming Madam.'

'What? Are you sure? In the dark?' I gasped incredulously.

'Yes Madam. We can see its lights in the entrance.'

'How do you know it's the *Fetu Ao*, Tobinabina?' I tried not to sound too excited.

'It is *Fetu Ao*, Madam. No other ship uses that entrance!'

What joy! What delicious

delight! I did not stop to think about the dangers or the reason why he would take such a risk. One thought only filled my mind: my love was home from the sea at last; my lonely vigil was over. I floated to the wardrobe and grabbed some clothes. They felt strangely uncomfortable, but I was too ecstatic to care. (Later, I discovered I was wearing odd sandals and my dress was back to front!)

I urged Tobinabina to get going so that someone would be at the wharf to meet the ship when it arrived. But he stubbornly refused.

'No, Madam. I will wait for you!' he said firmly.

Then, out of the corner of my eye I caught a strange reflection in the mirror. I turned in terror. In my haste to jump out of bed I had thrown the mosquito net over the night-light. It had smouldered undetected before bursting into violent flame. Fanned by the strong wind it was hungrily reaching towards the coconut rib walls. Once the flames caught hold of the tinder dry *te ba* the whole house would burn like a torch.

Crying out to the Lord in the extremity of despair, I beat with frantic hands against the merciless flames. Instantly, as if a giant hand had swept down from heaven itself, the searching tongues were extinguished. I watched them disappear from top to bottom in a flash. The net was almost gone; only its blackened edges and the hot scorch marks on the wall showed that it had not been just a bad dream. I looked at my hands in wonderment: not a mark or a burn anywhere. Falling to my knees I wept thankful tears of gratitude to my Heavenly Father.

We rode down to the village and along the foreshore where my eyes soon located the tiny lights bobbing gallantly on the silver-studded lagoon. The westerly had abated and a soft trade wind skipped lightly over the moonlit surface. Proceeding along the coral road towards the wharf, we had not gone far before I became aware that all along the beach to the northern tip of the island were huge fires. The houses were burning!



The *Fetu Ao* with Pastor Graham Miller & his wife Zita and two of the crew.





Pastor Graham Miller

'Tobinabina, whatever is going on?' I cried in dismay.

He shook his head gravely. 'These are very bad men about tonight, Madam.'

'Is this why you wouldn't let me come alone, Tobinabina?'

'Yes Madam,' was his reply. Every house we passed was in flames.

'Why are they doing this?'

'There has been a big quarrel Madam, and one village from the south has come to burn the houses of their enemies. They are drunk and very dangerous Madam. It is well for you not to be alone tonight.'

It was a night of crisis in more ways than one. Would they have burned the mission station had the *Fetu-Ao* not arrived? Who knows? Oddly, no one appeared to be trying to quench the flames. With Gilbertese fatalism the owners stood and watched them burn.

A large crowd had already gathered at the wharf and the *Fetu-Ao* was quite close when we finally arrived. We watched as the small mission ship felt her way gently towards us. A low chuckle came from beside me.

'Pastor Miller is a clever captain, Madam. The crew and the village people will now know that he is like Pastor Howse, and the witchdoctors will have to change their prophecies.'

A very large lump came up and stuck in my throat as a familiar form, taller and leaner than the Gilbertese crew, came out of the wheelhouse. A rattling of chains signalled the dropping of the anchors. The *Fetu-Ao* was safely home.

The beloved voice carried across the still water with a loud, '*Ko-na-mauri-O! Ko-na-mauri, Tobinabina. Ko-na-mauri, Madam. I see you still have your head.*'

A chorus of *Ko-na-mauri-O's* rang forth like a recitative from the waiting crowd. The dinghy was quickly lowered and soon the men were on dry ground with friends and families milling around asking: 'Where have you been? What did you do? Ai-ya!'

I was speechless with delight. My dearly beloved took the opportunity to ask Tobinabina about the fires. On hearing the explanation he said humbly:

'Well, Tobinabina, the Lord permitted them for our salvation. We dared not stay outside, it was much too dangerous.'

He went on to explain that a faulty engine, dirty fuel and a strong westerly were a potentially deadly combination in the reef-riddled waters. After consulting the crew he decided to take the risk. Pastor Howse had once made the entry at night. Maybe he could too. With a prayer for guidance they turned to the entrance. No sooner had they turned, than away on the island huge fires lit up the night, showing every beacon and lighting their way. In what remarkable ways the Lord works to protect His people and His work!

Tobinabina offered the captain the use of his bicycle and together we rode, hand in hand, back to the mission station. The long period of anxious waiting and loneliness was over. He was safe! The fires had, by now, almost burnt out. Only a few embers remained of a night of wanton destruction on the one hand, and God's miraculous deliverance on the other.

We left our bicycles by the garage and walked the short

distance to the house in the shining moonlight. Listening to my love's enthusiasm for his ship, I wondered whether the mistress of the sea had claimed him too. Then, as he went to step inside, I suddenly snapped out of my dream. 'Don't move!' I yelled. 'The trap!' But I was too late. My shriek died stillborn as the unintended victim sprang the trap. I was horrified.

The silence of shock was broken by an angry roar, which shot up to the thatch and rebounded against my stunned senses: 'What's going on?' Bottles were clattering in all directions and falling with a dull plop on the soft matting.

Jumping over the sprung trap and feeling my way by instinct and foreknowledge, I reached the lamp and lit it with shaking fingers. 'No, no, no ...!' I breathed silently, hoping forlornly that the trap might not have been as successful as it had sounded.

The lamp flickered uncertainly, its light inspiring another roar to rival the first: 'I'm all wet. My new shoes... My new socks... What's all this?'

Oh dear! Oh my! Oh help! I gazed in wonder at the sight. Spreading slowly over once pristine socks, new white shoes, and the floor coverings were psychedelic patterns of purple, mauve, orange and red. My popularity had just plummeted. I wanted to run and drop off the reef.

'Well?' demanded the captain of his first and only mate.

'S-serves you jolly well right for coming home in the middle of the night,' I spluttered. As I contemplated the havoc I had caused I began to panic. But the glint in his eye modulated from a twinkle to a sparkle before he burst out laughing. We both laughed, overcome with Gilbertese laughter, as we surveyed the carnage created by my devastatingly successful mantrap.

Finally, wiping his eyes he gasped, 'Next time Madam, you come with me! You are much too dangerous to be left alone.'

My trap had knocked the sea out of his eyes and the wind out of his hair. There were too many problems with Madam to risk divided loyalties. We walked hand in hand and stood before the blackened net. He ran his palm over the scorched walls, untied the well-knotted blinds and, for the first time in two months raised them high. A sentimental trade wind blew a welcome into our faces and the moonlight reached out with cool fingers to catch our prayer of gratitude and send it to our Father in Heaven. Fires had burned that night, one extinguished by the hand of God, the others permitted to burn so that they might guide His missionary and His ship to safety. Our night of miracles was over, ending a chapter. Tomorrow we would commence a new one together.

*E a band! (It is finished)*

#### Post script

A quarter of a century later Adventist work on Abemama had made considerable progress. Kauna High School, the only secondary school on the island—one of the few in the nation—was well established. The Government Officer for the central island group was Tobinabina's son, Kakaiwa, and two of his children, Tuneka and Entabete were both students at Kauna. □





## BREAKING NEW GROUND—Part 7

### Mission Advance

ALFRED G. CHAPMAN



See CV in Vol 3 #1

#### Synopsis:

G F Jones succeeded in having a school established at Efogi in Papua. Faole, a product of this school, became an outstanding worker. At the same time Bougainville in the Mandated Territory of New Guinea was entered with a school being set up at Lavilai. The availability of Solomon Island missionaries contributed to the rapid progress being made. Soon the island of New Ireland was also entered.

#### RENEWED PAPUAN GROWTH

##### Kokoda Blocked Off

THIS PERIOD which saw the establishment and growth of the Seventh-day Adventist Mission in Bougainville and New Britain, saw also substantial gains in Papua. At first there were some abortive attempts to expand from Efogi over the range to Kokoda. After an exploratory trip it was planned to make a further visit during 1926 to "select a spot on which to open a new station."<sup>1</sup> At this stage, G Peacock and then W N Lock who were to make the trip succumbed to mumps. The *Anglican Mission* then selected the spot to establish a station and the Government Secretary advised Pastor Lock that without the 'consent of the Anglicans' they would not be granted permission to establish a station.<sup>2</sup>

Discussions were held with the local solicitor who advised a direct approach to the missions concerned as, if they did not object when the Government approached them regarding any application by the Seventh-day Adventists for land, it was less likely that the Government would reject the application. He also suggested places in which the London Missionary Society had no teachers.<sup>3</sup>

##### An Approach to the London Missionary Society

Accordingly, an approach was made to the one in charge of the London Missionary Society in Port Moresby. One of the places mentioned by the solicitor was discussed and the London Missionary Society said they could not very well object to the Seventh-day Adventists going there but advised that they first inspect the site which was up the Vailala River. Some students from the area who were at Bisiatabu indicated there were several big villages with no missionaries in them. A white man who had lived on the river indicated a small population and so it was decided to look elsewhere.

##### Attempts to Move to Tupuseleia

The next efforts were to find a location comparatively near both Bisiatabu and Port Moresby.<sup>4</sup> Interest in this location near Tupuseleia, was aroused by a man, Mea, from that village who had come to Bisiatabu to attend school. While Pastor Carr had been at Bisiatabu this man's interest

in the Seventh-day Adventists had been awakened. Now he came with an urgent request that the Seventh-day Adventists open a school in his village offering land for a mission site, so an effort was made to see the site. Travel would be by car to Sapphire Creek, and across to the coast at Bootless Inlet, thence by canoe to the site near Tupuseleia. Rains made the road from Sapphire Creek to the coast impassable and after a futile attempt, it was learned that the magistrate from the Vailala area was in Port Moresby so it was decided to go there to see him. When he indicated that the population of the six villages near the Vailala River was about 4,000 people interest swung again to seeking to enter that area.

##### The Move Towards Belepa

Accompanied by one of the Bisiatabu students who came from the Vailala, Pastor Lock and Mr Peacock travelled the one hundred and fifty or more miles by coastal boat visiting some of the London Missionary Society stations on the way. After visiting each of the villages, talking with the people and showing pictures, Pastor Lock asked the people who were gathered together, if they wished the mission to come and if they would help in building a house. The people replied that they wanted the mission and would help.<sup>5</sup> The missionaries found on the Vailala a former resident of Port Moresby who was now managing a plantation and he also made them welcome.

##### Difficulty in Leasing Land Near Belepa

After returning to Port Moresby, Pastor Lock made an application for lease of three and a half acres of land adjoining Maira Plantation just a short distance from the Vailala River. Along the coast, just a few miles from the desired site, the London Missionary Society was strongly established. They had indicated no objections to Pastor Lock beginning Seventh-day Adventist work in the villages near the site of the lease. However, Government policy evidently delayed the granting of the lease for we find the matter referred to in Despatch Mo. 13/7/10 of September 18, 1930. That the matter was still undecided



1



2

1 Gerald Peacock; 2 Lock with a picture roll showing pictures

in 1933 is clear from *Statement B*:

Record of land granted or refused or acquired by Missions within the Sphere of Influence of another Mission.<sup>6</sup>

In 1935, further information regarding the position of the site was sought, especially its relation to land held by the London Missionary Society.<sup>7</sup>

#### The Comity Agreement Bypassed

However, the Seventh-day Adventist Mission was able to obtain the rental of five acres of land so it did not need to wait for the breakdown of the Spheres of Influence policy in order to begin work.<sup>8</sup> Within three years the opportunity came to purchase some freehold land near the villages of Beieoa and Idiloi so that long before the original application for the lease of land at Maiza was decided, the mission was soundly established.<sup>9</sup> The ineffectiveness of the Spheres of Influence and Lease of Land policies in achieving their purposes is well illustrated in connection with the establishment of the Seventh-day Adventist Mission in the Vailala area. The Administrator of Papua recognized that:

the right of the owner of a freehold or fully improved Crown lease to transfer his property to any mission without requiring the consent of the Government.

made the efforts of the Government to preserve the Spheres of Influence largely ineffective.<sup>10</sup> The Lieutenant-Governor expressed his attitude to the Spheres of Influence policy thus:

I wish to guard myself against any possible suggestion that I am in favour of the policy of Spheres of Influence, which in my opinion, is already falling to pieces and cannot possibly be maintained if it is ever seriously challenged.<sup>11</sup>

After the arrangements to rent the five acres for three years had been completed, G H Engelbrecht visited the Vailala district. He met the people in the area and noted the large numbers of boys of school age. At Hiloi people from the nearby villages gathered and expressed their desire to have a school. When they had moved over to the rented mission site some time was spent in marking out the positions for the houses to be built of bush materials. The people agreed to do the building and to then send word to the Mission through a nearby planter.<sup>12</sup>

#### The Move towards Korela

Meanwhile, efforts had been going on concurrently to obtain land for mission purposes east of Port Moresby. Land was finally obtained in the Marshall Lagoon area at Korela near Vilarupu.<sup>13</sup> To set up a station there, C E Mitchell was transferred from Efogi. He had the pleasure, not only of establishing the Korela



J Ross James treating a man with yaws

Mission station, but of overseeing the building and opening of the day school at the village of Wanigela, a short distance away. This was built by the Wanigela villagers on their own land in the centre of the village.<sup>14</sup> It was estimated that there would be about five or six hundred children in the village but the regular school attendance settled down at about one hundred.<sup>15</sup>

By mid 1929, the school at Hiloi was operating with just over a hundred day students in attendance. G H Engelbrecht had the oversight and was assisted by three of the students who were living on the mission property nearby. To enable them to teach and continue their own studies, the day school was open in the mornings and the station school with about twenty boys and girls attending, was held in the afternoon.<sup>16</sup> The regular attendance of students at the day school was encouraged by a magisterial order which made school attendance compulsory within a specified radius of a school where English was taught.<sup>17</sup>

The stations at Korela and Belepa had hardly settled into a routine after the struggle of establishment, when a new opportunity was presented for the Mission to take over some land at Aroma, about fifteen miles from Korela.<sup>18</sup> The Mission did so in 1929. This was in the centre of a populous area, about three thousand people living within easy reach of the site.<sup>19</sup> Pastor J R James made visits to the place and established good relations with some of the people.<sup>20</sup> Some in the area were members of the London Missionary Society and so there was the possibility of the conflict which the Spheres of Influence policy was designed to prevent. However, while relations were not always cordial, they did not degenerate to the extent that had been feared by those who argued for the need to maintain the Comity Agreement.

#### The Need to Train Papuan Teachers

The opening of the Wanigela and Hiloi schools, as well as the operation of schools on the Efogi, Korela and Belepa (Vailala) stations and at Bisiatabu, and now the call to provide for Aroma, emphasized the need to have Papuan teachers trained as soon as possible so as to staff the schools already operating and to open new schools in response to requests to do so. Some Papuans were working as teachers but heavy responsibilities were still carried by Fijians. Similarly in the Mandated Territory, the need to staff the ten outstations on Bougainville as well as the three schools on the stations near Rabaul made it clear that a training school was urgently required. In Papua eyes were turned to Bisiatabu,<sup>21</sup> while in the Mandated Territory, hopes were still centred on the schools in the Solomon Islands although the determination was forming to establish a training school in the Mandated Territory of New Guinea.<sup>22</sup>

#### THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST MISSION IN 1930 Papua

This may be an opportune place to summarize the position of the Seventh-day Adventist Mission in Papua and



Aliti, a missionary from Fiji, teaching in the church at Bisiatabu





Fijians who went to PNG as missionaries in 1930 & 1934  
L -R: Pereniki Taqi, Adi Kelera Reki, Tereti Nigara, Miriama Dau, Jiajana

Semeti Gade and his family

New Guinea at the end of 1930. In Papua there was a staff of five Europeans with their families: W N Lock was Superintendent; G H Engelbrecht was at the Belepa Mission; C E Mitchell was at Korela; C J Howell was at Bisiatabu; J R. James had made contact with the people at Aroma and was to locate there soon. Fijian workers, Nafitalai Navara and Maika Dausika carried the responsibilities of the Efogi station and district. Timothy, a Papuan, had given and continued to give, valuable help in the Efogi area.

At Bisiatabu, the two thousand or more rubber trees being tapped, yielded about five tons of rubber per year but more importantly, the influence of its school was spreading far and wide in Papua. The sixty young men and women who lived and studied there spoke eight dialects and came from as far away as two hundred miles. In its earlier years its influence had been undetected though strong, on the lives of a few like Faole of the Efogi area, and Mea of the Tipuseleia area. Now it was easier to see what it was doing as these men and Timothy, began to work for the mission. In 1930, four Papuans left Bisiatabu as mission workers.<sup>23</sup> The school programme at Bisiatabu was the usual one for similar schools. The mornings were taken up with the necessary work of the station, especially food production, the afternoons with class work. This consisted of Bible study, Motuan and English [reading and writing] and simple, practical arithmetic.<sup>24</sup> It was hoped to make Motuan a common language of the schools, produce literature in it and thus be able to train workers more quickly than would be possible if English were used exclusively. One duty that fell upon the school staff was to translate the Sabbath School lessons into Motu, cut stencils and duplicate them. In this, Mea, who was a Motu speaker, was a great help. The cutting of the stencil and the duplicating were done by a Motu speaking lad at the school. Some pupils were taught touch typewriting. One of these, Koivi, came from the Vailala, and it was hoped he would be a help there.<sup>25</sup> In 1927, the teachers were David, a Fijian, Jean Lock and G H Engelbrecht, though in the next year blackwater fever carried off David; and Engelbrecht who transferred to Vailala was replaced by C J Howell. None of these would have been considered trained teachers. The spiritual activities described in earlier accounts of the activities at Bisiatabu continued. Ever in the hearts of the workers was the desire to see the students know and accept the saving power of Christ and the desire to see Christian young men and women become dedicated mission workers.<sup>26</sup>

Efogi, the second station of the Seventh-day Adventist Mission in Papua, had been in operation about six years. Early during his stay in Papua, Pastor Carr had visited the people in and around Efogi.

Intermittent contact was maintained during the years that followed. Land was leased in 1914 but no attempt was made to establish a permanent station until 1924 when W N Lock settled there. Efforts were made in 1917 to extend over the range into the Kumusi Division west of the Am-



Efogi Mission Station and Church

bogo River but these were blocked by inability to lease land there due to opposition by the Anglican Mission. G F Jones patrolled vigorously in the area and prepared the way for the establishment of the Mission station by W N Lock. The school developed, accepting both boys and girls but due to its distance from Bisiatabu, the ruggedness of the country with the consequent difficulty in maintaining supplies and the strain of the isolation, C E Mitchell was transferred to Korela and Efogi was cared for by Nafitalai Navara from Fiji.<sup>27</sup> Students from the school there continued to go down to Bisiatabu and later to Mirigeda to continue their education and to train for mission work.

The newer stations of Belepa and Korela had larger schools attached to them to care for the day students from nearby villages, and at the station schools some of the more mature students did further study. It was hoped that they would enter the work force after training at Bisiatabu.<sup>28</sup>

#### New Guinea

On the New Guinea side the Bougainville efforts continued to be fruitful. During 1930, D H Gray founded a new school at Rumba, about three hours walk into the mountains behind Kieta.<sup>29</sup> High hopes were held for its future as it was on fertile soil and there were already operating several schools which in due course would give a body of students considerably larger than the ten with which it started. In New Britain, there were already three centres of interest but these interests had hardly had time to crystallise into formal schools.

#### EXPANSION IN THE THIRTIES

##### Papua

From this point the work of the Seventh-day Adventist Mission began to expand rapidly in Papua as well as in the Mandated Territory of New Guinea. In Papua especially, there was still difficulty in obtaining land in the desired locations and this caused a growth in places which were less desirable for there was a tendency to establish where land was available rather than where the people were interested. However, by the purchase of certain freehold land, the transfer of certain leasehold land, and the use of native built schools on native land, progress was made. At this



1 School in a village near Vilirupu;  
2 Vilirupu Mission house; 3 The Mitchell's  
landing at Vilirupu

stage the Seventh-day Adventist Mission began to operate infant and maternal health centres which added a further dimension to the informal educational program of the mission, as well as providing a greatly needed service in the two areas where the work was carried out.<sup>30</sup> There was a rapid growth in the church membership, number of churches, annual baptisms, number of workers, number of schools and enrolments.<sup>31</sup> From this time too, the mission gave more attention to the training of its workers by the establishment of training schools. At this time some trained teachers were appointed to the mission staff. The mission in Papua at this time began to submit the pupils of its schools to the annual examination held by the Papuan Administration for the purpose of obtaining subsidy. By 1932 the Government was willing to register schools and in the Vilirupu area two are noted as being registered.<sup>32</sup>

So in almost every aspect of the mission venture in Papua and New Guinea, 1930 might be looked on as the end of the establishment and the beginning of the forward thrust. The statistics bear this out.<sup>33</sup> In explanation of the statistics it may be said:

1. On occasion new statistics were not available for the new year and at such times statistics for the previous year might be repeated as in 1930 for the Solomon Islands when with slight modification, the 1929 figures are given.

2. The Solomon Islands statistics contain the figures for Bougainville where the first Seventh-day Adventist work in the Mandated Territory was begun in 1924. It is unfortunate that the early results of work in the mandated Territory are thus masked.



The M V Diari

stage the Seventh-day Adventist Mission began to operate infant and maternal health centres which added a further dimension

nil to 1,160. These last figures reflect the fact that in 1930, the Mission had just begun to operate near Rabaul, but that by 1932, the islands of Mussau and Emira had been entered and in these places the entire population had eagerly accepted the Mission and most of the people even up to age thirty, wanted to have a place in the schools. As well, contact had just been made with the Admiralty Group and there too, the contact resulted in a close association.

#### Bisiatabu at its Peak

Bisiatabu continued as a rubber plantation, the mission headquarters, and the senior school. However, it was felt in the Mission that it would be better to bring the school and headquarters down to the coast in order to facilitate contact with the work as it developed at Belepa in the Vailala River area to the west of Port Moresby, and at Korela and Aroma near the Marshall Lagoon to the east. Especially was this the case when the Mission acquired the MV *Diari* by which staff and students could travel much more conveniently. Bisiatabu had become a school enrolling about forty students. From it had gone those mission workers who had any training. At it had been conducted the first baptisms. From its security as a base extensions had been made to Efogi, Belepa and Korela. It had been designated as the Papuan Training School.<sup>34</sup> Now, however, its distance from the coast, the lack of population in close proximity and the difficulty of maintaining contact with the newer stations from it, made a change desirable.<sup>35</sup> It continued as a headquarters for work in the Efogi area and as the school for the students of the Efogi and Kosari districts who wanted to go beyond the village school level. Now it was to be cared for by a national worker.

<sup>1</sup> W N Lock, *Missionary Leader (ML)*, Apr 1927, p 7, 8.

<sup>2</sup> *CRS, A528, Item A9251Z, Part I, Apr 1927, Statement C (c 1933).*

<sup>3</sup> Lock, *ML*, Apr 1927, p 7, 8.

<sup>4</sup> Lock, *Australian Record (AR)*, 10 Oct 1926, p 23.

<sup>5</sup> Lock, *ML*, Apr 1927, p 8.

<sup>6</sup> *CRS, A518, Item A92511, Part I, 3 Jan 1931.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 Apr 1935.

<sup>8</sup> G H Engelbrecht, *ML*, Nov 1928.

<sup>9</sup> Lock, *AR*, 25 May 1931, p 2, 3.

<sup>10</sup> *CRS, A518, Item 9231Z, 1933.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, Part I, 28 February 1930.

<sup>12</sup> Engelbrecht, *ML*, Nov 1928, p 12.

<sup>13</sup> C E Mitchell, *ML*, Sep 1929, p 8.

<sup>14</sup> Lock, *AR*, 15 Apr 1929, p 3.

<sup>15</sup> Mitchell, *ML*, May 1930, p 8.

<sup>16</sup> Engelbrecht, *AR*, 17 Jun 1929, p 4.

<sup>17</sup> *National Regulation 1 of 1907.*

<sup>18</sup> Lock, *AR*, 6 Oct 1930, p 8, 9.

<sup>19</sup> A G Stewart, *ML*, Feb 1930, p 8.

<sup>20</sup> Lock, *ML*, Jun 1930.

<sup>21</sup> Engelbrecht, *AR*, 17 Jun 1929, p 4.

<sup>22</sup> Stewart, *AR*, 12 Dec 1929, p 2, 3.

<sup>23</sup> R H Tutty, *ML*, Mar 1929, p 7.

<sup>24</sup> Lock, *AR*, 6 Oct 1930, p 8, 9.

<sup>25</sup> Engelbrecht, *AL*, 29 Aug 1927, p 4, 5.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Stewart, *AR*, 9 Dec 1929, p 2, 3.

<sup>28</sup> Engelbrecht, *ML*, Nov 1928.

<sup>29</sup> *AR*, 17 Jun 1929, p 4.

<sup>30</sup> Stewart, *AR*, 15 Oct 1928, p 2.



- <sup>28</sup> Englebrect, *AR*, 17 Jun 1929, p 4.
- <sup>29</sup> D H Gray, *AR*, 13 Oct 1930, p 4.
- <sup>30</sup> *CRS ASZS, Item A92317*, Part I, 31 Jul 1929. Champion, Government Secretary.
- <sup>31</sup> see Statistical Summary
- <sup>32</sup> Mabel James, *AR*, 24 Apr 1932, p 2.
- <sup>33</sup> See Tables I-III
- <sup>34</sup> *Australasian Union Conference Executive Committee Minutes*, 8 Sep 1931, p 155.
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, 31 Jan 1933, p 344.

SOLOMON ISLANDS—TABLE II

Statistical Reports for 1911—1941

Year	churches	members	baptised	workers	schools	pupils	teachers
1911							
1915 1	7	-	-	4	-	-	-
1918 1	10	-	-	9	6	152	6
1919 1	10	15	-	10	10	252	13
1921 1	76	-	-	8	14	350	13
1922 2	89	-	-	8	18	573	14
1923 6	215	129	-	24	27	900	28
1924 6	312	39	-	38	38	768	37
1925 7	386	77	-	35	39	844	38
1926 9	458	86	-	39	42	750	48
1927 10	532	64	-	93	62	2445	74
1928 10	557	99	-	90	64	1128	72
1929 17	592	40	-	104	60	939	60
1930 17	592	-	-	103	60	939	60
1931 -	-	-	-	-	71	1005	71
1932 15	905	162	-	95	71	1020	71
1933 19	989	103	-	100	80	1062	77
1934 20	1100	119	-	115	100	1240	97
1935 -	-	-	-	-	100	1240	100
1936 -	-	-	-	-	90	1100	90
1937 22	1220	15	-	127	90	1100	90
1938 22	1220	51	-	122	90	1100	90
1939 23	1133	52	-	26	86	1000	86
1940 -	-	-	-	-	97	1157	5
1941 24	1401	187	-	116	92	1014	92

PAPUA—TABLE I

Statistical Reports for 1911-1941

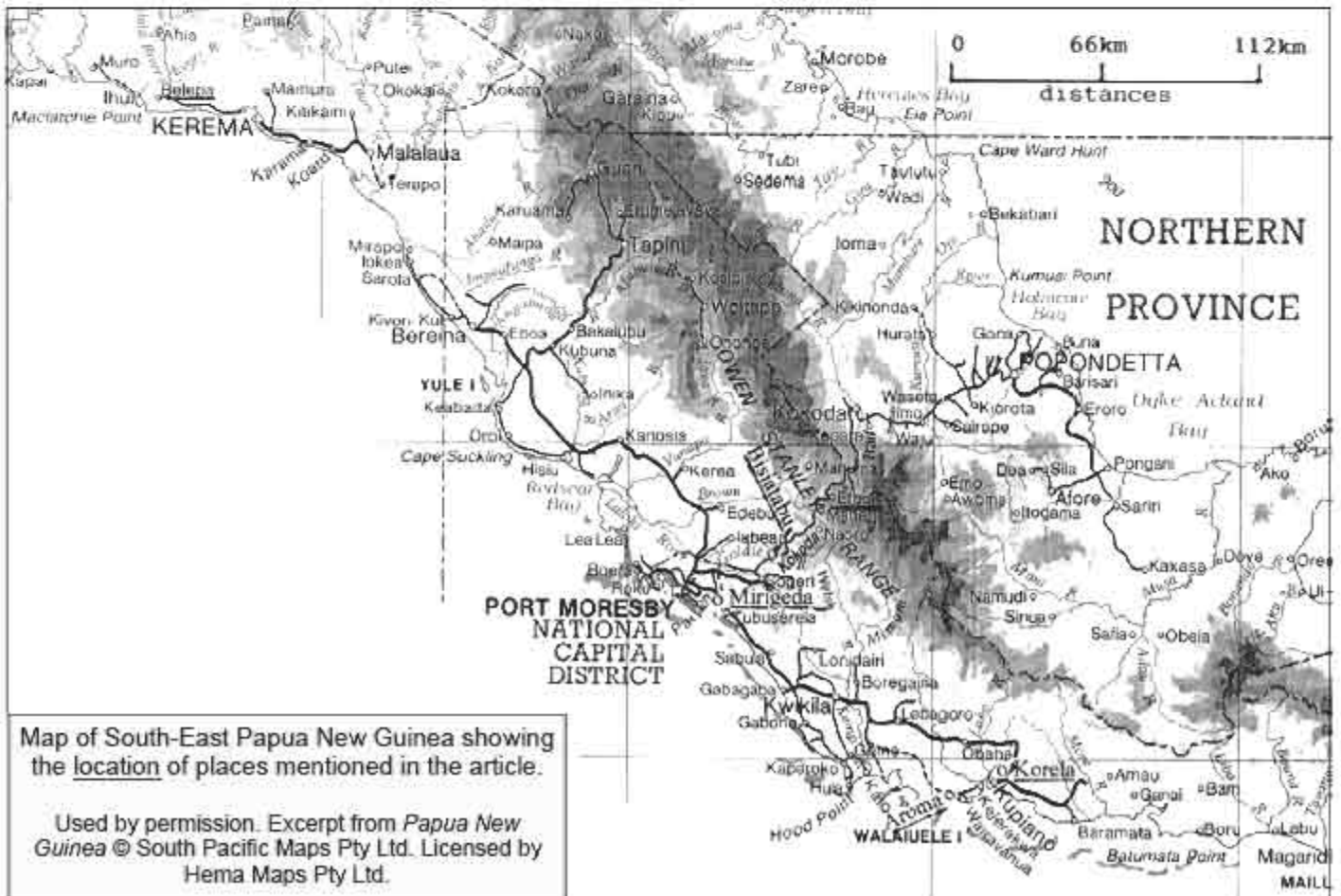
Year	churches	members	baptised	workers	schools	pupils	teachers
1911 1	5	-	-	5	-	-	-
1915 1	9	-	-	3	-	-	-
1918 1	6	-	-	2	1	10	1
1919 1	6	-	-	2	1	10	1
1921 1	6	-	-	3	-	-	-
1922 1	8	-	-	3	1	20	4
1923 1	7	-	-	5	1	27	1
1924 1	19	11	-	6	1	1	1
1925 1	19	-	-	4	1	27	1
1926 1	22	-	-	9	3	60	6
1927 2	22	3	-	9	2	80	4
1928 2	22	-	-	10	1	40	3
1929 2	22	-	-	10	1	40	3
1930 2	22	-	-	11	1	40	3
1931 -	-	-	-	-	6	475	13
1932 2	29	-	-	14	9	500	16
1933 4	34	3	-	21	10	650	20
1934 4	45	15	-	23	10	650	20
1935 -	-	-	-	-	16	890	18
1936 -	-	-	-	-	16	900	20
1937 4	160	21	-	19	16	900	20
1938 4	165	24	-	20	16	900	20
1939 9	144	1	-	19	22	1425	44
1940 -	-	-	-	-	31	1481	39
1941 7	173	25	-	62	32	1649	39
June 30				March 31			

MANDATED TERRITORY OF NEW GUINEA—TABLE III

Statistical Reports for 1929—1941

Year	churches	members	baptised	workers	schools	pupils	teachers
1929 -	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
1930 -	-	-	-	4	-	-	-
1931 -	-	-	-	4	9	500	10
1932 9	316	295	-	16	12	1160	12
1933 9	530	244	-	16	12	1160	12
1934 9	620	100	-	21	12	1160	12
1935 -	-	-	-	-	23	1300	34
1936 -	-	-	-	-	29	1000	40
1937 15	780	55	-	74	27	1000	40
1938 20	987	31	-	115	58	772	58
1939 41	1066	89	-	17	65	1155	65
1940 -	-	-	-	-	68	1179	112
1941 75	1088	118	-	151	85	1604	123

(Compiled from Australasian Union Conference Statistical Reports)





**BERYL STAFFORD**

*Born in Sydney in 1922, Beryl Stafford (nee Trood), attended public school for 3 years, and for the following 5 undertook correspondence school work. When the family moved to Cooranbong in NSW in 1941, she took the General Studies Course at the Australasian Missionary College. After marrying Calvin Stafford in 1945 she assisted her minister husband in Taree and Grafton for the next 2 years. Their mission service commenced in 1948 in Papua New Guinea—in the Eastern Highlands Mission until 1952, at Paglum until 1954, and on Mussau in 1954. They then served in the Western Solomon Islands Mission for the next 5 years. On returning to PNG they served at Korela in Central Papua until 1966, at Yani in Simbu Province 1967-1972, and at Homu in the Eastern Highlands 1972-1976. On returning to Australia the Staffords settled in Cooranbong. Beryl mastered Pisin (Pigin) English in PNG, dispensed medicines and taught knitting and sewing. A resourceful person who adapted well to new cultures, she settled in well in new surroundings. Beryl and Calvin have 4 children: Ruth, Gordon, Margaret, and Nancy.*

## EARLY DAYS AT KUMUL

### —a Missionary Wife's Life on a PNG Outpost, 1948-1950

ON THE 5<sup>TH</sup> OF MAY 1948, I arrived in Lae with my husband Calvin, and our eleven month-old daughter, Ruth, en route from Sydney to a new mission outpost in the highlands of New Guinea. From Lae Ruth and I were flown in to Bena Bena with June Gilmore and baby Ross. We stayed with the Nolan and Howell families until our goods arrived and the exact location of each mission station was decided on. My husband arrived from Lae some weeks later. He had been getting to know some of the missionaries who were there for meetings. He had gained some helpful information on obtaining suitable tinned foods; he was becoming familiar with Pigin and learning how to run a mission station.

We all lived in one big house on Sigoya Hill above Bena Bena. I was shy, not knowing any of these people, so I kept to myself as I looked after Ruth. I watched what the missionaries' wives did and discovered that I was expected to learn Pidgin English to be able to converse with the nationals, barter for garden food and purchase firewood. I didn't find it easy to learn this new language.

I saw how the missionaries' wives made bread with dry yeast. Making bread was not new to me as I had done it for ten years at home in Australia using hop and potato yeast as a rising agent but had not used dry yeast. I also learned I would have to dispense simple medicines to the local people when needed.

My husband flew out to Madang to charter a plane to bring in our goods and supplies to the Kerowagi airstrip. The Gilmore's goods were also to come on the chartered plane. Later our goods were taken by carriers to our different mission stations.

One day, while waiting for a smaller plane to come and ferry us to a closer airstrip, I took Ruth in her pram down to the airstrip. There were scores of nationals in native dress talking in their own language. Later someone asked if I was frightened of them. No, I wasn't. Although they were all new and foreign to me, I didn't feel they would harm me.

At last we were flown, along with most of our goods, to the small Catholic airstrip called Kogi where national Adventist

teachers were waiting with carriers to transport everything to Kumul. With a pole on each side of Ruth's pram and a big umbrella to protect her from rain, we all set off on foot for Kumul about ten to twelve kilometres away. There we found a house of native materials with two rooms and a built-in verandah. The first room was piled high with almost all of our goods while the other room had our innerspring mattress on the floor. We arrived sopping wet because of the rain but Ruth was quite dry under the umbrella.

We found our pressure lamp, some dry clothes and our bedding and left Ruth to sleep in her pram. As I recall we were given cooked sweet potato and corn for tea for which we were most grateful. This was our first night at Kumul—August 28, 1948—woven bamboo walls outside and woven pitpit (a sort of reed) inside. The floor, about thirty centimetres above ground level, was also woven bamboo—quite strange to walk on and very springy. Ruth had fun trying to negotiate the bouncy floor. The roof of the house was "kunai grass" thatch.

Later we erected a table made of woven bamboo on a timber frame with legs driven into the ground through the bamboo floor. The table sagged, so plates of soup needed to be held straight or they would spill. The stools were made from timber with long legs that were driven through the bamboo floor to the ground and they had seats made from woven reeds.

We managed to make a shelf or two, but there were no windows—only holes cut in each end of the house to let the light in. Shelving for crockery and saucepans was made from a framework of wood covered with woven pitpit. A small "Metters" wood stove stood on stones on a wooden frame, its chimney made from one length of steel piping and green bamboo with the joints knocked out. It went up through the thatch ceiling and was surrounded with clay to stop it catching fire. We made a place for our clothes by hanging a rod across one corner with a curtain in front to make a three-cornered wardrobe.

I thought this house wouldn't take much effort to keep tidy. When younger I had lived in a bush house in Australia, and although this house was small it was reasona-



The first Adventist camp meeting in the Highlands—Bena Bena. Men from L to R back: Eric Boehm, Calvin Stafford, —, Lester Lock, Cyril Pascoe, Syd Stocken, Lester Hawkes, Lyn Thrift, —, —, Stan McFarlane. Front, women & children from L to R: —, Ray Boehm, Grace Boehm, Beryl Stafford & children, Mavis Barnard & Kaye, Edna Lock & children, Emma Campbell, Gordon & Elwyn, Beryl Stocken, Freda Hawkes & children, Grace Thrift & child, Lucy French, Leila Maberly & child, —.\*

the mission horse called Bemborough—one of us walked and the other rode, then we swapped. We slept one night in a government rest house made of local materials.

Although it was a dull day Ruth got badly sunburned on her face and hands, and blisters formed on her cheeks. When we realised this we hurried on to Moruma where Ruth's burns were treated. It was wonderful for me to have other missionary wives to see and talk to, having seen none for months. Our children got along well with the other children. It was wonderful to hear from the delegates of the progress of God's work in other places, and to receive spiritual food for ourselves that we could pass on to the people at Kusanul.

Later, in August of that year, the first Adventist Camp meeting was held at Bena Bena. All the administrators and missionaries made plans to be there.<sup>2</sup> Those who could, took a group of believers with them even though it took days of walking. Calvin and I walked while the children were carried by local people.

At the time the Highlands highway was being carved out over the mountains so there were no bridges yet in the western section. The road was dirt and without even gravel. We negotiated small one-log bridges or if the water wasn't too deep, waded across. It was too far to travel in one day so we spent the night in a government rest house. Next day we climbed the Daulo Pass, at 2725 metres, then down the other side where we were met by Lyn Thrift in a jeep. We were grateful to be taken the last 48 kilometres to Bena Bena via Kabinufa where Lyn was the principal. Again the fellowship with other missionaries was wonderful, as were the various meetings taken by the other missionaries and camp delegates who came from Lae, Madang and Australia.

Some Australians had sent us a collection of different coloured wools and a few knitting needles that we could use to teach the students how to knit their own sleeveless multicoloured sweaters. Many of them had to make their own knitting needles from bamboo, copying the needles I had for size, and then at a certain time in the afternoon they would come to my verandah to learn how to knit. Several weeks later these boys could be seen proudly wearing their multicoloured sweaters everywhere.

About this time I felt the girls in the school should learn to sew, by hand at least. A simple skirt would be the easiest, and they all liked the idea. They liked red and we decided to have a blue waist tie and a blue band near the hemline. Well! What fun I had teaching them to thread a needle, with thread and needles so fine, and to hold a needle and sew in a reasonably straight line with a very simple stitch. Some did well, others found it hard but they all ultimately finished and wore their skirts proudly.

Our interpreter, Aunim, had planned to marry a shy, very nice village girl and wanted to have a Christian wedding, but his tribe insisted on a heathen ceremony. I made a simple white dress for the bride, while someone else brought white orchids for her headgear. The man wore a white shirt with a tie, and a loincloth. Many came to the Christian ceremony and our pedal organ, on which I played part of the Bridal March, was carried outside. My husband performed the ceremony, and then next day the heathen wedding took place, the bride being dressed in all the heathen regalia with grease and paint—a tremendous contrast to her appearance the day before.

On one occasion my husband and the teachers had to be away for about ten days, including a Sabbath, so the two teachers' wives, my children and I were left alone on the mission station. I wondered about the Sabbath meetings as the village people were accustomed to coming for a service and I did not want to disappoint them. Selecting some pictures from the picture rolls I made a simple sermon and those who listened said that it was good because they had understood it.

Why is it that accidents seem to happen when husbands are away? We had sharpened bamboo stakes about twenty centimetres high placed around our back door flower garden to prevent villagers from standing on the precious flowers. One afternoon when Gordon was about 18 months old, he and Ruth were playing outside while I was sewing. Suddenly I heard a cry of pain from Gordon with Ruth joining in too. I rushed outside to find he had tripped and fallen on one of the sharpened bamboos which had gone into his face. At first I thought it had gone into his eye. In spite of bathing it, his eye and the side of his face were swelling. It was getting late in the afternoon and the

nearest Aid Post was thirty kilometres away—and we would have had to walk there.

The first thing I did was to pray, and then I asked the rest of the staff and students to pray too. Gordon had a restless night but in the morning the swelling had gone down somewhat, and he could open his eye a little. We thanked God for his improvement, and during the day his face gradually went back to its normal size.

Some months later while washing his face, I noticed the cheek just below his eye seemed to be a bit tender when I pressed gently. I concluded that the bamboo spike had pierced his cheek and gone between his cheekbone and his eyeball. How thankful all the mission people were when I told them. We all praised God for his protecting care over Gordon's eye.<sup>3</sup>

Furlough time came and we had a very enjoyable six months in Australia with family and friends. When we returned to Kumul we were given a royal welcome. The nationals' happiness at seeing us again turned to sadness however when they learned that we were being transferred

further into the Highlands to begin a new station there.

But that's another story.

#### References

<sup>1</sup> The delegates were Pr F D Nichol, editor of the *Review and Herald*, Pr F Mote, secretary of the Australasian Division, with his son Fred; Pr W L Pascoe, Division treasurer; Pr H White, president of the Coral Sea Union Mission; Pr A J Campbell (Kainantu); F Mabely (Wabag); and Pr W Nolan, president of the Central Highlands Mission. Nurse Delaney, a sister to Lucy French, was also there.

<sup>2</sup> Expatriates there were: E A Boehm and family; F Mabely & family; J W French & family; L H Barnard & family; L N Hawkes & family; A J Campbell & family; W H Nolan & family; B C Grosser & Mrs Grosser; L R Thrift & family; C R Stafford & family; L I Howell, Bena Bena Mission Station Director; S H Gander, Madang; R A Mc Farlane, Lae; L M Lock, visitor; D Gillis, builder; C Hart & Mrs Hart, Lae; C Pascoe, visitor; H White, president of CSUM from Lae; J Newman, visitor; H Rudd, carpenter; Olive and Elsie Pearce, nurses from Togoba, (Beryl's cousins from New Zealand.)

<sup>3</sup> God could see into the future that he would need two good eyes to become a mission pilot for His work, flying over the mountains in PNG for 18 years.

<sup>4</sup> An effort has been made to identify the people in the photo. If you can help please let us know. Many thanks.



### The Keeper of Our Heritage

During the last 12 months, many changes have occurred. The South Pacific Division Avondale College Heritage Room Collection has changed its name to 'Adventist Heritage Centre'. The physical layout of the Centre has been changed to facilitate better access and a more pleasing work environment. And we have received some wonderful items, which have been added to the collection, eg A G Stewart's notebook the Paap family history, H B P Wicks' diaries, etc.

A quick tally of the collection reveals we have 2000+ books, 400+ magazine titles, 800+ document boxes, 130+ boxes of photographs and over 2500 audiovisual items (audio cassettes, films, videos, etc.) In the last 12 months we have added 330 books and 1900 documents. We have checked 250+ audio recordings, and sorted/housed 4000+ negatives and 8000+ slides. This all adds up to a wonderful primary resource collection that reflects the activities and the impact of the Seventh-day Adventist Church within this part of the world. Please come and visit us one Thursday if you are in the area. You are very welcome. Our hours are Thursday 9-12, 1-5. Rose-lee Power (Supervisor) Phone: 02 4980 2313, Email: [heritage@avondale.edu.au](mailto:heritage@avondale.edu.au)



## EXCITING YET PURPOSEFUL: a new venture in the Solomon Islands

### The birth of Betikama Missionary School 24.12.47–30.01.49

**Synopsis:** During 1946 and almost all of 1947, Lyn Thrift revived the school at Batuna, Western Solomons. Gardens were replanted, coconuts gathered and tithes assessed, sawmilling resumed, boats were repaired, classes recommenced and a choir festival held! Now Lyn is about to leave on a new venture further south on the island of Guadalcanal



Grace and Lyndon Thrift

**I**T WAS A COUPLE OF HOURS before midnight on 23 December 1947. It was a busy time on the Batuna wharf. However, loading was soon completed and the engine of the *G F Jones* started. There was a short prayer for a safe voyage, the ropes were cast off, and the boat moved down the Marovo Lagoon toward the Bili entrance en route to Honiara. It was just a simple procedure that had been repeated many times in the past. However, this trip had special significance, for on board were thirteen "boys", students of the Batuna Training School, who had been selected as the nucleus for the proposed Betikama Missionary School to be set up by their headmaster, Lyndon Thrift, and his wife, Grace. The journey was uneventful and, after a breakfast break at the Russell Islands, the boat arrived at Honiara around midday, the day before Christmas.

#### Why Betikama?

Before the war, Batuna had been the very heart of the Adventist mission in the Solomon Islands. It was the mission headquarters, with residences for the superintendent and secretary-treasurer. Also located there were the training school, hospital, printing press, sawmill, slipway and

engineering plant. A Japanese boat builder had worked there, and an unfinished boat was still in the shed when WWII ended. The surrounding Marovo Lagoon area had provided a large percentage of mission teachers, and these teachers had taken the local language to many areas, giving it almost the status of an Adventist Latin.

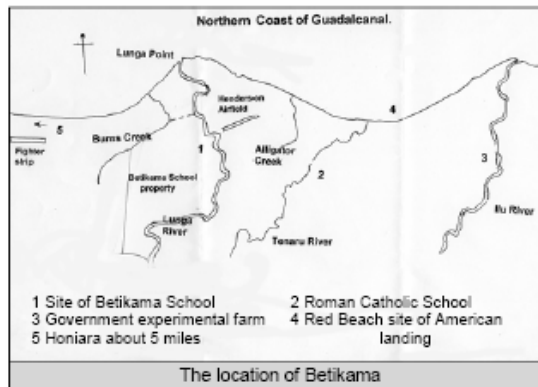
But there were problems. Batuna was far removed from the capital and business centre, Honiara. The nearest post office was some hours away by boat. The land had been worked by traditional island methods, and declining fertility caused difficulties in providing an adequate food supply for a school large enough to produce the needed teachers. Also the reliance on the Marovo language as the means of education and communication had become a limiting factor, for the only literature available in that language was the New Testament (*La Kali Hugaruna*), the lesson quarterlies and the hymnbook (*Buka va Hechi*).

As a result the energetic new superintendent of the Solomon Islands Mission, Pastor Herbert White, set out to find new locations for both the mission headquarters and the school. The former was relocated at Kukum, just east of Honiara, and the school at what became known as Betikama, a few miles further east. Doubtless, in his search he was assisted by Pastor Norman Ferris, who had gained an intimate knowledge of Guadalcanal from his years of pre-war mission work in that area. His brother, David Ferris, was available at the time and he also had a knowledge of the area, even though his work had been mainly on Malaita.

#### The School Property

The land purchased for the school had been owned by Lever Brothers and was inland from their coconut plantation. It covered 1,650 acres and was bounded on the east by the Lunga River (hence the name, Betikama, meaning Big Water in the local dialect). Burns Creek formed part of the western boundary. At the time of the survey done by the





government engineer, Mr Burns, four points were specified on the banks of the river and the creek where steel pipes set in concrete became permanent markers which were to be joined by straight lines. It is understood that the cost of the land was ten shillings per acre. At that time the exchange rate made ten shillings (which became the Australian dollar) the equivalent of US\$1.66.

The land was mostly flat alluvial soil, interspersed in some areas by sharp gravel ridges. The northern part was open kunai grassland, but further from the sea this gave way to tropical forest.

As the new school site was directly across the Lunga River from Henderson Airfield, the scene of much bitter fighting during the war, there were many reminders of the past in the form of unexploded shells, hand grenades, bullets, etc. And a former quarry on the property held a number of army trucks that had been lightly covered with gravel.

#### First Impressions

The entry road to the school was through a gap between a couple of hills, opening out into a flat area, which came into view quite suddenly. On that day in 1947 the first view of the school site was not such as would charm a newcomer. Batuna was located on a promontory, with the lagoon on three sides: the new school would be cut off from the sea and its breezes, and a large area of recently blackened kunai grass did nothing to improve one's first impression of the place. In the midst of this stood a near-complete residence, built from old army huts, for the expatriate couple, and a quarter-acre patch of sweet potatoes, just starting to run. "Home" for the boys was an army hut in the bush; it was in such a poor state of repair that the frequent showers of rain required the use of pandanus-leaf umbrellas. Before these boys had been selected they had been warned that life would be tough for a while; they were prepared to accept this and rose magnificently to the challenge.

#### The Food Supply

One thing that had been learned early in mission experience was that a well-fed school was likely to be a happy school, so establishing gardens was high on the priority list.

But until the crops matured, food had to be bought, and the local sources were the Catholic school at Tenaru and the government experimental farm at Ila. Food was purchased in this way until early March, when there was a shipping failure and the importing of rice ceased. The government promptly requisitioned all root crops on the island and the school was left with just three days supply. But before that food ran out, a miracle took place.

On a hot, cloudless day the Lunga River started to rise, not just a little, but 24 feet (7m) in a couple of hours as the result of a cloudburst in the mountains. The riverbank at the school was 27 feet (8m) high; hence Betikama escaped flooding. But it was a different story at the American base across the river. Some of their food stores were flooded, and as soon as the water subsided anything that was wet—even cartons of tinned goods—went to the dump, the happy hunting ground for the boys after work. Soon they were returning with cartons of breakfast cereals and other goodies. The commanding officer at the American base happily agreed to our taking the truck to the dump to bring back what could be salvaged, and this resulted in our salvaging one and a half large truckloads of cornflakes, rice bubbles, flour, sugar, yeast, raisins, cheese, milk powder, cocoa, etc. And did the boys enjoy the change to the

American food! A typical breakfast included cereal with milk, toast and cheese, fruit buns and hot drink. They loved it! (By the time the first crops were mature enough to start harvesting, there were only a couple of wheelbarrow loads left.) At worship that evening there was a thanksgiving service, and the hymn used was "Come, Ye Thankful People, Come." Good luck? Never! Providential? Absolutely!

absolutely!

But, back to the gardens. To ensure an adequate and regular supply of the staples, sweet potatoes and tapioca, fortnightly plantings of a quarter acre became the basic rule of the garden program. The sweet potatoes needed only one weeding—a fortnight after planting—for the

*The government promptly requisitioned all root crops on the island & the school was left with just three days supply*



vines grew fast enough to choke all weeds after that. At first the only agricultural equipment available, apart from shovels, included a weapons carrier (US army utility) and a single-furrow mouldboard plough. Usually there were two ploughmen and a driver working together, and it was very interesting to watch the competition to see who could produce the straightest furrow. Later the school acquired a small Ford tractor and a two-gang disc cultivator.

Other crops included corn, lujū (a yam), pawpaws, bananas and a local green called *ngachi* in the Marovo language. Coconuts for eating came from Levers' plantation, and those for planting along the riverbank were brought from Rennell Island for they were a shorter variety and the nuts were large.

By late May 1948, the school had a surplus of the staple vegetables, for which there was a ready market in Honiara. Another source of food was the river, which at that time was well stocked, though in later years the supply was depleted. Usually three boys went fishing on Tuesdays and they would stagger home, heavily laden. Some of the fish they speared were so large that when they were carried on shoulder poles, the tails dragged on the ground. Quite a lot of "recreational" fishing took place at odd times during the day.

Judging by the contented atmosphere, Betikama was a well-fed school.

#### Buildings

Prior to the arrival of the schoolboys at Betikama, the mission had bought the buildings at an American camp just east of the Metapono River. Some of these had already been moved to the school site. The work of removal was made more difficult by some bridges having been washed away in floods. Consequently, it was necessary to transport building materials along the coast on a barge borrowed from the leper station at Tetere and truck them to the school site. Most of these buildings were Quonset huts. By the end of 1948 four were being used as dormitories, one as a classroom and another to house the press, while two more had been used to build the headmaster's house. Other buildings that had been erected were the dining room and kitchen and two teachers' houses. Two married couples' houses were under construction.

Relationships with the American base were very cordial; visits by the commanding officer and chaplain were happy occasions. On one of his

calls Captain Collins enquired about some corn for Christmas dinner, and 700 cobs were given. In exchange he instructed that the school be given two more Quonset huts. Chaplain Nalley took a real interest in the program and made some very complimentary remarks when comparing Betikama with another school he had visited. He also provided a little humour when inspecting the garden,



Elisha Gorapava

by searching for pods containing little white balls on the tapioca plants, not knowing about the tubers.

Another helpful visitor was Sergeant Dewey E Keene, of the motor pool, who not only helped keep our vehicles running, but, as a diligent explorer of all the tracks in the area, also supplied much information on the whereabouts of timber and other materials useful for our building program.

Frank Aveling, the mission engineer, brought two diesel engines, a generator and a saw bench from Batuna and installed them for us. This made the school self-sufficient in timber, using logs brought in on a converted torpedo trailer.

Much of the materials needed during the first year at Betikama came from what had been left after the war. The thirty gallons of fuel bought at the beginning seemed to be like the widow's cruse of oil, for no further purchases were required. In fact, by year's end we had a stock of over 100 barrels. A system of small rewards for finding fuel and other essentials encouraged searching by the boys. In this way Kituru earned enough to buy a sewing machine and set himself up as a maker of shorts. Unused camouflage netting and rolls of barbed wire found in the jungle provided the necessities for fencing. Fence posts were cut from lenu trees. When some of these took root they did not need replacing for quite some time.

The result was that Betikama was started at minimum cost to the mission. It is understood that the outlay during the first thirteen months was A£850, excluding both national and expatriate wages.

#### The School Program

Before transferring from Batuna, the boys had agreed that during the setting up period they would be engaged in full-time work until adequate housing had been built. They willingly honoured this commitment. Classes were phased in gradually, firstly occupying the evenings, then half of the morning, and finally half of the day. The curriculum was like that of most mission schools at the time, with special emphasis on Bible and English. While the headmaster had a fair grasp of Marovo, he insisted that the students speak to him in English in normal circumstances in the hope that this would improve their spoken English and facilitate their access to literature.

Soon after the first group arrived three more students came from Kopiu school. Soon others joined and by May 1948 sixty-five were enrolled, a number that was constant to the end of the year. Liligeto and Laejama came as teachers and Likera cared for the press.

As the numbers increased and the different island groups represented likewise increased, an experiment in democracy was devised. An election was held to gain appropriate representation from each group and this became the "Legislative Assembly", charged with the task of formulating the rules that would govern the school. Liligeto was chairman, and it was interesting that the code of laws started with "Laws 1 -10: See Exodus 20." When the laws were approved and accepted an "Executive Council" was elected. Under Vave's chairmanship, it supervised the routine of school and work life, with power to impose limited "hard labour" if necessary. With the school organised thus, the teachers were free to give more time to their real work and a sense of responsibility developed among the students. It has been reported that this system continued



40 years on. Pastor Joshua Lapo leads the way followed by Pr Wilfred Bili & Pr Nathan Rore.

to function effectively in the absence of expatriate leadership.

It may be asked how Betikama fitted into the over-all educational program of the Solomon Islands. If such a program existed, those that worked at Betikama had not heard of it. To the best of their knowledge all education at that time was in the hands of the various missions, each of which chose its own objectives and programs. It was a similar situation with the planning and construction of the school. The mission made its own decisions and did the best it could with what was available. Guidance and regulation did not exist. There was so little government supervision that even in such a basic matter as the licensing of vehicle drivers, control was not instituted until well into 1948.

It would be sad if the recording of Betikama's first year did not include a tribute to that first class. It was due to their willingness, energy, faithfulness and sheer hard work that so much was accomplished in such a short time. And when they took up positions in God's work they were still faithful, providing a very significant percentage of post-war leadership for the mission.

#### The Church

Soon after the school started a church was organised and the appropriate offices filled. Before long thoughts turned toward the need for a church building. The students did not have money but they had energy, and Lever Brothers plantation was not being worked. Soon arrangements were made for the collection of coconuts in after-school hours; copra was made and the proceeds were divided equally between Levers, the church building fund, and the students who did the work. The drying was done by boys on one-hour shifts through the night, and by the end of the year the fund stood at £300 no small amount for those days.

#### The Aftermath

At the fortieth anniversary celebrations in 1988 there was a march past of current and former students. Fifteen hundred marchers participated, including some from the first class in 1948. It was a proud moment for the school, to have so many of its alumni return for the reunion. Among the marchers were men who had been mission presidents and secretaries, ministers and teachers, tradesmen, businessmen and politicians, including some government ministers. One ex-student was later to become a de-

partmental secretary at the South Pacific Division.

As I watched that march I could not help but think of what these people had contributed to God's work, through the spreading of the gospel, not only in the Solomon Islands, but also in other lands, particularly PNG. Only in the Better Land will we know the full story of all the good accomplished by that little group that started pioneering at Betikama on Christmas Eve 1947,

and by those that have followed on.

#### The Betikama "Pioneers".

Members of the initial group who started the school in 1948—from Batuna & other places such as Kopiu, Guadalcanal. (Prepared in January, 2003 by Nathan Rore).

1. Vavepitu. Teacher, missionary to New Guinea, preceptor, assistant mission director, Ordained; retired at Kolombangara.
2. Isaac Moveni. Teacher, district director, departmental director, ordained, retired at Dovele.
3. Solomon. Died soon after returning to his village at Viru.
4. Jioni Poa. Teacher at Rennell, Bellona and Malaita. "Very good and faithful teacher." Ordained? Retired at Ughela, Rendova.
5. Nathaneel. Teacher, district director. Remembered for his faithfulness in visiting, travelling by canoe without outboard. Died before retirement.
6. Jacob Makato. Chief of village of Jella, north New Georgia. Noted for leadership in village development, with very large Adventist church. Faithful layman.
7. Jacob Maeke. Carpenter. Worked at Jones Missionary College and Kukudu. Faithful member; retired at Dovele.
9. Kituru Ghomu. Teacher in both Solomons and New Guinea. Assistant Union Education Director, making an outstanding contribution to Adventist education. Ordained. Now retired at Sobiro, Gatokae Island.
10. Savakana. Passed to his rest before entering the work of the church.
11. Ben Miti. Passed to his rest before entering the work of the church.
12. Lasi. Did not enter church employ.
13. Elisha Gorapava. Teacher, ordained, Assistant Union Education Director, Mission president, Union Ministerial director, member of division committee. Powerful preacher. Passed to his rest in 1981. (From Kopiu Guadalcanal)
14. Thugea. Mission cashier, then to CSUM office. Trained as minister, ordained.
15. Wilfred Bili. president of Bougainville mission, ministerial teacher at Sonoma, mission president again, Stewardship Director, South Pacific Division. Retired on Guadalcanal. (From Kopiu)
16. Nathan Rore. Teacher, school principal, ordained, assistant education director, assistant president in New Guinea missions, president of 3 missions in Solomon islands, member of Division executive committee. Retired at Betikama.
17. Saronga. Teacher in primary schools—Malaita and Eastern Solomons. Retired on Guadalcanal. (From Kopiu)
18. Thomas Green. Whole life service in treasury work, Eastern Solomons Mission. Retired and passed away. ■





## A NATIONAL EXPATRIATE REFLECTS ON TEACHING PRIMARY SCHOOL IN SAMOA —some success in spite of difficulties



**TEINA TAIVAIRANGA**

*Teina Taivairanga, BEd Pacific Adventist College, was born on Rarotonga in the Cook Islands on 3 Sep 1935. He went to a government primary school there and later to Papaaroa Training School at Titikaveka. He graduated from Fulton Missionary College with a Primary Teachers Diploma in 1957, and later in 1974 with a Secondary Teachers Diploma. He obtained his BEd from PAC in 1984.*

*On the 26 Nov 1958 he married Tuakana Turla of Aitutaki in Tokoroa, NZ. Their first appointment was to the Adventist Central School at Lakovaa, Apta in 1959. Two years later they transferred to the Satala School in Pago Pago where Teina served as the headmaster for 3 years. Four years were then spent at the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Missionary School on Abemama in Kiribati. From 1968 - 1974 Teina taught, and also served as deputy principal at Fulton. He served 5 years as deputy principal at Papaaroa, 2 years as principal at Te Kaaroa School on Aitutaki C.I. and back at Papaaroa as principal for the next 2 years. After his study at PAC he spent 6 more years at Papaaroa. From 1993 to 1995 Teina pastored churches on Rarotonga as well as serving as Education Director for the CI Mission.*

*Six children were born into the Taivairanga family: —John (deceased), David, Edward, Adeline, Peter, & Marcella.*

*The Taivairangas now live at Papaaroa on Rarotonga.*

**I**T WAS IN the fabulous and beautiful Cook Islands that my ancestral and Christian roots flourished. In this place I must begin my reflections.<sup>1</sup>

My first contact with Christian education took place in 1951 when I enrolled as a student in what was then known as the Cook Islands Seventh-day Adventist Training School at Papaaroa on Rarotonga. This was a boarding school cradled in 1938 under the administration of Pastor Arthur Jacobson. Located close to a white, sandy beach and lagoon of natural beauty, and with more than one hundred hectares of fertile land suitable for cultivation, it offered the ideal setting for the operation of a boarding school. The school enrolled both married and single students from Rarotonga and from the other inhabited islands in the Cook Islands.<sup>2</sup>

I had no intention of being a part of this Christian environment or even becoming a committed Seventh-day Adventist. My only purpose of becoming involved in a school of this nature was just to satisfy my mother's wish. Her desire was to make a minister out of a brute known to the family folks in the village as being good for nothing and not worth anything. Being the first born of a family of three boys, I seemed to receive more attention than my brothers did. This early experience taught me that in family or school, the practice of preferential treatment of an individual destroys family togetherness and should not be tolerated.

I entered the school at the time when Pastor John Cernik,<sup>3</sup> an Australian missionary, was at the helm. Assisting him were two others, Henry Moala and Peter Manu<sup>4</sup> from the Friendly Islands of Tonga. There were also two Cook Island locals supporting the teaching ministry, Pastor Joseph



**John Cernik**



**Henry Moala from Tonga**

Vati and Ngatama Mareta Ria as well as others who were involved in the school program one way or another.

It was Henry Moala's Christian influence in the classroom and superb teaching style that helped in consolidating my desire to become involved in the teacher training program at Fulton Missionary College in Fiji. In January of 1954, after spending three years of academic grooming at the Papaaroa school, I left for Fulton. I had only one ambition, and that was to be a teacher, let alone thinking about becoming involved in the work of the church, or fulfilling my mother's desire of my becoming a minister.



**Daphne Halliday (Chapman)**

I spent four years at the College. The last two of these were spent in learning the skills in the art of teaching. I pay respect to an Australian missionary, Daphne Chapman<sup>5</sup> better known today as Mrs Don Halliday. Her outstanding devotion and dedication in the skills of teaching teachers to teach profoundly assisted in making me to be what I have been as a teacher. This does not in any way underestimate the heaps of spiritual, academic and moral support received from all my other expatriate Christian friends with whom I have rubbed shoulders in my over thirty years of service for the church in the Pacific.

#### Lalovaea SDA School - Western Samoa 1959 - 1961

The indelible missionary influence and impact, from



Teina outside a Lalovaea School fale in 1959

Papaaroa School and Fulton College influenced me to take my first teaching appointment to Lalovaea school in Samoa. Although I was making big money working in a factory in Auckland, New Zealand, I did not hesitate to accept the call. I considered it a privilege and honour to be called to serve in the teaching ministry of the church. I had not anticipated that my life would be moving in this direction.<sup>6</sup>

I was on the verge of getting into a marriage contract with a fine young Cook Island lady. She was a qualified teacher, and involved with the running of the children's Sabbath School classes at Ponsonby church in Auckland. Since our marriage in 1958, my wife, a dynamic woman, has always played a supporting role as either a full time or relief teacher in all of the schools where we have served.

Arriving at Lalovaea School in 1959, I taught under the David Hay intensive Bible-based education system.<sup>7</sup> He was another missionary teacher of New Zealand upbringing, whose systematic people-orientated administrative style focused on relationships rather than just on seeing a job done. It was not only a privilege but a blessing to be involved in a school of this kind where teachers and students worked together transforming every classroom activity into a hive of meaningful learning.

From my personal observation, I was merged into a mission-generated school, targeting a very strong witnessing program as well as placing emphasis on academic excellence. The success of growth in both the spiritual tone and the academic quality within the school system in general, came about as a result of the unreserved commitment and dedication of the teachers.<sup>8</sup> Then, there was also the dynamic of the positive parent - teacher relationships, an important element in the process of learning.

The regular Home and School meetings under the presidency of Sauni Kuresa drew many parents, families and friends together for valuable reflections on the school programs, and the performances of teachers and students. As a result of these well attended friendly interactions, the parent-teacher relationship grew stronger contributing to



liga Sauni Kuresa beside the playground equipment bought by the Home & School Association

the success of the school. Sauni Kuresa was an outstanding Christian musician, composer of the Samoan national anthem, and a prominent organist and pianist not only in his church in Apia, but also in the community at large. The Home and School functions were continuously benefited by the JMV Brass Band, one of the four brass bands he was managing on Upolu and Savai'i at the time.

This musical activity became a vital part of the school and church life. I believe that the use of instrumental and vocal music in the school and the church, helped in enhancing the presence of Adventism in the community. In addition to the use of brass instruments there were also the morning devotions and Bible periods when singing gospel songs enriched the spiritual learning process. Good quality sacred music transforms lives and should be encouraged in every Seventh-day Adventist school, as it instigates a vibrant atmosphere encouraging faith in a system of divine origin.

In the minds of the majority of the parents who supported the school, English was the most important subject. They considered that success with English would result in better employment and an improved economic situation. Therefore, the teaching of English as a second language became fundamental in the process of learning. The use of oral English saturated the primary section of the school, and was consolidated at the high school level. We used the Tate Oral English Series as I believed that oral expression should precede written language.

The Samoan community, comprising both Adventists and non-Adventists, were extremely interested in the education of their children. They would do anything to ensure that their children received the best from the best of the many schools in the community. They were prepared to



Teina with the head prefects, 1960: Ativale Mulitalo & Oa Oa



Some of the female teaching staff in 1961: Irae Neru, Mina Amosa (Cook Islands), Pele Potoi, Ruby Rea, Isa Solofa, Violosolo Saena & Sepuita Saluni (office).

invest every available resource of their time, energy and savings to provide their children with good education in spite of the expensive costs involved in terms of school fees and other items. Consequently, Lalovaea Adventist School, became their favourite centre of learning.

I was responsible for a class of about sixty pupils in Form 1 (the 7th year). Another teacher had an additional Form 1 of equal size. This high student-teacher ratio existed throughout the whole school causing problems for the mental capabilities of human weaklings.<sup>9</sup> But, I liked the challenge of teaching big classes, despite the problems of insufficient time for individual help for students. This difficulty can be reduced through adequate preparation and good organization on the part of the teacher.

In addition to a very strong academic program, evangelism became top priority. About half the students came from a non-Adventist background. It was this pattern that set the pace for me, not only to deal with the three "R's" in the process of learning, but also to help as many students as possible to accept Christ as their personal Saviour. The Bible became my key textbook.

Beside the normal Bible class periods, Pastor Tavita Niu,<sup>10</sup> a stalwart of Christian education, ran a weekly special class for those students interested in studying the Word of God. He was good, strict, yet kind and friendly. These Bible classes resulted in many baptisms. This gave me a sense of joy and satisfaction. Praise and honour can be given to God alone for lives surrendered to Him. I am convinced that the teaching of the Bible should always take first priority in all of our schools. Ellen G White identifies this need. "To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind and soul, that the divine purpose in his creation might be realised - this was to be the work of redemption. This is the object of education, the great object of life."<sup>11</sup>

About twenty years after my teaching years in Samoa, I stood in a queue for lunch during the 1980 Australasian Division Youth Congress at Haskell Park, Ardmore in New Zealand. The congress involved young people from New Zealand, Australia and the Pacific Triangle of Polynesia, Melanesia and Micronesia. Someone nudged me from behind, and being curious, I turned to see. He was well groomed, slightly taller than I was and probably in his early thirties.

"Do you remember me?" he asked. There was no

doubt whatsoever in his mind who I was even though time and tides had silently transformed my human frame into unwanted ageing, and more than double the size. A moment of silence lapsed, as I tried to peer into the voice and the face behind the question. "I'm sorry," I said. "I don't remember you."

"I am Tasi. You remember, I used to sit in your Bible class at Lalovaea School. I can still remember the singing time, the morning devotions and the Bible stories of Old Testament times."

How clean, accurate and confident the verbal reminiscence hit me. Grasping his hand I said, "Tasi, yes, I remember. It's nice meeting you after all these years, especially at a gathering of this kind. I can still see you occupying the front seat, quiet, yet eager to learn. How come? What happened?"

Briefly, the story went like this:

Over the years he had been searching for greater understanding of the Word. Having been brought up of London Missionary Society parents, he felt he had to look further for deeper knowledge of the Bible. Often, reflections of his days at the Adventist school at Lalovaea especially the worship and Bible times kept haunting him. Furthermore, he determined to find out more about the church behind the operation of such a fine Christian school he had attended. After his marriage, he moved to New Zealand with his family and settled in Porirua. There he accepted an invitation to attend an evangelistic meeting for the Samoan community conducted by Pastor Raigoso Tupai. His search for the truth took him into the baptismal font where he made his final decision to follow his Lord. At the time of our meeting during the Congress, Tasi had been ordained as a deacon and was doing the work of the church with his family. Wisdom expresses it gently this way, "Cast your bread upon the waters, for after many days you will find it again."<sup>12</sup>

God certainly works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform. He alone knows just how many of the boys and girls like Tasi, who also went through my classes, have given their lives to Him. This is the most beautiful thing that can happen in any school run by the church. It is not only rewarding, but extremely satisfying.

My teaching ministry at Lalovaea School terminated prematurely as I was asked to fill a need in the Satala school in American Samoa. It was a difficult decision for me to make as I was thoroughly enjoying the work I was doing in terms of the close friendly relationship developed between me and my class, especially in Bible study. But I realised that God's work must move on. He knows what is best in any circumstance. So, I transferred to Pago Pago in American Samoa.

### The Strength in the Education System

A summary of my reflections taken from my teaching experience at Lalovaea school:

1. It is important to maintain strong Christian overtones in all aspects of learning, integrating biblical principles in all subject areas. I believe that this is still the best way to challenge the humanistic, self-centred education schemes of the world. This Bible-based education encourages an atmosphere of love and understanding among students and teachers.
2. There are advantages in developing good relationships

between the teachers, parents and students. As a result, the spiritual tone and the academic quality will become better, enhance an increase in the enrolment and the level of internal and external examinations will improve.

3. The success of a school depends largely on the commitment and dedication of the teachers. Success is not dependent on costly classrooms, an extensive library, or the luxury of the latest computers. Even without these novelties, I believe that the success of any academic program depends on teachers who are able to effectively use a blackboard and chalk. There is a saying that the best teacher is marked by chalk smudges on his back. I can still see in my mind's eye those kikau (coconut leaves) classroom huts used as palaces for learning the three "R's" in the primary school. The temporary make-shift huts offered a situation conducive for learning.

4. The motto of the school, "Nothing Without Labour" was a key to success. What we put into any project is exactly what we will reap from it.

5. Teaching is a serious business-serious because we are dealing with human lives. Doctors deal with the frailties of human frames. Christian teachers on the other hand not only deal with the physical, the mental and the social aspects of learning, but also with the spiritual frailties of humans. This makes teaching very important and challenging. The ultimate purpose of teaching is to enhance academic success and to channel every student toward making a decision to serve God.

"Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God's ideal for His children. Godliness - godlikeness - is the goal to be reached."<sup>13</sup>

6. Teachers will never know how many of those precious jewels who have gone through their classrooms have become successful citizens in this life and have chosen to serve God.
7. People are more important than things. Modern equipment should not take the place of the ultimate purpose of running a Christian school. In terms of the mission statement, it is to encourage choices to serve God.

"True education means more than the perusal of a certain course of study. It means more than the preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical the mental and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come."<sup>14</sup>

#### Weakness in the system.

My experience led me to observe some weaknesses in the school system.

1. Students who were unable to cope with the academic demands due to the results of academic screening were left with the option of leaving school or being placed in

a lower class. In some way, the educational system needs to be adjusted to enable these less able students to receive an education appropriate to their quest for knowledge and a place in society.

2. A few students who were beyond school age had to leave because they could not cope with the study program of the class, especially in understanding and using English in verbal and written form. This is pitiful and pathetic. Coming from a background of indigenous freedom and ignorance, and through no fault of their own, some are compelled to swallow a communication diet of another language they are not even capable of chewing.
3. Students who were not able to carry on with their education fell back into the monotony of subsistence living in the style of village life. Children learn at different rates and at different levels. No one should underestimate the

importance of enabling a student to achieve the highest level of which he or she is capable in any kind of learning situation.

4. Sometimes the academic weakness found in some children is excused by blaming the performance of the teachers instead of accepting the limitations or indolence of the students themselves as the prime cause.

5. Some teachers are lacking basic skills in the English language. Unless this ever changing and ever growing language is properly taught and clearly understood by those who dabble in the education process and who claim to have the right to teach, very limited success will be seen.

#### Summary

1. Sometimes those whose English is not their mother tongue excel in its usage more than those who were born and bred with it. These are to be admired for their diligence and accomplishment
2. In the teaching of English as a second language, Oral English in primary schools tops my list. I see a need for the compilation of an Oral English course syllabus and reading materials relevant to modern trends in education, and conducive to our education philosophy and statement of mission for our Pacific Islands primary schools.
3. The teacher's role in setting the correct intonation and sentence patterns during this period is not only important but crucial. This is because the Pacific Island child learns faster by repetition of what he or she hears during Oral English drills.
4. Whether it be in speaking, teaching, preaching or reading, it is vital to know and understand the language one is using, whether English or a vernacular. This is where skill in language teaching becomes very important. Generally, the main problem is the lack of sufficient suitable reading materials.
5. My teaching experience will always be a vital part of my Christian growth and development. This experience has been enriched and consolidated by the support my wife

*The ultimate purpose in teaching is to enhance academic success and to channel every student toward making a decision to serve God.*



and I received from the teachers as well as the parents and church families throughout the three major ethnic divisions of the South Pacific region where we have worked. They were so kind, generous and caring. There is no doubt in my mind that the Seventh-day Adventist church family is a wonderful family to belong to.

6. The value of the dedication and unselfish services willingly propagated by expatriate missionaries in the island fields can never be estimated in cash. They came for the purpose of caring and sharing, and willingly offered endless resourcefulness to meet the local needs. There were always the kind gestures of physical and spiritual nurture. They deprived themselves of the luxuries of home and sauntered out on deck to face the unforeseen Pacific Ocean challenges of the unknown. This is what makes being a missionary something satisfying and rewarding for the sake of the gospel.
7. While it was difficult for my wife and me to leave our school and church family at Lalovaea when transferred to Satala school in American Samoa, there was no hesitation in responding to serve in another area of responsibility for God. It came as a fulfilment of my ambition of being involved in God's work as a missionary teacher. It was time to move on and leave our unknown future to a knowing God.
8. In the work of education as in any other phase in God's work, there will always be happy times and times saturated with aches and hurts. Life is not always strewn with roses without thorns, sunshine without showers, success without sweat and parting without pain. This philosophy is true in every aspect of our lives.
9. I believe that "variety is the spice of life". Change is inevitable. Some must move on while others stand on guard as watchers on the education walls of Zion. That is why I believe in constructive change.
10. I have learned that what we receive depends on what we are willing to invest. The apostle Paul makes a point, "Be not deceived God is not mocked for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."<sup>15</sup> Therefore anything good done in my teaching to make a difference in the lives of young people, is a reflection of what God can do with anyone who is dedicated to Him and His service.

#### References:

- <sup>1</sup> The Cook Islands consist of 6 large & some smaller Polynesian islands. They are located approx. 2,600 km NE of Auckland, NZ. Population is c.17500. The islands were visited by Capt James Cook in 1773, annexed by Britain in 1888 and transferred to NZ control in 1901. The people have common citizenship with NZ and became a self-governing overseas territory of NZ in 1965. Avarua, on the island of Rarotonga, is the administrative capital. The islands produce fruit, copra and crafts. The Polynesian Maori people are known for their courage and navigational skills in their conquest of Te Moana o Kiva or the "Pacific Ocean." They even travelled as far as NZ which they called Aotearoa, or the "Land of the Long White Cloud." It was this kind of geographical, traditional and cultural flavour that provided the setting for John I Tay and other pioneer missionaries when they landed on Rarotonga at the time of the first visit of the Pitcairn in 1891.
- <sup>2</sup> "In 1938 an estate of more than 100 acres (40 hectares) was made available (on lease) at Titikaveka on Rarotonga to the mission, and a boarding school for 57 students was opened. A G Jacobson, the mission superintendent operated the school with the help of a national staff. In 1945 N W Palmer was

appointed the first headmaster. During this year the school began a training programme for Cook Island workers." From this time on the institution was known as the "Cook Island Training School."

- <sup>3</sup> John Cernik had previously served as principal of two island field institutions—Aore in Vanuatu (New Hebrides), 1940-1942, and Beulah in Tonga, 1943-1949. In the Cook Islands it was from 1950-54.
- <sup>4</sup> Henry Moala and Pita Manu served in the Cook Islands, c 1950-54.
- <sup>5</sup> Daphne Chapman, an Australian missionary, served at the Fulton Missionary College, Talavu, on the main island of Viti Levu in Fiji, from 1950 to 1952 and again from 1955 to 59. Later on, following marriage to Don Halliday she, with her husband, taught at Fulton.
- <sup>6</sup> At the time of the call to connect with the school in Apia Samoa, Teina was making good money working in the mex processing plant of Hellabys at Penrose in Auckland.
- <sup>7</sup> David Hay, a NZ missionary, served as headmaster of the Apia Central School, Lalovaea, and as the Samoa Mission Education Director from 1958 to 1963.
- <sup>8</sup> Teachers at the Central School in 1959 were: David Hay, Nei Hughes, Pemasa Fuatai, Mrs Fuifui Pemasa, Siaumau Samatua Mrs Tuakana Taivairanga, Teina Taivairanga, Pr Tavita Niu (PT), Luther Dakua, Mataina Fa'asisila, Irae Neru, & Mrs Pel Potoi. Assisting at times were Mrs Fay Hay & Pr Tini Inu.
- <sup>9</sup> Enrolment in 1959 was more than 500 pupils.
- <sup>10</sup> Pr Tavita Niu had served as a pioneer missionary in the Tuvalu (Ellice) Islands from 1946 to 1949. From 1959 he cared for the youth department of the Samoa Mission.
- <sup>11</sup> Ellen G White, *Education* (Mountain View, California: PPP, 1942), 11.
- <sup>12</sup> Ecclesiastes 11:1 NIV, Bible
- <sup>13</sup> White, *Education*, 18.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid, 14
- <sup>15</sup> Galatians 6:7 KJV, Bible.

□



The Viking Ahoy fast on the shore at Buca Bay  
(See story on the next page)

## REFLOATING THE *VIKING AHOY* —drama in Buca Bay, Fiji

RAYMOND WILKINSON



See CV in Vol 1 No 1

ALEC THOMSON



*In 1938, Alec with his mother and father, was baptised by Pr Fergus McFarland. He attended the West Australian Missionary College and graduated in 1942. He graduated 2 years later from the Ministerial Course at the Australasian Missionary College. Following brief colporteur service he ministered in a number of churches.*

*He married Shirley Price on 15 Aug 1947. They began mission service in 1948 he as acting principal of the Aore Training School in Vanuatu. Over a period of 25 years Alec and Shirley worked in Vanuatu (10), Kiribati (9), PNG (6). At the end of 1972 they again entered into ministerial service, for the Aborigines at Kempsey, NSW, & for churches in Western Australia.*

*They retired at the end of 1985. Alec has continued to help out in church work. As a Master Mariner, together with God's guidance, he has successfully sailed a number of boats through difficult seas and reef-strewn areas. He has been a member of the Royal Art Society, NSW, since 1948, and the WA Watercolour Soc. since 1991.*

*The Thomsons have 2 daughters, Michelle and Claire. They now live at the Victoria Point retirement village, Brisbane, QLD.*

(Editorial note: Two men have contributed to this saga of the sea that occurred at Vatuvonu, Fiji, in 1957.)

### Ray Wilkinson's story.

WE HAD BEEN WORKING in the Cook Islands, and near the end of 1957 I received a call to be principal of the Vatuvonu Central School on the island of Vanua Levu in Fiji. We arrived in Suva just before the time of the Central Pacific Union Mission's annual meetings, and as there was no representative from the Cook Islands available just then, and none from the East Fiji Mission for which we were bound, I was invited to attend the meeting.

Toward the end of the meetings we heard that there had been a cyclone and it had hit Vatuvonu on 7 January. The damage had affected both the school and the mission headquarters causing minor damage to buildings. Worse, it had caused possible damage to both the mission boats, the *Viking Ahoy* (which was used by the mission) and the smaller *Ai Talai* (mainly used by the school). Both boats, we heard, had been blown aground.

Because Barry Crabtree, who was the Mission President for the East Fiji Mission, was in Australia, attending a summer school at Avondale, Norma Crabtree and her children were the only expatriates at Vatuvonu. To try to be of any help to Norma and the Mission staff, and to get ourselves to the school so that we could see what needed to be done before the new school-year began, we flew up to Savusavu, the closest airport to Vatuvonu. A new road (with the somewhat grandiose name of the Hibiscus Highway) was being laid down to link Savusavu with Buca Bay where Vatuvonu was situated. The road was not yet complete, but could be used to within a few miles of the school.

Before leaving Suva we sent word to Vatuvonu by radio to let Norma know when we would be arriving. On arrival at

Savusavu we managed to find a taxi whose driver was willing to take us to the end of the completed section of the road. As we travelled we could see evidence of the cyclone's force, and that the road was also somewhat damaged.

We arrived at the end of the road in the middle of the afternoon. There was nobody there to meet us, so, after waiting for a short time we hid our suitcases and hand luggage under some bushes and set off on the track to the Bay. Our two children, aged two and three, soon tired and that meant we each had to carry one. We had walked less than a kilometre when to our delight we heard the sound of a tractor coming in our direction. Soon it appeared over the rise ahead and we saw Norma perched on one of the mudguards, and the Mission's engineer driving. What a wonderful sight that was!

The tractor had a very basic platform attached behind it, and we were able to go back to where we had left our luggage, and soon had the luggage and ourselves piled onto the platform—and thus ceremoniously we made our grand entrance to Vatuvonu. We had only the few items which we had been able to carry with us on the plane, and were very grateful for the welcome Norma gave us and for the items she was able to lend us so that we could settle into our new home.

Then it was time to check the boats. We saw that the *Ai Talai* which had been blown through the wharf (a clear indication of the rather flimsy structure that had been the wharf), was virtually undamaged but had then been lifted onto the nearby sandy beach. After the cyclone, the mission and school staff had been able to push it out into the deeper water and it appeared to be in fair condition.

The larger *Viking Ahoy*, however, had been blown on to a section of a reef near the boundary of the mission station, and was well aground. At low tide, the water on the reef was only ankle deep, as was the water most of the way around most of the ship! It was clear that we needed to both

*When I was  
half-asleep I  
thought I  
heard a voice  
telling me...*



The unsuccessful attempt to float the boat using drums.

lighten the ship and provide some buoyancy if ever it was to be refloated.

The next day, mission workers came to help. I am fairly certain Pastor Nemani Tausere, Assistant President and Marika Tuiwawa, my assistant, were among them. We all worked alongside Captain Volau and Engineer Emosi to lighten the ship. That involved taking out all the ballast and removing what we could of the engine parts. The ballast was covered with sticky black ooze, and we were soon covered with the same! The only "work" clothes I had with me were my white shorts and shirts, which I planned to wear in the classroom. One set of my clothes had to be dedicated to the lightening of the ship! Heavy (and also oily and dirty) engine parts were then removed and placed on the land. Once that was done, we started to think about buoyancy. We were able to find a couple of empty fuel drums, and then we cut quite a lot of bamboo. We then used crowbars to channel holes under the ship so that we could pass rope through, and then we affixed the drums and bamboo on either side of the ship.

We tied it all as tightly as we could at low tide, hoping the rising tide would lift the ship enough for us to move it into deep water. At high tide we made an attempt, pulling with the *Ai Talai* and pushing for all we were worth. The buoyancy we had added did make a difference, but it was clear that we were not able to shift the ship. We then set about getting more bamboo, and tying that in place. And then, just at this time Alec Thomson arrived with the *Fetu Ao*, and how pleased we were to see the ship and the senior men and crew with them. They had brought additional drums and good rope and we felt sure that the next effort would be successful. But it wasn't.



The crew of the *Fetu Ao* at Abemama in 1957. It is not known whether all these men were on the boat at the time of the incident. Nauan is first on the left & Fred Langley is second from the right at the back. His grandfather was the Anglican Bishop of Melbourne

Alec Thomson's story.

While all this was going on, we left the Gilbert Is-

lands and sailed for Fiji in November 1957 where we had to have some work done on the *Fetu Ao*. The work was completed in January and the *Fetu Ao* was ready to return to Abemama in Kiribati (Gilberts). I remained in Suva on business and when I was there Pastor A W Martin caught up with me and gave me the startling news that a cyclone had passed through the north of the group and the *Viking Aboy* had been blown ashore at Buca Bay on Vanua Levu and that the CPUM officers wanted me and my party to leave that day.

I told him that that was impossible because we had to get supplies and fuel on board, and they would need rope and drums to help float the *Viking Aboy*. In addition, we would have to get permission from the Harbour Master and Customs to do the trip to Buca Bay. What was more, we wanted to visit the Lau Group to inspect cyclone damage there and distribute a few bags of Dorcas clothing that had arrived a few days before.

The Gilbertese sailors—Fred Langley, first mate; Kautu, engineer; and Baureti, Tiam and Nauan, crew—prepared the ship for sail. It was the next afternoon, however, that

we set out in the *Fetu Ao* for Vatu-vonu. With me on board were Pastor Gordon Branster, CPUM President; Pastor William Coates, Fiji Mission President; Mrs Olive Coates; Terry Sowden, Fulton College Manual Arts teacher and my wife, Shirley. We arrived the next day and immediately

set to work. Ray Wilkinson and the Fijians had been working on it for some days but the *Viking Aboy* was still high and nearly dry. All hands attempted to refloat it by fastening 44-gallon drums under it, but without success, even though we worked until 10 o'clock that night.

Some of the folk slept ashore where Mrs Crabtree and the Wilkinsons found places for them, while some slept on board ship. When I was half-asleep I thought I heard a voice telling me to use the lifeboats. I think it was the voice that wakened me, but there was no one in the cabin. Shirley was in the kitchen getting breakfast, so I asked her where everyone was. She told me that all the men had gone ashore to work while I had been asleep.

I joined them and told them what I had heard. We gathered some heavy beams from Mr Ward who had the saw-mill near by, and placed them under the stern of the *Viking Aboy* in the space near the propeller. We rested



"Mission Accomplished".

them, one each side on each of the lifeboats from the *Fetu Ao* and roped them stern and stern to the *Viking Ahoy*, as I had been instructed by the voice. As the tide slowly came in that afternoon, the *Viking Ahoy* slowly lifted and about 5:15 pm on Tuesday, 14 January 1958, she was floating at anchor in the Bay.

There seemed to be no structural damage, so the whole company praised God for His instructions.

The next day, I went my way to the Lau Group and spent the Sabbath out there, later returning to Buca Bay and towed *Viking Ahoy* to Suva. Mission Accomplished!

**Ray Wilkinson—a postscript.**

I am certain that Alec Thomson's story of feeling he was given an idea from the Lord is a valid one. I can remember what a difference that lift, provided by the lifeboats, made. We also had a rope tied to the mast of the *Viking Ahoy* and some helpers pulled on that to help keep the ship on an angle so that the ship's keel would not dig into the reef and make movement more difficult.

At a signal, the *Fetu Ao* strained and we pushed, and



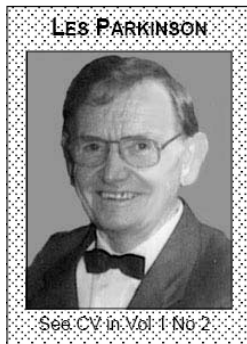
**The Fetu Ao and the Viking Ahoy.**

prayed and pushed, and suddenly there was a shudder, and the ship moved backwards (with a few bumps and shudders) into deeper water. This time we prayed again—prayers of thanks.

For some days we had the *Viking Ahoy* at anchor in the Bay. Each day we went out and bailed the water that had seeped in, but the ship was in remarkably good shape. Then, when Alec returned, he took her in tow and headed for Suva where the gallant ship was repaired and sold. She had served the church well. □



## ESTABLISHING THE FIRST PERMANENT BASE OF OPERATIONS IN VANUATU—Part 6 Tanmaru in NW Malekula



**LES PARKINSON**

See CV in Vol 1 No 2

**Synopsis:** Calvin Parker, the superintendent of the New Hebrides Mission, (Vanuatu) had had a burning desire to take the gospel to the Big Nambas people in NW Malekula. Alma and Norman Wiles had opened up the work in the villages of Matanavat, Tanmiel and Emilawap in North East Malekula and prospects for establishing permanent mission stations were encouraging. Because

the people in Matanavat were friendly with both the Big Nambas people and the Bush people they used the opportunity to visit the Big Nambas village of Tanmaru to become acquainted with the people and learn the language. Living conditions were very primitive. They were exposed to mosquito infested areas and the dangers of tribal warfare and cannibalism.

**E**ARLY IN 1916 Calvin Parker wrote of his excitement:

The object of our prayers for the past two years has materialised, and now the Big Nambas people [Tanmaru] have stretched out their hands ... They are

very enthusiastic. [Matanavat] has been the key in the hand of God for opening up this work and a large number of the bush people's villages.<sup>1</sup>

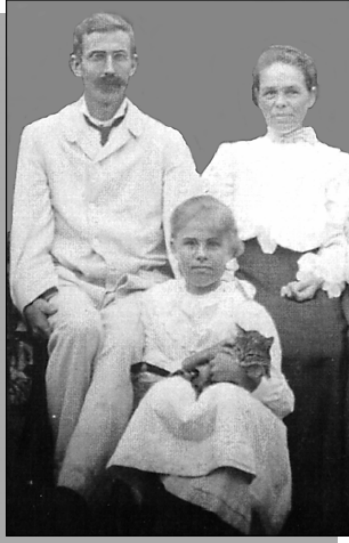
It was also the key to the request that came from the Big Nambas for on one occasion when Parker was visiting Matanavat he was able to make friendly contact with Nakambat, the Big Nambas chief of Tanmaru, and was invited by him to visit his village. Parker felt that the Lord had given access to them in a wonderful way and his desire to help them was strengthened.<sup>2</sup>

In November 1915 Parker and Wiles had made the first visit into Big Nambas territory. They remained at the anchorage. Accompanying them was the chief and a number of his people from a Small Nambas village inland from Matanavat who had previously threatened to kill both Parker and Wiles.

During the last days of December 1915 Parker and Wiles made a further trip to the Big Nambas territory. On the initial visit in November they had made an appointment for the brother of Nakambat to meet them and escort them up to Tanmaru. When they reached the anchorage Parker decided for safety reasons that Norman Wiles should remain on the launch, while he took the trip alone up the mountain to the village.

It was a 16 kilometre climb over a flat and up a steep mountain-side of over two thousand feet, with the sun's





Pr Calvin, Mrs Myrtle Parker & daughter Ramona (Missionaries from USA)

When they eventually reached the village they were taken to the dancing ground and Parker was invited to sit on a stone. There were a large number of men on the dancing ground and they gathered around Parker and felt him all over.

Parker remarked:

My silent prayer was that God would cause His virtue to flow out as He did from the body of Jesus, and that this people would have created in them a longing desire for the living Bread that came down from heaven, instead of the flesh of this poor body.<sup>4</sup>

Nakambat was very friendly and Parker talked as best he could in Bislama and a few words of the Big Nambas language that he had picked up on previous contacts. Parker found that the men were very interested in his bag of medicines and it was not long before he was treating many of the men gathered on the dancing ground. Word soon spread to the sick in the village and they converged on the dancing ground for treatment.



Nakambat. The bone through his nose showed that he was a cannibal

direct rays pouring down. It took about three hours to make the ascent.<sup>3</sup>

On the way up they passed numbers of Big Nambas men coming down and each time the guide came in contact with these men he would stop and watch them out of sight. Parker learned later that the guide was afraid they would shoot Parker when the visiting party turned their backs.

When they eventually reached the village they were taken to the dancing ground and Parker was invited to sit on a stone. There were a large number of men on the dancing ground and they gathered around Parker and felt him all over. Parker remarked:

My silent prayer was that God would cause His virtue to flow out as He did from the body of Jesus, and that this people would have created in them a longing desire for the living Bread that came down from heaven, instead of the flesh of this poor body.<sup>4</sup>

Nakambat was very friendly and Parker talked as best he could in Bislama and a few words of the Big Nambas language that he had picked up on previous contacts. Parker found that the men were very interested in his bag of medicines and it was not long before he was treating many of the men gathered on the dancing ground. Word soon spread to the sick in the village and they converged on the dancing ground for treatment.

Nakambat and his people requested worship and Parker hung up a picture roll and began to sing. To his amazement the men walked away from him to what they considered a safe distance and looked to see what was taking place. When Parker prayed the men sat down with their backs to him and covered their heads. When the prayer was over Parker wryly remarked, 'Many had to

be told to wake up!'

The brother of Nakambat took Parker to see his compound and some of his twenty-five wives. Parker noted that the houses were larger and better built than the coasta ones. Each building was surrounded by a high, tightly woven reed fence, the entrance being through a small hole which even Parker found difficult to squeeze through. He also noted that when the inhabitants of the houses wanted to enter their homes they did so on hands and knees.

Nakambat and his brother took Parker to the outskirts of the village and showed him a piece of ground which they indicated they would give if it was decided that the mission would be established in their midst.

The two men assured Parker that they would put up a school building and protect the Europeans. The end result of the visit was an invitation to establish a station near the village of Tanmaru.

### Request Granted for Tanmaru

When Parker returned to Atchin he immediately wrote to the Australian Union Conference in Wahroonga, NSW. He reported in the *Record* that he had decided to work in Tanmaru and had asked for a grant for building materials and furnishings for a house for a worker and his wife.<sup>5</sup>

Parker maintained that this Big Nambas tribe was the largest, the most cannibalistic, and the most warlike of all the tribes on Malekula but, at the same time, that they were friendly with a great many bush tribes. If the people were won to the side of Christ a wide field in which to work would open up.



Stewart and Wiles (seated) telling the gospel story.

On 27 April 1916 Calvin Parker made his last visit to Tanmaru. He was accompanied by Andrew Stewart and Norman Wiles. The people of the village welcomed them with great friendliness. Hardly a gun could be seen. The ground that Nakambat had promised to the mission had been cleared and a number of posts had been cut for the church/school building. Parker surveyed the land for registration and the total area was six acres. He was also promised further ground if it was needed.

The friendship that had developed between Parker and Nakambat was seen when Parker told the chief that he would be leaving for Fiji. He wrote:

Nakambat, with deep emotion put his arm around me and gave me a hug and said, 'Come back again. This is your place. You will walk about this place with us. You are our friend and I am your friend'.<sup>6</sup>

Nakambat was elated when given the news that Norman and Alma Wiles would be their missionaries.

Parker made a plea to Adventists throughout the world that they would pray for Brother and Sister Wiles as they went to live among the Big Nambas. The move was fraught with a great deal of danger, as they were the worst cannibals of the New Hebrides. He was concerned that one false step might mean death to them.<sup>7</sup>

Andrew Stewart from Atchin made a second visit to Tanmaru. He reported that a mission site had been selected and land secured. They were waiting for workers so that work could be started among them. He felt that the door was open and it was imperative that they move in while the situation was favourable.<sup>8</sup>

Norman Wiles was given the responsibility of making monthly visits to Tanmaru, however, in August 1916, a fortnight after his previous visit, reports began filtering through to Matanavat which indicated that the people of Tanmaru were no longer interested in having the mission established in their area. The report was that a trader had gone up into the village and told the people that all the land around them belonged to him for he had previously paid for it with six muskets. He threatened the people if they allowed the mission to have the land. Wiles was also told that they, he and Stewart, were to go to Tanmaru and collect the three pounds the mission had paid for the land. When the two men arrived in Tanmaru to investigate the stories they found them to be false. What they did find was that Nakambat had made a start with the thatching of the school building.

By October 1916 Wiles was able to converse with the Big Nambas in their own language and when he and Stewart visited the village the people gathered around him, and in their own language, he told them about the picture on the roll. When he prayed in their language there was complete silence as they listened intently to him as he talked to God. At the conclusion of the prayer Wiles and Stewart were subjected to very close scrutiny by three men from a neighbouring Big Nambas village. These men put their hands inside the shirt sleeves and felt Wiles lower arm. Stewart had his trouser legs pulled up until they got a good look at the calves of his legs. They also inspected the hats, glasses, collars, clothes and boots of the two men.<sup>9</sup>

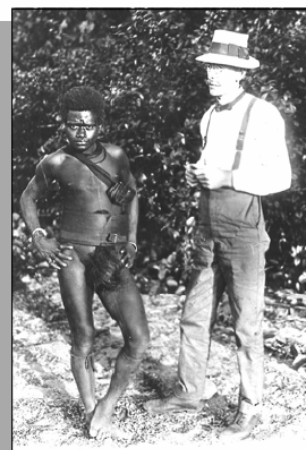
Toward the end of October 1916 the Tanmaru people completed a small building for the Wiles.

On 19 February 1917 Nakambat made a surprise visit to Matanavat. Alma Wiles who had not seen him before described him as a fine, big healthy looking man. Nakambat told Norman and Alma Wiles that the people had finished thatching their school house and that the walls were partly finished and that they had plans to finish it quickly. However, he also stipulated that the mission should comply with their promise to erect a teacher's house and go and teach them. Alma Wiles wrote of the urgent need for an earnest man and his wife who had a real love for souls 'to

come over and help us.'<sup>10</sup>

When Parker, who was then Superintendent of the Central Polynesia Conference in Fiji, heard of the urgency for a missionary couple for Vanuatu he added his voice to her plea, writing:

We think of our dear Brother and Sister Wiles trying to navigate the heavy ocean swells along the coast from Matanavat to the Big Nambas and landing in a small canoe that they may retain the hold that we together gained through prayer and peril amongst the wild cannibal people. Is there not some strong man and his wife in our ranks who will give up the pleasant associations of the homeland for this crying need of the great island field?<sup>11</sup>



Stewart with a Big Nambas man

In August 1917 Norman and Alma Wiles moved to Tanmaru for a short period. When they arrived at the anchorage known as Hoenparav there were no Tanmaru men or boys to meet them so they started to walk up the track toward the house that had been built for them by the village people. Here they made contact with some of the men who immediately went to the beach to collect the boxes. Bamboos were secured as a bed and wild canes, which were plentiful, were plaited into a table and the house was furnished. As the Wiles were settling in the men and boys crowded around watching operations and taking special note of the first white woman they had seen. One man went for some firewood and another brought water in a bamboo from the creek about three kilometres away. For a few matches or a little rice the Wiles were able to get anything done. Water, however, was a problem and both Norman and Alma had to use economy and also watch the way they emptied the water from the bamboo.

Norman Wiles writing of their experience said:

We had no difficulty in becoming acquainted with the men and boys, but the women were very shy. Taking the all important medicine bag we went to the village. The men have a lot of skin disease and we were able to help many of them by administering vaseline and chrysophanic acid. As I had not yet mastered the language we often got stuck for words and had to appeal to others for explanations, but got along fairly well on the whole.<sup>12</sup>

When Nakambat learned that Alma would like to see his house and wives he willingly led the way. His wives soon appeared from their gardens. They were loaded with bananas, yams, firewood, etc. Alma counted nine of them and as they came toward her they did so in a stooped position as they were forbidden to walk upright in the presence of men. They also had to sit down.

Norman Wiles learned that there were no less than sixteen villages, each with a population of from one hundred to three hundred, and that they all spoke the same language. When he heard this he immediately realised that he would be able to carry on an extensive work once he had

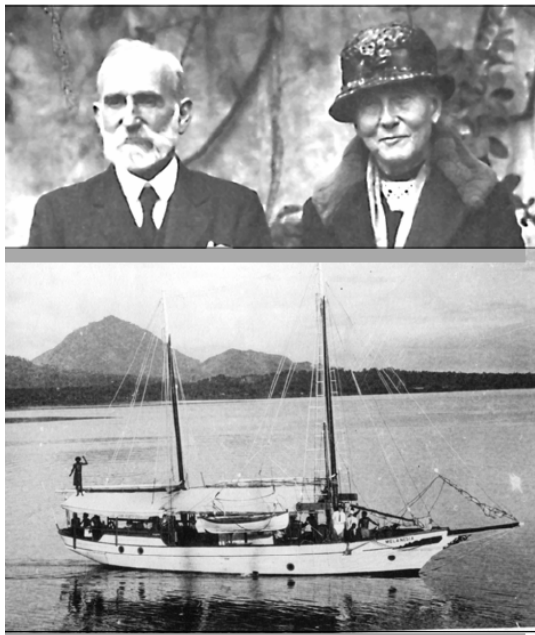
fully mastered their language.

Each morning the young missionaries walked from their house to the village and conducted worship for the men and boys. Between forty and fifty attended each day. On the last morning they had two meetings and forty-two attended the first meeting and forty the second. They recognised that an interest was growing each day and that the men and boys had the ability to sing and answer questions. A promise was made to Alma that as soon as she had learned sufficient of the language the women would be allowed to attend school.

Norman also noted that the people were very loyal to their chief and submitted to all that he said and he further recognised that if Nakambat, was opposed it would be very difficult to hold the interest of the people. Nakambat was able to answer questions regarding the creation of the world and the origin of the human race.

During this time a chief and a number of his men from a neighbouring village which was several kilometres inland from Tanmaru visited the village of Tanmaru. Nakambat introduced the chief to Wiles.

Norman Wiles, not missing an opportunity to witness, sat down and talked to the visitor, a large man about six feet tall. He wanted to know more about the school, but said he did not want the school as he thought it would not be much good. Then Nakambat and his men began telling the visiting chief that the school was good and gave him a real sermon while Wiles sat and let them talk. The number of people in his village was like the leaves of the trees. He felt thankful for what had been done and believed that the Spirit of God was going before them.<sup>13</sup>



Captain G F Jones & his wife Marion and the *Melanesia*.

In November 1917, Captain G F Jones and his wife arrived on the *Melanesia* at Port Vila, Vanuatu from the Solomon Islands and after Customs sailed for Atchin arriving on November 7.

The following day Jones and Stewart left for Matanavat to visit Norman and Alma Wiles. Norman Wiles joined

them for the journey to Tanmaru.

Writing of this experience Jones said:

It had been raining and with the tall grass through which we had to walk we were wet through after a short distance. We reached the top, however, after an hour's walk and introduced ourselves to the chief and his people. We then went into our grass hut and took our clothes off to dry. As I took no change with me I wrapped myself around with my blanket and we slept on some shaky bamboo sticks while our clothes were drying ... We met all the men folk in the early morning, and I spoke to them for about forty minutes, Brother Wiles interpreting.<sup>14</sup>

When they returned to the beach Nakambat and some of his men were invited on board the *Melanesia* where they sang one of their mountain songs in perfect unison and harmony.

Before moving permanently to Tanmaru Norman and Alma, because of ill health, returned to Australia on furlough. Norman was suffering from malaria bordering on black water fever. (Black water fever is a dangerous complication of malaria and is characterised by the passage of dark red to black urine, severe toxicity and high mortality, especially for Europeans). During their absence from the field Stewart made frequent visits to Tanmaru and on one occasion took with him Jope Laweloa the Fijian worker. This was about April, 1918. When they arrived in the village not too much attention was given them as preparations for a dance to be held that night were underway and everyone seemed to be involved. Stewart and Jope were taken to a Nakamal (men's house), a long narrow hut with the roof resting on the ground and only one small opening about two feet six inches square.<sup>15</sup>

As they had no lamp they decided, whilst it was still day light, to enter the hut to see where they would eventually sleep. As their eyes became accustomed to the semidarkness they discovered a large pile of stones in the middle of the hut on which lay a roasted pig. Alongside the pile of stones was a man lying on a leaf mat who responded to Stewart and Laweloa's gaze by saying, 'Masta mi sik'. On the other side of the fire was a narrow bunk consisting of about five pieces of bamboo tied together. When Stewart felt the ridges of the bamboo and saw that the length of the bed was only five foot long he decided to try the earthen floor. He found two plaited leaf mats which he spread on the floor where there was the least dust and as far from the pig as he could get.

The two men found that the far end of the Nakamal was partitioned off with rough sticks standing on end and making a small enclosure for the occupant to hide in time of war. When he and Laweloa found another plaited leaf mat they prepared to spend the night in the small enclosure.

Before it became dark they went outside and treated the sick. After eating a few biscuits that they had in their pockets and having worship with the sick man, they decided to retire early for they were told that during the night a number of people from some distance away would arrive and dance until day break.

Stewart used his camera for a pillow and tried to rest. He wrote of his experience thus:

We lay and turned for some time and then I suggested to Jope that for a change we get up and walk around awhile. We came to the dancing ground and there, under the flickering light of the wild cane torches, we could see the painted figures glistening with perspiration as each man danced and yelled, at the same time, holding his musket firmly in his hands.

We retired to our humble beds and waited the cessation of noise at break of day. When they were finished we were ready to begin, and gathering a few of the men around, who had attended services before, we started singing a hymn in the Big Nambas language which Norman Wiles had translated. Then in Bislama I briefly told them the story of redemption and had those nearest me interpret it into their own language which the visitors understood.<sup>16</sup>

Not long afterwards Stewart and Jope returned to the small mission vessel and made their way to Atchin

#### Government Approval Granted

In the latter part of 1918 Andrew Stewart wrote that on the Sabbath before, the British Resident's vessel had passed, landing some mail and informing them that the Resident, Mr. King, would probably call on his return a few days later. They planned at once to go to Tanmaru to bring the chief, Nakambat, and some of his men back to wait for Mr. King's return.<sup>17</sup> Stewart had not long returned to Atchin when he received another message from Mr. King requesting him to go to the island of Vao, which was nearby, to see him. Stewart took Nakambat and his men with him. The Commissioner questioned the chief closely. Nakambat was given an opportunity to talk and each time he replied he included the words, 'we want the missionary to come and live amongst us'. (Olketa man i wantem misnari emi stap wetem mipala).

When asked why he wanted the Europeans to live with them Nakambat replied that the school was good and if trouble arose he would have the missionary to represent his case to the Government. Mr. King was not fully convinced that it would be wise to settle in the outskirts of the village of Tanmaru, however when Stewart explained to him that it was the intention of the mission to build a house near the coast and not in the village he was satisfied and gave his approval for Alma and Norman Wiles to live in the area.

With the Commissioner's approval being granted work began immediately on erecting a house for them. The place was on an elevation about one and a half kilometres from the beach. The house when completed was twenty-four feet by thirteen feet with a front and back verandah. Stewart stated they would commence work there and later determine where the permanent mission site would be.<sup>18</sup> He recognised that because of the terrain of the area it would be difficult to make roads and therefore next to impossible to convey building material and other requirements to the top of the mountain range where the majority of the people lived.

News of the proposed establishment of the mission was voiced among the other Big Nambas villages and Stewart remarked that the leading men from other villages had visited the mission and for the first time looked upon 'sawn timber, corrugated iron and the "fair skin" of the

missionary carpenter.'<sup>19</sup>

It was also in the latter part of 1918 that Norman and Alma Wiles returned to Atchin. They remained on the island for approximately one year. This situation was brought about because a French recruiter had been shot dead at Espiegles Bay on North-west Malekula while he was attempting to land on the beach. The area was declared a no go zone for Europeans. The ban was lifted about December 1919. The Wiles returned to the territory of the Big Nambas either in December 1919 or early January 1920.<sup>20</sup>



Wiles treating the old man with his hand blown off.

On 1 February 1920 Wiles wrote about an anxious time he was having. An old man of Tanniel near Mataनावat had blown off his hand with dynamite while attempting to kill fish. There was no doctor close by and they had no launch so Wiles amputated it without anaesthetic. It was a difficult task. He hoped that the man would survive and that he could get medical help from somewhere.<sup>21</sup>

Wiles then spoke about the murder of the Frenchman at Espiegles Bay and of the British and French expedition that resulted in the killing of several people. One of the ni-Vanuat men killed was a brother of the chief of the village that instigated the killing of the European. The chief mourned his brother's death and refused to wear his usual dress and eat yam until a white man was killed and he had eaten his flesh. To help bring this about he handed two cartridges to the same two men who had done the shooting before and told them to kill the missionary at Tanmaru.

The would-be killers set out on their task and came to within one and a half kilometres of the Tanmaru mission. As they neared the gardens a shotgun was fired at a pigeon. This act frightened the two men and at the same time no doubt saved the lives of Norman and Alma Wiles.

Wiles thought that the story was feasible but was not sure whether it was correct. They did not let the situation worry them as they believed that God had already shown them his protection.

Some time later early in 1922 Harold Blunden, from the Home Missions department of the Australasian Union Conference in Sydney, made a report concerning the incident. He wrote:



At Espiegles Bay,—[about twelve kilometres] from the landing near our mission home three years ago a French recruiter was shot dead while he was attempting to land on the beach ... A punitive expedition visited these people and shot three of the natives amongst them the man who had murdered the Frenchman. The brother of this man cast off his belt, which is an emblem of revenge\*, and declared that he would not eat yam until he had secured the blood of a white man in repayment for his brother's death. [\*This meant before the next season arrived]... Some of his people prowled around the locality surrounding the mission house for some time, and one day Brother Wiles was warned from three quarters that a plot had been laid for his life.<sup>22</sup>

After the episode related above Norman Wiles reported on the deteriorating situation in the area. He said that there had been a war on between their village and another village inland. The people were all in the village crowded together with muskets ready. They were on guard night and day ready for the least sign of trouble. Up to that stage no one had been seriously hurt although one man had been shot in the leg. He was unable to say how things were because he had been laid up with a sore foot. They had heard shots and the drums beating and wondered whether there had been a cannibal feast.

Their house was almost finished except for the back verandah and they were waiting for their roof which was to be made of native materials. The finishing of the school-house was also held up. He made the remark that it would not be of much use if they did not have a congregation.<sup>23</sup>

On 11 February 1920 Wiles wrote:

I don't know if there is much more to report. I have already written telling of the trouble which has arisen here. Things are still unsettled, there having been no communication between the two villages. Some of the natives have ventured out in search of food only to hurry home again as soon as possible. The old chief Nakambat, became concerned about our safety and feared lest the Amoh [Amok] people would shoot us. He asked some of the men to come and guard us, but as none seemed willing, he came himself with two others. We fixed them up a place to sleep and they spent three nights. The mosquitoes were extra bad just at that time and they hardly slept at all because of them. When their three days were finished they said they were going home, but that some others would relieve them and keep guard over us. The others did not come, however, and we are alone again with the sick man and his companions. When the chief was here he demanded that we close the front doors, no matter how hot it was. One night a dog came around and made a noise. Muskets were cocked at once and all was in readiness. We were pleased to see that they felt a responsibility for our safety although we did not feel the need of protection. Since his visit here the chief has lost another son, three or four years old. He says that he has lost twenty children by death, and ascribes it to the fact that some men from a distant village placed poison in his house. He says that he and his people come to school now, and why is it that God does not help

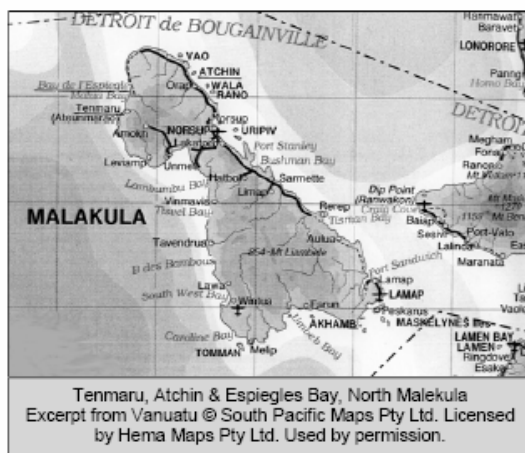
him and stop his people and family from dying?<sup>24</sup>

Wiles carried out a census of Tanmaru village and found that there were three hundred and two people in the village. He was told that other villages had more inhabitants and some had less. He also remarked that he would have to make a new alphabet to accommodate the sounds. He maintained that the people, although numerous, were dying out and that hardly any children were to be seen. Many parents had only one child and many of the men had no wives. He said we were just in time with the gospel or there would be none left.

When Andrew Stewart visited Malekula toward the end of March 1920 he found both Norman and Alma Wiles, sick with fever, and as the people of Tanmaru were in a rather unsettled frame of mind, because they had been attacked by a neighbouring tribe, he decided to take the young missionaries back to Atchin to enable them to recuperate. The change seemed to do them the world of good and Stewart returned them to their outpost. It was the last time he was to see Norman Wiles.

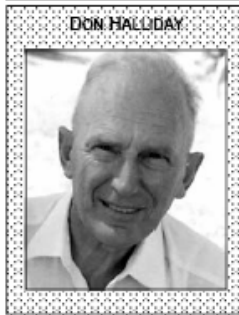
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- <sup>1</sup> C H Parker, *Australasian Record*, 3 Jan 1916
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 7 Feb 1916
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, 3 Apr 1916
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid*
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid*
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, 26 Jun 1916
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid*
- <sup>8</sup> A G Stewart, *ibid*, 3 Jul 1916
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, 4 Dec 1916
- <sup>10</sup> Alma Wiles, *ibid*, 9 Apr 1917
- <sup>11</sup> Parker, *ibid*, 14 Jul 1917
- <sup>12</sup> N Wiles, *ibid*, 22 Oct 1917
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid*
- <sup>14</sup> G F Jones, *ibid*, 3 Dec 1917
- <sup>15</sup> Stewart, *ibid*, 15 Jul 1918
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid*
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 9 Feb 1920
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid*
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 22 Dec 1919
- <sup>20</sup> Editor, *ibid*, 2 Feb 1920
- <sup>21</sup> N Wiles, *ibid*, 3 May 1920
- <sup>22</sup> H Bhunden, *ibid*, 9 Jan 1922
- <sup>23</sup> N Wiles, *ibid*, 3 May 1920
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## TRAINING SECONDARY TEACHERS AT FULTON COLLEGE, FIJI—1970-1984



*Don Halliday M.A., MEd was born in Adelaide Sth Australia, and spent his childhood in Hobart, Christchurch (NZ), and Wahroonga (Sydney). After graduating from the teachers' course at the Australasian Missionary College in 1943, he commenced a long, varied and fruitful service in education for the church.*

*Don taught secondary classes at Burrwood in Sydney, Avondale High, Newcastle, Papanui in Christchurch (where he helped in the school's registration as a secondary school), and at Strathfield in Sydney. Then followed service in colleges at Longburn in NZ, Fulton in Fiji where he served as Registrar for 6 years, and Avondale College as Registrar for 4 years. Following 2 years in Sydney he served in Papua, first at Mt Diamond (1950-52), and then in the newly established Pacific Adventist College until 1955. He then spent 4 years as Education Director for the CPUM. Since retirement in 1989, Don has given short-term assistance at Sonoma, Faglum, and PAU in PNG. He is married to Daphne (nee Chapman), also a teacher, and their 2 daughters, Colleen and Marion, also trained as teachers. The Hallidays live at Altonville, NSW.*

IN 1941 FULTON started as a training school for ministers, primary teachers, and office workers in the Fiji Mission. After the formation of the Central Pacific Union Mission, (CPUM) of the SDA Church in 1949, it became the main training centre and major secondary school for the new regional organisation, staffed mainly by expatriate teachers.

As educational standards rose in its various territories, secondary classes were added on top of their existing primary schools, and by the end of the 1960s it was becoming obvious that these developing secondary schools could not continue to be staffed by expatriates, and thus national teachers would have to be trained. Indeed, some young people had already gone to Avondale College in NSW, Australia for training. Further, national governments were increasingly insistent that expatriates be replaced by local staff.

Other developments suggested a possibility of doing some secondary teacher training at Fulton, rather than sending prospective teachers to Australia. Late in the 1960s, Fulton followed the example of other secondary schools in Fiji in switching from the British system of secondary examinations (the Cambridge Senior) to the New Zealand system (the New Zealand School Certificate). (The present writer found himself involved in this changeover, since he was the only teacher on the Fulton staff who had recently taught in a NZ secondary school.) More students were now passing the Fiji Junior Examination (at the Form 4 level) and passing on into Form 5, where the brighter students could progress to the New Zealand examination, and pass it, too, since it was somewhat easier than the British exam. Thus there was a pool of prospective students with a higher academic level who could possibly become secondary teachers. It happened that just at this time several children of expatriate staff were approaching the end of the available secondary classes, and there were several bright national students in the same class.

At the same time the Vatuvonu school and the newer Navesau school were adding secondary classes, as also were the schools at Beulah (Tonga), Papa'arua (Cook Islands), Parker (New Hebrides as it then

was), and Lalovaea (Samoa). Thus Fulton was no longer the only secondary school in the CPUM. And this reflected a trend in all the island education systems. Fiji in particular had a new policy of extending some secondary education to country districts by founding junior secondary schools which would cover Forms 1 to 4.

Furthermore, at this same time the University of the South Pacific was being brought into being, on a campus near Suva which was formerly a flying boat base for the Royal New Zealand Air Force. One of the courses proposed for this university was a junior secondary teaching course, which would take students with a good pass at the Form 5 level and give them three years of academic and professional training. I recall that the foundation Professor of Education, Professor Honeybone, told us that they would be training teachers to teach courses that did not yet exist in schools that did not yet exist. Professor Honeybone managed to get a grant from UNESCO to finance ten subject experts who would coordinate the development of courses and text books in their subjects for the proposed new junior secondary schools.

In January 1969, at a time when many teachers from round the CPUM had come to Fulton for a meeting of the CPUM Educational Advisory Committee. They



The 'new student' (Don Halliday) being enrolled by Sakiusa Yavavalaviaturagalevu (1970)



1970 Teaching Staff L to R Back row: M Tuiwawa, U P Jerome, R M Ferguson, W J Driscoll, W P Miller, R M O'Hara, B I Peach, D Tame, K J Moore, J H Rowden: Front row: R K Wilkinson, Ruth Wilkinson, F Rogoyawa, Hazel Eaton, Linda Driscoll, J Cernik (Principal), Lois Cernik, Adrienne Peach, Beverly Mitchell, Daphne Halliday, D J Halliday.

discussed the upgrading of both teaching and ministerial courses for the regional institution. A new theology course at diploma level, with Form 5 entry standard, was to run in addition to the existing lower level ministerial course, and it was recommended that we start a secondary teaching course in the following year with a Form 6 entry level. It was felt that a two-year professional course after Form 6 would be equivalent to the University's three-year course following Form 5. It was also felt that the secondary teaching and theology courses could have some common subjects in English and Bible, thus cutting down on the extra teaching time that would be required.

It was in fact already planned to offer Form 6 that year (1969), with the aforementioned class of expatriate and competent national students providing the initial intake. This was accomplished without an increase in staff, as we were discontinuing one of the five classes in Forms 3 and 4, leaving only two classes for each of those forms. It was anticipated that students who were successful in the new Form 6 class could form the first intake into the proposed secondary teaching course. It was pointed out that the secondary schools in the CPUM could at once absorb ten graduates from such a course if we had it, and it was hoped

that the other two island regional organisations (Bismark-Solomons, and Coral Sea Union Missions of the SDA Church) would also contribute students, since they were behind the CPUM in educational standards and were hardly in a position to provide similar courses in their own training colleges.

The Advisory Committee's recommendation was approved by the CPUM Executive Committee.<sup>1</sup> It was then forwarded to the headquarters of the Australasian Division of the SDA Church in Sydney for its approval. Dr Edward E White, the Division Education Director, and Pastor Gordon Lee, the CPUM President, offered some comments and questions on the proposed course, and their concerns were referred to a subcommittee consisting of Pastor Ken Gray, CPUM Education Director, and Fulton's Academic Committee. This subcommittee met in February and subsequently reported to the CPUM Executive.

This committee recommended that the other two regional organisations, the BSUM and CSUM, be invited to send students who had a good pass at the Form 4 level, and they could then complete their secondary education and do their professional training at Fulton. We pointed out that our three-year course after Form 5 was equivalent to the University's three-year course, and that students were doing three years of academic education (Forms 5B, 5A, and 6) after Form 4 before entering the course, and thus could confidently expect to be capable of handling Form 4 classes. Our Fulton staff had been improved by the addition of degreed national staff. The new course when fully operational would require 37 teaching periods (which might perhaps be reduced by teaching some subjects in alternate years only), and thus we would need one extra expatriate teacher to start with, and perhaps another the following year. These would of course require new housing. We proposed to train teachers initially to teach Bible, English, and either History/Geography or Science/Mathematics. At a later stage perhaps commercial and manual subjects could be added. These recommendations were accepted by the CPUM Committee and passed on to the Australasian Division which agreed to the plan.<sup>2</sup> Now



The Pioneers: The first group of students from the Bismark-Solomon & Coral Sea Union Missions for the Secondary Teacher Training Course.

we were able to make arrangements for the new course.

Thus when the College commenced for 1970 additional staff, housing and equipment were in place and we had students ready to begin training. In the initial class some were admitted on a mature age basis but with previous primary teaching experience, while others had completed the Form 6 class in the previous year. Four of these students graduated the following year as our first secondary teaching graduates.



Three of the 1971 secondary teaching graduates.

The year 1970 also marked the start of a wider sphere of influence for Fulton, for in that year we had a number of students from Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands who had completed the New Guinea School Certificate and were subsidised by their respective regional organisations. These students had first to complete their secondary education. The Solomon Islanders and some Papua New Guinean students managed to cope with Form 5 and pass their School Certificate, and thence go on through Form 6 and the secondary teaching course, graduating in 1973 after a total of four years at Fulton. The other Papua New Guinean students were not so fortunate. They floundered in Form 5, and we informed their regional organisation that they would have to repeat the year. The CSUM Secretary informed me that they could not see the value in this; after another four years they would still have no more than a diploma, whereas in Papua New Guinea they could immediately enter the newly formed University of Papua New Guinea and complete a degree in the same time. The CSUM, therefore, withdrew those students and sent them instead to their own university.

In the years that followed the secondary teaching course was both broadened and lengthened. It was broadened to

include more teaching subjects, namely Industrial Arts, Home Economics, and Commerce (secretarial, accounting, and economics).<sup>3</sup> In 1979 it was lengthened to extend over three years instead of the original two, and the first graduates from the longer course completed their work in 1981.<sup>4</sup>

Over a period of fourteen years Fulton College<sup>5</sup> contributed 103 secondary teaching graduates to the teaching force of the three regional organisations.<sup>6</sup> The best year was 1977, when 17 graduated, closely followed by 1978, with 16 graduates. The CPUM contributed students from Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, and the Cook Islands, while the others sent students from PNG, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Vanuatu, and Tuvalu. By the end of that time most of the teaching in our island junior secondary schools was being done by national teachers, many of them Fulton graduates.

It was expected that in time Fulton would raise its standard still further to train teachers for the higher classes in secondary schools also. But this was not to be. When the South Pacific Division planned a new tertiary college for the islands, it was decided to locate it in Papua New Guinea, where we had the largest Adventist population. Primary teaching, ministerial, and commercial courses, which had a set course of study, could continue at Fulton, but secondary teaching, where students could select from a wide array of teaching fields, required a variety of specialist lecturers and teaching equipment which we could not afford in more than one island college. Thus at the start of the 1984 school year new secondary teaching students from all over the islands converged on Pacific Adventist College, not on Fulton. These students included some who were starting the new course after finishing Form 6 at Fulton, some who had already done a year of the Fulton course, and others who had previously completed Fulton's course and were coming to study for a degree after a few years of teaching. With the graduation of a solitary secondary teaching student at the end of that year, the secondary teaching course at Fulton came to an end. But the influence of that course lives on as its graduates are today teaching in Seventh-day Adventist secondary schools all over the South Pacific, many of them in positions of leadership.

#### References & Notes

1. Central Pacific Union Executive Committee Minutes, 12 Jan 1969
2. *ibid*, 27 Feb 1969
3. Telephone conversation with Allen Sonter, 11 May 2002
4. *Makasoi 50th Anniversary Souvenir*, 1991
5. Over the years has been known as: 1941-44 Fulton Training School; 1945-48 Fulton Missionary School; 1949-71 Fulton Missionary College; 1972 onwards Fulton College.
6. *Makasoi 50th Anniversary Souvenir*, 1991

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## What Readers Are Saying

"It is good to keep our historical heritage ever before us. It gives us a sense of being who we are." **J T PNG**

"Good variety of articles. Something for everyone interested in our mission history." **A R NSW**

"A great Journal of the history of the Adventist missions in the Pacific." **H H NSW**

"How wonderfully God has blessed and led through the years." **M D VIC**

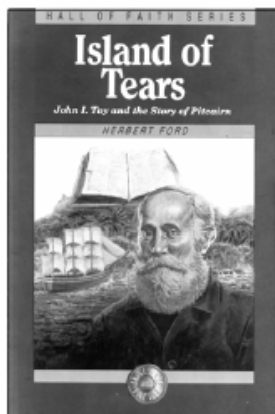
"Most of the authors are known to me and most of the settings are familiar. Interesting stuff." **R R QLD**

"It is inspiring to look into past history and to recognize that you know many of the early workers in the South Pacific Division's mission field territory." **R F USA**

"I enjoyed every page. Thank you again for an excellent document." **H R USA**

□





## Book Review

Published by  
Pacific Press Publishing  
Association  
Boise Idaho USA 1990

The mutiny on the *Bounty* and the settlement by the *Bounty* mutineers on Pitcairn Island is a story of enormous historical interest and infamy known to millions. However, few

know the details of the sequel; the equally amazing story of the entrance of the Seventh-day Adventist message into the isolated outpost of Pitcairn in the south east Pacific.

As the head of the Pitcairn Island Study Group at Pacific Union College in California, Herbert Ford is well informed on Pitcairn's religious history. Although briefly told in a mere 79 pages, he clearly traces the experience of pioneer missionary, John I Tay, and his quest to evangelize the island. Ford also relates events preceding Tay's voyage including the wreck of the *Wilawave* on Oeno Atoll in 1858 and Capt Knowles' voyage to Pitcairn in search of help. It was this same captain who, some years earlier, had taken a parcel from James White and John Loughborough to the people of

Pitcairn.

Following the acceptance of the Adventist message, by the entire population Ford relates Tay's appeal to the General Conference headquarters in Battle Creek, USA, for an ordained minister to baptise the new converts. The ill-fated voyage of Andrew J Cudney on the *Phoebe Chapman* in 1888 is well told. All aboard in the ship they had built for the journey perished at sea.

The construction of the boat *Pitcairn*, its first voyage, the baptism of the islanders in 1890, and the continuing voyage of the *Pitcairn* to other Pacific islands, as well as the tragic and untimely deaths of John Tay in Fiji and Captain Marsh in Auckland, conclude the story.

Three small details are omitted from this excellent book. Firstly, the Thursday October Christian, trained by *Bounty* mutineer John Adams (p26), and the man of the same name who was first to accept the Adventist message in 1886 (p43), were not the same person. He was actually the son of his namesake, and grandson of Fletcher Christian, the mutineer. Secondly, The author states that the tracts delivered in a parcel by Capt Knowles were read briefly after their delivery, but he fails to note that they were reread with increasing interest nearly 10 years later before Tay arrived which helped to pave the way for the ready acceptance of Tay's message. Thirdly, no mention is made of the remarkable fact that not one of the islanders who accepted the Adventist message in 1886 had died in the 4 years that elapsed before the *Pitcairn* arrived and all were baptised. This is an example of the providence of God, which really permeates the entire story

Pr Malcolm Bull (Missionary on Pitcairn 1984-85) □

## Letters

### Life Sketches—Laurence A Gilmore

"In Vol 3 No 1 p 39 of the *Journal* ...I was surprised to read that he commenced the 'Carols by Candlelight Program' when he returned to Australia in 1968...I had sung in previous programs in the early 1950s."

Mrs June Nirmal, Western Sydney, NSW

You are correct, June. The program did commence in the early 1950's. Where the *Life Sketch* states commenced, it should read recommenced. —editor

**Contents—Picture Captions** Vol 3 No 2 p3. "The thumbnail picture listed as Pr G Branster, should be Pr A Gathercole. He had a similar hair style to Pr Branster." Pr Ron Taylor, Point Victoria, QLD

### Decentralisation in the Australasian Division. Vol 3 No 2 p 19

1. Mrs Wendy Pietz of Cooranbong, NSW, has rightly pointed out that on p 27, it was Ted Fletcher and Betty, not Ivy, who returned to Australia in 1957.

2. Pr Bert Cozens of Cooranbong, NSW, has correctly pointed out that:

Pr Bert Pietz and not Pr Freeman McCutcheon was president of Vanuatu Mission in 1949, p 22.

The Ted Jones family transferred from Suva to Aore, not to Santo on leaving the CPUM. p 26.

Pr Reg Millsom's service at the CPUM was from 1963 until 1971, not 1974. p 27.

Pr Bert also said that not all of Eric Howse's roof was blown away during the cyclone (p25, 26), for he has a slide showing the north side still in place.

And he felt that the money provided by the AIUC for repairs to the boat *Viking Ahoy* was probably used to purchase a new dingy. Reference 30 p 28

Thank you for your helpful contributions — article author, David Hay.

### "Cleanse the Lepers" Vol 3 No 1 p 18.

"In connection with the list of the staff members at the Mt Hagen Hansende Colony June Rogers should read 1954 to 1959." Mrs June Macaulay. □

We need to study the working out of God's purpose in the history of nations and in the revelation of things to come, that we may estimate at their true value things seen and unseen; that we may learn what is the true aim of life; that viewing the things of time in the light of eternity, we may put them to their truest and noblest use. Thus, learning here the principles of His kingdom and becoming its subjects and citizens, we may be prepared at His coming to enter with Him into its possession.

E G White, *Education* p 184 □

## Life Sketches



**SARAI MALAGA** was born in the village of Saleaamua on the eastern end of the island of Upolu on the 23 June 1945. She obtained her secondary education at the Adventist Central School (ACS), Lalovaea, Apia, a Diploma in Primary Teaching (1967) and a Diploma in Secondary Teaching (1979) at Fulton College (Fiji), a BEd from Pacific Adventist College (PNG) in 1985, and a MEd from AIIAS in the Philippines in 1995.

Sarai married Alatise in 1972.

She began her service for the church at ACS, Lalovaea in 1968, as a teacher. She was the principal at Iakina in American Samoa, 1982-83, and

Samoa Adventist College (SAC) at Lalovaea, 1989-90, 1998-99; deputy principal at Papaaroa College on Rarotonga in the Cook Islands, 1991-93, and at SAC in 1997, and education director, Samoa Mission, 2001.

Sarai remarried early in 2003. Sadly she passed to her rest in Auckland, NZ, on 30 August of the same year.

Well educated and intelligent, Sarai was a talented teacher who served well the interests of Christian education. There are many students who have benefited from her wisdom and experience. Having taught Sarai in her secondary classes, the editor of the *Journal* remembers her as a diligent student, a careful thinker, and a good Christian. She now sleeps from earthly worries, awaiting the soon return of her Saviour and Lord.



**AISAKE KABU** entered this world at Mualevu in the Lau Group of the Fiji Islands on 29 July 1938. On completing his secondary education at Delana Methodist School at Levuka on the Island of Ovalau, he attended Fulton Missionary College in Fiji from 1949 to 1953. On graduating from the Ministerial Course in 1953 he commenced a 38 year period of service for the church. Apart from a year's study at the Australasian Missionary College in 1961, he served in the West Fiji Mission from 1954 to 60, in Fiji Mission as an evangelist, radio broadcaster and departmental director during the years of 1961 to 1977. From 1978 to 1983 he served as a departmental director and evangelist, and for the next three years as president of the mission. In 1987 he became the secretary of the Central Pacific Union Mission, and from 1991 the president until February 1994 when he retired. It was while he was conducting an evangel-

istic series of meetings in Ba that he felt unwell and his health deteriorated. Sadly he passed away on Sunday 16 November 2003.

Aisake's marriage to Serai Ravutu was conducted by Ratu Semi on 6 February 1952. Six children were born to this union: Salote, Vace-maca, Tui, Alici, Tiko and Sala.

Personable, talented and a powerful preacher, Aisake was used of God to lead many people to accept the Adventist message.

Pastor Robert Frame, a past president of the Australasian Division of the church, remembers Aisake well. "I regard Aisake as the best interpreter I ever had," he said. "He made me sound like a good preacher during my visits to Fiji." Another who knew him says that his friendly and caring way for people enabled God to use him in a variety of positions. He was the first national president of the Central Pacific Union Mission.

Aisake's faith in his Saviour and Lord was strong, and he now rests awaiting the call of the Lifegiver. □

### Photo Credits

Adventist Heritage Centre: p 3 #1,7; p 8; p 10; p 11 Efofi; p 18 Quonset; p 20; p 30; p 31; p 33. Alec Thomson: Cover #1; p 3 #6; p 22 Moala; p 26; p 28; p 29. John Howse: Cover #2. Glynn Litster: p 3 #2; p 11. Zita Miller: p 7. Beryl Stafford: p 3 #3; p 15; p 16. Rose-Marie Radley: p 12; p 32. Lyn Thrift: p 19. Lois Cernik: p 22. Daphne Chapman: p 22. David Hay: p 3 #5; p 23; p 24; p 39. Fulton Makosoi 1995: p 3 #8. Makosoi 1970: p 35; p 36. *Appeal for Missions* 1931: p 12; p 30 Nakambat. *Solomon Star* 16.9.88: p 21. E H Gates, *In Coral Isles*: p 40. *Australasian Record*, 12.5.47: p 18. □

# Pacific Islands Translators

—preparing 'good news' literature while students at the Australasian Missionary College  
Cooranbong NSW



<u>At Avondale</u>	1911-13 Vaioala Kerisome	1911-12, 1915 Margaret Williams	1909, 1913-17 Bofaiva Vai Vaemola	1898-99 Frances Waugh	1913-14, 1917 Agnes Dean	1912-15 Fred Hunt
<u>Country</u>	SAMOA-NIUE	AUSTRALIA	TONGA	COOK IS	FRENCH POLY	SAMOA
<u>Periodicals</u>	<i>O le Tala Moni</i>	English Guidance	<i>Talafekau Mo'oni</i>	<i>Tuatua Mou</i>	<i>Te Marama- rama (later Tiarama)</i>	<i>O le Tala Moni</i>
<u>Books</u>				<i>Daniela Christ Our Saviour</i>	<i>Christ Our Saviour</i>	

Tracts were also prepared and sent to the islands

